

Cinematic Unisystem RPG

Being a compilation of the many Cinematic Unisystem rules into one document.

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Conventions

We have taken certain liberties here to make this book easier to follow. Do try to follow along. You'll thank us later. Really.

Text

This book looks different depending on what's going on. As words make up the bulk of what's in here (hence the appellation "book"), you can bet that when the words change their look, something important just happened. The text you are reading now is standard text. It covers general explanations and narrative sections.

Other words are set off from the standard text like this. These boxes contain additional, but tangential information, or game play aids and tips.

Other words are set apart in this way. These boxes detail Guest Stars or Adversaries that may be used in Episodes, if you want.

Dice

As you've probably noticed, dice are central to the Cinematic Unisystem RPG. We already mentioned that D10 means a ten-sided die. We also hinted that it was the only type of die you will need. When you need to roll, toss that D10. The number that comes up is adjusted by any modifiers applicable and that's your roll result. Some D10 have a "0" on one face. That's read as a 10 (despite what it says). We could go on here, but you've got the drift now, and ... really, there's not much more to say about the dice.

Gender

You English majors know that the guy reference (he, him, his) is customarily used for both male and female. Lots of folks think that's part of the whole male domination societal thing, and don't like it muchly. On the other hand, saying "he or she" all the time is clumsy and way-too-PC for us. Given the source of this book, and that this is a modern and enlightened age... and we like to give stuffy grammarians fits - we're going to use the gal reference (she, her) whenever a generic designation is needed. That ought to wig out some tightly wrapped grammarian somewhere.

Measurements

For those of you who don't travel much, the U.S. Measurement system (feet, yards, miles, pounds, etc.) is not used in most countries. The metric system is actually predominant in much of the world. Still, this is a U.S. Game, so, we are going parochial and using the Imperial system. For our worldly aficionados, rough conversions may be found by multiplying miles by 1.5 to get kilometers (instead of 1.609), equating meters with yards (instead of 1.094 yards), halving pounds to get kilograms (instead of multiplied by 0.4536), and so on. The Cinematic Unisystem RPG is about story and dialog, not statistics and dimensions. All that measurement stuff won't come up very often anyhow.

Some Assembly Required

This chapter deals with creating Cast Members: the stars of the show. Cast Members are the roles you—the players—assume in the game; they may be larger-than-life heroes making a stand against the forces of darkness, or regular people facing the unknown. You are limited only by your imagination—and the casting needs of the Director.

Casting Call

Casting is a pretty important step, and it involves both you and the Director. Let's face it, the BtVS TV show wouldn't be anywhere near as much fun if the entire Cast consisted of fat hairy guys named Bob. You need an interesting Cast to make a good Series, and the casting process is the way to do it.

The Director should guide you through character creation. She should start by giving you an idea of the

setting and the needs of the Series. This may be as general as “the game starts on a bus making a stop in Everytown USA. Your characters have to be on that bus, for whatever reason” or as restricted as “the game is set in a high school in the Midwest. All the Cast Members have to be students or teachers at the school, and at least half of you have to be students. I need one Chosen One and one Occult Expert; the rest of you can be anything else, but no vampires or demons are allowed.” In some cases, the Director may simply hand out pre-generated characters (see Archetypes, pp. xxx) and have all of you pick and choose. On the other hand, if you want to make your own character, as long as you don’t come up with something wacko like “I’m a cyborg alien killer robot from the future in a clone body. Can I have two miniguns?” we say the Director should let you go with it.

Depending on the game, some choices may not be appropriate. If the game is set in Everytown USA, a Conan the Barbarian type might not work — although with creativity as your guide you can certainly give it a shot.

Teamwork between you and the Director is pretty important here — there’s a thin line between unnecessary limits on your creativity on one hand and entirely incompatible characters making the Director’s carefully plotted game unplayable on the other.

Chapter Seven: Episodes, Seasons, and Drama provides your Director with advice for developing a Cinematic Unisystem RPG Series and storyline-appropriate characters. But before she heads off to read that, you both should read through this chapter. There’s plenty of good stuff here. For example, right below we have several options a Director may want to consider for her Casting Calls. You and she probably want to read them first.

The Creation Process

The Unisystem uses a “point system” to create characters. Basically, you “buy” different abilities by spending character points. The better or more powerful a characteristic is, the more “expensive” it is. Some negative features, known as Drawbacks, do not cost any points. Instead, they have a negative value—by acquiring them, you actually get more points to buy other things. Keep in mind, of course, that these Drawbacks limit or hurt your character in some way, so loading them on carelessly is not a good idea.

Not everything is based on points, either. Some character elements are creativity-driven: your character’s concept (what kind of person she is) and personality, as well as her name and history. These depend wholly on your imagination.

The Character Elements

Characters in the Cinematic Unisystem RPG have four basic elements. Some elements are conceptual (what kind of character is she?) while others are numerical attributes (what are the character’s actual abilities?). As you make each selection, you narrow down the possibilities of the character, until you finally have a clearly defined fictional individual, ready to go out and start kicking demon derrière.

1. **Type:** Character Type determines the general power level and nature of your character. Heroes are tough and skilled. White Hats are normal people who depend on their wits and luck to survive.
2. **Attributes:** What are your character’s natural abilities, both mental and physical?
3. **Qualities and Drawbacks:** What innate advantages or penalties affect your character?
4. **Skills:** What does your character know?

Character Type

As we mentioned, creating a character involves allocating a number of points to various aspects of that persona.

Character Type determines how many points you have to “spend” on each character component — your character-building “budget,” in accountant-speak.

Character Type also goes a long way toward giving the Season (or the first several Episodes at least) a tone and scope. For example, if your Director wants a lower key Series involving less powerful characters, or one Chosen One, and some sidekicks, she should have you play with one, maybe two, Heroes and several White Hats.

By contrast, a higher powered more Cinematic tone, could be acquired by using Experienced Heroes for all the roles.

Hero

Heroes kick booty and take names, they have skills and abilities well above the norm. Tough cops who rarely need backup or gals who wear mystical gloves are examples of this type.

Attribute Points: 20
Quality Points: 20
Drawback Points: Up to 10
Skill Points: 20
Drama Points: 10

White Hat

White Hats are regular people who find themselves fighting the supernatural. They don't have kewl powerz or special training, (very often) but they have something special (Drama Points) that allow them to survive against insurmountable odds. Possibilities include nosy reporters who make a habit of chasing ghouls and monsters, and the proverbial teenagers driving psychedelic vans in the company of strange dogs.

Attribute Points: 15
Quality Points: 10
Drawback Points: Up to 10
Skill Points: 15
Drama Points: 20

Experienced Hero

These full-fledged cinematic heroes have amazing skills and abilities. This is the Type if creating Special Forces soldiers who can fight an entire army with a knife, immortal wandering swordsmen, and bio-engineered super-soldiers from a bleak future. Lest you get cocky, however, remember that the Director will be ratcheting up the power level of the bad guys too.

Attribute Points: 25
Quality Points: 25
Drawback Points: Up to 10
Skill Points: 40
Drama Points: 20

The Older Set

The skill point allocation in these Character Types represents a relatively young Cast. If you are interested in more mature characters, those past the high school or college years, add 10 skill points to whichever Character Type you choose. Okay this with your Director first though.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are inborn characteristics: your character's strength, intelligence, senses and so on. By selecting a set of Attributes, you are defining the limits of what the character can and cannot do. So, if you buy a very low Dexterity for your Cast Member, do not be surprised if she falls down, breaks dishes, and sucks at juggling.

Buying Attributes

Attributes are purchased using Attribute points (imagine that!). Those points are set by your Character Type (see p. 5).

Attributes can be bought up to level five on a one-for one basis (i.e., Strength 3 would cost three points, Strength 4 four points, and so on). Attributes above level five are more expensive: three points per additional level. Level six is the effective human maximum (buying an Attribute up to level six would cost eight points).

Beings with supernatural abilities (Vampires, demons, werewolves and the like) can have Attributes above six.

At the other end, at least one point must be put into each Attribute. So, a White Hat has 15 points to distribute among the six Attributes. You can have three Attributes at level two (average), and three at level three (somewhat above average). Or you could drop an Attribute to one, and get one at four. This character would really shine in one aspect, would be above average at a couple other things, would suck at one thing, and would be average for the rest.

A Hero has 20 points. With that, you can go with four Attributes at level three and two at level four. This creates a balanced character good at most things. Or you could keep three Attributes at average level and have two at level five and one at level four. This persona would be extremely gifted in certain areas.

The Meaning of Numbers

Level 1: The character is below average in this Attribute. Strength 1 indicates a poor physique, either a petite or flabby, sedentary person.

Dexterity 1 indicates clumsiness, someone likely to drop things—not to be trusted with delicate manual work unless the person has trained very hard to do so. Characters with a Constitution 1 are delicate and often in poor health. Intelligence 1 is below average—not mentally challenged, but certainly a bit slow on the uptake. Perception 1 depicts someone not very aware of her surroundings, likely to miss what's before her face. Willpower 1 results in a person who is easily intimidated and influenced by others, a follower instead of a leader, and somebody who is likely to succumb to temptation.

In other words, Attributes at level one are not flattering. If your character has an Attribute at level one, she is going to be pretty feeble at some things.

Level 2: This is the average for human beings. Most people in any given group have Attributes at this level, typically with one or two at levels one or three. Nothing wrong with being average, but the character is unlikely to shine with such Attributes unless her skills are so high she can compensate.

Level 3: This is above average but not extraordinary. Strength and Constitution 3 show some athletic aptitude — somebody who works out at least three times a week, or a natural athlete who has not taken time to develop her talent. Characters with Dexterity 3 are graceful—good dancing partners, grabbed near the beginning in pick-up sports, unlikely to suffer from butter fingers or Klutz Syndrome. Intelligence 3 indicates a bright person who can easily learn new skills, if she has the temperament to do so. With Perception 3, a character has good senses and intuition, and is not easily fooled or confused. Characters with Willpower 3 are rarely bluffed or bullied under normal circumstances.

Level 4: An Attribute at this level is well above average. Very few people — perhaps one out every ten in a random group — have one or two Attributes at this level. Strength and Constitution 4 can be found only in athletes (including the best football players in a large high school or college campus), extensively trained Special Forces soldiers, and other people who spend a large amount of time and effort keeping in shape. A Dexterity 4 would only be common among gymnasts, acrobats, dancers and other talented and graceful individuals. Mental Attributes at level four indicate near genius (Intelligence), highly acute senses and intuition (Perception), or an “iron will” (Willpower).

Level 5: This is the “practical” human limit. People at this level are extraordinarily talented, able to perform complex and difficult feats with little practice. While people with Attributes at level five are not record-breakers, they are among the best and the brightest. In a small or medium-sized community, only a handful of people have one or two Attributes at this level, and they are likely to be well known for their strength, wisdom, or toughness. Cities, large college campuses, and groups of demon fighters have more of these extraordinary individuals, but even there they are not common.

Level 6: This is the basic human limit. A few people with “freakish” features may exceed it (to level seven), but they are a handful even among the teeming billions living in the 21st century. Characters with one Attribute at level six are very rare, something on the order of one in ten thousand, or less. People with more than one Attribute at level six are perhaps ten times less common, and so on.

Level 7+: Now we are talking superhuman. Someone with Strength 7 would be as strong as a horse; a Dexterity 12 connotes inhuman grace; and so on. These folks can perform at a level that normal folks can hardly comprehend. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

Strength

A measure of your character's physical power, Strength determines how much damage she inflicts with hand-to-hand weapons, how much weight she can carry, and how much she can withstand before collapsing. Strength is useful to people who do a lot of heavy lifting or anybody likely to enter hand-to-hand combat. Characters apt to have a high Strength include athletes, manual workers, and soldiers. A low strength indicates either small size

and body weight, or just a lack of exercise.

The Strength Table shows how much a character of any given Strength can lift without much effort. Higher weights can be raised (assume a maximum lifting weight—for brief periods—equal to double the Lifting Capacity), but a nail might be broken or a spleen ruptured in the process.

Strength Table		
Strength	Lifting Capacity	
1-5	50 lbs x Strength	(Strength 5: 250 lbs)
6-10	200 x (Strength - 5) + 250 lbs	(Strength 10: 1250 lbs)
11-15	500 x (Strength - 10) + 1500 lbs	(Strength 15: 4,000 lbs/2 tons)
16-20	1,000 x (Strength - 15) + 5,000 lbs	(Strength 20: 10,000 lbs/5 tons)
21-25	1 ton x (Strength - 20) + 5 tons	(Strength 25: 10 tons)
26-30	2 ton x (Strength - 25) + 10 tons	(Strength 30: 20 tons)

Dexterity

Dexterity indicates your character's physical coordination and agility. It helps with any task that requires motor control and precision, from performing card tricks to shaking booty to feeding knuckle sandwiches (Dexterity helps to land the punch; Strength determines how much it hurts the punchee). If you want to do cartwheels — or try those kewl moves you saw in The Matrix — you'd better have a high Dexterity (and some help from the script).

Constitution

This Attribute shows how physically hardy or healthy your character is. Constitution is important when it comes to resisting disease, damage, and fatigue. It is also used (along with Strength) to determine how much of a pounding your Cast Member can take and still keep ticking. Constitution also comes into play with skills that involve endurance, like swimming and long-distance running. Constitution is useful for people in strenuous and dangerous jobs (firefighting, demon hunting, being a demon hunter's friend).

Intelligence

Brains good. This mental Attribute determines your character's ability to learn, correlate and memorize information. The higher her Intelligence, the easier it is for her to employ "scholastic" skills. Also, this Attribute is used to understand and interpret information. Note that intelligence and education are two separate things; you can be brilliant but illiterate. Education is covered by your character's skills, which determine what she has learned in her life. Watchers and other intellectual types tend to have a high Intelligence level.

Perception

When a vamp you've never seen before tries to suck your blood, Perception might help you spot her before she strikes. This mental Attribute governs the five senses of the character and is important for wannabe detectives (to spot those important clues), people with enemies (to see or hear them coming), and mystical or psychic types (to detect "disturbances in the Force").

Willpower

This Attribute measures your character's mental strength and self-control, and her ability to resist fear, intimidation, and temptation. If you don't want to run away screaming like a little girl the first time a vamp flashes its fangs at you, Willpower is your friend. Any supernatural ability that tries to control or influence victims is resisted by Willpower. It can also be used to intimidate and dominate others through sheer force of will.

Attribute Bonuses

Some Qualities (like Robot) provide bonuses to one or more Attributes. These modifiers are applied after Attributes have been purchased normally. For example, if you spend five points on Dexterity, and your character

has a Quality that adds a +1 to Dexterity, Dexterity 6 is the final result.

Life Points

Life Points represent your character's physical health. The Strength and Constitution of the character are the determinant factors; a big muscle-bound athlete can survive more punishment than a pencil-necked, cold-catching nerd. Life Points determine the amount of physical damage the character can take before being unable to function.

Life Points are determined by adding the character's Strength and Constitution, multiplying the result by four, and adding 10—or you can skip the math and just consult the Life Point Table on the next page. This formula is for human beings (and human-like beings, such as vampires). Some creatures have different Life Point totals (many demons are much tougher than normal humans, for example).

The Hard to Kill Quality (see p. 14) is a good way to increase Life Points. Players should figure out Life Points at the end of character creation after all Attributes have been figured out normally.

Life Point Table										
Constitution x Strength										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	18	22	26	30	34	38	42	46	50	54
2	22	26	30	34	38	42	46	50	54	58
3	26	30	34	38	42	46	50	54	58	62
4	30	34	38	42	46	50	54	58	62	66
5	34	38	42	46	50	54	58	62	66	70
6	38	42	46	50	54	58	62	66	70	74
7	42	46	50	54	58	62	66	70	74	78
8	46	50	54	58	62	66	70	74	78	82
9	50	54	58	62	66	70	74	78	82	86
10	54	58	62	66	70	74	78	82	86	90

QUALITIES & DRAWBACKS

Qualities are innate characteristics that give the character an advantage or positive trait. Being an Athlete is a Quality — Athletes are stronger, faster, and tougher than normal. They have bad things going for them, too (nerds hate them), but the ability to get dates with cheerleaders tends to outweigh the bad stuff. Qualities cost Quality points to acquire.

Some Qualities are package deals — your character buys one Quality but gets a number of benefits, or some benefits and some downsides. Athlete, Brainiac, and Vampire are all examples of these package Qualities. In general, your character is limited to purchasing one of these types of Qualities. Now, if you want to play a Brainiac-Occult Investigator or Brainiac-Werewolf, talk it over with your Director. You might be able to pull that off. Directors, watch this carefully. Athlete-Brainiacs, Werewolf-Vampires, or Robot-Demons are highly suspect. Even so, we don't recommend laughing in anyone's face (that would be rude).

Drawbacks are characteristics that somehow limit or detract from the character — bad eyesight, emotional problems, or being oh-my-god-it's-hideous ugly, for example. Drawbacks have values. When Drawbacks are acquired, the character gains extra points that can be used to buy Qualities or skills. Think of the extra points as a little reward for making the character a bit more three-dimensional and entertaining than some plain vanilla, "nothing wrong with me" bloke.

Beginning characters are limited to 10 points in Drawbacks. That does not mean players have to get 10

points' worth of Drawbacks; most will probably end up with less than that.

Changes During Play

After creating the character, some (use common sense) Qualities and Drawbacks may be acquired or lost in the course of a game. For example, a scarring wound could reduce the character's Attractiveness, or a change in fortune might increase or decrease the character's Resources or Social Level. When such a change is brought about during play, no experience points (see p. 74) are needed to purchase them. If players want to purposefully change a Quality or Drawback, they must spend experience points and come up with a good reason for the change. This intentional change is somewhat restricted though (see p. 74).

New Qualities & Drawbacks

The Quality and Drawback list presented in this chapter is far from exhaustive, although it covers most of the basics. In many cases, a "new" Quality or Drawback can be an extension or variation of an existing one. The value of the characteristic should be balanced out by the benefits or penalties it gives the character. Most Qualities or Drawbacks should be worth between one and three points; only the most powerful or crippling of them should have a value of four or higher, unless they are "combo" Qualities like Chosen One or Commando. These "combos" often include Attribute bonuses; each Attribute bonus costs one character point, with the maximum bonus being +5 to any one Attribute.

List of Qualities & Drawbacks

Qualities are innate characteristics that give the character an advantage or positive trait. Drawbacks are characteristics that somehow limit or detract from the character. Both Qualities and Drawbacks help round out the character, and can be helpful both to roleplay and to "succeed" in the course of a game. Qualities are desirable traits, and therefore they "cost" character points. Drawbacks, on the other hand, are limiting factors, and as a "reward" for acquiring them, the character gains extra points. Points acquired from Drawbacks can be used in any point category such as Attributes, Qualities, Skills and Metaphysics.

For point categories other than Attributes, Drawback points may be added on a one-for-one basis. Purchasing Attribute points using Drawbacks is much more expensive. The cost to raise an Attribute one level is equal to the value of that level. For example, raising an Attribute from 3 to 4 costs 4 Drawback points, from level 4 to 5 costs 5 Drawback points, and so on. Further, the costs are cumulative. Raising one Attribute from 3 to 5 costs 9 Drawback points.

Numerical Qualities and Drawbacks

Some Qualities and Drawbacks are expressed in numerical ways: the most common examples include Attractiveness, Charisma and Resources. These are similar to Attributes, since these Qualities and Drawbacks change the character in positive or negative ways. As a result, they are represented as bonuses or penalties. For example, a Charisma Quality of +2 represents a bonus of 2 levels on any Task or Test that involves influencing or manipulating people through social skills, while a Resources Drawback of -2 indicates very low income and few possessions, well below the national average.

Bringing a trait below the average gives the character extra points to put into other character elements. These traits have an average value of 0; so if a player does not want to deal with any numerical Quality, simply assume that it has a base value of 0.

List of Qualities and Drawbacks

ACUTE/IMPAIRED SENSE

2-POINT QUALITY OR DRAWBACK

Some people have the eyes of a hawk, or the ears of a bat — kind of yucky when you think about it. Others are near-sighted, hard of hearing or otherwise impaired. Characters with this Quality have one sense that is more (or less, if it's a Drawback) refined and sensitive than the rest. Normally, the senses are represented by the Perception Attribute. Acute or Impaired Senses indicate one or more are higher or lower than normal for a person with that Perception Attribute. When choosing this Quality, pick Vision, Hearing, Smell/Taste, or Touch. When bought as a Quality, an Acute Sense provides a +3 bonus to any Perception-related roll that relies on that particular sense. If acquired as a Drawback, Impaired Sense give a similar -3 penalty to Perception-related rolls.

Some Impaired Senses (hearing and sight in particular) can be easily corrected by glasses, hearing aids, and similar devices (though no doubt some insensitive high schooler will give you a hard time about it). If the impairment is eliminated by the use of such devices, the Director should reduce the value of the Drawback to

one character point. As long as your character's glasses or hearing aid or whatever is on, she is fine. If, say, a vampire knocks the glasses off, she won't be able to see very well (Cast Members should probably wear contacts or those spiffy new sport glasses-straps). It is possible to have more than one type of Acute or Impaired Sense, or, for example, to have Acute Hearing and Impaired Eyesight, or a similar combination of senses. For obvious reasons, you cannot select both the Impaired and Acute versions of the same sense (but "duh" for asking).

ADDICTION

VARIABLE DRAWBACK

Don't do drugs, kids. You've all seen the after-school specials and know the score about addiction. Still, a big component of a good story is tragedy, and addiction is that in spades. If you want to go there, an addicted character's gotta have something (drugs, liquor, smokes) and she's gotta have it bad.

A particularly virile form of addiction involves magic. Magic use can latch onto your character and keep her coming back for more. Now, we're not suggesting that magic addiction must occur, but it's certainly something your Director will keep in mind should your character turn to magic as a solution to every problem. Abusing magic is a sure recipe for the Addiction (Magic) Drawback. If that's your type of poison check out pp. Xxx for more complete rules on Magic Addiction.

Addiction Point Value Table	
Habitual drinking or smoking:	1 point.
Heavy drinking or smoking; light use of marijuana or LSD:	2 points
Heavy use of marijuana or LSD:	3 points
Alcoholism; habitual use of barbiturates or cocaine:	4 points
Habitual use of heroin; heavy use of barbiturates or cocaine:	5 points
Heavy use of heroin:	6 points

For all addictions, the value of this Drawback is determined by the severity of the addiction and the relative effects of the drug or substance. Since this isn't the Drug Awareness Week Roleplaying Game, we won't cover all the gory details. Directors should adjudicate the game effects of a "high" on a character. This can range from a small penalty for being slightly "buzzed," to the complete stupor of a heroin trip. A rough guide would be a penalty equal to the Addiction Point Value of the Drawback (heavy use of marijuana imposes a -3 penalty to all rolls). A drug addict character is often unable to control herself. Whether using magic creates the same "buzz" and penalties is up to your Director.

The Addiction Point Value Table gives guidelines for the value of a given type of addiction. Directors should modify these values as desired. Note that the point value can vary depending on how deeply the addiction has taken hold.

When an addicted character hasn't gotten her usual "fix," she suffers from debilitating withdrawal symptoms. Most mental actions are at a penalty equal to the value of the Drawback (so, a character with a 2-point Addiction suffers a -2 penalty to most mental actions) until the addict can get what she needs. The most severe drugs (like heroin) also produce strong physical effects; such addicts have a withdrawal penalty of -3 to all physical actions in addition to the penalty on mental actions. Unlike some Drawbacks, this problem cannot be overcome easily. Generally, the best a character can hope to do is to deny her craving "one day at a time." Getting rid of this Drawback should never be a matter of saving up enough points to "buy it off." Resisting the craving requires a series of daily Willpower (doubled) rolls. The first few rolls suffer no penalty. After a number of days equal to the character's Willpower have passed, add a penalty equal to the value of the Drawback. If the character blows any of the rolls, she'll do whatever it takes to get her fix. If no fix is available, she goes through the withdrawal penalties. And so on. Once ten straight days of successful Willpower rolls have passed, the character may lower the Addiction Point Value by one. And it starts all over again. Not a fun situation to be in, but if the struggle to overcome the addiction is roleplayed well, it should earn the character some Drama Points.

ADVERSARY

VARIABLE DRAWBACK

At some time in the past, the character has made an enemy, or she belongs to a group, race or nation that automatically attracts the enmity of others. An Adversary is more than somebody who dislikes the character, however. He, she or they wish nothing less than the destruction of the target, either by killing or ruining her.

The more powerful the Adversary, the higher the value of this Drawback. Chroniclers should determine if an Adversary is appropriate to the game in question. If the Adversary is unlikely to appear frequently, the Chronicler can reduce the point value or disallow it altogether. Individuals are worth 1 to 3 points as Adversaries, depending on their resources and abilities. A normal person would be worth 1 point; a Magician, a Green Beret or a multimillionaire would be worth 3 points. An organization may be worth 2 to 5 points, depending on its power. A gang of thugs would be worth 2 points, the police department of a city would be worth 3 to 4 points (depending on its size and competence), and a Covenant would be worth 5 points or more.

The player should have a good reason why her character has earned the enmity of the Adversary. The Director can then weave this enemy into the plot of the Story in any way she sees fit.

ARTIST

2-POINT QUALITY

Your character's an artist, someone unusually talented and creative. Artists end up forming bands that don't suck (Dingoes Ate My Baby, post sausage-fingers phase), painting masterpieces, writing Great American Novels, and doing other cool stuff like that.

Artists get a +1 to any two mental Attributes (Intelligence, Perception, or Willpower); the bonuses cannot be stacked onto one Attribute, and the limit remains six for humans. They also get a +1 to (what else?) the Art skill. Artists tend to be a bit sensitive and emotional, though; they have a -1 penalty to Willpower rolls to resist fear or losing their temper, or otherwise letting their emotions rule.

ATHLETE

4-POINT QUALITY

The character is into physical fitness in a big way. He may haunt the local sports bar scene on occasion, but mostly he's a doer not a watcher. Athletes can be marathon training types, gym rats, keep-it-tight aspiring actresses, or super intense health nuts. They spend much of their free time practicing and working out; this of course leaves little time to devote to the more cerebral aspects of life.

Without additional charge or value, Athletes gain +1 to each physical Attribute (to a maximum level of six for humans), two levels of the Sports Skill (and at least one more level must be purchased on top of that), and -1 penalty to all rolls involving intellectual abilities (anything using the Intelligence Attribute, particularly research), except where the Sports Skill is involved.

ATTRACTIVENESS

1-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY OR DRAWBACK

This Quality or Drawback determines the character's looks (or lack thereof). The average person has an Attractiveness of zero. Attractiveness typically ranges from -5 to +5 in humans. A +1 or +2 make the person stand out in a crowd. At +3 or +4, we are talking model good looks. At +5, the pulchritude borders on the heartstopping. On the flip side, at -1 or -2, the person has homely features, unsightly blemishes, or scars. At -3 or -4, the character is downright repulsive. At -5, break out the paper bag — looking at the character is almost painful.

A positive Attractiveness helps when dealing with people of the right sex or sexual persuasion. If you're "looking good" enough, a few come-hither glances may help you get backstage at a rock concert, avoid traffic tickets, get your flat tire changed, and so on. Add your character's Attractiveness bonus to any activity (usually Influence skill rolls) where persuading people is a factor. Negative Attractiveness works the opposite way, except when the purpose is to intimidate someone; people are more scared of an ugly mug than a pretty face.

Attractiveness costs one point per level if bought as a Quality, or adds one point per level if acquired as a Drawback. After character creation, Attractiveness can change only by events that modify the character's entire appearance, either through scarring or plastic surgery, or growing up in the right places ("Look ma, I've got breasts now!").

BRAINIAC

4-POINT QUALITY

Your character is a true smarty. Some call him brilliant but rarely to his face. They're too busy snickering about his horn rims, too-short pants, and unsettling enthusiasm about chip-manufacturing technology. Brainiacs tend to obsess on some project or another (say, making fusion work). This means they aren't really 'people'

people. Still, a large number wind up making several million bucks before they turn forty. At that point, they find themselves surrounded by lots of 'close friends.'

Brainiacs gain +2 to Intelligence and +1 to another mental Attribute (to a maximum level of six); +4 skill levels to be spread among the following (or grouped in one): Computers, Knowledge, or Science; a two-point Obsession with their latest project (which can change regularly); and -1 penalty to any roll where their personal social skills are pre-eminent. These characters are prime candidates for the Emotional Problems or Outcast Drawbacks.

CLOWN

1-POINT DRAWBACK

Wise guy, eh? The Clown refuses to take things seriously and is always coming up with jokes and wisecracks, even at the most inappropriate moments.

Perhaps your character is deeply insecure and tries to gain other people's acceptance through humor, or she simply delights in keeping folks off-balance with her comments. The biggest problem these characters have is that they cannot keep their mouths shut even when they know a joke will only work against them.

Clowns are generally accepted and liked during situations where their quirky humor is not out of place (parties and other social gatherings, or among friends). Their sense of humor gets them in trouble during tense and dangerous situations. Another problem the Clown faces is people often do not take her seriously even when they should.

CONTACTS

VARIABLE QUALITY

You know the routine—make a phone call to the right people and you get information, special supplies, some cash, or even the proper make-over regimen. This Quality gives your character those phone numbers. The more helpful the contact is, the higher the Quality's point value. For any and all Contacts, the Director determines whether or not the Contact is available at any given time. Generally, the more time your character has to reach or get word to her Contact, the more likely the Contact will come through.

A Contact that only provides hints, rumors, or gossip costs one point. If the Contact usually provides reliable information and helps the character out in small ways (offering a ride, letting the character spend the night over, or getting a background check on somebody), this Quality sets you back two points. Actual allies who help the character in any way they can run three to five points, depending on the Contact's resources.

COVETOUS

1- TO 3-POINT DRAWBACK

Everybody wants stuff. A Covetous character wants stuff really badly, and will do almost anything to get it. She may be motivated by love of money, lust for sensual satisfaction, hunger for power, or the search for glory. Whatever she desires, she will do almost anything to get it, limited only by any sense of caution or morality she may have—and in some cases, not even by that. A Covetous character usually refrains from breaking her own moral code or the laws of the land in the pursuit of her goals, but if a golden opportunity presents itself, the temptation may just be too great.

There are four types of covetousness: Greed (money and wealth), Lechery (sexual relations), Ambition (power and influence), and Conspicuousness (fame and renown). It is possible to covet two or more of those things, but each additional source of desire adds but a single point to the value of this Drawback.

The Covetous Drawback has three levels of severity, worth one, two and three points respectively.

MILD: The first level is relatively mild. Your character knows what she wants and she spends a great deal of time and effort to attain her goals, but she won't break her own rules or those of society to do so. This is a 1-point Drawback.

SERIOUS: The second level is stronger — presented with enough temptation, your character may act even if it goes against her better judgment or morality. She may resist if the action she contemplates is truly wrong and reprehensible — stealing credit for a heroic deed performed by a friend, for example — but resisting requires a Willpower (doubled) roll, at a penalty of -1 to -3 if the temptation and possible rewards are great. This is a 2-point Drawback.

DESPERATE: The third level is the strongest — a desire so strong that it often overwhelms any scruples your character may have. When presented with temptation, she can only avoid acting by making a Willpower roll, with penalties ranging from -1 to -5 depending on the size of the prize. For a high enough reward, your character will turn on friends or loved ones, and even betray her principles. This is a 3-point Drawback.

DEPENDENT

2- OR 3-POINT DRAWBACK

Your character has a relative or someone who is close to her — perfect for the villains to terrorize, hold hostage or otherwise use and abuse. A mother, a husband, a little kid sister. If your character has one Dependent, she gets two points. More than one Dependent is worth three points—sorry, five siblings may be a bunch, but they just don't give you any more points.

EIDETIC MEMORY

1- OR 2-POINT QUALITY

Your character has an uncanny ability to remember certain impressions, events, or visions. After focusing for a few moments on some subject, he can recall this sight with startling accuracy. A person with the one-point version of this Quality can "freeze" an image in his mind (a static image like a page or a stop-action scene from the movie that is "life") and recall it with precision at a later time. This is the limit of his capacity though; once three images are "recorded," a new one requires the displacement of an old one (character's choice). We recommend that you write down the circumstances of your character's mental "snapshot" so your Director has a good reference when you ask that detailed question several sessions later. Otherwise, he should fill in any details you can't remember whenever it is necessary. Your Director may also require an Intelligence (doubled) or skill (say, Art for drawing) roll to accurately reproduce the memory in a form that others can recognize or use as a basis for research. The number of Success Levels in this roll gives some indication as to the accuracy of the reproduction.

Photographic Memory: By spending two points, the character gains a much deeper retention of his experiences. After reading a book, he can quote passages without missing a word. After viewing a scene, he can reenact it moment by moment. And he almost never forgets anything. As with Eidetic Memory, your Director will fill in the details but the scope and "memory storage" is essentially unlimited. Your character receives a +1 bonus to any skill roll where memorizing facts is useful, such as Knowledge and Science. Finally, any rolls where memory plays a significant part gain a +1 to +3 bonus, at your Director's discretion. A battle of wits (or at least memory) against this gent is as smart as getting into a land war in Asia (and much more risky than going up against a Sicilian with money on the line).

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

1- OR 2-POINT DRAWBACK

Does your character have difficulty relating to others? Does she get depressed often, wear dark clothing, or listen to a lot of weird music? If the answer is yes, she might have an Emotional Problem or two. Those with Emotional Problems react in unreasonable ways to certain situations and problems. The reaction can be anger, pain or anguish, typically more extreme than normal. People get wiggly for the strangest reasons. Emotional Problems can be overcome during play, but this should always be roleplayed. If you are able to convey the inner struggle of your character over the course of several Episodes, the Director might allow her to eliminate the Drawback without having to "pay" any experience points to do so. And there's probably a Drama Point or two in it for you as well.

DEPRESSION: Your character's emotional problems make the very act of living a chore. Common symptoms include sleep problems (either oversleeping or insomnia), severe procrastination (to the point that the sufferer may lose her job or get kicked out of school), and a lack of interest in anything. A character with Depression suffers a -1 to most Tasks, and tends to avoid becoming involved. This is a 2-point Drawback. A severe shock may snap someone out of this state for a while (a life threatening crisis could do it), but the character will sink back into inactivity afterwards. Certain drugs and psychiatric treatment can reduce the effect of this problem (which also reduces its value to one point).

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY: These clingy types are overly dependent on others. Once they make a friend, they want to hang around her all the time. When involved in a relationship, they are excessively needy. This behavior tends to freak friends and relations. This is a 1-point Drawback.

FEAR OF COMMITMENT: Whenever your character starts feeling too close to somebody, she becomes afraid and pulls back. Maybe she is afraid that if she lets somebody get too close, they will hurt her, and it's ... just ... not ... worth the pain. Or perhaps she fears that if she reveals too much about herself, the other person will see the "real her" and be appalled or disgusted. This makes it very difficult to have a healthy relationship with either friends or lovers. This problem is a 1-point Drawback.

FEAR OF REJECTION: When this person experiences rejection (or thinks she has been rejected), she feels hurt and angry. People with this problem may be afraid to make friends or approach those they are attracted to, and if their fears come true, they harbor a great deal of resentment and anger. This is a 1-point Drawback.

INSECURITY: Are we talking shy or what? It's that kind of insecurity that can paralyze a person and cause them to mumble. An insecure person might hesitate before acting (-2 to Fear Tests, see p. 49) or suffer penalties

when interacting with others. This is a 1-point Drawback.

LONER: This character has little need for friends or companions ... or others in general. Whether motivated by fear of getting hurt or sheer disgust with those around her, she is highly unpleasant to be around and will not accept aid of any kind. This is a 1-point Drawback.

FAST REACTION TIME

2-POINT QUALITY

Most people freeze when something bad is about to happen (like ... I don't know ... when a large reptile lunges out of the dark at you). Not someone with this Quality — the lucky one rolls away and punches ol' scaly as soon as it bares its teeth at her. In combat, contact sports or other physical confrontations, characters with this Quality gain a bonus for Initiative purposes (+5 if using dice, see p. 50), modified by common sense (Fast Reaction Time cannot help the target of a sniper half a mile away, for example).

Because they are fairly immune to the "freeze" factor so common in dangerous situations, Fast Reaction folks also gain a bonus of +1 on Willpower Tests to resist fear.

GOOD/BAD LUCK

1-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY OR DRAWBACK

If your character enjoys Good Luck, Fortune smiles on her far more often than on most people. Whenever she needs a break, there is a good chance that circumstances will conspire to give her one. If your character suffers from Bad Luck, on the other hand, Murphy's Law ("if anything can go wrong, it will") always applies to everything she does. Good Luck points are like low-key Drama Points, but have the advantages of being re-usable and you can use them whenever you want.

Each level of Luck counts as a +1 bonus (or -1 penalty) that can be applied to any roll, after the die is rolled, once per game session. Multiple levels can be added together for a big bonus on one roll, or spread around several different actions. For example, if your character has three levels of Good Luck, she can get a +3 bonus on one action, a +1 bonus to three actions, or a +2 bonus for one and a +1 bonus for another.

With Good Luck, you decide when it comes into play. Bad Luck, however, is in the hands of the Director, who chooses when it affects a given roll. Directors should exercise caution and good judgment when applying Bad Luck. If they use Bad Luck for meaningless rolls, the Drawback becomes little more than a minor inconvenience. On the other hand, applying Bad Luck to Survival Tests (see p. 62) or other critical rolls is a good way to alienate folks. Make the Bad Luck count, but don't abuse anyone. We're trying to get you all to have fun here, not create angst (well, not out-of-game angst).

HARD LUCK EXAMPLE: Jenna has a 2-point Bad Luck Drawback. At one point in the Episode, Jenna takes aim with her gun as an enemy attempts to flee the area. The character's mission will be much harder if the villain escapes, but Jenna is in no immediate danger, so the Director tells Jenna that a startled bird flies in front of her, spoiling her aim. A -2 penalty is applied to Jenna's shot.

HARD TO KILL

1- TO 5-POINT QUALITY

Characters with this Quality are extremely tough, and can withstand an amazing amount of damage before going down. Even after they are severely wounded, medical attention has a good chance of reviving them, scarred but alive. This Quality is bought in levels. Level five is the highest possible for human beings; Some supernatural beings can have more levels. Each level of Hard to Kill adds three Life Points to your character's Pool. Additionally, each level provides a +1 bonus to Survival Tests. If you have any Quality points left over, you should invest them here. Your character will thank you.

HERO/BIG DAMN HERO

1- OR 3-POINT QUALITY

True heroes save others, and that's what this Quality lets you do.

Once per game session, your character can give someone else +10 on any one test. Best of all, he can do it after the player has made his test. This costs the good guy a Turn (only thing he can do that Turn), however, and he must explain what he's doing to help his friend. This could be anything from a few words of encouragement, a helping hand up a cliff-edge, or distracting a bad guy so that his companion can get in a lucky shot.

A hero with Big Damn Hero has another special effect as well. Once per session, he can restore half of another character's Life Points just as if that Cast Member had spent a Drama Point. No action need be spent for this effect—the champion can simply shoot his companion a wink or look of camaraderie. Such a sign of respect from an admired hero is enough to give new life to the downtrodden.

This Quality is going to be most often found in a Hero or Experienced Hero, but no reason another character can't possess it.

HONORABLE

1- TO 3-POINT DRAWBACK

Your character follows a code of behavior, and will not break it lightly, if at all. The more restrictive and rigid the code is, the higher its value. Honor Girl should almost never break the code's rules, no matter what the cause. In a life-or-death situation where honor must be ignored, your character might do so, but even then a Willpower (not doubled) Test is necessary to overcome the psychological barriers reinforcing the code of honor.

MINIMAL: Your character does not lie or betray friends or loved ones, or people she respects. Anybody else, especially people from groups they dislike or are prejudiced against, is fair game. This is a 1-point Drawback.

SERIOUS: This code of honor is more complex, and applies to everyone, friend or foe. Your character always keeps her word and does her best to fulfill any promises she makes. She will not betray the trust of others once she has accepted it. She may be reluctant to give her word except in a good cause (at least a good cause as she sees it), because once it has been given she will abide by it. This is a 2-point Drawback.

RIGID: Your character lives by a strict set of rules that controls most of her actions towards others. In addition to all the other restrictions above, she will refuse to participate in acts of betrayal such as ambushes, striking a helpless or unsuspecting foe, or cheating in any way. Lying is anathema, and she will only do so in cases of extreme need. Even then, she will feel guilty and will not do a very good job at deceiving; any tasks requiring lying will have a -2 to -6 penalty, determined by the Director. This is a 3-point Drawback.

HUMORLESS

1-POINT DRAWBACK

She without the funny, lacking the ability to laugh at life, and taking everything with the utmost seriousness. Other people's attempts at humor leave her cold or annoy her. Most people find this facet of her personality to be unattractive or bothersome. Clowns and practical jokers most likely select the Humorless as their favorite target.

LOVE/TRAGIC LOVE

2- OR 4-POINT DRAWBACK

The character's love life is the stuff songs are made of - whether it's the pop of Britney Spears or the thrash of Marilyn Manson is up to the storyline, of course. A Cast Member with this Drawback starts the game with a relationship or develops one shortly after the Season begins (usually during the first or second Episode). This love may or may not be reciprocated; your character might be in love with someone who barely knows she exists. Whenever the character has to choose between following her heart or her head, she must make a Willpower (not doubled) roll at a -3 penalty. This Drawback is worth two points.

TRAGIC LOVE: As above, but any romantic relationship the character develops ends badly. This can happen in two possible ways: something bad happens to the character's beloved, or the character has an unfortunate tendency to fall for the wrong people. Tragic Love can be a good source of Drama Points and is a 4-point Drawback.

MENTAL PROBLEMS

1- TO 3-POINT DRAWBACK

Your character has some major malfunction. Maybe her parents abused her, or she is in dire need of some Prozac. The short circuit could be quirky or downright insane, depending on how severe the problem is. Some common Mental Problems follow.

COWARDICE: Your character is more afraid of danger and confrontation than normal people. She may shun danger altogether, or only risk it when she's sure she has the upper hand. Use the value of this Drawback as a penalty to rolls to resist fear.

CRUELTY: This is a person who actually likes to inflict pain and suffering. At the lower level, she reserves this for people who have angered or attacked her, but at the highest level she is a sadist with no feelings of remorse (this is probably not appropriate for most Cast Members, but is typical among vampires and demons).

DELUSIONS: Your character believes something that just isn't true—she might be a confirmed racist, or convinced that spirits whisper words of wisdom only she can hear. Note that this might not be a delusion after all! What's important is that others *think* it's a delusion.

OBSESSION: A particular person or task dominates your character's life, to the exclusion of most other things. To pursue her Obsession, she will go to almost any length (as limited by her morality). She may neglect

other duties, both personal and professional, to pursue that which fascinates her. The “obsessee” may be a person (who may or may not be aware of your character’s feelings, but who almost certainly would be upset about their intensity) or a task (like getting revenge on somebody, or performing some important or notorious feat).

PARANOIA: “They” are out to get you. Trust no one. Everything is a conspiracy and everyone is keeping secrets. Your character never knows when somebody is going to turn against her, but she knows they all will, sooner or later. A paranoid character expects treachery at every turn, and rarely trusts even her friends and relatives. Now in a universe where monsters exist and secret organizations have run centuries-old conspiracies, being paranoid is somewhat healthy. However, a character with this Drawback is seriously bent. This makes her testimony less likely to be believed, even when she is speaking the truth. Paranoid characters often suffer from Emotional Problems (point value determined separately).

PHOBIA: Something gives your character the wiggins — snakes, heights, enclosed spaces, public appearances, etc. The harder it is to overcome the fear, the more this Drawback is worth. Whenever the character faces the subject of her phobia, she must make a Fear Test (see p. 49) with a penalty equal to the value of the Drawback. If the situation would normally be frightening, (even to a person without the Phobia) add the Phobia value to the regular Fear Test penalty.

RECKLESSNESS: This character is supremely overconfident and impulsive, willing to take incredible risks, often without thinking of the consequences. Most of the time, she never looks before she leaps — and gets into all kinds of trouble as a result. A Reckless character prefers to act first and think about it later. She says what’s on her mind with no consideration for diplomacy or courtesy, rushes into dangerous situations, and rarely wastes time on second thoughts. Reckless does not necessarily mean suicidal, however. Acting on impulse no doubt puts the character in jeopardy, but doing something that is clearly lethal is not roleplaying, it’s just stupid.

ZEALOT: A zealot is a person whose beliefs (political, religious or personal) are so strong that they dominate her life and behavior. She is willing to sacrifice anything, including her life (or the lives of others) in service to the ideals she holds dear. This character is a danger to herself and others, and shows a total disregard for the law whenever it conflicts with her beliefs. Mad cultists, wild-eyed crusader types and other mixed nuts qualify for this Drawback. This differs from Obsession in scope (Zealot behavioral dictates are more comprehensive) and severity. This Drawback is rare outside of the Deranged level. Your Director will determine if lower severity levels are even possible.

The higher the value of the Mental Problems, the more debilitating it is. Generally, Cast Members should not have Mental Problems worth over two points, although playing the lunatic can be fun every once in a while.

MILD: The hang-up is controllable and your character seldom allows the problem to control her during times of crisis, especially when friends and loved ones are involved. People may not even know something is wrong with the character. This is a 1-point Drawback.

SEVERE: The problem is severe, and affects your character’s daily life. Anybody who knows the character realizes or strongly suspects that something is wrong with her. This is a 2-point Drawback.

DERANGED: The character is clearly deranged, with no regard for such considerations as the law, the safety of others, or the integrity of her immortal soul (you know, little things like that). That does not mean she is completely berserk. She may control herself out of fear of being stopped or discovered by the law or other major threat, but when no such fear exists, watch out.

MINORITY

1-POINT DRAWBACK

A Minority is considered a second-class citizen because of race, ethnic group, religion or sexual preference. She is disliked by the establishment types. People of the dominant group tend to act negatively towards her; many are automatically suspicious, fearful or annoyed at her for no reason other than what she is. This Drawback has a 1-point value to reflect the relatively enlightened 21st-century America, where people cannot be denied service in a restaurant because of the color of their skin (in most places, at least). In other settings, where prejudice has the full weight of the law and tradition behind it, this Drawback might be worth two to three points.

MISFIT

2-POINT DRAWBACK

Dorks, squibs, freaks, and geeks — all names for the misfits of society. In school or out, they are the losers who seem to have a permanent “Kick Me” sign tattooed on their foreheads. They are to bullies what fire hydrants are to dogs. Misfits don’t interact well socially; they have a -2 penalty to Influence Tasks. They also attract the attention of any cruel or abusive character.

NATURAL TOUGHNESS

2-POINT QUALITY

Your character is tougher than normal, able to take a punch without flinching. She has four points of Armor Value (see p. 62) against blunt attacks, such as fists, baseball bats, dropping pianos, and the like. Bullets and slashing attacks are unaffected by this armor, however. This Quality is common among professional boxers, bouncers, and Jackie Chan types.

NERVES OF STEEL

3-POINT QUALITY

A character is almost impossible to scare. Whether too dumb or too tough is open to question, but she remains unruffled even in the face of unspeakable horrors. This is key in keeping dry cleaning bills down. She is immune to fear except when confronting the strangest supernatural manifestations, and gains a +4 bonus to rolls even then.

OBLIGATION

VARIABLE DRAWBACK

Some rights are accompanied by duties. An Obligation must be followed to various degrees, and grants a number of points depending on the strictness of its dictates. Members of secret societies or special agencies often have an Obligation to their group. Failure to fulfill one's duty can lead to trouble — demotion, loss of job and health benefits, harsh words ... sometimes it can even be downright dangerous to say "no" to one's secret puppetmasters.

MINIMAL: Obeying the basic precepts of the organization or creed and not betraying its members are the major points here. This is worth no points.

IMPORTANT: Your character is expected to routinely risk herself for the organization, and go above the basic precepts of the membership. An Important Obligation is worth one point.

MAJOR: The welfare of the organization is placed above that of your character. She is always on call, and does not have time to pursue a normal job (unless it's a cover for the real assignment) or much of a personal life. The penalties for disobedience or selfishness are severe, and may include death. This is worth two points.

TOTAL: Your character is expected to die for the organization, if need be. Missions are extremely hazardous, and she is constantly in danger of imprisonment, torture, or execution. This is worth three points. Commandos have this level of Obligation (which is already included in their Quality value, so you can't take it again ... but "A" for effort).

OCCULT LIBRARY

VARIABLE QUALITY

In magic, it's not who you know that matters, it's what tomes you have access to. Characters who want to practice the mystic arts should have at least a book or two on the subject — this is not the kind of thing that you can make up as you go along, not if you want to live long (or in a form other than a newt). The larger the library is, the more this Quality costs. Keep in mind that if one Cast Member (or Guest Star) has a big Occult Library, the other characters may benefit from it, but the owner has some control over it (i.e., they are her books, and she may not want to share whenever the other characters want). Sometimes it's good to have one's own "stash" of arcane lore.

MINIMAL: Your character has one, count it, one book of magic, and maybe a few scribbled notes her Aunt Agatha left behind. The book has some 11-20 spells (the Director secretly rolls a D10 and adds 10 to the result); each time your character researches a spell successfully (see p. 79), mark it off. Eventually, she knows all the spells in the book, and there are no more. One book is not enough to help her much with research into the identity of monsters or demons, so research rolls are at a -3 penalty (see p. 79). This level costs one point.

GOOD: The character has a modest occult library, with several books on assorted esoteric subjects, maybe even the Time-Life series. This library gives no bonus or penalty to research rolls, and holds as many as 31-40 (D10 + 30) spells all told. Cost is two points.

IMPRESSIVE: A good collection, including some very rare tomes of hidden lore. Rolls to identify monsters are at a +1 bonus, and as many as 60 (D10 + 50) spells can be researched. Cost is three points.

AMAZING: A collection which fills a whole section of a library, qualifies. Monster research rolls are at +2, and pretty much any number of spells can be contained there. A character with such a library should have a minimum Occultism skill 3, unless she just doesn't read and just likes to collect books for the pretty pictures in them. This costs five points.

This Quality only covers the raw material knowledge itself, for truly powerful Witch Fu, you'll need some spooky otherworldly powers to go with it (see pp. 27-37).

OUTCAST

2- TO 5-POINT DRAWBACK

Your character is not loved by those around him. Because of his looks, beliefs, habits, interests, lack of charisma, or mannerisms, those around him have decided he is persona non grata. Outcasts have a rough time in social situations: they suffer a -2 penalty to Influence rolls. They automatically attract the attention of any cruel or abusive character.

If their difference is clear and the community as a whole shuns them, they are considered second-class citizens and suffer repression from the local authorities. These folks are burdened with a four-point Drawback. If they don't appear different from others and are just ostracized by those who know them, they avoid legal restrictions. That drops the Drawback to two points.

Some Outcasts make it a practice to avoid paying too much attention to their surroundings to spare themselves hurtful looks or whispers — these types suffer a -1 penalty to all Notice rolls. Others are the proverbial “fish out of water” and are unfamiliar with the society in which they live. This detriment is mostly roleplayed but should affect the character's behavior with regularity. Adding either the “notice” or “unfamiliar” features to the Outcast Drawback raises the value by one.

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

VARIABLE DRAWBACK

Some misfortune has affected your hero's body, whether from birth or by accident. He may suffer from limb loss, spinal column damage, or any number of impairments. Some possibilities are discussed below. Check out the Tool Man Quality (see p. 21) for some cool things you can do with your handicap.

Blind: The character cannot see anything. Unless he's got some type of radar sense (and wears a double-D logo), combat is never going to be his strong suit. Perception and Notice rolls (modified by Acute or Impaired Hearing) are needed to find a target in combat, and even then attack and defense rolls are at a -5 penalty. This is an eight-point Drawback.

Missing or Crippled Arm/Hand: The hand in question cannot be used to grab or hold objects. Any task requiring two hands is at a disadvantage (-3 or worse) or simply impossible. This is a two point Drawback. A character with a prosthetic hand can overcome some of these problems, reducing the Drawback to one point in value. And yes, prosthetic hands do indeed include mechanical hands and chainsaws.

Missing or Crippled Leg/Foot: Your character is unable to walk or run normally. With the help of crutches or a cane, he can move at up to one-third normal speed (see p. 47). Hand-to-hand combat rolls are at a -2 penalty. This is a three-point Drawback. Modern prosthetics can reduce the penalties, increasing speed to up to half-normal, and reducing combat penalties to -1. This reduces the Drawback value to two points.

Missing or Crippled Arms: Both arms are missing or crippled. Your character cannot use any tools normally. Some people with this handicap have learned to use their feet with great skill to compensate for their loss, but it still sucks—big time. This is a four-point Drawback.

Missing or Crippled Legs: Your character is unable to walk. Without the help of a wheelchair, the best he can do is crawl or roll on the ground. This is a four-point Drawback.

QUADRIPLAGIC: Paralyzed from the neck down, almost all physical activities are impossible. A special wheelchair, operated with the neck or mouth, can help your character move around (if the unfortunate has access to such instruments). Someone needs to take care of her basic needs, from feeding to changing. This highly debilitating trait is an 8-point Drawback.

RANK

1-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY OR DRAWBACK

Your character is part of some other seriously hierarchical organization. High rank has privileges; subordinates obey your character's orders. On the other hand, low-ranking cogs are at a disadvantage; they get ordered around, and disobeying is not a good career option. The value of the Rank feature ranges from -1 to +9, and costs one point per level (or grants one point at the lowest level). Keep in mind that high Rank also entails numerous duties that may restrict your character's actions even more than very low Rank. The Ranks Table shows some law enforcement, government agency, and U.S. Army ranks. Ranks titles in other organizations vary.

Rank Table	
Rank	Description
-1	Rookie cop, Private

Rank Table	
0	Beat cop, Corporal
1	Agent, Sergeant
2	Detective, Sergeant First Class
3	Agent in Charge, Lieutenant
4	Bureau Chief, Captain
5	Commissioner, Major
6	Lieutenant Colonel
7	Colonel
8	Major General
9	General

RECURRING NIGHTMARES

1-POINT DRAWBACK

Your character is plagued by terrifying dreams that relive some traumatic experience, or are just frightening and disturbing. Every night, your Director should check to see if your character suffers from nightmares. They may be imposed at his discretion, or may be rolled randomly (on a roll of one on a D10, a nightmare results). On any night when the character is afflicted by the nightmare, he suffers -1 to all rolls the following day due to exhaustion.

RESISTANCE

1-POINT PER LEVEL QUALITY

Some people are just innately better at ignoring the bad things life (or the unliving) throws at them. This ability allows your character to fend off the effects of a particular type of harm. Each different type of Resistance Quality must be purchased separately. We've given some examples, but feel free to devise others.

POISON: Your character has a cast-iron stomach; add the level of this Resistance to any Constitution rolls to resist the effects of poison.

DEMONIC POWERS: For some reason, your character is able to resist the supernatural abilities of some types of demons. She adds her Resistance level to any rolls against being controlled or dominated through supernatural means. This includes the hypnotic powers some demons and vampires have.

PAIN: Each level of this Quality reduces the penalties associated with severe wounds, and adds to Willpower and Constitution rolls to stay conscious when severely injured (see p. 62).

RESOURCES

2-POINTS/LEVEL QUALITY OR DRAWBACK

Having a big bank account helps with a lot of life's troubles, though not so much with fighting the supernatural. A character's Resources determines how much material wealth she has access to. In the case of those dependent on parents or guardians, the Resource level applies to that older type. Whether your character has access to these assets at any given time is a matter for the Director and the plotline.

DESTITUTE (-10): Has the clothes on her back, ten dollars' worth of stuff and maybe a shopping cart. Lucky to scrounge a few dollars a month.

MISERABLE (-8): Personal wealth of about \$100 in property (including the clothes on her back). May be homeless. Might earn \$100 a month.

POOR (-6): \$500 in property and a place in low income housing. Has an income of \$500 a month or what she gets from welfare.

HURTING (-4): Personal wealth of about \$1,000 in property, and lives in a small apartment. Income of \$1,000 a month before taxes.

BELOW AVERAGE (-2): \$5,000 in property (including an old vehicle, perhaps), an apartment, and pre-tax income of \$1,500 a month.

OKAY (0): \$15,000 in property and income of \$2,500 a month before taxes.

MIDDLE CLASS (+2): Personal wealth of \$50,000 in property (a mortgaged house and a new or slightly used car). Has an income of \$5,000 a month before taxes.

WELL-OFF (+4): \$300,000 in property and an income of \$10,000 a month before taxes.
WEALTHY (+6): Personal wealth of \$700,000 in property. Has an income of \$40,000 a month.
RICH (+8): Personal wealth of \$2,000,000 in property. Income of \$50,000 a month.
MULTIMILLIONAIRE (+10): \$5 million in property and an income of \$200,000 a month.
Each additional level adds an additional \$5 million in property and \$200,000 to monthly income.

SCHMUCK

2-POINT DRAWBACK

Schmucks are those goofballs who always screw up those critical moments. Their actions don't usually destroy the world, but they come close. They certainly make life much more difficult — both for them, their companions, and everyone who comes near them.

Schmucks must make an Intelligence (not doubled) roll whenever tasked with some critical mental task, such as repeating magical phrases, mixing magical potions, or talking their way out of trouble. Failure means the hero flubs in some way that has fairly serious results down the road. Once the die is cast, the player should try to roleplay the tragic error and at least give the rest of the group a chuckle out of it. Your Director might reward good ad libbing with a Drama Point. The hero'll need it. This Drawback is only worth two points because it's fairly easy to circumvent. The character can always let someone else recite the magic words or create the potion.

SECRET

VARIABLE DRAWBACK

There exists a dangerous and hidden fact about your character. This could be a secret identity or a shady past. The more damaging the secret if it became known, the higher the value of the Drawback. For example, damage to your Cast Member's reputation and livelihood would be worth one point; a threat to her well-being (she might be arrested or deported if the truth were known) two points; life, limb, and lymph nodes three points.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

2-POINT QUALITY

The observant almost always knows what is going on around them, and can react with uncanny quickness to the unexpected. These characters gain a +2 bonus to any Perception-based roll to sense trouble or danger in the immediate surroundings. It is very hard to be stealthy around them; the same bonus applies when they resist any Crime or Acrobatics rolls made to sneak up on them.

STATUS

1-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY OR DRAWBACK

Don't use this Quality if your hero is going to be hopping in and out of different settings (ask your Director if you're not sure). If you're basically stuck in one locale where a character's societal rank can actually be used, feel free to spend those points. This trait represents the standing of the character in the eyes of the people around him. It includes any fame, glory, notoriety, or social position the character possesses. In medieval Europe, Status was hugely important. Titles and position were well worth fighting over.

For those with a more modern background, Status could also reflect military rank or job title (assuming that standing has any impact on the current situation). The Status Table (see p. 21) runs down a few examples. Others should be devised based on the table entries.

In modern society, access to, or the ability to generate, wealth often creates societal position. A character gains a +1 bonus to his Status equal to one-half his Resources level (if positive). In medieval times, access to resources was generally a function of status and thus is not purchased separately. That may not always be the case however, and the Resources bonus may be applied at your Director's discretion. Status may affect some rolls (mostly involving Influence—the "Do you know who I am?" factor). But it's largely a background tool. Low-status people have considerable more problems functioning in society. They are more likely to be harassed by the authorities. Doors are closed to them. High status people can get away with more. Their word carries more weight, the authorities cut them more slack, and merchants may offer better deals hoping they tell all their high society friends. On the down side, high Status may come with obligations, as those of a feudal lord to support and defend his vassals.

Status Table

Level	Description
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Status Table	
-2	Criminal, outcast, slave
-1	Foot soldier, swordsman, archer, private, street juggler
0	Soldier responsible for burial detail, corporal, modern citizen
1	Sergeant, doctor, attorney
2	Captain, local priest, local politician, "name" journalist, minor celebrity
3	Unlanded knight
4	Landed knight, celebrity
5	Baron, bishop, major celebrity
6	Duke, archbishop
7	King, media mega-star
8	Emperor, pope

TALENTLESS

2-POINT DRAWBACK

The Talentless individual is totally lacking in creativity and artistic talent. Maybe she is too stolid and practical, or maybe she just doesn't have the imagination to do anything artistic. This Drawback does not just affect her ability in the arts, but also in many social skills where flair and creativity are necessary.

Your character has a -3 penalty when trying to do anything artistic. This penalty does not affect Tasks where other people's art is judged; many expert critics are Talentless. When she does try to create something, however, the best she can hope for is a mediocre result. In addition to the penalty, the character can never get more than one Success Level in artistic pursuits, regardless of how high her skill levels or rolls are. People with this Drawback also make poor liars, charmers, or social butterflies. The same penalty applies to such skills as Influence—a lack of creativity affects the ability to lie convincingly, for example.

TEENAGER/YOUTH

2-POINT DRAWBACK

Life sucks when you're a teenager. You feel like an adult, and you want plenty of adult things, but you don't have the legal rights of an adult. Characters under the age of 18 get this Drawback (sure, you still can't drink until you're 21, but life is hard—suck it up). Most of the problems teenagers face are social. Most adults instinctively distrust and look down on them, they have a lot of legal restrictions, and they have parents or guardians bossing them around. And then there's all that angst and heartbreak of their so-called lives, but that's a different show.

TOOL MAN

3-POINT QUALITY

You know the drill. Or the chainsaw, or the weed whacker. Yeah, the one on the end of your stump, buddy. Take that handicap and turn it into an asset. A character with this Quality must first take a Physical Disability Drawback. Both could be purchased during character creation. Alternatively, the Drawback could be imposed on your character during play (those nasty Directors). If that's the case, you need to spend experience points to gain this Quality (see p. 74), and you must also find someone to install your new Go-Go Gadget arm, leg, or whasit. That takes a Mr. Fix-It roll with at least three Success Levels, not to mention some quality time with your stump.

Once you've got the Quality, you can add "attachments" to your refurbished phantom limb. Electrical attachments aren't much use unless they're rechargeable, and even then, finding some place to plug your stump in might be difficult, especially in medieval England or post-apocalyptic London. Useful attachments include gauntlets, chainsaws, and power drills (see pp. 58-61) but all sorts of other weapons can be strapped on. Knives, swords, Ginsus, and so on are treated just like the normal varieties, except they can never be dropped. Because they literally become part of their anatomy, characters with normal weapons (not power tools) attached add +1 to their attack rolls when wielding them.

Training Package Qualities

Certain Qualities (like Cop, Demon Hunter, and Occult Investigator) represent special training and conditioning. Unlike supernatural Qualities like Demon or Vampire, they don't include special powers, just a few Attribute bonuses (which cannot raise Attributes beyond the human maximum) and skill adds.

Some organizations (see p. 134) may include special training for their members, justifying a newly devised Quality along these lines. Your Director should design the Quality to make sure it is fair and it works in his storyline. Typically, no training-based Quality should have more than three Attribute bonuses and no bonus should be higher than +1. Skill bennies should also be restricted to +1 or at most +2. Over all, a training package shouldn't cost more than ten points (and most should be five points or less).

Racial & Training Package Qualities

COMMANDO

4-POINT QUALITY

Navy SEALs, Green Beret soldiers, and Special Forces Marines. All are highly trained and dedicated professionals who risk life and limb. And in a Cinematic Unisystem game, are likely to be thrust into the heart of whatever danger is facing the cast this week. Commandos are military, (or ex-military) and have all kinds of special training and maybe even some cool toys they took with them or have on loan.

Without additional charge or value, Commandos gain +1 to any two physical Attributes, to a maximum level of six (the bonuses cannot be stacked on a single Attribute); Fast Reaction Time or Situational Awareness (pick one); three levels of Hard to Kill (an additional two levels can be acquired by spending points during character creation); and a 3-point Obligation (or, if they quit under ... unfortunate circumstances, a 3-point Adversary or 3-point Secret).

COP/DETECTIVE

5- OR 8-POINT QUALITY

If you're in law enforcement, you get to say all the cool lines like "Just the facts, ma'am," "I like this perp for the Jones murder," and that timeless phrase, "Freeze scumbag!" Plus you get to call for backup (although so many movie cops never bother), flash a badge, and carry a gun. On the down side, the pay's bad and you can get killed on the job. Now, don't get us wrong, life threatening is part and parcel of being any kind of demon hunter. It's just that being a cop adds a whole bunch of mundane (guns, knives, hit and runs) ways of dying to the mix.

Law enforcement types get a +1 to any physical Attribute (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution; guess that time at the Academy paid off) and a +1 bonus to the Crime, Driving, and Gun-Fu Skills. They also have the authority of the law behind them (not to mention that they get to carry a gun). With reasonable suspicion (any particularly rational explanation that a neutral party would buy), they can stop cars, search people, detain suspects, and other nifty things. With probable cause (a reasonable basis to believe that criminal activity has occurred), they can arrest someone and haul them off to the station. Whether such suspicion or cause exists is a question that keeps many attorneys and judges in full employment. If the judge says your character blew it, the perp goes free (and you might be in for some discipline too). A basic beat Cop law enforcement Quality costs five points. His legal authority (worth two points) is balanced by a one-point Obligation (Important) to the force.

Detectives are a bit higher up the totem pole. They get a two-point Contacts (Governmental or Criminal) Quality kicker. They also have a two-point Rank Quality but their Obligation Drawback increases to Major. All told, the Detective Quality costs eight points.

On the other hand, if your character abuses his authority, he can get in trouble - there are bosses to answer to if he does anything wrong. Break too many rules, and the lieutenant is going to ask for his gun and his badge. At that point, your character becomes ex-law enforcement, with all the skills of a normal police officer (and the Contacts for a detective who hasn't burned his bridges) but none of the authority. Ex-law enforcement types usually have a lot more attitude, but there's no shortage of that among the regular maverick cops (at least on TV and in the movies). If your character is one of the ex, this Quality drops by one point (authority goes but so does the Obligation) for the Cop, and three points (Rank lost too) for the Detective.

If your Director is using the organizational rules in Chapter Five: Cabals, Covens, and Agencies, and has stated out the local police force, your character should get some major Influence roll bonuses for the precinct's Governmental Clout. Still, that's not going to apply in all circumstances politicians ain't overly intimidated by cops and some agencies resent police intervention.

CRIMINAL/WISE GUY

2- OR 3-POINT QUALITY

Crime doesn't pay, but try telling this bloke that. Your character can be a suave expert safecracker and second story man, or an angry mob enforcer looking for revenge-basically anybody involved in shady deals and illegal shenanigans.

Criminals get +1 to any Attribute (Intelligence, Perception, or Willpower for the thinking-type criminals, Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution for the brawn over brain types), +1 to the Crime Skill (naturally), and +1 to a skill related to their criminal career. A getaway driver, for example, would get a +1 to his Driving Skill, a cat-burglar would use his bonus on Acrobatics, and a leg-breaker would put it into Kung Fu.

On the down side, Criminals have poor impulse control when it comes to money. They have to make a Willpower (doubled) roll whenever the opportunity for a fast buck presents itself-for example, taking time off to ransack a demon's lair instead of watching out for, say, demons. Your Director can add penalties to this roll, depending on the amount of loot available - no penalty for a few hundred bucks, -1 for several thousand dollars, -2 for over \$10K, -3 for over \$100K, and -5 for a really big score (a million dollars or more). The biggest down side is hard time in the slammer. That puts a huge crimp in demon hunting activities, not to mention living a normal life (other than that whole monster and assorted paranormal biz).

Wise Guys are basically Criminals with connections. They gain a two-point Contacts (Criminal) Quality as well as a one-point Obligation (Important) to their syndicate. If your Director is using the organizational rules in Chapter Five: Cabals, Covens, and Agencies, and has stated out the local family, your character should get some major Influence roll bonuses for the mob's Criminal Clout. Still, that's only going to apply in certain circumstances-members of rival organizations aren't going to kow-tow much.

DEMON HUNTER

4-POINT QUALITY

In a world where monstrous entities prey on humankind, your character has chosen the role of a hunter. Maybe vampires sired his sister, or demons ravaged his neighborhood (and the authorities wrote it off), or he simply stumbled across some supernatural vileness and can't let it go. Whatever the reason, he has dedicated his life to the fight against the forces of darkness. He has trained and prepared and is ready to do what must be done.

Demon Hunters are normal men and women, but after some time fighting demons and vampires, they start picking up certain skills and abilities. They get +1 to any three Attributes (the bonuses cannot stack on the same Attribute; as usual, the bonuses cannot increase a human being's Attributes above six). Additionally, they get a +1 bonus to any two combat-oriented skills (Gun Fu, Kung Fu, or Getting Medieval) and +1 to the Occultism Skill.

On the down side, a hunter worth his crossbow makes enemies fast. These characters gain a one-point Adversary (to be defined) even if they are just starting out. This Drawback can be raised to reflect a hunter who has been around the demon block a few times and has more of a rep. Furthermore, these types find it very hard to work with anybody who has any hint of the supernatural. A witch might be okay, but for most of them, a demon is a demon, and the only good demon is a dead demon. This takes the form of a Mental Problem (Mild Delusion - all supernatural beings are evil). Higher values of the Drawback can be taken for extra points; keep in mind that raising it above the one-point level makes it difficult (if not impossible) to work regularly with other Cast Members who happen to be, say, vampires, demons, or ghosts or ...

NOSY REPORTER

5-POINT QUALITY

The truth is out there, and if your Cast Member has his way, it's going to be on the eleven o'clock news. Your character has an uncanny ability to pry into other people's business and make it public knowledge. It doesn't make him many friends, but he gets his name in the papers a lot. Of course, reporters in a world filled with demons, vampires, and werewolves soon discover the world is a very dark and complex place, and that most newspapers and TV stations cannot handle the truth. Might be time to open a rogue website and spread the news yourself.

Nosy Reporters get a +1 to both Intelligence and Perception, +1 to the Notice skill, and +1 to a skill related to their field (crime reporters get, duh, Crime, while a political beat type raises his Knowledge Skill). Your Kolchak also gets two points worth of Contacts to represent assorted sources of information. On the minus side, these characters cannot restrain their innate inquisitiveness, and they almost always end up in trouble. Whenever your character tries to resist his curiosity (deciding that, for example, meeting alone with an unknown source at midnight in the cemetery might not be a good idea), he must make a Willpower (doubled) roll.

OCCULT INVESTIGATOR

4-POINT QUALITY

Horrific roleplaying games often refer to “Things Man Was Not Meant To Know.” - Occult Investigators make it their business to study these things. A lot of them end up in New England asylums, or dead, or worse. The survivors learn a lot of more-or-less useful stuff, from the initiation rites of the Knights Templar to the best places in town to find those hard-to-find tomes. Their knowledge also makes them better able to overcome their fears (or maybe they are a little bit too insane to be afraid anymore).

Occult Investigators get a +1 to any two mental Attributes (Intelligence, Perception, or Willpower) and a +2 bonus to the Occultism Skill. Furthermore, they get a +1 bonus to Fear Tests, thanks to their familiarity with the strange and unusual (whether or not they themselves are strange and unusual).

When presented with an opportunity to learn something supernatural - stopping to gather a few ancient scrolls as the temple starts to collapse, for example - they must do it unless they make a Willpower (doubled) roll, with penalties of -1 to -5, depending on how valuable the find is.

PROMISED ONE

PREREQUISITES: GETTING MEDIEVAL 3, GUN FU 3, OR KUNG FU 3

16-POINT QUALITY

These champions aren't told they were born to fight the forces of darkness, they just find themselves hip deep in the supernatural at some point in their lives, usually while it's trying to kill them.

Promised Ones are rarely white knights. Most of them have serious personality flaws they must overcome if they're to one day succeed against the forces of darkness. That just makes the character more interesting. Your Director will make sure that your character is nicely rounded out with Drawbacks of one type or another. (Directors, just in case you're not paying attention, that's a major league hint.) Characters must buy at least three levels of Getting Medieval, Gun Fu, or Kung Fu (not counting the benefits of this Quality) before they can purchase this Quality.

Here's what these cursed souls get for their hard earned Quality points:

- +2 Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, and Willpower. Promised Ones may possess Attributes above the normal human maximum (six).
- Fast Reaction Time, Nerves of Steel, and two levels of Hard to Kill. Promised Ones can buy an additional eight levels of Hard to Kill with other Quality points.
- +1 to the Getting Medieval and Kung Fu skills.
- Damage is regenerated at a rate of one Life Point per Constitution point every hour.
- A two-point Adversary Drawback directed toward minions of darkness. These usually consist of demons and vampires, but evil takes many forms in many different settings.

ROBOT

5-POINT QUALITY

Your character is a robot, endowed with artificial intelligence by its creator. Robots (at least NPC ones) are intelligent, but typically don't have a will of their own, being restricted by their programming. Some robots eventually become independent operators, often with tragic results. Also, a disembodied demon could inhabit a robot body; a human being might find her mind or soul trapped in a robotic frame as well. This Quality assumes the character is an independent robot.

Robots get +4 to Strength, +1 to Dexterity and +2 to Constitution (these scores can exceed normal human levels). Figure Life Points normally, but the robot cannot heal damage normally and must be repaired. Anybody with Science skill 3 or higher can fix a robot. Each Success Level in a Science and Intelligence Task restores one Life Point per Constitution level of the robot; each repair attempt takes one hour. When a robot falls “unconscious,” she has been deactivated. She may recover consciousness (like any other unconscious character) on his own, or require the help of someone with the Science or Mr. Fix-It skills (or Occultism for things like golems), at the Director's discretion.

The Robot Quality may also be used to cover things like arcane clockworks, golems made from the river mud, homunculi, or any other type of artificial being. When used for cyborgs, the Quality assumes that the being is mostly mechanical and that its life support is dependent on its artificial parts (we aren't talking Lee Majors with just an arm, two legs, and an eyeball here).

TOTEM WARRIOR

12-POINT QUALITY

Gifted with the power of animal spirits, Totem Warriors were created to battle the forces of darkness. Never numerous, the last Totem Warriors were killed by the evil entity, but a new generation has arisen.

Characters with this Quality get to be ass-kicking mystic warriors. Pretty cool, eh? On the other hand,

their abilities are primal in nature, which means they can sometimes lose control to their animalistic impulses.

Totem Warriors get eight bonus points to spread among their Attributes, with a maximum bonus of +4 in any one Attribute. The exact spread depends on the animal totem chosen by the character. As extra goodies, the character gets Acute Senses (again, the exact type depends on the animal spirit chosen), Fast Reaction Time, and three levels of Hard to Kill (up to ten levels can be acquired in total). Also the Warriors gain +1 to Kung Fu (ah... Animal Fu?) Skill.

It's not all sweetness and light for these animal folks though. Totem Warriors have a -1 penalty to Willpower rolls to resist their basest impulses (as determined by their mental Drawbacks). They also gain an automatic Adversary (the Wendigos, their ancestral demon enemies) worth three points.

Totem Warriors must be pure humans. If they are turned into vampires, zombies, werewolves or other supernatural creatures, they lose all their Totem powers.

BEAR

The strong, loner types, Bear Warriors are the heavy lifters of the gang. Their stubbornness makes it difficult for others to influence or control them.

Attributes: + to Strength, +2 to Dexterity, +2 to Constitution.

Enhanced Sense: Acute Sense of Smell

Special Ability: Bear Warriors get a +1 bonus to any rolls to resist fear, domination (magical or mundane) or intimidation (this bonus does not apply to trickery or seduction though).

COYOTE

Coyote Warriors are tricksters and survivors. They are not very strong, but they are smarter and faster than wolves and can adapt better.

Attributes: +2 to Strength, +3 to Dexterity, +1 to Constitution, +1 to Perception, +1 to Intelligence.

Enhanced Sense: Acute Sense of Smell

Special Ability: Coyote Warriors get a +1 bonus to any Crime, Influence, or Notice roll dealing with trickery or deceit. This applies both to lying and tricking others, and to detecting the lies and tricks of others.

EAGLE

The far-seeing Eagle Warriors are the scouts of the bunch. They cannot quite fly like their totems can, but they sure can jump.

Attributes: +1 to Strength, +4 to Dexterity, +1 to Constitution, +2 to Perception.

Enhanced Sense: Acute Vision

Special Ability: Eagle Warriors get a +2 bonus on any roll involving jumping or leaping, including Acrobatics and Sports.

OWL

Owl Warriors are wise, always alert and observant.

Attributes: +1 to Strength, +3 to Dexterity, +1 to Constitution, +2 to Perception, +1 to Intelligence.

Enhanced Sense: Acute Vision

Special Ability: Owl Warriors can see in the dark very well. As long as there is any light available, they will suffer no light penalties.

PUMA

Powerful predators, Puma Warriors are strong, fast, and deadly.

Attributes: +3 to Strength, +2 to Dexterity, +1 to Constitution, +1 to Perception.

Enhanced Sense: Acute Hearing

Special Ability: Pumas gain a +1 bonus on any rolls involving intimidation and fear (both to cause it and resist it).

RAVEN

Raven Warriors are tricksters, not unlike Coyotes. They are also attuned to magic and its workings.

Attributes: +1 to Strength, +2 to Dexterity, +1 to Constitution, +1 to Perception, +2 to intelligence, +1 to Willpower.

Enhanced Sense: Acute Sense of Smell

Special Ability: Raven Warriors get a +1 bonus on Occultism rolls involving magic (either using it or

understanding its workings)

WOLF

The ultimate pack hunters, Wolf Warriors are the foot soldiers of the team, able to do a bit of everything.

Attributes: +3 to Strength, +2 to Dexterity, +2 to Constitution, +1 to Perception.

Enhanced Sense: Acute Sense of Smell

Special Ability: Wolf Warriors have a +1 bonus to any rolls involving teamwork with other characters, whether in sports (completing a pass), combat (helping out a teammate), or research (helping discover some secret).

Creating Demon and Supernatural Characters

So you want to take on the role of a big badass demon, supernaturally gifted demon hunter, The Chosen One, or just someone who is magically gifted? Your Director is feeling good that day, so he says, 'Sure, no problem.' What next? The easy way is to pick and choose from the pre-existing Qualities listed in this chapter (see p. 27-37). Still, that ain't going to cut it if you have your heart set on creating your own demon race from the ground up. If that's your unscratchable itch (we don't want to hear about any others, by the way), the first step is to sit down and discuss things with your Director. It's easy to create some unstoppable killing machine with these rules. No doubt your Director is going to have a thing or two to say about that. Best bet is to develop something with pluses and minuses that your Director can build stories around. It'll probably be more interesting for you as well.

Creating a Demon/Supernatural Package

The basics are simple-pick assorted supernatural abilities, add up their cost (or subtract in the case of negative traits like Vulnerabilities), and come up with some appropriately weird name for the resulting package. When creating the character, buy the package you've created a Quality, apply any Attribute modifications and other goodies (or Drawbacks) to the character, and you're all set. Although it's unlikely, it is possible that a package deal could have Attribute penalties and Drawbacks that outweigh the benefits. In that case, the Quality becomes a Drawback and points are given to the player to be spent elsewhere.

Generally, a Demon/Supernatural package should not exceed twenty points in total value, or have Attribute bonuses beyond +5 (or Attribute penalties beyond -2, for that matter). Go beyond those limits and the Cast might start wearing capes and latex bodysuits and shouting 'It's clobberin' time!' before a fight.

Beyond the Numbers

It's much better if a new demon or supernatural race has a bit more going for it than just numbers and special powers. Some back story, or some sort of culture adds nice depth. Many are just aliens from other worlds who got here through a portal instead of a spaceship, but who are as unique as regular humans. When creating a demon, give these elements some thought, and hash them out with your Director.

An interesting demon race can provide fodder for plenty of Episodes down the line. Relatives and enemies from the Cast Member's home dimension might drop in once in a while for some fun and games (or terrifying violence, which in some cases is the same thing).

Supernatural Qualities & Drawbacks

These are the things that make demons, undead, and other 'special' boys and girls stand out from us plain humans. Many of them are very useful to fight (or inflict) evil, while others are actually disabilities-things that make the character in question less capable than a normal person.

These aspects may be collected together as part of a Demon Quality, or they may be add-ons to a mortal or "ordinary" demon. In the latter case, the abilities are unusual for the particular race and make your character even more 'special.' Assuming your Director lets you get away with that, of course. A two-point Demon Quality, and 18 points of special supernatural add-ons (assuming your character has the Quality points or has enough Drawback points to balance it out) is doable, but is going to be very hard to justify. Directors, be warned: this too approaches the comic hero power level mentioned earlier. The abilities listed here are appropriate for demonic or supernatural types that can be used as Cast Members. We've not given point costs for the big, nasty, invulnerable, reality-twisting, fifty-foot tall demons 'cause ... as Cast Members, no way! Those evilmeisters are handled by Directors, who don't need to worry about how much things cost. Not to belabor the point, but remember that supernatural abilities are a privilege not a right. Your Director will let you know whether your character has access to these powers and can purchase them. Demons and vampires should have general

access to these babies, and a psychic human could purchase a few of them, but in all cases make sure your Director concedes to your character abilities (which require a storyline rationale).

AGE

2-POINTS/LEVEL QUALITY

Some beings have been alive and active for several life spans; they could be True Demons, ancient undead, or simply have Dick Clark's genes. Ancient characters are very powerful, having refined their abilities with centuries of practice. This Quality assumes that the character has some other powers or natural abilities, like vampirism or demonhood, which allowed him to survive this long (such powers must be purchased separately). Each level of Age adds one century to your character's life span. Truly ancient supernaturals (a millennium old or older) have ten or so levels of Age, and are extremely dangerous. As such, they are not appropriate as Cast Members in most games.

The Age Quality only refers to periods during which the character was active. Many supernatural beings have long periods of 'down time,' times when they were in stasis (a fancy term for chillin' in a big way). If you want to create a character from a truly ancient period, be our guest; add as many levels of Age as you can afford, and consider the rest to be 'down time' for whatever reasons. The bonuses your character gets are restricted to levels of Age purchased though.

As you get older, you learn more (at least that's the theory). Each Age level grants one point per level of Intelligence to put into skills, to a maximum of four per level. Age is not without its downsides though. Over time, enemies and secrets are accumulated, and these always seem to outlast friendships and renown. For each level of Age, the character must take one level of either Adversary or Secret and gains no character points for these Drawbacks.

ANTISOCIAL IMPULSES

VARIABLE DRAWBACK

Demons and other supernatural types don't have the same drives and emotional makeup of humans. They sometimes find it hard to control their primal urges. We're not saying humans are the models of restraint, but poor impulse control is a common supernatural trait, which is probably a sign of most demons' natural evil tendencies.

Antisocial Impulses is a Drawback, similar to Covetous (p. 12) and Mental Problems (pp. 15-16), and like those Drawbacks it has several levels (1-3). Common types of impulses include the following.

Cruelty: This is identical to the Mental Problems (Cruelty) Drawback (see p. 15).

Deceit: Some demons love intrigue the way humans love sex or chocolate-covered cherries. They never miss a chance to plot and manipulate those around them, even their friends and allies. This often happens even when it's not in the demon's best interests. Straightforward plans are never favored; convoluted is definitely the way to go. Where's the glory in simple? Resisting the impulse to lie and manipulate others, or to make a plan less complex than it could be requires a Willpower (doubled) roll with a penalty equal to the level of the Drawback.

Violence: Your typical berserker type. The critter can't walk away from a fight, and when in doubt, it starts swinging. Whenever a potential confrontation happens, the character has to make a Willpower (doubled) roll with a penalty equal to the level of the Drawback. On a failure, the demon reacts violently.

BLINDSIGHT

8-POINT QUALITY

This represents the classic wuxia stunt of seeing the world without need of eyes. With this Quality a character can sense his surroundings, making it impossible to blindside him. Your character is immune to the effects of darkness or invisibility and gains a +2 to all Perception rolls (this is cumulative with any Acute Senses bonuses). The Fast Reaction Time Quality is an added bonus (with no extra charge). Finally, the character's supernatural abilities grant him +2 to close combat attacks and defenses. These benefits are only applicable against living or moving foes.

When combined with the Physical Disability (Blindness) Drawback, a character can 'see' a monochromatic world around him with enough concentration (reading and close visual work is not possible). In a fast-paced combat situation, a nearby assailant who has no body temperature and does not breathe or move is invisible to a blind character.

DEMONIC TUTOR

2-POINT DRAWBACK

With enough trickery and lies, a young magician can be convinced to become the pawn of a demon. The

bad beastie looks for a youngster with great magical potential and attempts to turn her into a willing thrall. Being a creature of lies and deception, the demon usually tries to find some way to trick or coerce its student into performing progressively more questionable acts. In time, it claims that the magician is irrevocably evil and has no choice but to continue on this path.

Once the dead bodies start piling up, some are so distraught that they break down or commit suicide. Although its corruptee isn't available to manipulate anymore, this may be just what the demon sought. Others attempt to leave or to turn on their teacher. Fighting the demon's demands is difficult, since it surreptitiously makes a pact with anyone it teaches. This pact prevents the character from attacking the demon and allows the demon to walk through any wards that she attempts to erect against it.

Characters who submit to the demon's demands and willingly work evil are not suitable Heroes or White Hats. On the other hand, a Cast Member who struggles against the demands of her dark master is an excellent roleplaying hook. Your character might know her teacher's true nature and be fighting against its demands, but she is afraid for her life, or even that her friends will shun her if the truth comes out.

Though a more complex challenge, it's best if the Cast Member is unaware of her teacher's true nature. Pulling this off requires you to separate out-of-game knowledge from what your character knows. That can be difficult to play convincingly. Furthermore, if the other players know what's going on, they too must join in with the voluntary ignorance. Otherwise, your Director must keep this Drawback from you and introduce the new teacher during the course of play. That means you don't get to spend the resulting Drawback points. Once your character clues in, the Drawback is revealed and the points may finally be used.

EMOTIONAL INFLUENCE

VARIABLE QUALITY

Your character can affect those around him emotionally. The feelings can vary from attraction to anger to depression. How the target reacts is your Director's call. For example, if the emotion is anger and the target fairly assertive, violence is likely. Conversely, if the target is retiring, anger could manifest as passive aggressiveness. To avoid the power's influence, the target must make a Willpower (doubled) roll. If affected, he may make a new Willpower roll each Turn after that. Failure means the target has little control over the emotion at issue.

For certain emotions (say lust), your character's Attractiveness levels also modify the target's Willpower roll (such modifiers are paid for separately and do not affect the cost of this Quality). The modification is the converse-negative Attractiveness grants bonuses to the target's roll; positive Attractiveness imposes penalties. The basic Emotional Influence ability costs two points. Penalties may be added to the target's roll for an additional point per level. So, Emotional Influence with a -3 penalty runs five points.

ENCHANTED OR SUPERSCIENCE ITEM

2-POINTS PER LEVEL QUALITY

Your character is the proud possessor of a powerful magic item or a wondrous superscience device (see pp. 118-120). She may have built it, stolen it, inherited it, or simply found it in a dumpster—in any case she now owns it. Your character knows how to use it and while it may have one or two secrets, it's basically hers and under her control. Like spells, both enchanted and superscience items have Power Levels, and your character must pay two points for each such level. No character can start the game with an item more powerful than level six.

While this Quality allows characters to start with an extremely powerful item, if it is destroyed or stolen, the points paid for it are gone. Directors should never maliciously take away such items, but if your character strikes a huge demon with a magic sword and the demon grabs it and teleports back to its home dimension, she is simply out of luck. Again, that whole lifenotfair thing ...

ENCHANTER/SUPERSCIENTIST

5-POINTS PER LEVEL QUALITY

Other than casting spells and making minor items, magic is used to create objects of great power. We're not talking about talismans, charms, or vials of witch detecting goo here. Any kind of magician can do that. Only certain practitioners can devise and craft significant mystical objects. Most of these folks use traditional methods to create things like magic swords or amulets, but recently some have used the trappings of technology in their work. These superscience items appear to be pieces of astoundingly advanced technology, but for purposes of the Cinematic Unisystem RPG, they are just as magical as a draconian katra.

A character with the Enchanter version of this Quality can create powerful items such as mystical talismans and magic wands; one with the Superscientist Quality builds wondrous freeze-rays, intelligent robots, and the like. A character cannot possess both aspects of this Quality though. There's a basic thought-process

incompatibility there and we don't want anyone's brain to go to mush on our watch.

More details on Enchanters and Superscientists can be found in the section of Superscience (see pp. 118).

ENHANCED/REDUCED ATTRIBUTES

VARIABLE QUALITY OR DRAWBACK

Enhanced Attributes include your basic superstrength, super-speed, and other super-stuff. Some supernatural beings can lift cars over their heads, hear a whispered conversations from across football fields, leap over small buildings in a single bound, run faster than speeding locomotives, fly ... ah okay, that's probably going a bit too far.

To reflect these super-abilities, your character gets Attribute bonuses, ranging from +1 to +5 or even higher. These bonuses are added to the character's Attributes after the Attribute points specified by his Character Type have been distributed. So, if you give your character a Strength 4 and then devise a Demon Quality that adds three to Strength, the final Attribute level would be seven.

On the opposite end are Reduced Attributes. Some supernatural beings are slower (or slower-witted) than normal humans. Wimpy non-humans might suffer a -2 to their Strength, demons not known for their wit might have a -1 penalty to their Intelligence; a slave race could have a -1 penalty to their Willpower, and so on. For reduced Attributes, anything beyond -2 is probably too extreme for playable characters.

Enhanced Attributes cost one point per +1 bonus up to +10 for Strength and Constitution, and +5 for everything else. Beyond that point, the bonuses cost five points per level (so a +10 bonus to Dexterity would cost 30 points, five for the first +5, and 25 for the next five levels-to use a fairly extreme example). Reduced Attributes provide one point per -1 penalty instead of costing a point. So, a demon race with Strength +3, Dexterity +3, Constitution -2, and Intelligence -1 would have a total cost of three points.

Your Director may have a thing or two to say about serious levels of Enhanced Attributes. Be prepared to have him declare an upper limit of +5 to any one Attribute. Once again, four color superheroics may not be his, or your, cup of sake.

HYPNOSIS

5-, 10-, OR 20-POINT QUALITY

Some demons and undead have the power to control the minds of others. Against single opponents or those without much in the way of will, this ability can be devastating. It comes in three levels, at an increasingly higher point cost.

Gaze Into My Eyes: At this level, your character can cause someone to hesitate for a few moments-plenty of time to launch an attack with impunity. The hypnotist makes a Willpower (doubled) roll (or uses his Brains Score in the case of Supporting Cast); the victim does the same. Unless the victim beats or ties the result, he is helpless for a Turn and has zero defense rolls against any attack. This ability costs five points.

What Do You See?: Your character can create illusions and muddle the victim's senses. This uses the same Resisted Willpower roll as Hypnosis (Gaze Into My Eyes), but if the character wins, the victim finds the illusion compelling. The character can render himself invisible or appear to be someone else. A character with What Do You See? gets a +1 bonus to use the Gaze Into My Eyes power. Ten points purchases this ability.

Come to Me: At this level, the supernatural being can dominate the victim, forcing him to obey almost any command. Every time your character tries to command the victim, use the same Resisted Willpower rolls as above. If the victim loses, he must comply. Some commands may go so totally against the victim's self-preservation instinct or moral code that he gains bonuses (+1 to +5) to resist (at your Director's discretion). Directing someone to jump off a skyscraper is morally questionable and could invalidate any control your character has over him.

Your character gains a +1 bonus to attempts to use What Do You See?, and +2 to use Gaze Into My Eyes. This ability costs a whopping twenty points.

IMMORTAL

0-POINT QUALITY

Not as in 'cannot be killed' but more as in 'not getting any older here.' Some supernatural beings don't age normally, staying the same apparent age for centuries or millennia. This doesn't cost points by itself (let's face it, much as we'd like to think differently, few Series are going to span centuries), but Immortal characters can gain the Age Quality (see p. 27) if their characters have been around for a few centuries.

INCREASED LIFE POINTS

1-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY

Some supernaturals are much harder to kill than your average innocent bystander ... or bull elephant. They could have redundant organs or their guts are just harder to rip out. These critters have more Life Points than the normal formula would allow for someone with their Strength and Constitution (see p. 8). Each level of this power adds an extra ten Life Points. Additionally, supernatural species can gain Hard to Kill levels; they work as the Quality of the same name (see p. 14), providing both extra Life Points and bonuses in Survival Tests.

INVISIBLE

20-POINT QUALITY

Some entities cannot be seen through normal means, which allows for all kinds of neat ninja tricks. Invisible characters can still be heard though and some sensors may detect them. Believe us, fighting them is still no picnic (see p. 55).

This Quality costs a base twenty points, and the invisibility may be turned off and on at will. If the invisibility drops for at least a Turn when your character attracts attention to himself (by, say, smashing something over a victim's head), the cost is reduced to ten points. Similarly, if the character is stuck on 'invisible,' the power is also halved to ten points.

IRON MIND

3-POINT QUALITY

Your character is immune to all forms of Telepathy (see p. 35) and some Supernatural Senses (see p. 58; Director's call on that), as well as all spells or powers that seek to read or control his thoughts or emotions. He can still be struck by magic or slammed by Telekinesis, but no one can get into his head. It's not all good though. Those with this Quality tend to be somewhat closed off and distant, and often also possess the Outcast Drawback (see p. 18).

LIMITED USE

1- OR 2-POINT DRAWBACK

Whatever your character's particular power, he can't use it as much as he would like. There are conditions and if they aren't met, your character can wave his hands, concentrate, flex his wrists, or mumble haiku all he wants, and no one will be impressed. That could prove very ... unfortunate.

This Drawback is worth one point if the conditions aren't too crippling. For example if the ability only works during the night (or the day), or only if the target is singing or if he does his Vulcan mind meld thing. Two points are awarded if the prerequisites are very limiting. This applies if the power can only be used once a day, or for an hour each day. This value would also fit if the capacity was effective only against one demon species, vampires, lawyers, or blonds.

MAGIC MAGNET

2-POINT DRAWBACK

Your character attracts spells and magical energy — basically she is a lightning rod for the arcane. If any sort of spell backfires and affects the wrong target, it hits her. If random magical energy has been released in the vicinity, it always rebounds on her in some way. These effects are rarely directly harmful, but she could end up invisible or with rabbit ears if she is too close to a ritual that goes wrong.

MAGICAL FAMILY

0 TO 2-POINT QUALITY OR DRAWBACK

Witches and Warlocks do have children and families. Your character has magical relatives—she may be part of a hereditary coven of witches, or she may simply have a father or aunt who dabbles in the occult and is willing to teach a bright and interested teen or young adult. While life can sometimes be dangerous for a character with this background, having a parent or other relation who can offer useful advice (and even cover with the authorities and other adults for the Cast Member's more questionable activities) is a rare gift.

The cost of this Quality depends on exactly who the relative is and how old the character is. It's free for Cast Members over the age of 18, as long as they possess at least one level of Sorcery. Characters this age or older are also expected to provide their own magic books (purchasing the Occult Library Quality separately). For younger Cast Members, having an uncle, aunt, grandparent who works magic costs one point (this assumes that the character's parents know nothing of magic). It costs two points for a teenage character to have a parent who uses magic—it's huge when your parents are cool with you using the mojo. Teenage Cast Members may consult their relation's two-point Occult Library, but gaining access to any of these spells requires asking their family's permission (or sneaking around behind their backs).

Of course, this background only costs points if the parent is a good person who honestly wishes to help her child. Having magic-using parents who simply want to use and control their child as a source of power is instead a 2-point Drawback.

The only significant limit to your character learning magic from her family is that the character's parent or other relative will not give her access to spells of Power Level four or higher until she has reached maturity. Few mothers want their teenage daughters or sons to be attempting to work with the most potent and dangerous forms of magic, especially while they are living at home (it's really hard to get that stuff out of the carpet).

NATURAL ARMOR

1-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY

Some demons and other critters have really tough skin, as good as or better than a suit of armor. In some cases, it is armor that has been mystically grafted onto their skin, which raises all sorts of personal hygiene problems best not considered too deeply.

Natural Armor subtracts its value from any damage your character takes (just like regular armor, see p. 62). The damage is reduced before any modifiers (for Slash/stab or Bullet weapons for example) are taken into account. Natural Armor 10, for example, would subtract ten points of damage from every attack that hits.

NATURAL WEAPON

1- TO 8-POINT QUALITY

This covers your basic razor-sharp claws, big nasty teeth, horns (real goring horns, the kinds of things that can do real damage), steel bands that wrap around hands, and other (un)natural weapons. The more deadly the implement, the more it costs. Those given below assume that the weapon causes Slash/stab damage. If it causes Bash damage instead, lower the cost by one. If the weapon is retractable, a one-point kicker is added to the cost. If the weapon is detachable (and throwable) or launchable instead, double its cost. These missiles have normal thrown or pistol ranges (see pp. 56) depending on how they are used. If they can reach out and touch someone like a rifle, the damage is halved (before armor or damage modifiers).

Delivering damage with a natural weapon requires a Combat Maneuver that brings it into play. A claw would use Punch, a horn Head Butt, and a serrated shin Kick.

Small:	One point	2 x Strength damage.
Medium:	Two points	3 x Strength damage.
Large:	Three points	4 x Strength damage.
Extra-Large:	Four points	5 x Strength damage.

PSYCHIC VISIONS

0-POINT QUALITY OR 3-POINT DRAWBACK

Some people can see the future in visions or dreams. Most of the time, the visions aren't very clear, nor do they happen very often, and they cannot be activated on purpose—they just happen. No rolls are needed. Your Director should make the visions or dreams ambiguous and use images and situations from your character's life. The visions should reflect his current problems and worries. Your character's friends and enemies may pop up in the visions, offering advice, vague threats, or deep philosophical comments. The Director can use the visions to drop hints about upcoming events—the rise of some great evil, the potential bad decision to come, the next winner of American Idol, and other fun stuff. As your character has little to no control over this ability and it largely acts as a cool plot device for the Director to use, it costs no points.

The three-point Drawback expresses itself through painful, paralyzing flashbacks (more like 'flash-forwards') of death and danger. These visions happen a lot more often, and while they are active, the character is pretty much out of it (cannot take any actions for one to four Turns, depending on how long the vision lasts). Humans who get this 'gift' don't live very long—the intensity of the visions eventually destroys their brains (often literally). Only Demons and Half-Demons can endure the visions without permanent damage. A human character with this version of Psychic Visions is going to need some help eventually (in a Season or so).

PSYCHOMETRY

4-POINT QUALITY

Your character possesses a preternatural sensitivity to objects and the energies others leave when they touch them. He can gain information about items and places using this ability.

Characters with psychometry often get impressions from simply bumping against a wall or touching the steering wheel of a car—many beings with this power wear gloves most of the time. These visions are determined by your Director. To use this ability actively, your character must touch the object and roll Perception and Notice.

The exact result depends both upon the roll and upon the history of the object being touched. Consult the Psychometry Chart below but know that your Director might modify the 'read' depending on the needs of the storyline.

Psychometry Chart	
Success Level	Result
1	Feel the strongest emotions associated with the object in the recent past (one day or less), and gain some sensory glimpse of the person feeling that emotion. This is not a full-face portrait though (sorry, the villain doesn't get revealed until the end of the Episode, remember?), but it could be a flash of someone's shoes, the smell of their perfume, the sound of music playing in the background at the time, or some other (more or less) useful clue. This level reveals items that are supernatural in nature.
2	Impressions go back further in time (a week or less) and get more precise for more recent (one day or less) events. If the visions are frightening, time for a Fear Test. This level reveals a few vague hints about the potential uses or powers of any supernatural item.
3	Impressions go back one month or less. Can now detect more than one wielder/owner within that time frame if they left a good psychic 'imprint' (i.e., felt strong emotions while in contact with the item). Clues are even more plentiful, but they are rarely complete. Events of extreme emotional or magical power can be glimpsed, no matter how long ago they were. This level reveals if an old knife was used to perform a human sacrifice 300 years ago, but would likely not show anything more than a shadowy glimpse of who performed the deed or where it was performed.
4	Impressions go back one year or less. Visions are granted about every owner/wielder of the object or those in contact with it (in the case of a murder weapon, that would include both the killer and the victim if the weapon was a knife or something that had to touch the victim). This level reveals most of the powers and uses of an enchanted item. This level also reveals a bit more information about powerful events that happened many years or centuries before. It would show that a knife was used by a tall vampire to perform a human sacrifice in the ruins of a large church, and might even show a partial glimpse of the victim's face or a general sense of why the sacrifice was being performed.
5-9	Impressions go back between ten to fifty years. The visions are stronger and incredibly detailed. They are also imprinted more firmly in the psychic's mind, and may be revisited at a later time even if the object is not available. Clues from beyond that time are also more complete. These kinds of Success Levels are the most subject to Director whim.
10+	This brings up any scene concerning the item or place in the last century, or at any time if it involved significant supernatural events. These visions may be entered, walked around in, slowed, frozen, or otherwise experienced in full sensory mode as if part of the holodeck. Your Director should withhold only specifically warded or totally plot-destroying information.

PYROKINESIS

3-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY

Some psychics can start fires through the power of their mind alone. To use this power, your character rolls and adds his Willpower and Pyrokinesis levels. Each Success Level inflicts one point of fire damage per level of Willpower. For example, a pyrokinetic with Willpower 4 who got four Success Levels on his roll inflicts sixteen points of fire damage (more than enough to put the hurt on someone).

The amount of damage determines what can be ignited with this power. Highly flammable objects (gasoline soaked rags) require only one to three points of damage to start burning. Dry wood needs five to six points, regular clothing or wooden furniture requires ten or more points, and synthetic furniture and the like need twenty or more points to start burning. Using this power on a human both inflicts damage and sets his clothing on fire. Once something ignites, it burns normally (see p. 58 for details on Fire damage).

REDUCED DAMAGE

VARIABLE QUALITY

Some critters aren't easy to damage like normal folks. A demon from a fiery dimension might take half damage from fire or heat, for example. Vampires are highly resistant to bullets and falls due to their undead nature. This power comes in three levels. The first reduces damage by half, the second divides damage by five and the third drops damage by a factor of ten. Damage is rounded down, to a minimum of one point. In all cases, the base damage is adjusted after Success Levels have been added. Damage type modifiers are not applied. The cost of the trait depends on what form of damage is affected. It'd be neat to be nearly invulnerable to everything but that's gonna cost quite a bit.

Everything: Applying Reduced Damage to all injuries costs five, twenty-five, or fifty points, respectively.

Specific Attack: If something specific but relatively common is affected, the cost is three, ten, and twenty points, respectively. This covers damage like fire/explosions, all kinetic attacks (fists, bullets, falling safes, pimpslaps), and so on.

Limited: This is a single specific type of attack, such as bullets, falls/large blunt trauma, or metal weapons. This costs one, five, and ten points respectively.

REGENERATION

1-, 3-, OR 6-POINT QUALITY

You can't keep a good demon down. Or a bad one for that matter. Some supernaturals heal very rapidly. The amount healed is equal to the character's Constitution Attribute. The faster this amount heals, the more expensive the power is. Healing Point per hour costs one point. Healing every minute costs three points. The very handy regeneration-every-Turn runs six points. While regeneration allows the regrowth of limbs, it does not convey immortality or invulnerability. No matter how fast a character heals, if he gets into the negative Life Points, is forced to make a Survival Test, and fails, it's curtains for the mug.

SORCERY

5-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY

Some people have the spark of magic. They can use the dark arts more easily than normal students of the occult. Your character's Sorcery level is added to spellcasting rolls up to level five (after that, additional levels only help with repeat casting penalties, see p. 80). It is also used for other witchcraft powers, like telekinesis and sensing the presence of magic. Characters with Sorcery can cast some spells faster than normal, allowing them to actually use magic in the middle of a fight — your basic witch-fu. Don't get cocky though; Sorcery is no magic bullet against the unpredictability and dangers of magic use. Reach for the spells too often and something potentially very nasty is going to come your way. You've been warned. Magic and the role this Quality plays in it are described in Chapter Four: Playing With Primal Forces.

SPIRIT MEDIUM

2-POINT QUALITY

Your character can see (and talk to) dead people. While not everyone leaves a ghost, many people who have been murdered, especially those killed by magic or monsters, do. While only a few ghosts can actually appear to ordinary mortals, this character can see all of the faint and intangible restless spirits that lurk on the edges of the mortal world, hoping that someone like her will see them and heed their pleas for justice and vengeance.

Unfortunately, your character has no choice about hearing these pleas. If they are talking, she can hear them. They can also hear her, so if your character yells at them to shut up and leave her alone, the more timid ones may do just that. On the other hand, all the living people nearby hear her shouting at the air like a lunatic — not the best way to make friends or get a date. The worst part of this ability is that ghosts can tell that your character can hear them and often follow her around. Learning some simple wards like the Circle of Binding (see pp. 97-98) might be useful, but then you have to figure out how to get the spirit to enter the circle.

SUPERNATURAL ATTACK

VARIABLE QUALITY

Maybe your supernatural can expel fire out of some unmentionable orifice, or spit gobs of acid, or something equally nasty. This type of attack is not dependent on the critter's Strength (unlike Natural Attacks). The more damage the attack does, the more it costs. How far the attack reaches also plays into the cost. Close combat attacks (use Kung Fu and Dexterity to 'hit' the enemy) are cheaper than ranged attacks (use Gun Fu and Dexterity to 'shoot' the attack, or, if the attack is something unusual, a Wild Card Skill instead of Gun Fu). Ranged attacks fire as far as a pistol (see p. 56); those that can reach rifle ranges do half damage.

Minor: The attack inflicts twenty points of damage. It costs four points for close, eight for ranged.

Major: The attack inflicts thirty points of damage. It costs seven points for close, twelve for ranged.

Deadly: The attack inflicts fifty points of damage. Fifteen points must be spent for close, twenty for ranged.

Massive: The attack inflicts one hundred points of damage. It costs thirty-five points for close, forty for ranged.

SUPERNATURAL FORM

1- OR 2-POINT DRAWBACK

Let's face it- you're going to get second glances if you're a big red bipedal lizard with a prehensile tail. But not all demons look like demons; some actually look like supermodels. For the unfortunates who don't, having a supernatural face is a Drawback.

Some critters can instantly switch back and forth between a human shape and their real one (pausing just long enough for cool morphing FX). In some cases, they have to change into their non-human form to use their special powers.

Definitely Not Human: Your character just can't pass himself off as human. His favorite time of the year is Halloween, 'cause then he can at least show his face. This is a two-point Drawback and carries with it an Attractiveness -2 feature. Additional negative Attractiveness levels can be acquired for extra points. Alternatively, positive Attractiveness levels can be purchased separately to neutralize the downside of always having your supernatural side up front.

Dual Shape: The being has a human and a supernatural form. He can switch at will and nearly instantly, although sometimes anger or surprise (or sneezing) brings forth his true shape involuntarily. This costs no points unless the human form is weaker (for example, any supernatural powers only apply to the demon form), in which case this is a one-point Drawback. The character can have a split Attractiveness level, one for each form (which is purchased separately). If Life Points are increased in the demon form, reverting could bring the human into a world of pain (and negative LPs).

SUPERNATURAL SENSES

VARIABLE QUALITY

Any level of this ability enables the being to tell by sight (or smell or sound or in particularly intrusive cases, taste) if someone is a human, a vampire, or a demon. Others have more sharply defined powers. In some cases, they can actually 'feel' people, 'read' their auras, or pick up mystical clues. A Perception and Notice roll may be required and the Success Levels dictate the depth of the information gathered. Sometimes the input is overwhelming and just can't be missed (all this in your Director's discretion). Mortal mages commonly have these gifts.

Basic: Your character can tell a being's basic nature- demon, vampire, magician, etc. Rarely is a Perception roll required. This costs one point.

Empathy: The being can tell what someone is feeling. People are generally pretty poor at hiding their anger, grief, or smug confidence. Most of the time, the empath can only read the strongest emotions a target is feeling. With particularly strong feelings or a very good Perception roll, the being learns about exactly how the target feels. This runs two points.

Enhanced Senses: This gent has one or more incredibly sharp senses (sight, hearing, smell, and so on), enabling him to track by scent or hear a whispered conversation a hundred feet away. The power requires the Acute Senses Quality (for each sense to be enhanced) and a minimum Perception 5. Where applicable, it doubles the bonuses of Acute Senses, but most of the time, no roll is needed. These senses cost three points each. Fortune Telling: The character can catch glimpses of the past and future by looking at someone or something. This can work like Psychometry (see p. 32, except with the possibility of future visions) or it can be dictated by your Director according to the needs of the plotline. This costs five points.

Insight: The supernatural can see detailed truths about a person (including Qualities and Drawbacks) by reading his aura-his nature, feelings, desires, fears, even possessing entities or other abnormalities. It can also be used to track, particularly by attuning oneself to the aura of certain beasts- this may require one or more Perception and Notice rolls. Any use requires at least a Turn or three of concentration. This power costs five points.

The Sight: Your character can see magic and traces of supernatural power. He can also tell if someone is preparing to cast a spell and see at a glance if an item is magical. He can even see a faintly glowing residue indicating that magic has been used in an area during the last few hours. If the being spends a minute or so looking closely at someone and makes a Perception and Notice roll with two Success Levels, he can tell if the person is a normal human. If he makes the roll by three or more Success Levels, he can tell if the person is a psychic, vampire, demon, or something undefined. The character cannot actually see ghosts in detail, but if one (or some other invisible supernatural being) shows up, he can notice a faint glow of power in its vicinity (no need

for the normal invisibility Perception roll, see p. 55). With sufficient Success Levels (Director's call), he can also tell at a glance if someone is possessed. Three points must be spent for this ability.

TELEKINESIS

3-POINT/LEVEL QUALITY

This is your basic ability to move objects with the power of your mind. To use this power, your character rolls and adds his Willpower and Telekinesis levels. The Success Levels equal the 'strength' of the levitation effect. So if the roll resulted in five Success Levels, your telekinetic could move an object with a Strength 5.

When tossing people around using telekinesis, the damage done is two times the Success Levels in Bash type. The telekinetic Strength (the Success Levels in the roll) must be sufficient to lift the person off the floor, though (see p. 7). Precise tasks (guiding a key into a keyhole, manipulating a keyboard) require a Perception and Telekinesis roll (with appropriate Success Levels as your Director demands). Attacks use Dexterity or Perception (player's choice) and an appropriate skill (staking a vamp would use Getting Medieval, firing a gun Gun Fu). All remote tasks suffer a -1 penalty because the telekinetic manipulates the object at a distance. Damage is set by the weapon and uses the telekinetic Strength level rolled. Tossing small objects requires only a Willpower and Telekinesis roll, and must overcome the target's defense roll. The damage value of such an attack is two times the Success Levels rolled.

Telekinesis requires some effort to maintain. After a number of Turns equal to your character's Willpower, he has to make another Willpower and Telekinesis roll to maintain the power, at a cumulative -2 penalty. So, a psychic with a Willpower 4 would suffer a -2 penalty on the fifth Turn and a -6 penalty on the thirteenth Turn that he maintained an effect or used successive effects. This penalty applies to all telekinesis rolls until the psychic gets at least three hours of rest (as in magic use, see p. 80) between uses.

Let's Revisit: If a character with a Willpower 4 was swinging a large axe with her Telekinesis (beats chopping wood by hand) and rolled a 16 (four Success Levels), she would have an effective Strength 4 for the next four Turns. On the fifth Turn, she would reroll Willpower and Telekinesis and subtract two; this could change her psychic Strength value.

TELEPATHY

5-POINT QUALITY

Your character can speak into the minds of others. While doing this, he can also hear any thoughts directed at him in response. A telepath can mentally communicate simultaneously with a number of people equal to his Willpower. The duration in minutes and range in ten -foot increments depends on the Success Levels of a Willpower (doubled) roll. An exception may exist for those the telepath knows very well (as long as your Director buys into that). In that case, your character can communicate with such targets at any distance, as long as he can see them or knows where they are.

If the telepath touches someone or looks into his eyes, he can listen in on what the being is thinking. In this case, the subject resists the telepath's Willpower (doubled) roll with one of his own. If successful, your character's Success Levels dictate the time (in minutes) that may be spent probing and the depth of the 'read' (consult Mind Probe Chart). Using eye contact for mind probe telepathy only works if the target is less than five feet away. Sorry, no long distance or binocular-aided mind probing permissible.

Successive attempts to communicate telepathically or read someone's mind before resting at least three hours suffer a cumulative -2 penalty. So, for the second attempt, the roll suffers a -2 penalty; on the fifth attempt, an -8 penalty.

Mind Probe Chart	
Success Level	Result
1	Can sense only basic emotions.
2	Can sense surface thoughts (whatever the subject is thinking at the moment).
3	Can delve deeper into the mind of the subject. A simple question can be 'asked' and a one sentence or less answer is revealed. Each additional Success Level grants one more question and answer.
4+	Can get a clear picture of the subject's personality, find memories, and get any information available (provided the telepath specifically asks for it).

UNCONTROLLABLE POWER

5-POINT DRAWBACK

Your character's power is not fully under his control. During times of stress, it can go wild, striking things and people at random. Whenever the character is angry, scared, or otherwise stressed, a Willpower (doubled) roll is needed, with penalties from -1 to -6, depending on how stressful the situation is. If the roll fails, the power goes off at random (your Director can be as sadistic as he feels is appropriate; feel free to kibitz). If the stress is extreme, the power not only goes wild, it works at double its normal level. For example, if a Telekinetic confronts her abusive father, her power might go out of control at double its normal strength. Your Director will tell you if your character's power makes sense with this limitation.

UNIQUE KILL

5-POINT QUALITY

Some supernaturals can't be killed by conventional means; something extraordinary is needed. Some demons need to be beheaded, for example, or their bodies must be burned to ashes. That doesn't mean your guy doesn't take damage normally, and can't be incapacitated -he just doesn't die from it. If the character isn't destroyed in the correct way, he eventually heals from any injuries and rises again.

This Quality only applies if there is one specific way to kill the supernatural. While it's true that vampires can only be dusted in certain ways, those ways are fairly numerous. Having that many 'limited ways' to be aced just doesn't make the grade. Vamps don't enjoy the Unique Kill Quality.

VULNERABILITY

VARIABLE DRAWBACK

Some supernatural beings have an Achilles heel, something that hurts them a lot more than normal. Vamps, for example, have lots of cool things going for them, but their slight sunlight problem balances things out a bit. Vulnerabilities range in value from no points (if it's something so rare and unique it's only coming up when your Director decides it comes up) to lots of points (if it severely endangers the character).

Minor: A rare item or substance (unique mystical artifact, for example) that does extra damage to the character (double damage after armor and modifiers), or negates any armor or special defenses, or which can destroy the character if reduced to zero Life Points (like, say stakes). This is a two-point Drawback.

Major: Something common that inflicts constant damage, or a special form of attack that does massive damage (five times damage after armor and modifiers). This is a three-point Drawback.

Multiple Vulnerabilities: Vampires have a laundry list of things that can kill them. You can do the same for your character but these banes don't stack completely- the maximum value of all combined Vulnerabilities is five points.

Sample Supernaturals

Described below are some sample supernatural packages. We've presented them for your use and enjoyment. They can also serve as guidelines for creating new critters. Your Director is free to modify or disallow them in his game (but that'd be true even if they were canon, so don't get too worked up).

DEMON/HALF-DEMON

VARIABLE QUALITY

Your character is not human, but belongs to one of the hundreds (thousands?) of transdimensional species that inhabit the various hell-realms. Or maybe he is part of those weakened, hybrid demon races that stayed on Earth when the True Demons were disposed. Perhaps he's just a mixed (and mixed-up) child-the offspring of a demon and a human (no, we are not going into details, let's just say it happens and leave it at that).

No set cost can be given for this Quality because no two demons are the same. Some are stronger than a horse and uglier than a platypus (no offense to the platypus). Others are as strong as a platypus and uglier than a horse (if they're rich, that could be overlooked). Many have a variety of special powers (and a bunch of problems too). Each demonic 'species' has its own point value, determined by the sum of their bonuses and penalties. Rules for creating demon species from scratch are presented in a separate section (see p. 26).

REVENANT

17-POINT QUALITY

This unusual form of undead is an instrument of vengeance or justice (even they aren't sure) who may

be agents of the Powers That Be or some other entity interested in fighting the forces of darkness. Revenants are men and women who died violently, usually through supernatural means. They come back as avenging angels, hunting down those they deem 'tainted' with evil or the supernatural. Unlike most undead, however, they do not reincarnate in their original body- instead they take over the corpse of another victim of violence or supernatural activity. Driven by powerful visions and a thirst for revenge, Revenants need to get used to the idea of living in a stranger's body for the rest of their existence, driven by powerful visions and a thirst for revenge.

Revenants look alive (if a little pale), but they don't have a pulse, don't sweat, and don't need to eat. Their bodies are only slightly above room temperature. Most importantly, they cannot be killed normally. If their body 'dies,' their spirit takes over the body of the closest person who dies by violence after their 'demise.' The 'rebirth' takes little or no time at all, but the distance the new body is from the site of death can cause a spot of trouble. The only way to destroy a Revenant permanently is to burn its body while it's still alive. The flames trap the spirit and remove it from this plane of existence.

Killing a Revenant (without burning it) means the Cast Member needs to start over in a new body. Your Director decides when and where the new body is found. In general, the character is going to be out of the game for a bit.

The newfound body usually has average levels (2) in all Attributes. To determine the Attributes to come, roll a D10 and distribute those 'extra' Attribute points as desired, then add in the bonuses of the Revenant Quality. Over time, the body 'grows into' these higher stats, as the Revenant's spirit reshapes the body. This occurs at the rate of one Attribute level per week. This can result in a truly radical transformation of the body in question! In general, skills, Qualities, and Drawbacks carry over to the new body, and replace those possessed by that body.

Revenants get a +2 bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution, and a +3 bonus to Willpower. They have Regeneration (Per hour) and their unique body-switching power (10 points which includes their Unique Kill (Fire) Quality). Finally, they have Psychic Visions- the debilitating version. A Revenant's total cost is 17 points.

Anybody Home?

For simplicity's sake, newly infested bodies should be as blank a slate as possible. Perhaps an Attribute or two could vary from the norm, but otherwise, it's best to just let the Revenant mold the body to his previous Attributes without worrying overly about "left-over" clutter.

The "under the hood" folks among you no doubt have noticed that the Revenant's "new body" Attribute points range from 13 to 22 (the 12 from the "body" plus D10). Thus, a Revenant could have more or less Attribute levels in total than it had in its first body (built using the Champion or Investigator Character Type).

That's designed to add a bit of variety to the character and give the player a bit more ability to adjust his character after a fatal encounter. Some players or Directors might like to keep the character's Attribute levels more consistent. In that case, simply set the "Attributes to come" level at the former body's Attributes. Alternatively, you could keep the mental Attribute maximums the same as the former body and allow some variation on the physical side (use half a D10 result, rounded down, to spread around). This all adds complexity, of course.

Another way to twist things (and add complication) arises if your Director varies the non-Attribute aspects of the body that your Revenant infests. Keeping some Qualities or Drawbacks (or even skills in very odd cases) flavors the assumed body. What if your Revenant took over someone who had deranged-level Mental Problems, or was half-demon, or had superhuman healing abilities, or retractable adamantine claws, or was really, really short. The variations are limitless.

VAMPIRE

12- OR 15-POINT QUALITY

For the most part, vampires are irredeemable monsters, unable to control their lust for blood and death. Normal vampires have high levels of the Mental Problems (Cruelty) Drawback, and for the most part are not fit for human company. There is nothing very sexy or appealing about a demon in human drag who considers people little more than meals-on-legs. So far, the TV show has revealed only two exceptions: Angel, whose soul was restored by a Gypsy curse, and Spike, chipped and later ensouled. Even they are one short step away from devolving into their monstrous selves (Angel if he ever experiences "true bliss," and Spike after a short surgical procedure; souls don't serve as much of a hindrance to evil, as we've seen lots of times with regular humans).

Playing a vampire as a Cast Member (other than Angel or Spike) would be very difficult. You and the Director must agree on how or why the vampire can control her inner demon. Whatever the explanation, the cost to play a "humane" vampire is 15 points. Normal vampire characters would cost 12 points, but unless your Director wants to have a murderous monster in the Cast, that's not much of an option.

Vampires gain +3 to Strength, +2 to Dexterity, +2 to Constitution, and two levels of Hard to Kill (they can

have as many as 10 levels in total); +2 bonuses to hearing and smell/taste-based Perception rolls (+4 when involving blood); take only one-fifth damage from bullets (other weapons hurt normally); recover from injuries at the rate of one Life Point per Constitution level every hour (fire damage regenerates at the rate of one Life Point per Constitution level per day); and are immortal. Vampires are vulnerable to sunlight, holy symbols, stakes through the heart, and beheading.

WEREWOLF

3-POINT DRAWBACK OR 7- OR 13-POINT QUALITY

Your character is afflicted with the curse of the werewolf.

Some werewolves retain some control over their inner beasts, but for the most part this is a curse, not a boon. In their animal form, werewolves have +4 to Strength, +2 to Dexterity, +2 to Constitution (adjust Life Point totals normally), and can bite and claw victims, inflicting (2 x Strength) points of base damage (Slash/stab). Werewolves are also tough creatures in their bestial form, gaining the Natural Toughness Quality and Armor Value 1 (see p. 62). They also have regeneration level 1, regaining their Constitution score per hour. (Some wolfies have been known to have the regeneration per Turn while in wolfman form!) Wolfies have very sharp noses, enjoying the Acute Senses (Smell/Taste) Quality whether wolfed-out or not; if the character already has that quality, the bonuses stack together. A victim bitten by a werewolf has to pass a Willpower (doubled) roll, or become cursed as well. Seeing an enraged werewolf usually calls for a Fear Test with a -4 modifier (experienced monster hunters avoid this modifier once they have encountered enough lycanthropes).

If the Director is in control of your character's werewolf form, this is a 3-point Drawback. Otherwise, this is a 6-point Quality. Some lycanthropes can transform themselves at will and are not limited to the full month, cost of this ability is 12 points.

On the negative side, silver is a big problem for werewolves. Silver weapons inflict double normal damage (slashing and bullet weapons inflict triple damage). They are less effective than normal metal weapons, however; subtract three points from the base damage (before the multiplying effect), to a minimum of one.

ZOMBIE

VARIABLE QUALITY

Zombies have varying attributes depending on the actual spell that was used to raise them, but they all share a few things in common. The process of decay is halted as long as the zombie remains animated. This means that a zombie who was raised very shortly after she died could pass as one of the living (at least as far as appearances go, the room temperature body would still be a "dead" giveaway). Zombies are also highly resistant to damage. They don't have more Life Points than normal, but they are very tough.

Zombies ignore most damage effects. When the undead takes damage, she marks off the Life Points but that's pretty much it (even when Life Points fall below zero). Any blow that does damage equal to the zombie's Strength x 4 will knock it down. When knocked down, the zombie must spend the next Turn getting up. Otherwise, it can act unencumbered by even grievous wounds. It is unsightly, but emotionally stable and professional zombies tend not to dwell on the whole image thing.

Now, don't misunderstand- zombies aren't indestructible. If a zombie is reduced to -30 Life Points through slashing attacks, it becomes dismembered. This means the separated parts take on a life of their own. Instead of facing one of the walking dead, the attacker faces two crawling hands of the walking dead ... and a combat booted, toothy walking undead. Decapitation is pretty effective against zombies (actually, it's pretty effective against all sorts of things). If a head attack reduces a zombie to -10 Life Points or worse, she has to make a Survival Test (see p. 62). If she fails, the head comes off and the ambulatory corpse is reduced to the more common stay-in-one-place corpse. Burning a zombie to ashes (which takes about 200 points of damage) would also work. The best way to get rid of a zombie would be to reverse the spell that created it in the first place, but this is often easier said than done.

Being a zombie is a Quality with a base cost of 10 points, plus additional points based on any Attribute modifiers. Different methods of returning the dead to undeath grant different modifiers. If a zombie had +2 Strength and -1 Dexterity, Intelligence, and Willpower, the Quality would cost only nine points.

SKILLS

Skills are learned abilities, the result of training, study or experience. In general, anything that can be taught is considered a skill. The character's background, education and life experiences determine what skills she would be likely to have.

Skills are broken down into broad categories. Rather than assign a skill to different types of guns, for example, the Gun Fu skill covers the ability to fire anything with a trigger. This is not realistic, but reflects the

reality of TV shows. It also makes character creation easier: rather than having to look at a huge list of skills for your character, you can look at your character sheet and decide which of the 18 skills in the list are appropriate. The specifics are left to your imagination. If your Cast Member is an intrepid jungle explorer, her Science skill would reflect mostly an expertise in botany and biology, and her Knowledge skill would deal mainly with geography and exotic cultures. A criminal lawyer may have a Crime skill that lets her identify and communicate with assorted underworld types, but she may not be able to pick a lock.

Buying Skills

To acquire skills, use the character points allocated to the skills category as determined by the Character Type. Skills cost one point per level for levels one through five. After level five, each additional level costs three points.

RACY EXAMPLE: Lorna wants her character to be an excellent driver—in fact, she could race cars for a living! Such expertise would require a skill of five or higher. Lorna decides to go for broke and give the character a Driving skill 7. This costs five points for the first five levels, and six points for the other two, for a total of 11 character points. Lorna's character will be an ace driver, but she is unlikely to have very high skills in anything else.

The Meaning of Skill Numbers

Like most numbers in the Unisystem, high is good and low is bad. The higher a skill level, the more proficient the character is at using that skill. In general, a level one indicates a beginner or amateur, somebody who has just learned the rudiments of the skill. A level two or three represents general competency—the ability to perform average tasks with ease. A level four or five indicates extreme competence in the subject, the result of a lot of study or practice. Higher levels indicate true mastery of the skill or craft, and the ability to perform the most difficult tasks with relative ease. A master of Kung Fu would have a skill level in the 7-10 range, for example.

ACROBATICS

Beloved skill of cheerleaders and circus performers, this is the ability to perform tumbles, somersaults and other complex maneuvers. It is also used to dodge attacks, climb obstacles, and perform similar tasks of agility. Acrobatics can replace Crime when trying to move silently (use the higher of the two skills for sneaking around attempts).

USING THE SKILL: Acrobatics is used with Dexterity to perform most maneuvers, including avoiding close combat attacks and gunfire. When jumping for distance, climbing, or swimming, use Strength along side Acrobatics instead.

ART

Ever wanted to create some masterpiece for the ages, or just have your CD go platinum? All you need is a high enough level in Art. All the arts are covered by this skill: music, painting, sculpture, creative writing, and so on. That does not mean your character knows all artistic skills though. When creating the character, decide which art or arts are the character's specialty.

USING THE SKILL: There are two types of rolls that use this skill. First, to create art, use Intelligence and Art for writing and painting, Dexterity and Art for dancing or playing an instrument, or Constitution and Art for singing. The Success Level determines how good the creation or performance, for things like music or dance, is. To judge someone else's art, use Perception and Art.

COMPUTERS

This is the nerdy art of keyboard slinging for fun and profit. With this skill your character can make computers do what she wants, including both programming and hacking. People don't need this skill to use a computer. Just about anybody can find the "on" switch and use a mouse. The Computers skill lets your character do fun things like breaking into confidential databases, writing her own programs, programming her VCR, and other cool stuff.

USING THE SKILL: Intelligence and Computers to write a program or hack into a secure system. For hacking, the system's security imposes penalties, from -1 for a high school record system to -8 or worse for the FBI database. Perception and Computers help diagnose software or hardware problems without having to call a help line and being on hold for two to three days.

CRIME

Sometimes your character needs to break into a suspicious student's locker, or maybe find an important clue in someone's pants ... pocket. Breaking and entering, skulking around, lifting evidence—if it's illegal, this skill covers it, with two major exceptions: computer hacking uses the Computers skill, and conning people the Influence skill. Your character doesn't have to be a criminal to have this skill; cops, private investigators, and other honest but street-wise folks have it as well.

USING THE SKILL: Dexterity and Crime are used for things like moving stealthily (although Acrobatics can replace Crime here), lifting someone's wallet, and picking locks. Victims resist such activities with their Brains Score, or Perception and either Notice or Crime (whichever is better). Intelligence and Crime are used to identify criminals and street contacts (as modified by familiarity with the local criminal scene).

DOCTOR

After a tough fight, it pays to know some first (or second or third) aid. This skill covers the ability to heal injuries and cure disease through modern medicine. A full-fledged doctor has a skill of four or higher. Anything below that represents some training in first aid or emergency treatment. This is a good skill to have after a tussle with vampires.

USING THE SKILL: An Intelligence and Doctor roll is used to treat injuries; each Success Level restores one Life Point of damage (only one roll per patient per day). The victim also does not lose any more Life Points from bleeding and such. Perception and Doctor can be used to diagnose a medical problem, or determine the cause of death of some unfortunate victim.

DRIVING

Indispensable in California, land of the highway, this is the ability to sit behind the wheel of a car or motorcycle and get it to go the way you want. This skill covers all wheeled vehicles, although if your character is not familiar with a specific vehicle (trying to drive an 18-wheeler or a motorcycle if she has only driven cars before), rolls will be at -2 to -5 or worse. Your character can't pass Driver's Ed without at least one level in this skill.

USING THE SKILL: Dexterity and Driving for your basic high-speed chases, dodging rush hour traffic, and other complex maneuvers (there is no need to roll for routine driving). Use Intelligence and Driving for basic mechanic maintenance stuff—for the big stuff, you'll need the Mr. Fix-It skill.

GETTING MEDIEVAL

When a fist is not enough, it's time to break out some old-fashioned sharp metal whatsits and start a-hackin' and a-slashin'. This skill is used for all archaic weapons, from swords and quarterstaves to crossbows and throwing axes. It also covers driving stakes into the hearts of those pesky vampires. Anyone who takes on the supernatural on a regular basis – or anyone who *is* supernatural for that matter – tend to know how to use these items. Otherwise, they don't live too long.

USING THE SKILL: Dexterity and Getting Medieval cover most combat maneuvers. Feints use Intelligence (or Perception) to recognize them. There're a whole bunch of kewl Combat Maneuvers that use Getting Medieval (see pp. 51-54).

GUN FU

Guns don't kill people; the not-so-ancient art of Gun Fu does (oh, bullets help, too ... a lot). This skill covers your basic things that go "bang"—shotguns, pistols, and the like.

USING THE SKILL: Dexterity and Gun Fu for pointing and shooting. Aiming slows your character's attack to the end of the Turn, but you add the Success Levels of a Gun Fu and Perception roll to the shooting roll. Intelligence and Gun Fu help clear a jammed gun.

INFLUENCE

The ability to deceive, seduce, intimidate, or manipulate people for kicks and giggles ... or money ... oh yeah, or a good cause. Influence allows your character to pick up somebody at a bar, scare people into giving up important information, or otherwise persuade others to do what she wants.

USING THE SKILL: Intelligence and Influence for fooling, scamming, or fast-talking others. Willpower and Influence to intimidate people. If your character is trying to seduce somebody, for example, any Attractiveness levels act as bonuses or penalties to the roll. By the same token, a Hunter finds it a lot easier to intimidate someone if she lifts him over her head; the proper circumstances add bonuses or penalties (in the one to five range).

KNOWLEDGE

All non-scientific disciplines are covered by this skill. History, sociology, psychology, and the like are part and parcel of this skill. Knowledge can be useful in identifying the background of vampires and other creatures. For example, if you know a vampire was sired during the 17th century, it might be helpful to know what was going on in the 17th century. Knowledge can also help with occult research, and it lets characters say cool stuff like “This gauntlet is Late Medieval, probably from Florence; the markings are unmistakable.” Chicks really dig that.

USING THE SKILL: Knowledge is used with Intelligence for the most part. Knowledge skill rolls often add their Success Levels to Occultism or Influence rolls.

KUNG FU

Call it brawling, martial arts, fisticuffs, or flailing your arms around wildly, this skill covers the art of using your hands and other assorted body parts to hurt your fellow man (or critter). Kung Fu is indispensable for anybody who fights a lot. It's also very useful around bullies and in bar fights.

USING THE SKILL: Dexterity and Kung Fu for hitting someone or avoiding being hit—many Combat Maneuvers (see pp. 51-54) are based on this skill. Intelligence and Kung Fu may be used to identify a fighting style, or to feint an opponent. Perception and Kung Fu counter such feints.

LANGUAGES

If you want hablar espa-ol, or sound good ordering at a French restaurant, or read the Old Church Latin edition of the Necronomicon, you need to learn a few languages. This skill covers any language other than one's native tongue.

USING THE SKILL: This skill is different from the rest. Each level indicates fluency in one language (player decides which ones). When trying to decipher some arcane inscription, use Intelligence and Languages (knowing more languages helps). When trying to use a known language that you are familiar with, but less than fluent in, use Intelligence and Knowledge instead. After character creation, picking up new languages is difficult. This skill cannot be improved unless your character spends several months studying (see p. 74 for improving the Languages skill through experience).

MR. FIX-IT

If it's broken, this skill can fix it. If it ain't broken, it can improve it (sometimes into not working at all). If it just ain't, it can build it. Mr. Fix-It covers all technical and craft skills, from carpentry to mechanics to roadie work. This is what your character needs if she wants to rebuild the engine of that mean machine she's tricking out, or to make sure the Dingoes Ate My Baby concert comes through loud and clear. Adventure-wise, it could be used to set up elaborate and interesting traps.

USING THE SKILL: Perception and Mr. Fix-It for spotting a problem. Intelligence and Mr. Fix-It to do the repairs or construction work.

NOTICE

Need to get a clue? This is the skill. Without Notice, your character might miss the bloody handprint on the wall, the vampire sneaking past the window, or the oh-so friendly smile from Daisy in Chemistry. Notice measures a person's focus and discipline in observing her environment. This is the skill to have for spotting a critter lying in ambush around the corner or when you absolutely, positively need to find Waldo.

USING THE SKILL: Perception and Notice to spot things. Intelligence and Notice to remember something your character saw before but didn't realize was important until now. Notice is an active skill; it is relevant when a character specifically focuses her attention on something. Without the Notice skill, active sensing rolls suffer penalties from -1 to -3. For passive sensing (your Director will let you know when this is applicable, such as when resisting a Crime roll), a Perception and Notice roll or a Perception (doubled) roll may be used, whichever is more beneficial to the character.

OCCULTISM

Forbidden knowledge, the black arts, the stuff you only find in outlawed books or some really dark heavy metal songs. This is the skill of the truly arcane. It includes things like the basics of vampire-slaying (what works and what doesn't), identifying demons and their weaknesses, researching spells and rituals, and otherwise learning Things Man Was Not Meant to Know. Access to a good arcane library is a huge help (see p. 17). Your character needs the Occultism skill before she can become a proficient magician.

If your Director is feeling munificent, she might grant your spellcasting character a number of starting

spells equal to her Occultism skill (of the Director's choosing, no doubt).

USING THE SKILL: Intelligence and Occultism to recognize or research some supernatural name.

Perception and Occultism to identify a creature on first sight. Occultism is also used to cast spells, with bonuses from the character's Sorcery Level, if any (see p. 34).

SCIENCE

You can't blind them with science unless you know science. This skill covers all your basic sciences—physics, biology, chemistry and so on. It can come in handy when dealing with the supernatural, if only to figure out if something is really supernatural. Characters with this skill earn the privilege of saying "That's just scientifically impossible" a lot. At higher levels (five and above), weird science is possible—things like robots and a spray that will clean up those most-troublesome stains.

USING THE SKILL: Intelligence and Science for most things, from mixing a chemical formula to inventing a new device to repairing a broken thingamajig. Perception and Science are used to spot science-oriented clues, like identifying an unusual biochemical residue.

SPORTS

The ability to hit a ball with a stick, throw a ball, or do other things that may or may not involve balls. All sports are covered by this skill, except things like boxing and martial arts, which use Kung Fu, and gymnastics, which is part of Acrobatics. In a pinch, Sports can be used instead of other combat skills to do things like swing a baseball bat at a vampire's head or tackle a monster—if you really want to get that close to an icky.

USING THE SKILL: Depending on the nature of the sporting event, one of the three physical Attributes is used. Coordination- and agility-based tasks (throwing a baseball) depend on Dexterity, brute force activities (weight lifting or tackling) relies on Strength, and endurance sports (marathon running) use Constitution.

WILD CARD

Let's face it, some of you might notice that some skills are not covered in the list above (and you're probably right). To take care of that problem without resorting to fisticuffs, we have the unsung 18th skill on the list—the Wild Card. This is your fill-in-the-blanks skill—it can cover anything you want, with one caveat: The Wild Card skill cannot be broader than pre-existing skills (Weapons, for example, which would cover both Gun-Fu and Getting Medieval, earns a "nice try, bozo" award).

COMBAT MANEUVERS

By now, you are wondering about the list of Combat Maneuvers on your character sheet. If not, go back and put a few more points into the Notice skill. These are your character's preferred moves. You can find a list of Combat Maneuvers in Chapter Three: Rules, Borders, and an End Zone (see pp. 51-54). Head over there and pick the ones you want (there's no costs or limitations on these puppies). Combat Maneuvers have three elements.

BONUS: The total of your character's appropriate Attribute, skill, and other modifiers. The bonus is what you add to the attack or defense die roll.

DAMAGE: The base damage of the maneuver (if it does any damage). Add Success Levels after rolling.

NOTES: Any special effects. A stake through the heart, for example, does a lot more damage to vamps than to humans (although it's not good for humans, either).

DRAMA POINTS

Sometimes a character needs to succeed at something, no matter what odds. In a movie or TV show, the scriptwriter just decides the character succeeds, period. In the Cinematic Unisystem RPG, we simulate this with Drama Points. When you use a Drama Point, your character gets a huge bonus to her chances—think of it as the universe lending a helping hand. The impossible shot hits the target, the charging vampire trips and falls right into the stake, the bullet that hit your character was deflected by a lucky coin pendant hanging from her neck ... all those things are possible when you spend a Drama Point. The ups and downs of Drama Points are covered in Chapter Three: Rules, Borders, and an End Zone (see pp. 66-68). Characters start with a set amount of Drama Points depending on their Character Type. White Hats get more beginning points because that's what they do best.

FINISHING TOUCHES

These are the little things that mean so much—appearance, name, and the like. These touches bring life to your Cast Member and make her more than a list of numbers on a sheet of paper.

NAME: What's in a name? Among other things, it can provide some insights into your character's background and personality. An ethnic name can provide some depth. A weird first name, like Nicodemus, probably led to a lot of bullying as a kid. A nickname can add color (too many nicknames, of course, and your character may end up sounding like a refugee from *The Sopranos*).

APPEARANCE: You can go the "Police APB" route and be content to provide height, weight, eye and hair color, and the like, but some details make your character more memorable. A neat idea is to "cast" your character: "the part of my character will be played by such-and-such actor (or singer, or any public personality)." This provides a quick visual frame of reference. Everybody knows what the Austrian former bodybuilder turned into action hero looks like, for example. If everybody does it, the Director could even do a little Cast List: "Starring Harvey K. as Johann, Christina A. as Josie, and a young Brad P. as Luke."

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS: Maybe your character has some distinctive habit or mannerism—her hair is always a bit messy and tends to fall over her eyes, or she always looks nervous or uncomfortable around strangers. Any scars, tattoos, or piercings that are easily noticeable? How does your character normally dress? What kind of music is in her CD collection (or even albums if you are one of those ancient Watcher types)?

Hey, guess what? You're set to go. The stars of the show have been cast, and it's time to get the cameras rolling and the action started.

Rules, Borders, and an End Zone

Roleplaying is a bit like playing a board game and a bit like acting in a movie, but without the board or the script. Players sit around a table or in a den as they do for a game, and speak the lines for the Cast Members as they might in a movie. You, the Director, set the scene and control the Guest Stars and Adversaries. Dice determine what the results of a given action are. All simple and clear, right? Great, let's play. Ah, you think there's a bit more to it than that. You're right. Let's talk more.

Running a Game

As we noted in the first chapter, come game time each player needs a character sheet for her Cast Member, a writing implement, some scrap paper and a ten-sided die (or they can share a die, if they feel sharing-like). You Director types should have any notes you've made on the current Episode, this corebook, and other information you think you might need handy. The rest is done mainly by talking—describing the scene or what the characters are doing or acting out the Cast's dialog. Your job as Director is to describe the situation. For example, you might tell the players "It's a beautiful morning in Everytown USA. Too beautiful to be going to school, and yet that's where you are. First period is about to start. As you head off to your respective classrooms, someone starts screaming in horror. What do you do?" This is where the Cast Members get busy.

The players describe what they are doing and speak for their characters. One might say "Uh-oh. Something wicked this way comes. I head over to see what's going on."

Another could respond "I rush to my locker and grab my Official Slaying Kit ... just in case."

Most of the time, when a player wants her Cast Member to do something, it gets done—talking, walking, walking and chewing gum, leaping up in class and screaming "spiders!" (embarrassing, but not difficult to do). Sometimes however, the outcome of an action is in doubt. Just because a Cast Member wants to stake a vampire for example, does not mean the vampire is going to get staked. That's where the dice and the numbers on the character sheet come in.

The Basics

In the Unisystem, a die is rolled when a character is trying to do something important, and when there's some chance of things going wrong (see *To Roll or Not to Roll*, p. 122). You tell the players when to roll and what character sheet numbers to add to the roll. The die roll represents luck and chance; the character sheet numbers are the skills and natural abilities of the Cast Member. The better those skills are, the more likely that the character will succeed. An sharpshooter will hit the target more often than someone who closes her eyes and flinches when a gun goes off. Sometimes, luck allows the untrained to succeed, and the expert to fail—that's where the die rolling comes in.

The basic mechanic

D10 roll + Attribute + (Attribute or Skill): Basic Success: 9

D10: A ten-sided die. Higher is better.

ATTRIBUTE: The character's natural abilities. Use the Cast Member's Strength to see if she can lift a bag of cement over her head or Dexterity to pick someone's pocket. In some situations (lifting something for example), only Attributes are used. Usually in those cases, roll and add the character's Attribute doubled (e.g., if the Cast Member has Dexterity 3, add six to Dexterity-based rolls). In certain cases ... say, when footing is treacherous or positioning awkward, no skill is used and the Attribute is not doubled. Those are pretty rare circumstances though. Also, sometimes two different Attributes (no doubling) are used instead of an Attribute and skill. As the Director, this is ultimately your call.

SKILL: The character's learned abilities. Use Kung Fu to punch someone, or Crime to pick someone's pocket. Always use an Attribute alongside a skill.

The player announces what her character intends to do. You tell her what Skill and Attribute to add to the roll. The player rolls the dice and adds the Attribute/Skill combo to the result. If the total, after all modifiers, is nine or higher, the character has succeeded. Otherwise, failure-city.

Success Levels

In some situations, you Director folk need to know more than whether the character has succeeded at something—you need how well she succeeded. When that's the case, check the result against the Success Level Chart on the next page (it's also on the character sheet—handy, no?). The greater the number of Success Levels, the better the character did. Some difficult tasks require more than one Success Level.

Success Levels Table		
Roll	Success Levels	Description
9-10	1	Adequate
11-12	2	Decent
13-14	3	Good
15-16	4	Very Good
17-20	5	Excellent
21-23	6	Extraordinary
24-26	7	Mind-boggling
27-29	8	Outrageous
30-32	9	Superheroic
33-35	10	God-like
+3	+1	It just keeps getting better...

Resisted Actions

Sometimes, an action is resisted. This usually happens when the character is trying to do something someone else would rather didn't happen. If a character is trying to grab some hair from a potential witch's hairbrush, there is a chance that the girl will notice, for example. Also, close combat is a biggie on the Resisted Action front. Resisted Actions involve two or more characters. Both make their rolls as above. If one succeeds (gets a total of nine or above) and the other doesn't ... well, that's pretty easy. If both succeed, the one with the higher total wins. If both fail, nobody accomplishes anything. If you still need a comparison, the lower roll fails more. In case of a tie, the defender (if there is a defender) wins; otherwise it is just a tie. Guest Stars and Adversary characters typically use a fixed value (no roll) for their action (the Muscle, Combat or Brains Score, see p. 47); the Cast Member needs to beat those Scores to succeed at the Resisted Action. If defending, the Cast Member needs to beat or tie those Scores.

Life and the Meaning of Success Levels

So what's the deal with Success Levels? How important are they to the game? What do all those

numbers mean, and why should you care? Most of the time, Success Levels don't matter much. For most things, a result of nine or greater means the Cast Member has succeeded at whatever task was being attempted. Sometimes however, just doing something is not as important as doing it well, and that's where Success Levels come in. Let us elaborate.

CREATIVE STUFF: A music performance, writing a great novel or telling a good lie—how well the character did it is going to be pretty important. One Success Level is pretty mediocre; she didn't do anything wrong, but it didn't look too good. No rotten tomatoes get thrown, but she gets quite a few yawns. If the audience was already hostile or suspicious, whatever was being attempted is not going to work. Two Success Levels is decent—she pulls it off (whatever it is) without a hitch and looked competent doing so. Three Success Levels is a good job—this is where people get real applause and cheers. High fives all around. Four Success Levels gets standing ovations, favorable reviews from most critics, maybe even a record contract. At five and above, she is on fire (in a good way); everything worked perfectly and almost everybody loves what she did.

HURTING AND HEALING YOUR FELLOW MAN: When the character attacks someone, how well she struck influences how much she hurt the target. Add the Success Levels of the attack roll to the base damage of the attack. On the flip side, for uses of the Doctor Skill, each Success Level heals one point of damage.

LENGTHY TASKS: Things that take some time (like breaking down a door or lifting something really heavy) may require the Cast Member to get a high number of Success Levels, usually in the 5+ range. Characters can accumulate Success Levels by trying over and over. For example, you might decide that breaking down a sturdy door requires eight Success Levels. A strong Cast Member could roll well enough to get all eight Success Levels in one or two tries, while a wimpier character would take several tries (at one to two Success Levels a pop, it might take four to six rolls before the door breaks).

Roll Modifiers

In addition to skill and Attribute levels, other factors may add bonuses or penalties to the roll. Easy tasks gain bonuses, while difficult and complex ones incur penalties. The astute among you will notice that modifiers are comparable to Success Levels (see p. 44). Negative modifiers make it harder to reach the Success Level needed; positive ones make it easier. But modifiers allow finer adjustments (a +1 bonus affects a roll but does not amount to a full Success Level change). Also, positive modifiers could transform a roll into a success in a way that Success Level decreases can't (i.e., once you lower the required Success Levels to one, you can't go any lower).

The Base Modifiers Table gives some guidelines. In addition to those modifiers, Drama Points can add bonuses to rolls (see p. 66).

Novice Directors should go light on the modifier action; after you have a few games in your backpack, feel free to add them as needed to make things more challenging. In the case of positive modifiers, think carefully about whether a roll is needed or not, bringing us neatly to our next subject ...

Base Modifiers Table	
EASY:	+5
MODERATE:	+3 to +4
AVERAGE:	+1 to +2
CHALLENGING:	No modifier
DIFFICULT:	-1 to -2
VERY DIFFICULT:	-3 to -5
HEROIC:	-6 to -9
SHAAH, RIGHT:	-10 or worse

To Roll or Not to Roll

Die rolls are best only when the situation has some dramatic value and where the outcome is in doubt. Keeping rolls to a minimum allows players to get involved in the story. Generally, if the action is routine or not important, rolling shouldn't be involved. Also, some things should be so ridiculously easy that making rolls is a waste of time—no need for Perception and Notice rolls to spot a twelve-foot tall demon running down Main Street, for example. Some basic pointers follow.

GOOD TIMES TO ROLL: Shooting a crossbow bolt at a charging vampire; searching a murder scene for clues; climbing a chain-link fence with three rabid dogs or hell hounds—or rabid hell hounds—in pursuit.

BAD TIMES TO ROLL: Parallel parking; shooting a crossbow bolt at a paper target (unless wagering is involved); searching the bedroom for a missing sock (whether dirty or not); climbing a chain-link fence with plenty of time and no pressing circumstances. Not every situation is going to be as clear-cut as those described above, but in general, you should try to keep the action flowing. The less time the players spend rolling dice, the more time they can spend getting into their characters and thinking up all those delightful witty comebacks that earn you more Drama Dice.

Using Attributes and Skills

As we said, when rolling is called for, you Director dudes decide what skills and Attributes the player adds to her roll. The skill descriptions in Chapter Two: Some Assembly Required provide some guidelines. Here we give you a few more words of wisdom directed at Attributes.

STRENGTH: Strength affects how much damage the Cast Member inflicts in hand-to-hand combat, which is very important in the Ciniverse. Beyond that, Strength is used when brute force is key. Lifting a heavy object would use Strength (doubled), or Strength and Sports if the character has some weightlifting background. Strength is also used when trying to tackle someone to the ground (use it with Kung Fu or Sports) or when breaking free from someone's grip (using Strength (doubled) or Strength and Kung Fu, whichever is better).

DEXTERITY: Most physical actions use Dexterity. Dexterity includes both general agility and nimbleness (for use with Acrobatics and Kung Fu) and fine coordination (for things like Crime).

CONSTITUTION: The least-used Attribute in terms of rolls, Constitution comes in handy when the character needs to resist fatigue, injury and disease. For most of those rolls, add the character's Constitution (doubled). Some Sports rolls (marathon running, for example) use Constitution instead of Dexterity. Constitution also controls things like singing ability (use Constitution and Artist to sing, for example).

INTELLIGENCE: Used in any roll where a character's memory and intellectual ability are important. It helps in such things as deciphering some ancient mystical text (Intelligence and Occultism) or outsmarting an enemy in a brawl (Intelligence and Kung Fu). Sometimes it is hard to decide whether to use Intelligence or Perception in a roll. Rule of thumb: if memory or thinking ability is the most important element, use Intelligence instead.

PERCEPTION: If the roll requires the character to spot something, Perception is the Attribute to use. It measures how aware the Cast Member is of her surroundings. Perception is most commonly used with Notice, but almost every skill can be used with Perception. To wit (trés legallike, non?), Perception and Kung Fu can be used to detect some weakness in an opponent's fighting style.

WILLPOWER: Willpower is mostly used defensively, but it can also apply to a number of skill rolls. Trying to intimidate others or avoid being intimidated, would use Willpower and Influence, for example. When casting spells, Willpower is the key Attribute (Willpower and Occultism to perform a ritual).

Ability Scores

To keep die rolling to the bare minimum, the basic rules apply only to Cast Members and (if you so choose) important Guest Stars and Adversaries. Rather than roll for every vampire, demon and high school principal that you plotmasters (much more James Bond than Director, eh?) throw in the path of our heroes, the Guest Stars' and Adversaries' Attribute and skill levels are condensed into Ability Scores. The scores are the "roll totals" of those characters. Whenever Cast Members need to fight or outwit these characters, they need to beat the Ability Score number. No dice for them!

Ability Scores are generated by taking the character's Attribute and skill averages and adding six to the total. Most Ability Scores will be in the 9-14 range, but powerful monsters and skilled Guest Stars may have much higher levels. There are three Ability Scores: Muscle, Combat and Brains.

MUSCLE: This score is used for contests of strength—things like tackles, breaking free from grapples and holds, strangulation and similar brute force situations. Cast Members need to tie or beat the Muscle Score number with their rolls. Muscle is double the Strength level of the character plus six. Some creatures have bonuses for extra limbs ('specially tentacles and other creepy stuff).

COMBAT: This is the number used for attacks and defenses. Add the character's Dexterity level, the average of her combat-oriented skill levels, and six. This score determines the Success Levels of an attack; add those Success Levels to the base damage of the attack. So, if Vamp X's Combat Score is 17, she has five attack Success Levels; she adds five to the damage of any attack that connects. Nasty critter.

BRAINS: This score applies to all mental and perception abilities of the character or creature. It is used to spot enemies, resist attempts to control or deceive the character, use any magical or supernatural ability, or figure out the Hunter's quips. It typically uses the average of the character's mental Attributes (Intelligence,

Perception, and Willpower) and the average of any appropriate skills, plus six.

PAR EXAMPLE: You cast a typical vampire foe with Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Constitution 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, and Willpower 2. The Muscle Score is an impressive 16 (Strength (doubled) plus six). Combat is a 12—you decide the vamp's effective skill in combat is two, plus four for Dexterity and the base of six. For Brains, the total is a 10—the average of the critter's mental Attributes is two, with an average skill level of two. If the vampire tries to grapple somebody, she uses the Combat Score + 2. The Cast Member would have to tie or beat that 14 with her roll and modifiers. To punch somebody, Combat is used; avoiding the unpleasantness that is the vamp's grime-encrusted claws requires a defense roll total of 12 or higher. If our heroes try to sneak past the vamp though, their totals need only be 11 or higher (they have to beat the Brains Score of 10).

Movement

The Cinimatic Unisystem RPG is meant to be played fast and loose, with a focus on story and fun. For the most part, precise movement actions are not going to be needed. Simply let the characters get where they want to be and move the action along.

Every so often, you may decide that how far a character can move in any given Turn (see p. 57) is important. In those cases, add that character's Dexterity and Constitution together. This result is how many yards the character may move in a second (times five for a Turn). Doubling the sum of Dexterity and Constitution shows how many miles per hour that character can run.

Chases: Movement concerns may also arise during a chase scene. First, you must decide how much of a lead the chatee has on the chaser. We suggest granting +1 per Turn of head start. Then have the two racers perform a Dexterity (doubled), or Dexterity and Sports Resisted Action. The winner gains +1 per Turn. So if the lead sprinter started with a three Turn head start (+3) and the chaser won the first Resisted Action, the lead would be down to +2. Once the lead is eliminated (brought down to 0), the chatee is caught; if it grows to +5, the chatee gets away.

Leaping: Wire work, anyone? If you need to know how high or far a character can jump, refer to the Jump Table. With a good running start, double those distances. A Dexterity and Acrobatics roll (or the Combat Score) increases the character's jumping distance by either one yard (in length) or one foot (in height) per Success Level.

Climbing: This is accomplished with a Dexterity and Acrobatics roll (or the Combat Score) with modifiers depending on the condition of the surface to be scaled. No modifiers are necessary if good hand-holds are available (climbing up a pipe bolted to the wall); -6 is applied when the wall is rain-soaked marble blocks. Some surfaces, like wet glass, just aren't climbable. If you need to know how far a character travels in one Turn, multiply the Success Levels of the roll or Score by one yard.

Jump Table		
Strength	High Jump	Long Jump
1-2	1 foot	2 yards
3	2 feet	3 yards
4-5	4 feet	5 yards
6	5 feet	6 yards
7-8	7 feet	8 yards
9-10	10 feet	10 yards
+1	+2 feet	+1 yard

Working Together

When two or more characters gang together to get something done, it's usually a good thing. They can fact-check each other, engage in entertaining repartee, and generally share the load. But it ain't all happiness and comradery all the time. There are times when a weak link can be a big problem.

If the task is long-term or low-tension, such as research or construction, all the participants roll and add their Success Levels together. This is used when each member of the gang has her own work space and communication is easy. If anyone fails, she adds no benefit but also causes no penalty. All that help should make the task go quicker.

It's not so simple when time is short, distractions abound, or when coordination needs to be precise (say casting a spell). In those cases, one person (usually the one with the best chance or in the best position) takes the lead. The others roll separately and contribute a +1 bonus per Success Level to the leader's roll. The leader adds up all the bonuses and applies them to her roll before determining Success Levels. Messing up can be a real downer; any helper's failure subtracts two from the leader's final result.

Hitting the Books: Research

Sometimes the Cast Members can't kick a monster's butt until they know what it is, what its vulnerabilities are, and even where its butt is. Research, investigation, and computer hacking are an important part of any Series. Most of this dull stuff is done "off-camera" though. The show rarely (okay never) spends valuable screen time showing the dull process of research or investigation. It's always done in montage or a quick jump cut. Which leads to the rule "When it's on screen, it's Important" Have the characters roll, figure out how long it's going to take them, allow them a couple of opportunities to come up with witty lines while doing their research and then give them whatever information (if any) they've gleaned.

To research a monster's identity or find a new spell, use Intelligence and Occultism. The Occult Library Quality (see p. 17) is invaluable here—let's face it, you're not going to discover the hidden vulnerability of a Cytorrakkian demon in the Encyclopedia Britannica (but you could find it in the pages of Eden Studios Presents, Vol. 1), no matter how long you spend reading it. If the characters don't have the right books, the research is an automatic failure. You do not have to tell them that though. Failure is part of drama, after all. Then you could be kind and allow the Cast Members to figure out the name of the book or books they need to get the desired information. Oddly enough, securing them requests a bit of a mini-quest with ample opportunities for combat and sarcasm.

Hacking works pretty much the same way, except with Intelligence and Computers ... oh ... and without the books. Some databases are harder to break into than others, but in the Ciniverse a highschool student routinely hacks into all kinds of sensitive information, so don't penalize the characters too much. Just like research, hacking happens off-camera most of the time; don't waste time with complex cyberpunk flow-charts (unless that's what you and your group are into, who are we to judge?).

Other types of research and investigation may use Knowledge or Crime instead of the skills noted above. Then there's good old-fashioned legwork—asking questions, following people around, beating up Willy and so on. Those can be roleplayed, especially if the investigator is likely to get herself in trouble.

Fear and Loathing: Getting the Wiggins

Life in the Ciniverse can be downright scary ... and that's on a good day. Whether a character discovers that her date is a flesh-eating insect or sees a vampire digging itself out of its grave, she is likely to wig once in a while. Most of the time, this should be roleplayed rather than determined by rolls—if the characters encounter a corpse, they can react to it as they will. During potential combat situations though, the fainthearted may freeze for a crucial moment, or worse.

When the big hairy scary happens, the characters have to make a Willpower (doubled) roll (Qualities like Nerves of Steel or Fast Reaction Time help). This is called a Fear Test. Feel free to add modifiers to taste. We've provided a handy chart with suggestions. If the result of the roll is nine or higher, the character may be afraid or apprehensive, but she can act normally. If the result is eight or less, she wigs out. Use the Panic Table for inspiration.

For the most part, Fear Tests and their repercussions are reserved for special, climactic situations (where the modifiers are plentiful) and Supporting Cast Members (with weaker wills). You'll find Willpower high enough among most Cast Members that little pants-wetting occurs. That's all part of the hero thing; we don't want the gang breaking and running at the drop of a demon tusk. For those looking for more "horror," use Willpower (not doubled) or double the penalties.

Fear Test Modifiers Chart	
Vamp with his "game face" on:	-1
Hideous demon creature:	Half the creature's Attractiveness, rounded down (e.g., a critter with Attractiveness -7 would give a -3 to Fear Tests)
Splatter factor:	-1 for some blood; -2 for a murder victim's body; -3 for R-rated gore; -4 for cult film carnage

Fear Test Modifiers Chart

Sudden or unexpected encounter:	Add -2 to any other applicable modifiers (e.g., the bloody corpse falls out of a locker, the horrific vampire springs from the shadows, and so on).
Familiarity Factor:	After seeing it often enough (third or fourth encounter), eliminate the penalty to the roll.

Panic Table

Roll Result	Effect
7-8	Startled: The character is startled but not paralyzed, and can act normally. Initiative is lost, however; the critter wins Initiative automatically on that Turn.
5-6	Freak out: The character screams and/or flinches away. Only defense actions can be attempted on that Turn and the character cannot go on Full Defense.
3-4	Run Away!: The character takes off running like a spider-eating spine-missing Zeppo for a full Turn, unless cornered, in which case cowering in terror is on the agenda. No attacks are possible and defense actions are at -2. After each Turn (or handful of seconds), a new Fear Test can be rolled (reduce any penalties by one with each successive Turn, until the character snaps out of it).
2 or less	Total Terror: The character is not in control of her actions. She may lose her lunch, pass out or suffer some other oh-so-embarrassing fate.

COMBAT

Fighting the forces of darkness requires combat—most vampires won't go quietly into the night. Combat in the Unisystem uses the same rules described above, but with a few extra features. Combat does not have to dominate a game, but it just wouldn't be proper to have an Episode without at least a dose of butt-kicking action.

When combat starts, you as Director need to help choreograph the action. Sometimes it's easy (the gang is fighting one big nasty demon) but other times we're talking containment area breach (running melee involving the gang, commandos and dozens of vampires and demons). The rules presented in this chapter are meant to help keep things flowing; the action should be fast and furious, just like in the show.

Breaking It Down: Turns, Initiative, and Actions

To make things go a bit easier when the rough stuff starts, the action is divided into segments, known as Turns. A game Turn represents a short bit of time—five seconds or so—during which characters can attack and defend. During a Turn, a normal character can attack once and defend against one attack without penalties. Experienced or fast characters can make more than one attack during a Turn (see p. 55).

Each turn has three phases: Intentions (where the players say what their Cast Members intend to do), Initiative (determining who goes first—not to be confused with the organization of the same name), and Actions (where the fight is resolved and damage, if any, is meted out). A fight usually lasts more than one Turn, unless the characters are really on the ball.

INTENTIONS: At the beginning of the Turn, ask the players whose characters are involved for intentions—what the characters want to do. Intentions can include such things as “I call on the forces of Hecate to let me see things as they truly are,” “I scream like a little girl and try to run away,” or “I launch a spin kick followed by two fast punches.” Decide if the action being attempted is feasible, or if it will take more than one Turn to complete. If there is a problem with the intention, and it's something the character would know, warn the player. Otherwise, the intention stands.

INITIATIVE: At the beginning of a fight, you determine who attacks first. Common sense is the first determinant of Initiative. What are the circumstances of the fight? If it's an ambush, for example, the ambushers go first. If a character is attacking a gun-toting goon, and is too far away to grab it, the gunman gets to shoot first.

Unleashing a mental or supernatural power goes before a kick, and so on. Generally, mental actions (spells and similar supernatural powers) go first, followed by ranged weapons (guns, crossbows, cruise missiles) and finally by good old punches, kicks, baseball bats and “full copper re-pipes.”

If the situation is less clear-cut (a White Hat chances upon a vampire, for example), the character with

the highest Dexterity (modified by Fast Reaction Time) goes first. If both sides have the same Dexterity (and they both have or lack Fast Reaction Time), each side rolls a die. The higher roll wins; a tie means both characters act at the same time (really painful if they were punching each other in the face). During subsequent Turns, determine Initiative in the same manner, or award it to the character who has momentum (whoever managed to connect a punch without being hit back, for example).

ACTION: Whoever wins Initiative attacks first (assuming the Intention involved an attack). The target may be able to defend against the attack. Attacks are resolved using the basic game mechanic—the player rolls a D10 and adds the Attribute and skill involved, plus or minus any modifiers. The defender does likewise, and the higher (or equal if defending) roll gets their way. If the defender has no defense action available, or decides to reserve her actions for offense or movement, she defends with a roll result of zero. In effect, the blow lands unless the attacker's roll is nine or lower (in which everyone stands around looking silly). When fighting Guest Stars or Adversaries, attacks have to beat (defenses beat or tie) the target's Combat Score to be successful.

If an attack hits, damage is determined based on the attack's base damage, the Success Levels of the attack roll, the defender's armor, and any damage type modifiers. This is also when players (and you Directors) can spend Drama Points to get an edge during the fight (see p. 66).

After the first attacker is done, the second gets to go (no shocker there), and so on.

Keeping it Lively

Something isn't right if a typical combat goes like this:

"What do you do?"

"I punch the vampire."

"Roll and tell me what you get."

(Rolls)

"Sixteen—no, seventeen. Five Success Levels."

"Okay, you hit him. Add five to your base damage."

"Er, that's 15 points."

"The vampire is punching you back now. Roll and tell me what you get."

Ugh. Double ugh.

Description, description, description. If you don't create a picture of the action in the minds of the players, action sequences are going to get boring and repetitive. Players should help, too. They should try to describe their characters' actions. The best way to encourage that is to be descriptive and to reward players who go beyond the rules to help create that Cinematic feeling we know and love. Try to visualize the action. Vampires and other monsters have a lot of options. They might try to punch their victims ("The vampire's fist is on a collision course with your head. What do you do?"), or grapple them ("Growling, the vamp tries to bull-rush you"), or use some improvised weapon ("This vamp's got a baseball bat and he wants to hit your head out of the park"). If the player describes some interesting maneuver ("I duck under the swing and try to redirect the bat so the vampire hits himself in the face"), let her attempt it without penalty, or even give her some bonuses (usually a +1 or +2, or maybe the Success Level of the previous Combat Maneuver or defense roll). For really heroic stuff ("I somersault and walk all over the guy's face, all Matrix-y like"), Drama Points may have to come into play, though.

Describing the effects of the characters' actions also helps the players feel they are kicking butt rather than beating the stuffing out of numbers on a piece of paper. "The look on the vampire's face is major league surprise—just before she explodes in a cloud of dust." "The punch spins the vampire like a top. She knocks over a park bench and lands in a heap." "For a second, it looks like nothing happened. Then the demon's head rolls off her shoulders. That's gotta hurt." Finally, if you have to choose between rules and fun, go for the fun. Be flexible—no rules system is going to cover all the bases and if your gut feeling tells you that it's better to ignore or modify the rules for dramatic purposes, your gut is probably right.

Initiative Rolls

If your group absolutely, positively needs something more random for their Initiative rolls, have each player involved in a combat roll a D10 and add her character's Dexterity (plus any Fast Reaction Time bonuses) to the total. The character with the highest total goes first, and so on.

Combat Maneuvers

When the time for talk is over, and the time for senseless violence begins, a nice repertoire of action moves can be a real face-saver. Punches and kicks are all right, but spicing them up with flying jump kicks, feints, and the ever-so-important stake through the heart is where the Ciniverse shines. The Combat Maneuver

area on the character sheet gives players a place for all the information on the diverse ways in which their Cast Members can inflict pain and suffering on the forces of evil. The most common ways to do unto others before others do unto you are described in detail over the next several pages. The appropriate roll modifiers and the base damage inflicted is also listed (damage is discussed more on p. 57). Everything is also gathered in a nice neat reference table in Appendix I (see p. 140). Handy or what?

To make things quicker, Attributes, skills, and modifiers should be summarized in the Maneuvers section of the character sheet or Quick Sheet. These areas should have the character's favorite moves already pre-figured.

Note that any character may list any maneuver on her sheet; there are no requirements or limits. Still, don't go nuts here; it makes little sense to list most or all maneuvers, regardless of whether the character has the skills or equipment to perform them.

AIMING: Sometimes it pays to take careful aim—if the character misses the vampire's heart with a crossbow shot, she may not get a second chance. Aiming delays the shot action until near the end of a Turn. The player adds Perception and the appropriate skill (Gun Fu for guns, Getting Medieval for archaic ranged weapons) to the roll or just uses the Brains Score. The shot action roll gets a bonus equal to the Success Levels of the Aiming roll.

BOW SHOT: The Robin Hood maneuver. A character can fire a bow as fast as she can draw and shoot; multiple shots use the multiple actions penalties (see p. 57). A Bow Shot uses a Dexterity and Getting Medieval - 2 roll, or Combat Score - 2, and its base damage is (4 x Strength) points (Slash/stab type; to a maximum of 20). Modifiers due to range are applicable (see p. 56).

BREAK NECK: Before this maneuver may be attempted, the character must succeed at a Grapple (see p. 52). After that, the attacker rolls and adds Strength and Kung Fu, or just uses the Muscle Score. The defender rolls and adds Strength and Constitution. If the attacker's roll is higher, the base damage is (4 x Strength) points (Bash type). If the total damage reduces the defender to -10 Life Points, she must pass a Survival Test (see p. 62) with an added penalty equal to the Success Levels of the Break Neck attack (in addition to any normal Survival Test modifiers; this is due to the very sensitive nature of the neck for us normal human types). If she fails, you get that telltale crunching sound with fatal results. If the defender is a vampire and the successful attack reduces it to -10 Life Points, she has to pass a Survival Test (but no special modifiers are applied; undead aren't so sensitive—in any sense of the word). On the vamp's failure, her head is ripped off and she is dusted—gruesome but pretty impressive.

CATCH WEAPON: Isn't it super cool when a character just snatches sharp stuff out of the air? Don't try it at home—it's only for trained professionals. This maneuver uses a Dexterity and Kung Fu - 5 roll, or the Combat Score - 5. If the catcher's roll is not greater or equal to the thrower's roll, the weapon attack does an additional +5 base damage (nothing like jumping into the flight path of an object built for harm). On the other hand, if the catcher's roll works, she has a weapon all ready to go. And remember, reusing helps save the Earth.

CHOKE: Before this maneuver may be attempted, the character must succeed at a Grapple (see p. 52). After that, the attacker rolls and adds her Strength and Kung Fu, or just uses her Muscle Score. The defender rolls and adds her Strength and Constitution (or again uses the Muscle Score). If the attack result is higher, the base damage is (Strength - 1) points (Bash type). Furthermore, the defender cannot breathe (see Suffocation, p. 63). She is at -2 to all actions—being choked to death can be quite distracting.

CROSSBOW SHOT: Crossbows are easier to use than bows, but they take longer to reload. It takes one Turn to reload a crossbow (very hard to do when a vampire is charging). Crossbow shots use a Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll, or the Combat Score, and do 16 points of base damage (Slash/stab type). Modifiers due to range are applicable (see p. 56).

DECAPITATION: Your basic samurai killing slash; it needs a sword, axe, or similar big slashing weapon. Decapitation uses a Dexterity and Getting Medieval -5 roll, or the Combat Score -5, but damage is multiplied by five (after Success Level bonuses are added and armor effects subtracted; damage type is not applied; weapon damage is listed on p. 58). If the damage is enough to bring the victim to -10 Life Points or less, a Survival Test is in order (see p. 62). If that fails, the head comes off, and the rating of the show goes up to TV-M. Flashy way to dust vampires.

DISARM: Great for those times when a character needs to borrow someone's knife and its current owner isn't in the mood to share ... or only wants to let her have it pointy-end first. Disarm uses a Resisted Action with a Dexterity and Getting Medieval - 2 roll, or Dexterity and Kung Fu - 3 roll, or the Combat Score - 2 against the target's Parry action.

DODGE: This is where the hero ducks, somersaults or leaps out of the way of an attack. Dodging hand-to-hand attacks can be done once per Turn without penalty; dodging missile attacks (bullets, ninja stars, harpoons) suffers a -2 penalty on top of any other modifiers. Use a roll and add Dexterity and the highest appropriate skill (Acrobatics, Getting Medieval, or Kung Fu), or just use the Combat Score.

FAST DRAW: You can't have a cool gunfight in the Old West without a fast-draw contest. Each drawing

character uses a Dexterity and Gun Fu -3 roll, or just her Combat Score -3. The one with the highest total on the roll or modified Combat Score gets to shoot first (which requires a separate Gunshot Maneuver roll or Combat Score). Fast Reaction Time adds +3 to the roll or Score. If one of the people involved has a gun already in her hand, she gets a +6 to the roll or Score, for obvious reasons. If the shooter takes out the shootee with her first shot, assume the shootee misses completely.

This maneuver is unique enough that it can also be picked up as a Wild Card Skill. In that case, the Wild Card (Fast-Draw) Skill replaces Gun Fu for this roll and no penalty is applied. Fast-Draw can also be used for other weapons, like knives or stakes, in which case use the Getting Medieval Skill instead of Gun Fu. If taken as a Wild Card Skill, the character can use Fast-Draw on any weapon that can be holstered or pocketed.

FEINT: The art of faking out the adversary and smacking her from an unexpected direction. A Feint counts as a Resisted Action. It uses an Intelligence and Kung Fu or Getting Medieval roll, or the Brains Score, and is resisted by the target's roll adding Perception and either of those skills, or just the Brains Score. If the attacker wins, she can add the Success Levels of the Feint roll to her next attack action roll against the same opponent.

GRAPPLE: Sometimes a character wants to grab someone and shake 'em until her teeth rattle in her head. She has to grapple them first, though. Grabbing people is fairly easy; use a Dexterity and Kung Fu + 2 roll, or the Combat Score + 2. The victim resists with a Dodge maneuver. Vampires and other goon types often try to grab their victims either to capture them or set them up for some necking action. The attacker has to decide what part of the body to grab: limbs, the whole body, or the neck. When Grappled, the target is at -2 to actions that involve the grappled limb, or -1 to all actions if grappled around the body. If both arms are grappled by two attackers, the victim is at -4 to most rolls, and cannot Dodge. A neck grapple doesn't impair the target, but sets him up for either the Break Neck or Choke action. The victim can try to break free with a Strength (doubled) roll, or the Muscle Score versus another Grapple maneuver.

GROIN SHOT: Hitting below the belt may be frowned upon by the old-school pugilists, but they've been dead like forever, so who cares what they think? The attack employs another attack maneuver, with a -3 penalty to the roll or score. Damage is normal, but a male victim must gain at least one Success Level with a Willpower (doubled) roll (or the Brains Score) minus double the Success Levels of the attack. If not, he is knocked down and unable to do anything for the Turn. Females aren't completely unscathed either, but the Willpower roll (or Brains Score) suffers only a -1 penalty. Every Turn after the first, the character can make a new roll with a cumulative +1 bonus to recover.

The groin shot can be used with several different maneuvers. Kicks are the most common, but a punch, a weapon attack (nobody wants a baseball bat impacting there), and even a head butt (you do what you gotta do sometimes, eh?) may be used.

DEFINITELY EXAMPLE TIME: Our Heroine gets really riled and kicks a brand-new vamp (see p. 136) where it counts. Will winds up with an attack roll of 17 (pretty sweet), or five Success Levels. She does her normal four base points of Bash damage, plus five for the Success Levels, but that's not all folks. The vamp compares his Brains Score (9) unfavorably with double Will's Success Levels (10). Things are not looking good for the bloodsucker.

GUNSHOT: Your basic assault with a deadly weapon. Point towards enemy, pull trigger. Big boom ensues. Use a Dexterity and Gun Fu roll, or the Combat Score. Base damage varies depending on the gun used (see p. 58), but all benefit from Bullet type damage (see p. 57). Modifiers due to range are applicable (see p. 56).

HEAD BUTT: Sometimes, a character has to use the old noggin in ways not recommended by the Surgeon General. Head butts are very effective if the target is grappled or very close, because it's hard to dodge out of the way. If the Head Butt misses, though, the attacker hits the target with the wrong part of the head, and she takes the damage instead of the victim. Head Butts use a Dexterity + Kung Fu - 2 roll, or the Combat Score -2, and do (2 x Strength) base points of damage (Bash type).

JUMP KICK: To impress friends and smite foes, few things beat a Jump Kick. It's not easy to do, but when done right, it puts the kick back into "butt-kicking." Jump Kicks require two rolls, but count as a single action. The first is a Dexterity and Acrobatics roll, or use the Combat Score, to get airborne; the second is a Dexterity + Kung Fu - 3 roll, or Combat Score - 3. The kick does 3 x (Strength + 1) base points of damage (Bash type), and gains an additional damage bonus equal to the Success Levels of the Dexterity and Acrobatics roll or Combat Score. Of course, if either of the rolls miss, the Jump Kick becomes a Jump Stumble (the Cast Member falls down and loses untold style points). A Jump Kick is the only attack action the character can attempt on that Turn (no multi-actions with this puppy).

KICK: The plain vanilla kick is a simple yet effective way to put a hurting on someone. If a kick is parried, the target has a golden chance to try and grapple the leg, though. The Kick uses a Dexterity and Kung Fu - 1 roll, or the Combat Score - 1, but football and soccer players can replace Kung Fu with Sports if they like. Ditto for ballet dancers (use Art instead of Sport). Base damage is 2 x (Strength + 1) points (Bash type).

KNOCKOUT: Sometimes a character wants to take somebody out without inflicting permanent damage.

Any Bash attack (punches, kicks, baseball bats, and so on) can be turned into a Knockout attack, using a Dexterity and Kung Fu -2 roll, or Dexterity and Getting Medieval -2 roll, or the Combat Score - 2. The total damage of the attack is halved, but the victim has to make a Constitution (doubled) roll (or use the Muscle Score) with a penalty equal to the Success Levels of the Knockout roll, or she goes down for the count. Recovery from a knockout is in your fiendish Directory hands; the victim may recover in a few turns, or wake up an hour later ... possibly in captivity.

MELEE WEAPON: This covers swinging swords and axes, stabbing, and other close combat actions that involve sticking foreign objects into other people, or smashing said objects onto them. It uses a Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll, or the Combat Score. Baseball or hockey players can substitute Sports to swing stick-like weapons (fencers and archery enthusiasts use Getting Medieval, though). Since weapons do different types and amounts of damage (see p. 58), each weapon should have its own listing in the Combat Maneuver area of the character sheet.

PARRY: Your basic blocking move, used to deflect close combat attacks. Weapons may only be parried by weapons; a hand-to-hand attack may be parried by a weapon and that's going to cause normal damage for that weapon to the bonehead who rushed in unarmed. A Parry uses a Dexterity and Kung Fu roll, or a Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll, or the Combat Score. Thrown weapons can be parried at a -2 penalty. Arrows and crossbow bolts are parried at a -6 penalty. No character can parry bullets unless she's a princess from a mysterious Amazon island.

PUNCH: Closed fist, traveling quickly towards the target. Uses a Dexterity and Kung Fu roll, or the Combat Score, and does 2 x Strength points of damage (Bash type). 'Nuff said.

SLAM-TACKLE: The All-American football maneuver that can stop touchdowns or bring down fleeing vampires. Tackles use Strength and Sports rolls, or Muscle Scores, and can be Dodged but not Parried. On a successful hit, the target takes 2 x Strength base points of damage (Bash type) and, if she fails to resist with a Strength (not doubled) roll or the Muscle Score divided by two, she goes down hard. At the end of a successful tackle, the attacker can grapple the victim's legs or torso without rolling. Tackling is the only attack that can be attempted on that Turn (no multi-actions here either, nice try).

SPIN KICK: This is a spinning or roundhouse kick, harder to execute but delivering a great deal more damage. When a character really wants to leave a mark, the Spin Kick is the maneuver of choice. This move has the same potential problems as the regular Kick (see p. 53). It uses a Dexterity and Kung Fu - 2 roll, or the Combat Score -2, and does 2 x (Strength + 2) points of base damage (Bash type).

STAKE: Poking someone with a sharp pointy thing is going to hurt no matter who it is. Still, if it's not a vamp, and it's not in the heart, it's no different than using a knife. Stake poking uses a Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll, or the Combat Score, and does 2 x Strength points of base damage (Slash/stab type).

SWEEP KICK: Just the thing to slow down a charging demon, the Sweep Kick does little damage but sends foes to the ground by kicking their feet out from under them. This special kick uses a Dexterity and Kung Fu - 1 roll, or the Combat Score - 1. If it hits, the defender takes Strength points of base damage (Bash type). Further, the defender must resist with a Dexterity and Acrobatics roll, or the Combat Score to keep her feet. If not, she falls down.

TAKEDOWN: This includes judo throws, wrestling moves, trips and similar methods of making an enemy kiss the ground. The Takedown uses a Strength and Kung Fu roll, or the Muscle Score. If the target fails to Parry or Dodge, she hits the mat and takes Strength points of base (Bash type). Otherwise, the defender takes no damage and the Takedown fails.

THROUGH THE HEART: A classic. This attack has no effect on some creatures, but most things, including people, find it hard to survive after a sharp piece of wood gets stuck in or near the old ticker. Attacking the heart uses the appropriate Combat Maneuver with a -3 penalty, or the Combat Score - 3. Damage to non-vamps is quadrupled (after applying the base damage, Success Levels, armor; this multiplier replaces the damage type modifier). It's even worse for vamps (times five damage), but you have to stick them just right.

Through the Heart is used principally with bows, crossbows, stakes, and thrown stakes but other implements can and will be used.

THROW WEAPON: The art of taking a properly balanced weapon and throwing it at a target. The range of this attack is two yards plus two yards per Strength level. Throw Weapon uses a Dexterity and Getting Medieval -1 roll, or the Combat Score -1, and the base damage varies by the weapon tossed (see p. 58).

Toss: Your basic "pick up victim, then hurl victim across the room just to prove how badass you are" move. The defender must be grappled first (see p. 52) and the attacker must have a minimum Strength 4. Then, the attacker uses a Strength (doubled) - 4 roll, or the Muscle Score - 4, and the defender resists using a Strength (not doubled) roll or the Muscle Score divided by two. If the attack succeeds, it does Strength points of base damage (Bash type). Also, the defender is tossed one yard for each Success Level in the roll, and is knocked down automatically. If the attack fails, the defender remains Grappled, but takes no damage and doesn't go anywhere. Oh, and the attacker looks pretty silly.

WRESTLING HOLD: This is a half-nelson, full-nelson, or pretzel twist, in which the character immobilizes the enemy, usually by grabbing her from behind and twisting one or both arms. This requires a successful Grapple (see p. 52), and then a Strength and Kung Fu -2 roll (or the Muscle Score -2). The defender resists with a Strength or Dexterity (whichever is better) and Kung Fu roll, or the best of her Combat or Muscle Scores. If the attacker wins, the defender is at -1 to all actions for every Success Level in the attack until she breaks free or the attacker lets her go. Otherwise, the defender remains grappled.

Combat Complications

In the Ciniverse, fights don't happen in neat boxing rings and the rules are less Marquis of Queensbury and more Marquis de Sade. There's no such thing as a fair fight with the undead. Below are some complications that can add spice to hunting activities.

ATTACKING FROM BEHIND: Psst, a word of advice—if you have to stab somebody, stab her in the back—otherwise it ruins the surprise. A distracted opponent (like a vamp busy strangling a hunter) cannot defend against attacks from behind. Targets with Situational Awareness are the exception; they can defend, but at a -2 penalty. At your discretion, other would-be victims may get a Perception and Notice roll before they are bushwhacked; in that case, they can defend with a -2 penalty.

FULL DEFENSE: Sometimes, fighting is not the best option. Going fully defensive allows the character to defend against two attacks at no penalty (and against others if extra actions are available), and gives her a +3 bonus to all defense actions (dodges and parries, for the most part). No attacks are allowed on the Turn the character goes into Full Defense mode. This is a good idea for White Hats and Guest Stars (particularly those with Combat Scores below nine) who want to keep their enemies busy until help arrives. Asking for one's mommy doesn't provide any bonuses, but might make the character feel better.

FULL OFFENSE: Here the character attacks recklessly, without worrying about defense. Best reserved for surprise attacks or suicide troops. It's also good when several attackers are going after one target. The character gets a +2 bonus on all attacks in that Turn, but cannot defend against any attacks. Note that for those most feeble of Guest Stars and Adversaries (Combat Score 8 or lower), the only way to have any chance of success when attacking is to go Full Offense, or use a Drama Point.

KNOCKDOWNS AND FIGHTING WHILE LYING DOWN: Getting knocked on one's bottom is a bad thing. When a character is knocked down, she cannot attack for the remainder of the Turn, and defenses are at a -4 penalty. After that, all actions (both offensive and defensive) suffer the -4 penalty until the character stands. Getting up takes one Turn. Doing it with that oh-so-cool flip and snap thing requires two Success Levels on a Dexterity and Acrobatics roll. A number of Combat Maneuvers result in a knockdown. Also, any blow that inflicts more than triple the victim's Strength in damage (before accounting for Slash/stab or Bullet modifiers) may result in a knockdown, at your discretion (only do it if it seems dramatically appropriate).

INVISIBILITY: Not being able to see somebody cuts way down on accuracy. On the plus side, invisible people aren't encountered that often. On the minus side, they do exist in the Ciniverse.

Ranged attacks on invisible targets hit by pure chance. Make a roll; if the result is a ten, roll again. If that result is a nine or ten, the attack hits (like we said, pretty slim chance). Attribute and skill modifiers are irrelevant. The same rule applies for close combat attacks when the invisible target attempts to avoid combat.

When the no-see-em engages in close combat, the opponent can concentrate for a Turn and make a Perception and Notice roll (or the Brains Score) with a -2 penalty. Success allows an attack to be launched or a defense to be employed (not both) against the invisible person but any such action suffers a -4 penalty. Once the attack or defense is done, another Turn of concentration is necessary to strike or defend again.

The Perception roll may be dispensed with if some other means is used to pinpoint the invisible character. Steam, smoke, or other airbourne substance can mark the see-thru person, as would a sheet draped over her or a bag of flour poured on her. Penalties to hit marked invisible folks are only -2.

MULTIPLE ACTIONS: Characters can attack once and defend once a Turn at no penalty. Fast and furious fighters however, can do more. Those with Dexterity 5 or greater gain extra actions per Turn according to the Additional Actions Table

Additional Actions Table

Dexterity	Additional Actions
5-6	1
7-8	2
9-10	3

Additional Actions Table

11-12	4
+2	+1 per

The extra actions may be taken as attacks or defenses. As it is difficult to do more than two things at once (or walk and chew gum for some of us), additional actions suffer cumulative penalties of -2. The player only rolls once – successive attacks or defenses each reduce the total by two. If the target defends against any of those attacks, all attacks cease.

EXAMPLE ME, BABY: Jamie, a hunter with Dexterity 7, finds herself in an alley with three vamps. She's in a hurry so she decides to attack each vamp in one Turn. That's fine, her high Dexterity allows her two additional actions in one Turn, which she decides to take as attacks. Still, the second and third suffer penalties. She rolls and adds her Dexterity and Kung Fu; the result is 20. That's over the first vamp's Combat Score of 18, so he gets hit. Jamie's second attack uses the same result (20) but subtracts two and becomes an 18. That ties the second vamp's Combat Score (18 as well), so the blow doesn't land (ties go to the defender). Jamie cannot take her third attack as the second vamp defended successfully against her. Now Jamie has a problem. She has one defense action and two uninjured vamps in her face. They both swing at her. One she counters with a Parry roll of 19. The other strikes unhindered; his Combat Score (18 +1 for his ally) is greater than the minimum success total (9), so he automatically connects. Yipe!

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS: Numbers count. When two or more attackers gang up against a single target, their actions gain a +1 bonus for each attacker, to a maximum of +4 (more than four attackers just get in each other's way). So, if two vamps attack a hunter, they each get a +2 to their Combat Score. Again, if the defender doesn't have enough actions to defend against all attacks, some attacks are resisted with a zero defense roll. Here is another way for below-nine Combat Score characters to have a chance of hitting their opponent—attack in numbers.

HUNTER IN BONDAGE: Sometimes, the bad guys don't just want to kill. Sometimes they want to tie a character up. When tied up, chained, or otherwise restrained, fighting is a lot more difficult. If the character's legs are free, she can kick at no penalty. If she can move (i.e., isn't bound to a stake or chained to a wall), she can also head butt. If her arms are tied in front of her, she can punch at a -2 penalty. Getting free uses Dexterity and Acrobatics, with penalties from -1 (the bad guys were never in the Boy Scouts) to -6 (a few miles of rope used, or police handcuffs).

Multiple Actions Penalties

The basic multiple action rules limit characters to a certain number of actions based on Dexterity. This is done for simplicity's sake; in truth, a character should be able to act as many times as she wants in a turn. At the risk of some additional complexity, some of you may decide to handle multiple actions differently.

Cumulative and Universal Penalties: Each additional action declared in the Intentions phase of combat adds -2 to all actions that phase. That means if a character declares four attacks or four defenses in a Turn, each action suffers a -6 penalty (the first attack or defense has no penalty; each one after that incurs a -2). This allows characters to act as much as they want, at the expense of degrading all their actions.

Off Balance Penalties: Under this optional rule, each extra action taken in one Turn imposes a base -2 penalty to all actions in the next Turn. So, a character who takes three additional actions in one Turn suffers a -6 to all actions in the next. Again, the limit on actions is removed, but the frenzy of activity makes the character highly ineffective and vulnerable thereafter.

Interruption: Another possibility is to have the player roll for each of her character's attacks and defenses, but if an attack is blocked, initiative switches over to the opponent. That combatant then gets to use her actions until a defense is used successfully. The original attacker then resumes her actions (if any). In a one-on-many fight, the same sequence applies, but initiative varies among more than two people.

Guns, Crossbows, and Other Missiles

Why resort to fisticuffs when enemies can be dispatched via long distance? While guns are not used very often in the Ciniverse (see Gun Control sidebar), they are a fact of life.

Generally speaking, missile combat works just like regular combat. Attackers make their rolls or use their Combat Score, and the target tries to defend (usually by dodging). Dodging gunshots and the like is difficult, though; a dodge against missiles suffers a -2 penalty on top of any others that are applicable (the character is busy ducking for cover). If there is no available cover, the missile weapon dodge penalty increases to -4.

RANGE PENALTIES: To keep things simple (this ain't the Black Hawk Down RPG, y'know), assume no penalty at Short Range, a -1 penalty to shots at Medium Range, and a -3 penalty to shots at Long Range. Short range is under five yards for pistols and 20 yards for rifles. Medium range is under 20 yards for pistols and under 100 yards for rifles. Long range is up to 50 yards for pistols and up to 300 yards for rifles.

MULTIPLE SHOTS: If shooting doesn't work at first, shoot them again and again. Most guns can fire more than once in a five-second period (in fact, most handguns can be emptied in five seconds). Roll and add Dexterity and Gun Fu; each additional shot uses the same roll, but suffers a cumulative -1 penalty. Bows use the Multiple Actions rules (see p. 55). Crossbows and other single-shot weapons must be reloaded after each shot.

AUTOMATIC FIRE: Automatic weapons (assault rifles and machine guns) can fire a constant stream of bullets until the gun runs dry or the barrel overheats. Trained soldiers fire bursts—controlled gunfire that sends three or more bullets downrange. For any autofire, make one attack roll; each Success Level in the roll allows one bullet to hit the target (up to the number of bullets fired). The base damage for each bullet is modified by armor, and then added together before applying the Bullet type modifier. Success Levels do not affect the damage calculation. Still, lots of bullets leads to lots of death.

GUN CAPACITY: Typically, handguns are either revolvers (with five to six shots in the cylinder) or semi-automatics (with seven to 15 shots in the magazine). Hunting rifles and shotguns have one to five shots. Assault rifles and sub-machine guns have 20-30 shots in a magazine.

Gun Control

Some players may opt for the “Rambo Option” when fighting the supernatural, and festoon themselves in military hardware. This is likely to be more trouble than it's worth, though.

First of all, guns are loud. Your typical cemetery fight, using hands, feet and assorted medieval cutlery, does not make enough noise to be noticed by the neighbors. Guns can be heard several blocks away, and a running gun battle soon results in 911 calls and the attention of the authorities. Unless the Cast Members want to engage in open warfare with local and state SWAT teams, gun use is a no-no. Even the Initiative does not use guns extensively, especially in American cities, where the danger of collateral damage is so high.

Second, guns leave a trail. Bullets and guns can be traced to their crimes (and even to crimes that the current user wasn't aware of) through ballistic forensics. Those using guns wind up with detectable residue on their hands and clothes. Next thing you know assorted law enforcement agents are knocking on the door (or more likely, knocking down the door). Hunters and other supernatural hunters don't want to attract too much attention, because they are much more likely to end up behind bars than they are to convince the authorities that they are fighting the good fight. Guns can be acquired illegally, but that means the characters will be dealing with criminals of assorted types. Not something conducive to longterm profits or health.

Finally, guns aren't very effective against vampires. Bullets hurt vampires, but they take a minimal amount of damage from them (damage/2 points). It takes several shots to knock down your typical bloodsucker, which brings us back to the “guns are loud” bit—one shot might be ignored, but five or six are going to be noticed. When it comes to slaying the undead, the old ways work best.

Damage: How Much Does It Hurt?

Land enough punches and kicks on somebody, and something is going to break. Slaying is a dangerous job, and the Cast Members should expect their share of lumps, cuts and bruises. The occasional visit to the emergency room or even, for extreme cases, the morgue is not out of the question (although usually the Cast visits the morgue as investigators rather than as paying customers). When an attack hits a defender, subtract the total damage inflicted from the defender's Life Points. Once her Life Point pool is depleted, the character is at risk of losing consciousness or dying. Armor can protect the defender from some harm (see p. 62).

Players should probably write down their characters' Life Points on a piece of scrap paper, and subtract from it rather than erase and scribble on the character sheet (neatness counts, and besides those eraser crumbs are so ... skeevy).

Damage—Go Figure

Each attack action has a base damage number or a formula. If it is a number, the base damage is fixed, an inherent characteristic of the weapon—a .45 pistol does the same base damage for everybody (it's very democratic that way). Formulas usually depend on the Strength of the attacker—a punch from a 400-pound demon is going to hurt more than a punch from either Mary Kate or Ashley. Do the calculations once, and write the base damage of the attack on the Combat Maneuver List portion of the character sheet.

During play, the actual damage inflicted is equal to the base damage, plus one per Success Level of the attack roll, minus any Armor Value possessed by the defender, multiplied by any damage type or other modifier

(see below). That's a bit complicated, but once you play through a few combats, it will become much easier. The character sheet has the Success Level Table right by the Combat Maneuver area, so a quick glance provides that information. Quick Sheets have the Success Levels of the Combat Score worked into their damage entries.

EXAMPLE AWAY: Alecia has Strength 2. The Kick base damage formula is $(2 \times (\text{Strength} + 1))$; enter two into the formula, and voila! Alecia's Kick inflicts a base damage of six points. After an attack roll, she also gets to add the Success Level to this base damage. So if Alecia gets two Success Levels on a kick attack, she adds two to his base six, for a total damage result of eight Life Points.

EXAMPLE TWICE: Alecia uses a knife in the next combat. Knife base damage is $(2 \times \text{Strength})$, or four for Alecia. After an attack roll with two Success Levels, the damage becomes six. Further, a knife is a Slash/stab weapon (see next), so the final damage is doubled to 12 Life Points.

EXAMPLE THRICE: Alecia is now loose with a pistol. The gun has a base damage of 12 (no formula this time). Alecia's two Success Level attack raises that to a 14. Her target is wearing a bulletproof vest, though, which subtracts 10 from the damage, leaving a mere four. Bullet damage—the kind imposed by the gun—is doubled after armor (see below). So, the final damage result is eight Life Points.

Types of Damage

There are four types of damage: Bash, Slash/stab, Bullet, and Fire.

BASH DAMAGE: This covers any attack by a blunt object (fists, two-by-fours, falling safes, and so on). Bash attacks reduce Life Points normally. It is the only type of attack that can be used to knock out a victim (knives and bullets tend to knock people dead). Armor (natural or worn) and the Natural Toughness Quality protect against Bash damage.

SLASH/STAB DAMAGE: Pointy or sharp objects cause blood loss, puncture vital organs, and do other gross and gory stuff. Double this damage against most creatures, after subtracting for armor or similar protection (if any). Weapons with sharp edges can be used to cut off limbs or heads; if a limb is attacked and the damage is enough to reduce the victim to zero Life Points, the limb has been severed (see also the Decapitation Maneuver, pp. 53). Slash/stab damage modifiers are not used with attacks Through the Heart (see p. 54) or monster bite attacks; in that case the Through the Heart or Bite multiplier replaces the Slash/stab damage multiplier.

EXAMPLE THIS: Justin stabs a possessed biker and inflicts 26 points of damage. Since the biker has no protection, this is doubled, for 52 points of damage, which likely is going to result in a bad case of road rash. If the biker had been wearing a leather motorcycle jacket (Armor Value 2), two of the 26 points would have been subtracted, reducing the initial damage to 24, doubled to 48 – better, but still not real healthy.

BULLET DAMAGE: Bullets do nasty things to people. They mostly work like Slash/stab attacks, doubling against normal humans after armor is subtracted. Some critters (vampires especially) take very little damage from bullets, however. Bulletproof vests are very good against Bullet damage, but not so good against Slash/stab attacks.

FIRE DAMAGE: Burns are really bad. Fire can scar horribly, and Fire damage heals more slowly than normal. A person on fire takes three points of damage every Turn until somebody puts her out. If more than 20 points of Fire damage are inflicted on a character, some scarring occurs (assuming the victim lives). Fire damage also heals at half the normal rate; the player should keep track of fire damage separately. On the plus side, fire can kill vampires, if they burn long enough.

THE SIMPLE OPTION: If you and your players want to keep things simple, have all damage work the same way as Bash attacks—no doubling effect, no healing modifiers and so on. This option is not very realistic, but it is easier to remember.

Weapon Descriptions

The following weapons may be used during the game.

Their base damage codes are gathered in a convenient and spill-proof container in Appendix I (see p. 137).

AXE: Used by fire departments and medieval knights, although for different purposes. Long-handled axes can be wielded two-handed (add +1 to the effective Strength of the character). Does base damage of $5 \times \text{Strength}$ points (Slash/stab type). This drops to $4 \times \text{Strength}$ points of base damage when the axe is thrown.

BASEBALL BAT: Basic sporting goods, used in a nonsporting way. Typically used two-handed (add +1 to the effective Strength of the character). Does $4 \times \text{Strength}$ points of base damage (Bash type).

BATON: This covers any small stick—a police baton, a belaying pin, or half of a busted pool cue. Good for smacking people around and making 'em respect authority.

Base damage is $3 \times \text{Strength}$ points (Bash type).

BLUNDERBUSS: This Ridiculously huge caliber weapon is used for the pulp-genre "Big Game Hunting" so

popular among the rich elite. It is also called an Elephant Gun.

The Blunderbuss has a funnel-shaped barrel, making it the most ludicrous looking weapon of the era. Still, at some point, an exceedingly clever man used a long wooden bullet, reinforced at the back of the lead, to create the first of the mythical “wooden bullets” feared by vampires worldwide.

The Blunderbuss requires a Dexterity and Gun Fu roll to use. With wooden bullets, it may be used with the Through the Heart Combat Maneuver, suffering the usual -3 penalty. The wooden bullet does 15 points of Slash/stab damage, and gains the x5 bonus vs. Vampires if their hearts are successfully targeted (no doubling if the dusting fails). Normal ammo does 25 points of Bullet damage. The gun takes a Turn to reload after each shot.

BUFFALO RIFLE: The Big Ass Pistol of the rifle world, a Buffalo Rifle will drop a one-ton quadruped in its tracks, and will do much the same for most two-legged critters. The gun usually has one or two shots, after which it must be reloaded (takes about one Turn). Base damage is 22 points (Bullet type). Buffalo Rifles are available in games set in the Old West and after.

Bow: Neat old-fangled weapon for killing people at various ranges. The maximum effective Strength when using a bow is five. That means if the user's Strength is greater than five, the base damage tops out at 20.

Otherwise, a bow does 4 x Strength points of base damage (Slash/stab type).

CHAINSAW: The ultimate power tool of destruction, chainsaws in real life are more dangerous to their wielders than any intended victim, but we'll not go against a dozen horror movies here. Just to keep things interesting, we'll make them a bit chancy, though. On an attack roll of one, roll again. If the second roll is a failure or a “one” result, the character has hit herself with the saw. Major ouch-time.

Using a Chainsaw requires a Dexterity and Getting Medieval -3 roll, or a Dexterity and Mr. Fix-it -3 roll, or just the Combat Score -3. Its base damage is 6 x (Strength +1) points (Slash/stab type; to a max base damage of 60).

CROSSBOW: See bow. Not as fast, but easier to use and way cool-looking. Base damage is a fixed 16 points (Slash/stab type). Even cooler folks sport a little crossbow with a pistol grip. That model does 10 points of base damage (Slash/stab type). Either type needs reloading after each shot.

DYNAMITE: Early dynamite was simply sawdust soaked in nitro. Nowadays, it's much more sophisticated. Still, you light it (or use a detonator) and it goes boom.

Use a Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll (or sports if your field of expertise involves throwing) or the Combat Score. With three or more successes, the stick goes exactly where you want (usually at the feet of an unsuspecting vamp). Any less, and it goes a little astray (minimum damage imposed). On a failure, the stick doesn't land close enough to the target to do any damage. Base damage for olden-days dynamite is 20 points at “Ground Zero”, 12 points within a ten yard radius and five points within a twenty yard radius (all Bash type). Modern stuff does 25, 15, and 6 points respectively.

ENERGY DISRUPTOR: A ray gun for Far Future or high-tech games. Wielding this puppy requires a normal Dexterity and Gun-Fu Roll, or the Combat Score. The gun fires beams that do 15 points of base damage (Bash type). Triple the damage (after modifiers and armor are applied to living tissue. Oh, and any armor (natural or worn) that gets in the way of the beam protects with only half of its Armor Value. Obviously not available in most settings, unless aliens from another planet or particularly vicious nerds invade your Series. The shot capacity is up to your Directory (how big is your battery?)

FLAMETHROWER: Flamethrowers are nasty. Seriously nasty. So horrible are these weapons that the Geneva Convention banned their use. It doesn't mean that there aren't any out there, it just means that the U.S. Military doesn't officially have any. However, the flame-thrower is probably the most efficient anti-vampire (and anti-anything else for that matter) weapon around. Rather than the incendiary gel used in military flamethrowers, these are the details of your average homegrown flamethrower. MacGyvered together in the chem-labs to trash the Big Bad in true A-Team style.

Using a flamethrower requires a Dexterity and Gun Fu roll -2, or the Combat Score -2. base damage is six points (Fire type), then three points per Turn until somebody puts the target out. Anything flammable hit by the burst ignites. The average tank can hold 10 “bursts” of fuel.

FLAMETHROWER (makeshift): In an emergency, a handy way to fend off vamps is with the the most essential grooming item; hairspray. This track has been done in hundreds of movies, but in reality is a naked flame produces a “burst” as a real flamethrower (only at close range – three yards at most). Base damage is three points (Fire type), then three points per turn until the target is put out. Your average beauty product holds about five “bursts” before you're going to have a bad hair day. We did warn you not to try this at home – on an attack roll of “one” again, the flame back-flashes to the can causing the damage to the wielder. Not cool. Defiantly not cool.

FLARE GUN (Signaling Pistol): Hey, you might not be on a boat, but you could still be in trouble. This little pistol can be bought at any camping/leisure store for about \$75. Used mainly to attract the attention of the Coast Guard or mountain rescue, it's also ideal for hitting vamps or other light/fire-sensitive demons.

Using a Dexterity and Gun Fu roll, or the Combat Score, the signal flare can impale the victim and ignite. Base damage for the flare is nine points (Fire type). The victim then makes a Dodge roll. If successful, she is blinded for one Turn but otherwise escapes further damage. If failed, the flare catches in her clothing, causing five points (Fire type) damage per Turn (until she can get far away or cover it with something – flares are almost impossible to put out, even underwater) and blinding her for that duration. The flare pistol itself holds one flare at a time, and reloading it takes one Turn.

GRENADE: When you have to clear out a vamp lair and you don't have a superstar around to help you, grenades are the way to go. Grenades make a lot of noise, attract a lot of attention, and have a knack of not going where you wanted to throw them. But in enclosed spaces, they do their job just fine, thank you very much.

Use a Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll (or Sports if your field of expertise involves throwing), or the Combat Score. With three or more successes, the grenade goes exactly where you want it (usually at the feet of a group of vamps). Any less, and it goes a little astray (minimum damage imposed). On a failure, the grenade doesn't even land close enough to the target to do any damage. Base damage for the grenade is 30 points at "Ground Zero", 20 points within a three yard radius, and eight points within a five yard radius (all Bash type).

HOLDOUT GUN: These small, concealable weapons are just the sort of thing you attach to a tricky little extensible mechanism up your sleeve. Or for those not so clever with their hands, a boot works just fine. In any event, they usually hold one or two shots, and do 12 points of base damage (Bullet). Any roll to notice them suffers a -4 penalty.

KNIFE: Switchblades or easily concealed knives, used by thugs and lowlifes. Base damage is 2 x Strength points (Slash/stab type). This drops to 2 x (Strength -1) points when the knife is thrown.

A smaller version is called a pigsticker. Kinda cute actually, so long as the handle isn't sticking out of your body. Does 2 x (Strength - 1) points of damage (Slash/stab type). This drops to (Strength -1) points when the pigsticker is thrown.

The Big Knife is your typical ohmygodthatsabigknife (known as a short sword in other times). Does 3 x Strength points of base damage (Slash/stab type).

LASO: This is a great non-lethal weapon, perfect for capturing hostages or villains your character needs to take alive. Or, if she lassoes someone around the neck, she gets to be her own lynch mob. Lassos need some room to work – indoors is not good, unless you're in a cathedral or huge warehouse. They need a minimum distance of three yards between Lasso Gal and the chosen victim; maximum is the throw range for the user. Lassoing uses a Dexterity and Getting Medieval -4 roll, or the Combat Score -4. On a successful "hit", the victim's arms are roped to her sides. This weapon usually does no damage unless the neck is targeted, in which case it does (2 x Strength) base damage (Base; tripled against living, breathing beings after Success Levels and armor are accounted for).

Figuring out who is in control requires Resisted Action rolls – use Strength (doubled) or the Muscle Score. The winner gets to pull the loser around or knock her to the ground. If the legs are targeted (impose a -2 penalty), the victim resists at -4 to her Strength roll (or -8 to the Muscle Score). Lasso is a tough maneuver to learn, but it can also be taken as a Wild Card Skill.

MUSKET: Can't be a musketeer without a musket, y'know. These big guns are not very accurate (use pistol ranges) and reloading is a bear. Way back then, most people carried a sword or knife or bayonet around, just in case. This puppy is available from the "Three Musketeers" era all the way to the end of the Civil War (and still available in the hands of collectors or war-reenactment fans even after that). Damage is 17 points (Bullet type). Reloading a musket takes 12 Turns, minus the Success Levels of a Dexterity and Gun Fu roll.

PISTOL: Your typical handgun, this covers most police issue weapons (.38s, 9mm, and so on). Revolvers are stuck at six shots per gun; pistols can have as many as 17 rounds in a magazine. Base damage is 12 points (Bullet type).

A popgun is a small-caliber, easily concealed gun, used by cheap criminals, little old ladies who want protection and other wimpy gun-owners. Does base 9 points of Bullet damage and generally has 10 bullets.

On the flip side, a Big Pistol is a .357 Magnum, a .45 Colt, old west style Colt Peacemakers, and other "makes big holes in people"-type weapon. Most of these guns have less than 10 shots in their magazines (revolvers have six shots). Base damage is 15 points (Bullet type).

Moving to the ridiculous, a Big Ass Pistol is the kind of gun that shoots through buildings. Just the thing to put the Dirty in your Harry. Includes .44 Magnums, Eagle .50 cal's, and other massive hand cannons. Often a sign of insecurity: give wearers a hug and tell 'em it's not the size that matters but how you use it—but don't be surprised if you get shot. Big Ass Pistols tend to have a low bullet capacity (under 10 shots). Does 18 points of base damage (Bullet type).

PORTABLE SUN: A pulp-era combination of mad science and dangerous magic, this is one of the ultimate anti-vampire tools. Worn on a harness, this heaven lantern fires a beam of "sunlight" at the undead. The lantern itself must be charged with six hours worth of direct sunlight (tricky in Britain, what with the weather and all). At full charge, it holds two minutes of solar energy. Range is minimal though, limited to the average room, but if

caught in the cone of light any vampire faces damage as if from the mid-day sun.

Also a useful tool for as a high power search light or other light source.

QUARTERSTAFF: Basically a long stick, very nifty for attack and defense. A pool cue can double as a quarterstaff, and the narrow end makes a decent stake substitute (use Stake damage for the “sharp” end). Used with both hands (damage bonus already factored in).

Base damage is 3 x (Strength + 1) points (Bash type).

RIFLE: Your basic deer-hunting rifle, typically .30-06 or .308 caliber. These weapons usually are either single-shot or have 5-10 rounds in a magazine. Does 20 points of base damage (Bullet type).

Standard issue military weapons usually have a 20- to 30-round magazine. Can fire bursts. Base damage is 16 points (Bullet type). Illegal in most places, except for the military and SWAT teams.

High power sniper rifles such as a Barrett .50 caliber hold 10 shots and deal 30 points of Bullet damage.

RIPPERS: Concealed just under the fingernails, these are retractable steel blades that can be used in close combat or for food preparation. These nasty little cyberitems do 2 x Strength Slash/stab damage, and use either a Dexterity and Kung Fu roll, or a Dexterity and Getting Medieval Roll, or the Combat Score.

ROCKET LAUNCHER: For them what requires the big bang. But it ain't easy. Without military knowledge, this item is about as useful as a big drainpipe. Sure, your character could swing it around like a big club, but to really take out the demons she needs a Gun Fu 3 or better, one or more levels of the Military Rank Quality, (or a handy friend who happens to know how to use heavy weapons).

Using a rocket launcher requires a Dexterity and Gun Fu -2 roll, or the Combat Score -2, or the Combat Score -2. Base damage is 100 points at the point of impact, 35 points within a two yard radius, and ten points within five yards (all Fire type). You definitely don't want to fire this thing at anyone standing too close to you! Maximum range is roughly 150 yards. These stats are for a relatively small and portable launcher. If the gang manages to snatch more than one shell, reloading takes five Turns.

SHOTGUN: Ssshhh, we're huntin' scwewy wabbits ... and blowing them into little pieces. Sawed off versions suffer a -2 when rolling, but are easier to conceal. Does base 20 points of Bullet damage and has two bullets.

SMART GUN: This gun has more computing power than your typical workstation. Linked directly into the Mindjack, it uses the images from the user's brain to assess ranges, possible targets and movement. It pretty much aims itself, using a complex system of gyros and muscle feedback to the user's hand, giving shooters a +3 bonus on their Gun Fu rolls. As it uses the shooter's eyes to assess targets, it cannot aim where the shooter cannot see, although if she has the IR implants, she will be able to aim in near darkness. The gun does 15 points of Bullet damage and halves any Armor Value. It carries 25 bullets.

SPEAR: Pointy thing at the end of long stick. Fairly common in ancient times; very rare nowadays.

Used two-handed (damage bonus already factored in). Base damage is 3 x (Strength + 1) points (Slash/stab type). This drops to 3 x Strength points when the spear is thrown.

STAKE: Usually wood. Usually homemade. Often improvised. Don't leave home with it. Does base 2 x Strength Slash/stab damage. This drops to 2 x (Strength - 1) points when the stake is thrown.

SUBMACHINE GUN: Basically a pistol that shoots a bunch of bullets very fast. Nice to have in your corner when the going gets nasty. Can fire bursts, and has 30 bullets. Base damage is 12 points (Bullet type).

SWORD: Rapiers, broadswords and other large pieces of cutlery. This also covers katanas and other fancy weapons. Some of these weapons can be used two-handed; in that case, add +1 to the effective Strength of the wielder. They all do base 4 x Strength points of Slash/stab damage. The sword's daddy is called a Big Ass Sword (a Greatsword if you want to get technical). This heavy metal must be used two-handed (the +1 to Strength is already built-in). Base damage is 5 x (Strength + 1) points (Slash/stab type).

TASER PISTOL: This is the little boxy device that you often see on TV or in the movies. You press one end against somebody and they get shocked – big time. It uses a Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll, or the Combat Score, and Cannot be used at range. When hit, the victim takes some damage from the charge, and must make a Constitution (doubled) roll (or use the Muscle Score) at a penalty of five plus the Success Levels of the attack. On a failure, the victim is knocked out. Even if the target manages to stay conscious, the shock gives her a -2 penalty to all actions (including resisting another shock) for the next four Turns. Multiple shots have cumulative penalties. Base damage is 5 points (Bash type).

TASER RIFLE: A bigger version of the Taser Pistol, this weapon fires an electrical charge that does little damage but knocks out most targets, even vampires. Unlike the Taser Pistol, it can be used ranged, and using it in this way requires a Dexterity and Gun Fu roll. When hit, the victim takes some damage from the charge, and must make a Constitution (doubled) roll (or use the Muscle Score) at a penalty of five plus the Success Levels of the attack. On a failure, the victim is knocked out. Even if the target manages to stay conscious, the shock gives her a -2 penalty to all actions (including resisting another shock) for the next four Turns. Multiple shots have cumulative penalties. Base damage is 5 points (Bash type).

THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN: The classic of gangster movies, the Thompson (or “Tommy Gun”) is the most

recognizable for having the drum magazine in between the handles. Not exactly the best weapon against vampires, but if Al Capone shows up with zombie goons, this could be the gun that tips the balance. Also not big on the aiming front, the Tommy Gun is best used by hosing down everything in the area. With a drum magazine that holds 100 rounds, it is brutally effective in the hosing area. The gun uses Dexterity and Gun Fu roll, does 12 points of Bullet damage and can fire bursts.

TRANQUILIZER GUN: Great for bringing down animals without hurting them. Also good for dealing with werewolf friends and for taking specimens for the Initiative scientists to play with. A typical dose of tranquilizer is a narcotic poison with a Strength 6 (see p. 63). Each Success Level in the poison roll reduces the victim's Strength by one level. If reduced to 0, the target falls unconscious for one hour. Reduce this unconsciousness time by 10 minutes per Constitution level (minimum of 10 minutes). Vampires and some supernatural beings recover twice as fast.

WHIP: Favored tool of lion tamers, masked vigilantes of the Spanish Old West, and professional dominatrixes (dominatrices?), whips do not inflict a lot of damage, but they are loud, painful, and can entangle and trip victims. Your typical bullwhip also has a lot of reach, so it works more like a ranged weapon out to five to seven yards. Like lassos, they need space to work, and the minimum distance of two yards to be effective.

Whips use a Dexterity and Getting Medieval -2 roll, or Dexterity and Wild Card (Whip) roll, or the Combat Score -2. The damage is not spectacular (2 x Strength Bash), but it really, really smarts. No matter what, the victim loses her next action due to the ouch factor. Worse, if she fails to make a Willpower (doubled) roll minus half the Strength of the attacker (round up), she is paralyzed by pain for an entire Turn.

Whips can also be used to entangle or grab stuff (like guns, cigarettes and, if you're really good, full glasses without spilling a drop). Targeting a limb incurs a -2 penalty. A small object (gun, stake, knife) is at -4, and something small and fragile (cigarette) is at -6. These attacks do no damage – if the limbs are entangled, use the lasso rules.

WINCHESTER RIFLE: Or other similar repeating rifles of the Old West era. These guns do 18 points of Bullet damage. They hold 15 bullets.

Armor

Armor is not very common in the highly cinematic games, but cautious characters may decide to avail themselves of it, and the occasional demon or secret society uses archaic armor. Armor works by absorbing or deflecting some of the force of an attack, keeping sharp stuff away from the character's vitals and cushioning against impacts. Armor has, not surprisingly, an Armor Value, a number that subtracts damage from an attack.

Armor has its disadvantages too: it can be cumbersome and it can attract unwanted attention. Walking around in a full knight's suit of armor is going to make heads turn. Not to mention, it's illegal. In addition to the armor described below, some creatures may have natural armor in the form of scaly skin or bony plates.

Armor Table		
Armor Type	Armor Value	Notes
Leather or Tweed Jacket	2	Typical biker's jacket with lots of zippers or a Watcher's scholarly jacket
Leather Armor	3	Breastplate, helmet and arm and leg protectors
Chain Mail	8(4)	Second value is used against Bullet attacks
Plate Armor	12(6)	Second value is used against Bullet attacks
Bulletproof Vest	10(5)	Second value is used against Slash/stab attacks
Combat Armor	12	Worn by combat soldiers and SWAT teams

Bad Stuff: Injury

If a Cast Member is hurt enough, bad things start to happen. Characters reduced to 10 Life Points or below are severely injured, and find it hard to continue fighting; any combat roll suffers a -2 penalty. If reduced below five Life Points, this penalty goes up to -4.

CONSCIOUSNESS TESTS: When reduced to zero Life Points or below, unconsciousness or incapacitation (i.e., the character is conscious, but can only lie there and work very hard on breathing) is likely. The player must make a roll modified by both Willpower and Constitution, with a penalty of -1 for each of the character's negative

Life Points. So, a character at -4 Life Points (she has taken enough damage to reduce her Life Points to zero, and four more points on top of that) has a -4 penalty to her Consciousness Test. If successful, she can act normally (with the usual -4 penalty) but any further damage requires another roll (with new and no doubt greater minuses). The Resistance (Pain) Quality aids consciousness rolls, and reduces wound penalties.

SURVIVAL TESTS: If the character is reduced to -10 Life Points or worse, death is a possibility. She has to make a Survival Test. This uses Willpower and Constitution (just like Consciousness Tests), but suffers a -1 penalty for every 10 points that the character is below zero (i.e., a character reduced to -32 Life Points would have a -3 penalty to her Survival Test). The Hard to Kill Quality provides a bonus to Survival Tests. If the character passes the Test, she lives. If she doesn't, she Passes On to the Great Beyond (cue somber music). Remember those Drama Points!

SLOW DEATH: If a character is below -10 Life Points and makes a Survival Test, but doesn't get medical help within a minute, she may still die. Survival Tests are required every minute after the first, at an additional -1 penalty per minute (so after five minutes, the additional penalty would be -5; half an hour later, it would be -30, and even a Drama Point may not be enough to save her). A successful Intelligence and Doctor roll stabilizes the character, and eliminates any need for further Survival Tests (based on that injury).

DYING WORDS AND ACTIONS: Characters who fail a Survival Test are most likely unconscious and incapacitated. This is a huge downer, both for them and for the storyline. Such events should be marked in a significant way - immortalized. Thus, a special rule applies. If a character dies, the player has the option of performing one last deed, or saying some famous last words, at your discretion. The Last Deed option allows the character to act normally for one or two Turns (no wound penalties apply). Famous Last Words can take as much as a minute (more likely, they should consist of a couple of sentences). These are the character's last acts - make them count.

RESUSCITATION: Some injuries may kill the character, but leave her intact enough for medicine to bring her back. Drowning, gunshot wounds (except to the brain), and similar injuries may not be destructive enough to prevent modern science from saving the character. Common sense should be your guide. If the character was burned to a crisp or killed by a soul-sucking demon that stole her life force, CPR just ain't gonna do the trick. Resuscitation requires a Doctor and Intelligence roll, followed by another Survival Roll from the victim. In addition to all the previous modifiers, the victim gets a bonus equal to the Success Levels of the Doctor and Intelligence roll, and a -1 per five minutes since her untimely demise.

Or spend Drama Points - they're good for what ails ya!

Getting Better: Healing and Medical Help

A hospital or doctor can come in real handy whenever a character is severely injured.

Without medical help, characters can heal from wounds, but very slowly (one Life Point per day). With Drama Points, healing is not much of a problem, though. Characters should be up and around by the next Episode, unless the injuries were truly epic in scope.

For the rest of humankind (those not blessed with Drama Point extras, or supernatural regeneration), injuries heal at the rate of one Life Point per Constitution level every day spent under medical care. Some supernatural critters heal much faster, at the rate of one Life Point per Constitution level every hour. Some exceptionally powerful supernatural beings may recover from injury even faster. If you're up against those folks, we recommend large explosives (trashing the local high school is strictly optional).

More Bad Stuff: Suffocation, Falls, Poison, and Disease

Many things can kill a body, including cigarette smoking and high-fat diets. Those are not likely to come up in the course of a Series. The following are.

FALLS: It's not the fall that hurts - it's the sudden stop at the bottom. Any fall from more than one yard distance inflicts three points of Bash damage per yard. A Dexterity and Acrobatics roll (or the Combat Score) reduces the fall's effective distance by one yard per Success Level. So a character who gets four Success Levels in her Dexterity and Acrobatics roll would take no damage from a three-yard fall, and would suffer six points of damage from a six-yard fall.

If you like, top out falling damage at 50 yards (150 Life Points). That's highly cinematic (a fall of over 50 yards kills most characters but the serious veterans with Drama Points to burn might survive) but not totally bogus (humans have fallen out of airplanes and survived).

SUFFOCATION: If a character is unable to breathe or doesn't have access to enough oxygen (i.e., underwater), she dies. At least non-vamps do. Anybody can hold out for 12 Turns. After that, a Consciousness Test is required with a cumulative -1 penalty each Turn. Survival Tests kick in, again with the cumulative -1 penalty, each 30 seconds. Those who have lost consciousness may be resuscitated with medical help.

POISON: Poisons have a Strength Attribute. Roll and add the poison's Strength (doubled); this is resisted by the victim's Constitution (doubled). If the poison "wins," the victim is drained of one Attribute level per Success Level in the poison roll. Paralyzing agents drain Dexterity, while debilitating venoms might drain Strength. When the Attribute is reduced to zero, the victim is unconscious or incapacitated and the poison starts draining Constitution. When Constitution reaches zero, the victim dies. The frequency of poison rolls depends on how powerful the substance is. Very deadly poisons roll every Turn, while less powerful agents roll once per minute, per hour, or even per day. An Intelligence and Doctor or Science roll may help identify the poison and remove it from the victim. In other cases, it's an antidote or nothing. Some poisons are supernatural and require special forms of antidote.

DISEASE: This works just like Poison, except the Disease rolls (using the Strength of Disease) are usually less frequent (rarely faster than once per hour, and typically once per day). Some diseases do not kill; they just incapacitate victims with fevers, chills and other unpleasantness. Some diseases can be mystical in origin—normal treatments or a call to Dr. Mom will not help.

Breaking Stuff

Unless it is dramatically inappropriate, characters can break things without having to roll. Smashing a plate glass window or turning an expensive computer into a pile of useless electronic parts does not require rolls or damage calculations. On the other hand, a few important things that could be broken in the course of a game include doors, walls and other obstacles, where time is of the essence. Typically, the Success Levels of a Strength (doubled) roll determine how fast a door will be knocked down. Walls require a certain amount of damage before a man-sized hole is punched into them. In general, damage type modifiers don't apply to inanimate objects.

Breaking Stuff Chart	
INTERIOR DOOR:	Three Success Levels
REINFORCED WOODEN DOOR:	Four Success Levels, ignoring the first Success Level in any one roll
METAL DOOR:	Six Success Levels, ignoring the first two Success Levels in any one roll
REINFORCED METAL DOOR:	Eight Success Levels, ignoring the first five Success Levels in any one roll
INTERIOR WALL:	Armor Value 4; 20 points of damage
BRICK WALL:	Armor Value 6; 40 points of damage
CONCRETE:	Armor Value 10; 80 points of damage

F*INSTANCE: A vampire is trapped behind a cage-like metal structure and the sun is coming up. He goes after the reinforced metal door with abandon. The player rolls and adds his Strength (doubled) (14). Because the first five Success Levels are ignored, the player must roll a five or more to have any effect (19 is six Success Levels). Even then, he must amass eight Success Levels total to break through. Dawn's comin', bloodsucker.

For those who want to get a little more gritty, each object can be said to have a Damage Capacity (the object's "Life Points"). If the item takes more damage than its capacity, it is destroyed. Most objects also have an Armor Value.

Damage Capacity of Common Objects

Object	Armor Value	Damage Capacity
Wine Glass	0	1
Glass Bottle	1	5
Window	1	3-5
Dresser	3	5-10
Desk	5	30

Object	Armor Value	Damage Capacity
Personal Computer	4	10-20
Door	5	30
Door Lock	6-8	10-20
Reinforced Door	10-15	40-60
Reinforced Lock	20-25	30-50
Wood Wall	5+1 per inch	20 per inch
Brick Wall	9+1 per inch	30 per inch
Concrete Wall	18+2 per inch	50 per inch
Ferroconcrete Wall	20+5 per inch	75 per inch
Steel Wall	30+5 per inch	100 per inch

Exotic & Mundane Equipment

ANALYZER: A favorite device of science-fiction shows, the analyzer is a super-Palm Pilot that lets your character find out just about anything – as long as your Director decides she should know it. Otherwise, the device malfunctions or encounters weird “sub-space distortions” and so forth. Analyzers can provide the exact chemical composition of an object, or the atmosphere; they can also give you a quick medical diagnosis, detect life signs, and play any Game Boy Advance games. With an analyzer in hand, you can say things like “Captain, that woman walking towards us has no life signs.”

Using an analyzer requires an Intelligence and Knowledge roll. People who haven't been trained in it's use incur a -2 penalty, -6 if they are from a primitive culture (i.e., no TV sets). Available in games set in the Far Future or those where high-tech stuff can be found, at the Director's discretion.

AURAL ENHANCEMENT: To keep in constant contact with your cybersetting pals, this handy transceiver is surgically placed close to the inner ear. Optional upgrades can increase auditory perception (which is great for safecracking) or pick up broadcast radio and TV audio. With the increased auditory perception feature, this item grants the same bonuses as the Acute Hearing Quality.

CAMOFLAGUE SUIT: Gone are the days of dressing in green, looking like “Army Guy”. This cybersuit scans your character's environment and adjusts its color and tone to match, making her almost completely invisible. The suit doesn't reduce the sounds she makes, but anyone trying to locate her suffers a -4 on Notice rolls. The Suit is easily damaged. If it takes more than 10 points of damage, the camouflage effect is lost.

CHEMICAL BOOSTER: After a shot of adrenaline mixed with experimental cyberchemicals, your character can suddenly have the boost of strength that she needs to life the car off the trapped victim or ignore those nasty wounds for a while. A small vial of the solution is kept on the surface of the skin with an implanted delivery device that senses the need for the shot. The booster lasts for ten Turns, increasing the character's Strength by two. Also, the user can ignore all penalties for injury right down to -10 Life Points. If your Director wishes to see a Cast member perform a final heroic deed, she could allow the character to go without penalty beyond -10 Life Points, kept alive purely by the chemicals. Still, at the end of ten Turns, Survival rolls must be made as normal.

Some heroic hunters have modified the delivery system to send a shot of holy water into the blood stream, triggered by a vampire's bite. This will send holy water straight into the mouth of the bloodsucker as a final act of revenge (40 points of damage) Pointless, perhaps, but at least you know you've gone out with a splash.

CYBERNETIC PROSTHESES: The latest The latest trend in the dark cyberfuture is the addition of enhanced limbs, even if the former ones were healthy. The old ones are sold on the black market. Usually cybernetic limbs grant the character a flat score of 4 in both Strength and Dexterity, but only when using the replaced limb. Stronger and/or more dexterous limbs are available, but without extreme modification the limb has it's limitations. Stories of cybernetically powered individuals who push the limits of their abilities usually end in disaster – the limbs pop messily off the bodies. Whole-body replacements are available, with the subject's brain surgically

implanted into a new body. This is the equivalent of having the Robot Quality, except the Attributes of such a cyborg can be increased as far as your Director will allow.

One of the strangest trends in cybernetic prosthesis modification comes from the “vampire wannabe”. Many wannabes have undergone drastic surgery to have retractable fangs, and some even have sub-dermal muscle enhancements to give the impression of a vampire's game-face. Suddenly slaying has become far more complicated...

DERMAL ARMOR: Some people just know they are going to get into a fight and like to be prepared for the worst. Armor of varying thickness can be surgically grafted onto or even under the skin. Plates of Kevlar can be attached to both front and back of the ribcage to prevent staking – a particularly useful bit of preventative medicine for the vampire on the street. Strips of flexible steel can be applied to the arms and legs to strengthen the bones, while thin layers of chainmail can be laid under the skin of the neck to protect against bites. Sheets of thin Kevlar have an Armor Value of ten (five against Slash/stab attacks), while chainmail has an armor value of eight (four against Bullet attacks). If the armor takes too heavy a battering, it may be rendered useless at your Director's discretion.

GASOLINE LANTERN: A gasoline lantern casts a yellowish glow and burns for four to eight hours. This is an essential item for stalking around all those spooky, old, pulp-era houses. Heroes should be careful though as these lanterns can explode if dropped or turned upside-down (15 points of Fire damage to any and all in a three yard radius).

HACKER COMPUTER: This computer, known as a “Deck” among cybersetting hackers, is the size of a laptop and looks like your average computer. You plug directly into cyberspace through your Mindjack, controlling your actions with data-gloves. To the casual observer, the hacker looks like she's conducting an invisible orchestra. In reality (oh, bad phrasing), she is mentally within cyberspace, manipulating data streams and flying through restricted network domains. The Deck is the only way to hack into any computer in a cyberpunk setting and any budding hackers should be warned of bio-electrical feedback and mind-death caused by the ultra-hard firewalls and anti-intrusion software (or ICE). Do we know computer geekspeak, or what?!

MEMORY STORAGE: In the hackable world of cyberpunk, valuable data is taken from place to place via information couriers. People wipe their earlier memories for more storage space and upload the information straight into the brain via a Mindjack. The courier is unable to access the information. She can only download the data at the destination when certain visual stimuli are present. With some modification, human beings can become data stores for vast amounts of information. Information can only be retrieved by the carrier when in a state of meditation, downloading the information directly to a deck via a Mindjack, or reciting it verbally.

MINDJACK: The key feature of any cyberpunk setting is the ability to “jack in” to computers and technology directly without all those fiddly keyboards and mice. With single fiber optic cable, plugged into the surgically implanted socket (usually behind the right ear), characters can access cyberspace, upgrade skills and tune into her weapons. This multipurpose socket is connected directly to the brain and is about the size of a pentop. Once fitted, the wires seek out the correct parts of the brain themselves, and the socket is almost impossible to remove without causing serious brain damage.

OPTICAL REPLACEMENTS: A common piece of cyberware for everyone. No longer does your character need glasses or contacts. Still, why stop there when she can have the time constantly on display in the corner of her vision? TV or virtual programs can be beamed in as well. For a few extra bucks, zoom features, infra-red and thermal imaging (not so handy for spotting vampires unless they've just fed), camera-like recording to send images (be sure to switch it off before using the bathroom), X-ray vision ... the list is endless. But as always, the more special features you want, the more it's gonna cost you. Without the optional enhancements, this item provides the same benefits as the Acute Vision Quality.

SMARTCHIPS: Ever find yourself needing to know how to pilot the odd helicopter for jet-ski to escape the bad guys? Just pop in a Smartchip that holds the skill. Your cybersetting character can only plug on Smartchip in at a time. Once removed, no knowledge of the skill is retained. Each chip grants the user a Wild Card skill of five in one particular skill area. The chips are very specific and set to the one level. If the character needed to perform surgery on an injured teammate and already had Doctor 3, she would still only get the Wild Card (Surgery) 5 (the Doctor Skill would make no difference while she's relying on the pre-programmed information). Some of the more dangerous chips, such as Demolitions, are only available on the black market.

SKIN SUIT: A particularly nasty bit of covering available for cybervampires is a full-body “sun suit”. This skintight black material, complete with a full hood and face mask, is sewn over every part of the body. The eyes are protected by thick lenses that may be lightened or darkened as necessary. To feed, a pair of syringe-like retractable needles spring from the index and middle fingers of each hand, and the blood is pumped directed into the vamp's mouth. Of course, this type of coating *may* be completely unnecessary if pollution in the cyberworld has obscured the sun.

SUPER-CONDUCTOR REFLEXES: With one painful injection directly into the spinal cord, the subject's entire nervous system is enhanced with a superconductive material that relays messages from the brain faster than

before. It can take weeks to become oriented to the new reflexes. During that time, the character often overestimates when reaching for objects or places her foot wrong when moving down steps. Once she is accustomed to her new abilities, she gains the equivalent of the Fast Reaction Time Quality.

VAMPIRE DETECTION GOGGLES: Another eccentric invention of the pulp era, this is a complex array of mirrors posing as a heavy set of goggles. The Lenses protrude five inches from the face and weigh heavily on the nose. Even so, due to the partial use of mirrors, vampires appear translucent, almost ghostlike, revealing their nature instantly. Handy, no?

THE DRAMA POINT SYSTEM

Up to this point, the rules mostly simulate “reality” - the reality where people get punched and lose teeth, and where people fail at the most inappropriate moments and suffer and die as a result. In the Ciniverse (and most action movies and TV shows), the Cast has the scriptwriters on their side. The heroes survive against impossible odds or perform incredible feats at just the right moment, especially when it’s dramatically appropriate.

This affects things beyond deeds. Sometimes the cavalry arrives in the nick of time, or a vital clue is discovered just when the characters need it. Then there’s the magical recovery time – up and about the next day. While werewolves have supernatural recovery powers, the Gang should, by all rights, suffer numerous casualties every time they come into conflict with vampires or demons. Yet, they usually escape with little more than a few bruises. With Drama Points, the Cast can temporarily “short-circuit” reality and perform heroic feats - do the impossible and win the day.

Think of Drama Points as “script aids” - they prevent the heroes from suffering ignominious, meaningless deaths because of bad luck. They do not make the characters unbeatable, however. For one, players get a limited number of Drama Points, so they have to be used with great care or the characters may exhaust their good fortune before the dramatic finale. Also, the bad guys have Drama Points; this allows even a lowly vampire to threaten a Hunter with a lucky punch, or the head villain to escape certain death.

Characters start the game with 10 to 20 Drama Points. These points are not regained automatically. Drama Points have to be earned. They may be awarded for performing heroic feats. They are also given as “payment” for the times when tragedy or misfortune strikes the Cast. When bad things happen to good people, the Cast may get some Drama Points as a “karmic payment.” Finally, Drama Points are earned when the players help develop storylines and subplots beyond the basic “kill the monster” scenario. White Hats can really shine here, befriending the more heroic types and helping them bear their burdens.

Using Drama Points

How can players use Drama Points? Let me count the ways. Five (short count). Used judiciously, they can snatch victory from the fanged jaws of defeat. They include Heroic Feat, I Think I’m Okay, Plot Twist, Righteous Fury, and the ever-popular Back From the Dead. As the Director, you have veto power over the use of Drama Points. Usually, if something bad is slated to happen to the character, using Drama Points won’t help her get out of the situation. The consolation prize, however, is that those situations earn the character extra Drama Points. So, if a cast member is meant to get blindsided and knocked out by a hidden villain, her player doesn’t get to use Drama Points to escape her fate, but instead gets a Drama Point for her troubles. Okay, she’s not rolling in puppies, but she does have something.

Heroic Feat

Sometimes, a character really needs to land that punch, disarm the time bomb with ten seconds left on the clock, or shoot the oxygen tank in the shark’s mouth before it swims over for a bite. When the White Hats of the world have to stake a vampire on the first try, invoke the Heroic Feat.

By spending a Drama Point, the character gets a +10 bonus on any one roll or value. This can be an attack or defense roll, or any use of a skill, or even a Fear or Survival Test. The Heroic Feat can also make things hurt more; the +10 bonus can be added to the base damage of a single attack strike in addition to any Success Level bonuses (then armor, damage type, and other modifiers are applied).

Playing It Straight

The Drama Point System is not for everybody. Some players just don’t like thinking in terms of Hollywood heroics, and prefer a more realistic approach. Drama Points encourage a certain degree of metagaming, with the players thinking about the rules of the game instead of the actual story their characters are living. While the results are largely positive—the game is meant to simulate the feel of the TV show—the means

may not be to everyone's taste. If you don't like Drama Points, you can always play the game "straight." The characters are on their own, to live and die by their talents and the luck of the dice.

Games without Drama Points are grittier and deadlier. The gulf between Heroes and White Hats cannot be bridged; it is recommended that all the Cast Members be either Heroes or White Hats — otherwise, the White Hats get totally upstaged.

Injured characters may be incapacitated for long periods of time, and death is much more likely even among Heroes. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but players who want to perform the same feats that Buffy and company make look easy every week on TV are going to be disappointed. As usual, you and the players should talk things over and settle on something that will satisfy the group (happy players keep coming back, and happy Directors keep producing new Episodes, after all).

A player has to announce her character is using a Drama Point during the Intentions phase of a Turn (see p. 50), or before rolling during non-combat situations.

Also, only one Heroic Feat may be performed in a Turn. It can be used either for attack, defense, or damage, but not for more than one of those in the same Turn.

EXAMPLES "R" Us: Maria is being terrorized by a demon. In a burst of desperate speed, she kicks it in the groin. Maria's player spends a Drama Point, and she gets a +10 to her Dexterity and Kung Fu roll (3 and 1 respectively). Before Maria's player even rolls the dice, she has a +14 bonus. Not surprisingly, the kick lands, and the demon doubles over with a very surprised expression on its face.

I Think I'm Okay

The bullet didn't hit any vital organs. The character rolled with the impact and the baseball bat didn't crush her skull. The spear got caught in the knight's chain mail and no serious damage was done. Somehow, the injuries that should have killed a character or at least put her out of commission are not as bad as she thought they were. Or maybe she got her second wind—a few bandages on her bloody but largely harmless wounds and she is ready to go. Whatever the rationale, I Think I'm Okay allows Heroes, White Hats, and normal humans to get back into action after enduring beatings that would have sent a pro football player to the hospital.

For a mere Drama Point, the character heals half the Life Point damage she has taken up to that point. Round fractions in the character's favor (23 points of damage becomes 11). The character is still bloody and battered, but she can act normally. I Think I'm Okay can be used only once per Turn, but it can be used several Turns in a row, each use halving whatever damage remains. If the character had suffered enough damage to be incapacitated or unconscious, however, healing does not necessarily awaken her. You as Director decide if the time is right for the character to revive and join the action. Also, if the injuries were life threatening, you may decide that the character has to go to the hospital at some point, although she can wait until the action (or the Episode) is over.

DELUXE EXAMPLE: A sword-wielding vampire runs a hunter through. The wound inflicts 40 points of damage, and the hunter Riley had already been injured for another 36 points previously, so he's in really bad shape. Not wishing to see the end of the character just yet, the hunter's player spends a Drama Point. The 76 points of damage are reduced to a "mere" 38 points—not exactly unhurt, but not dying, either. The sword must have missed the hunter's vital organs. Next Turn, the hunter's player could reduce it even further to 19 points, and a Turn later, to 9 points. This would take three Drama Points, though—a pretty hefty expenditure.

Death Before Drama

The default rule is that a I Think I'm Okay Drama Point can be spent after injury, but before Consciousness or Survival Tests. That serves to avoid nearly all deaths (unless your players haven't been able to keep one Drama Point in reserve ... and aren't you the running-them-ragged sort?). For those looking for a bit more grit in their game, have the Consciousness or Survival Test go first, then Drama Point expenditure. In that case, the Drama Point(s) are more likely to be of the Back From the Dead sort.

Plot Twist

The killer accidentally dropped a valuable clue at the scene of the crime. A mysterious stranger shows up in the nick of time. The local thrift shop just happened to have a copy of the Pergamum Codex on a back shelf. Heroes often find help and information from the most unlikely places or at precisely the right time. Once per game session, each character can spend a Drama Point and get a "break." This is not a Get Out of Jail Free Card. If the heroine stupidly walked into a vampires' lair and she is surrounded by a horde of bloodsuckers, a Plot Twist won't allow her to escape unscathed. The vampires might decide to keep her alive, however (after beating her soundly to get some cheap thrills), and her friends might somehow realize where she is and come to

her rescue. By the same token, sometimes clues are available, but they cannot be found at that time. If you decide that a Plot Twist is not possible, the player gets the Drama Point back.

Righteous Fury

I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore. Nothing is more deadly than a pissed off heroine; even the humblest White Hat can become a fearsome enemy if properly motivated. It takes a lot to drive a character over the edge, but when it happens most fictional heroes become unstoppable engines of destruction.

By spending two Drama Points, the character gets a +5 bonus to all attack actions, including magical attacks, for the duration of the fight. These benefits are cumulative with Heroic Feats, above. Problem is, an appropriate provocation is necessary to invoke the Righteous Fury rule. A player can't decide her character is pissed about the existence of vampires, or global warming, or even the mystery meatloaf they served at school that morning. She needs to be truly provoked—a brutal attack on a loved one, an unexpected betrayal of trust, or crimes so horrible they go beyond the usual vampiric and demonic mayhem.

Back from the Dead

Sooner or later, everybody dies. In the Ciniverse, it's usually sooner, but sometimes they manage to come back. It doesn't happen often, but it is possible. There are also ways in which a character remains dead, but she (or somebody much like her) can still be part of the Cast. A character who dies may, by spending Drama Points, make a triumphant return. No return from the grave is without complications, however, and not even Drama Points can erase the problems that result from cheating the Grim Reaper.

The sooner the character is back from the dead, the more Drama Points it costs. Coming back next Season costs one Drama Point (that means the player is going to need a new Cast Member until then). Returning for the next Episode costs five Drama Points. Bypassing death in the same Episode as one's demise costs 10 Drama Points. At your option, a Cast Member with insufficient Drama Points can pay in installments—all Drama Points she has now, and any Drama Points she gets in later Episodes, until the debt is paid. Spending the points is not enough; you and the player need to work out the details behind the resurrection. Some possible explanations follow.

MIRACLE AT THE ER: The hard-working docs at Sunnydale General Hospital (or the local body and fender shop) got that heart pumping after some electroshocks, heart massage, and pure force of will. The character might have seen visions of the future or the past, spoken to dead friends and relatives, or undergone some type of Profound Mystical Experience during the brief time she was dead.

GHOST WITH THE MOST: The character is dead and buried but her soul lives on, and she's not going anywhere. Or the character may rise as some type of undead. Vampires are possible, but it's very hard to be a good vampire. Zombies tend to stink up the place. But maybe some mystical force brings the character back as an undead instrument of vengeance (maybe named after a black carrion bird?). The character gets at least 10 points' worth of new Qualities, and possibly more. Those ain't free, and must be paid for with unspent experience points (see p. 74), or paid in installments with earned experience points.

GREATER POWER: Perhaps some greater power decides that the character has not fulfilled her destiny yet. The reason for the return could be unknown to the character for a while, and thus unexplainable to her friends. The downside is the greater power's motivation. Depending on what's expected from the resurrectee, it might be better to have stayed dead ...

Spending Drama Points: Some Guidelines

So a character has 10-20 shiny Drama Points, and is ready to do the impossible. How many should be spent in an Episode? What happens if the player runs out? While the answers will vary from one gaming group to the next, here are some rules of thumb for both you and the players.

If the player spends all her Drama Points, she may not have them when her Cast Member really needs them. And if she tries to hoard them greedily, her character may get her butt kicked on a regular basis (which may force the player to spend Drama Points to nurse her back to health). It's a balancing act. Ideally, players should spend no more (and hopefully less) Drama Points than they earn in the game session. That way they have a nice stash saved up for the Final Showdown or some other dramatic moment.

During the typical Episode, players should probably not spend more than five Drama Points apiece - assume a maximum of two points on each of two fights, and one point for some non-combat use. But that's in a "fair" fight. If a group of four White Hats tries to take a couple of experienced vamps, they are in trouble, and may end up spending Drama Points like crazy just to survive. In those cases, it's better to use one Drama Point for a Plot Twist to stop the fight. If you want to keep up the pressure and constantly put the Cast in dangerous situations, then players may end up spending 10 Drama

Points per session. In that case, you are going to have to make good those expenses by giving out more Drama Points than normal.

Players should not use Drama Points frivolously - save them for a fight with the Big Bad or the main villain of the Episode. By using tactics and letting the Heroes go in front while the White Hats maneuver around the fringes, vamps and other low-ranking villains can be defeated without much in the way of Drama Point expenditures.

Remember to scale the enemies to the abilities of the characters. If none of the Cast Members have a Combat Maneuver with a bonus higher than nine, for example, putting them up against a bunch of critters with Combat Scores of 16 (which means the best Cast Member needs a seven or higher on a D10 just to avoid getting hit and an eight or higher to hit the monster) is asking for trouble. That forces the Cast to spend a bunch of Drama Points to win the day. So, as a rule of thumb—maximum expenditure of five Drama Points per game session or Episode (depending on how long the Episode is), with an average of two or three points. If all the players are spending more than that amount on a regular basis, you may need to turn down the heat a bit. If only one player is overspending, then it's probably her problem and not the game's.

TWIN SIBLING: At the character's funeral, before you can say Laura Palmer, there she is, looking sad but perfectly alive! Well, it's not really her, just her long-lost sister/cousin/clone/alternate dimension stand-in/so on and so forth. The character should be adjusted somewhat, to reflect the different life story (some skills or Attributes might be modified).

All these options could be very useful to generate drama. How will the character's miraculous return affect the Series? How will the rest of the Cast react? What terrible price must be paid for the life that has been given back?

Earning Drama Points

Once a player spends her Drama Points, they are gone for good. To get more, she is going to have to work for them. Fortunately, they can be obtained in a number of ways.

Experience Points

Characters can use experience points (see pp. 74) to buy Drama Points. Heroes can buy them at the rate of two experience points for each Drama Point. White Hats get a discount: they can get one Drama Point for every experience point they spend. This is the most mechanical way to gain more Drama Points, and can result in characters that improve very slowly. Some TV characters never become more skilled over the seasons, so this is okay.

Quotable Quotes

The Ciniverse is as much about the dialogue as it is about vampire stomping. Coming up with cool, witty lines is not easy. Let's face it, tv shows have a team of talented (and highly compensated) screenwriters working for them, and you and your players don't. Players who put in the effort to come up with a funny and memorable line should be awarded with a Drama Point, once per game session. Both you and the players have to agree that the line is worthy of the reward. Oh, and nobody should get points for parroting lines from a TV show, unless they are used in a particularly creative manner.

Heroic Acts

Stomping on vampires does not constitute a Heroic Act—it's part of the usual job description for the Cast. To earn Drama Points, a character needs to perform acts of self-sacrifice for the good of others. The sacrifice should be significant—serious risk of death or injury or some personal loss. This type of act should get one or two Drama Points, depending on how serious the sacrifice was.

When Bad Things Happen To Good People

Sometimes, the plot may require that something bad happen to the Cast Members. Someone sneaks up behind the character and clobbers her; the escape car refuses to start; a freak accident allows a villain to escape; the spanking new and very sweet boyfriend turns out to be a brain-sucking demon (no way!). This shouldn't happen often, or the players are going to feel railroaded. When it does, you should "pay" for the privilege by giving the affected characters one to three Drama Points. When this rule is invoked, the players cannot use Drama Points to undo the results—if the villain is meant to get away this time, she has to get away. Ditto if this is their turn to end up as hostages. The more unfair the situation is, the more Drama Points they get,

up to three Drama Points for situations where the characters are totally getting hosed by life.

The Agony That Is Life

This is the tragic version of When Bad Things Happen to Good People. When a subplot involving a Cast Member and her Drawbacks (things like Addiction, Love, and Emotional Problems) results in a tragedy, she should be awarded one to three Drama Points every game session where the subplot comes into play. Losing a loved one (usually through death or abandonment), ending a relationship, fighting to overcome drug abuse—if the subplot could be made into a Movie of the Week starring that Sally gal from All in the Family, it is Drama Point worthy. The players really need to get into character, though. “My character goes to a bar and gets plastered. Oh, woe is me” just ain’t gonna cut it. Roleplay the stages of grief, the lies addicts tell to themselves as well as to their friends and the crisis moments when things come to a head.

Sometimes, an emotional crisis directly affects the character. This happens almost exclusively to Heroes: when their psyches are struck and their self-confidence wavers, they are in serious trouble. When tragedy strikes the character (usually when a subplot reaches its boiling point), she suffers a -2 penalty to all her actions. Even worse, the character cannot use Drama Points for Heroic Feats, Plot Twists or Righteous Fury. This sad state of affairs lasts until the character snaps out of it, usually through the efforts of a White Hat (see Support Your Local Hero, next). These times of grief get the character involved two Drama Points, or three if the crisis lasts for an entire Episode.

See Chapter Seven: Episodes, Seasons and Drama for more ideas and guidelines on introducing subplots into a Series or Episode.

Support Your Local Hero

This option is only open to White Hats. In the Ciniverse, the White Hats can help support the Heroes by simply being friends, maintaining the heroes balance and even her sanity. Without the friends who know about her problems and support her through them, Hunters can lose their marbles really quickly. White Hats that roleplay helping other characters through The Agony That Is Life (see above) should get two Drama Points. Giving advice is part of it; the other is to realize there is a problem, learn what is going on, and do something about it.

Cinematic Battle System

Large scale epic battles such as those you see in Lord of the Rings have a way of being a major headache and ½ when you're facing the rules. But have no fear. We have a bitchin' way of handling the biggest battles and the maddest mayhem. We like to call it our Cinematic Battle System. You can use this for any scenario, from epic historical fantasy to the post-apocalyptic alternate to a weird World War II type setting.

Getting Narrative

The Cinematic Battle System is a quick and dirty system designed for you Directors who like to play fast and loose with numbers so they can concentrate on describing the action. Battles are fought in rounds, an arbitrary measure of time created mostly to distinguish it from Turns. Things happen a bit slower in battle because more folks are doing more things. The exact amount of time in a round depends on what's going on. If the armies are fully engaged in hand-to-hand combat, each round might only be a few minutes. If they're still maneuvering and only firing occasional volleys as targets come in range, the round might be half an hour long or more. Given the concentration on the action (not the mechanics), your description does actually matter even though it's a fairly subjective summation of how you think the battle is going. The heroes' plans and reactions must make sense within the context of your interpretation of the battle results.

For example, let's say that the human army meets a group of orcs in an open field battle. The first couple of rounds don't go so well and the humans are starting to lose. You describe the warriors falling back and getting flanked. In response, one of the Cast Members decides to lead a hidden cavalry reserve to attack the orc flankers and relieve the frontline troops. You say that's a fine plan and grant the heroes a bonus for the round of the cavalry charge.

Plans and Schemes

Before the battle, the Cast should be given a written list of the forces at their disposal, and at least a sketch map of the situation. For instance, you'd tell the group they have 30 swordsmen, 20 archers, and 10 knights besides the named characters. Then you should sketch out a rough outline of the castle, point out the

moat, show them the orc's most likely direction of approach, and so on.

Providing a good description and at least a quick sketch map gives the players a clear understanding of what they're up against.

Plan, Schman

Once the group knows what their troops and terrain are like, they can start kibitzing about their plan. Even though the Cinematic Battle System boils down to die-rolling, the Cast's plan still matters. Some of the actions they take might gain them bonuses on their Battle Test (see pp. 71-72). They might also be able to take advantage of certain narrative situations as the battle rages if they've properly planned for it. Seems a bit vague? Ah, you'll see exactly what we're talking about as we continue.

Leading From the Front

Cast Members shouldn't sit back and let the Guest Stars do all the fighting for them. Most have huge egos when it comes to combat and will want to dive right into the carnage.

Such homicidal maniacs can choose whether to fight in hand-to-hand combat or stand back and fire their guns, arrows, and so on. To spill some blood, the player first describes his hero's action in general terms. This should be something like "I draw my sword and and dive off the wall into the orcs." Or, "I take a crossbow with explosive bolts and try to pick off the orc shaman."

The narrative description determines what roll the character uses for the round, usually either Strength and Getting Medieval, or Dexterity and Gun Fu. Once that's determined, check the tables below to see what happens. Use the standard target number (ah ... nine dummy ...) for this roll, not a foe's Combat Score (this roll simulates several minutes worth of fighting against multiple foes). **In the Thick of It** is the chart for those who want to get medieval; **Sniper** is for those who want to hang back and pick off their targets from afar. The Success Level determines the effect the hero has on his side's Battle Test (see p. 71-72).

Some of the entries state that the hero suffers a "counterattack." This is an automatic hit from the most common weapon wielded by the enemy in that type of combat (hand weapons in melee, missile weapons at range). The character gets his armor against the counterattack as usual. If a hero fights the orc army in hand-to-hand combat and gets hit with a counterattack, for example, he suffers the axe-blow of a orc. It does its usual damage of 20 (see p. 58), doubled to 40 (for Slash/stab) and the character loses 40 Life Points (might be a good time for Drama Point spending). If wearing a chain mail (Armor Value 8), he'd only lose 24 Life Points. Note that Cast Members can't go after specific foes whenever they want—that requires a Plot Twist Drama Point expenditure (see p. 68). In that case, arrange for the two foes to meet up in the field of battle. That might take some doing narratively but make it happen anyway—those Drama Points are pretty special things. Once the two foes come face to face, shift over into regular **Unisystem** Turns for a while. The battle can rage around them but it becomes mostly backdrop. Then again, at a dramatically appropriate time, a stray arrow, grunt soldier, collapsing wall, or some such may intrude to mess up the dandy little duel going on.

In the Thick of It (Melee Attacks)

Failure: The hero wades into battle and finds himself overwhelmed by his foes. He suffers three counterattacks. Life sucks that way.

1-2 Success Levels: The hero slays his fair share but pays for his heroism in blood. He adds +2 to his side's Battle Test for the round but suffers two counterattacks.

3-4 Success Levels: The hero rages through his foes, splitting skulls like melons at a Gallagher show. He adds +3 to his side's Battle Test for the round and suffers one counterattack.

5+ Success Levels: The hero covers himself in glory (as well as brains, blood, and bits of bone)! He adds +4 to his side's Battle Test for the round and no counterattacks can be made against him.

Sniper (Ranged Attacks)

Failure: The hero pops his head up and the enemy spots him. He inflicts few casualties this round and suffers two ranged counterattacks (assuming the bad guys are range attack capable) - now he knows what a pincushion feels like.

1-2 Success Levels: The warrior picks off several foes but suffers some return fire as well. He adds +1 to his side's Battle Test but suffers one counterattack from enemy missile fire (assuming they have such weapons).

3-4 Success Levels: This guy could shoot the wings off a fly. He puts down a number of foes and adds +2 to his side's Battle Test for the round. He is unscathed by counterattacks.

5+ Success Levels: Don't give this guy a bell tower and a box of Oreos! He nails more opponents than

he can count. He adds +3 to his side's Battle Test for the round and ignores any missiles targeted at him.

Battle Test

Dice meisters rejoice—it's time to roll the bones. The leaders of each side make an Intelligence and Influence (or just use their Brains Score) roll and add or subtract the modifiers from the Battle Test Modifiers Table. The leader with the highest total wins the round; ties are just that—ties. You should narrate the action, covering the next round of the battle.

Battle Test Modifiers Table	
Mod	Situation
+2	The leader's army is roughly twice as strong or numerous as your foe.
+4	The leader's army is three times powerful than your foe or better.
+2	The leader's army is protected by major fortifications.
+2	The leader's army is composed of troops that cause fear, and their foes are mostly mortal.
+1 to +4	Any additional beneficial surprises, tricks, advantages, or heroes' bonuses. This bonus should only apply in the round it occurs.

Modifiers

So how do you judge relative strengths between the armies? Good question. Compare numbers, types of troops, individuals who make up the types of troops, weapons, armor, training. The King's Guard, a group of heavily armed and armored cavalry, can probably handle three or four times their number in orcs. If such a battle, the abilities of the Guard outweigh the numbers of the orcs, so no modifier would be applied. Once you consider all those "power of army" things, remind yourself that the storyline is paramount. What do you think would make for a good tale? All in all, there's no need to sweat the exact decision made regarding relative strengths. Make a call and move on.

For situation-specific modifiers, consider what's different about the Battle Test for this round compared to any other. Did the cavalry get into position to charge this round? Are the front ranks in range of the catapults for the first time this round? Is the final route of retreat cut off so the troops know it's kill or be killed time? These are the situations that call for special modifiers.

Finally, your judgment calls aren't set in stone. Assign modifiers, roll the dice, and see what the results are. Next round, adjust your modifier calls depending on new circumstances, your re-evaluation of the army strengths (taking into account casualties on both sides), or where you want the story to go.

Casualties

Now both sides make Constitution (not doubled) rolls for each type of troop in their force. The side that lost the round subtracts two from each roll. (Neither side suffers the penalty if the Battle Test was a tie.)

If a troop type fails its roll, it suffers 10% of its commencement-of-battle number in casualties (round normally). If an army has 120 archers when it marched into battle, and it suffered 10% casualties, 12 archers become casualties that round and may no longer participate in the battle. This 10% number remains constant even as the total fighting force decreases. In subsequent rounds, 12 more archers are lost until there are none (but mostly likely someone will retreat before then). Make sure you write down your different troop types and their starting number before you get to this step so there's no "cheating."

Remember that "casualties" means killed or wounded. Some of those who took a dive might be just fine for the next battle—if there is one.

Retreat!

The final step is for the general who lost to check the morale of this troops. He should make a Willpower roll. His Willpower is doubled as long as he still has half his force left. The moment it drops below that, he must roll Willpower without doubling. Failure means his troops are ready to retreat. The general can keep fighting, but his losses from this point on are doubled (20% of commencement-of-battle numbers per roll instead of 10%). This often happens when troops can't retreat—such as those in a be-sieged castle or other fortification.

Drama Points and Battles

The leader of each side can spend Drama Points as usual. Only one Drama Point may be spent per round. When using a Heroic Feat Drama Point to add +10 to his Battle Test (see p. 66), the player must describe what brilliant plan, stirring speech, or unexpected event caused this bonus, but it otherwise works as usual.

The I Think I'm Okay Drama Point expenditure (see p. 66) is treated a bit differently in the battle context. Such Drama Points can be used to negate half an army's losses for the round. The point may be spent after results are determined. This represents the general yelling or encouraging the walking wounded to get back into the fight, rallying deserters, or simply stirring his men to greatness by his own daring do. Alternatively, an I Think I'm Okay Drama Point may be spent to negate any losses from a particular type of troops. The other types suffer full losses as dictated by their Constitution rolls.

Putting It All Together

The good guys are composed of Edward the knight, Jacob the knight, Justin the Cleric, Ericka the Sorceress, and Silverleaf the Archer. They lead 30 swordsmen, 20 archers, and 10 knights.

The army of the Dreadaxe Orcs has 450 orcs, 50 orc sergeants, and 25 goblins. Their characters are the orc warchief, the orc shaman, and a harpy.

Now we go through the modifiers. You decide the orcs are roughly equal to the human archers and swordsmen, so that makes the bad guys easily three times more numerous (i.e., powerful) than the Heroes men. The army of orcs adds +4 to their Battle Test for outnumbering the humans by more than three to one. They also add +2 because the orc warcry instills bone-chilling fear in the humans. That's a total bonus of +6.

The humans get +2 for fortifications. You also decide to give the humans a one-time bonus of +2 for the catapult bombs, +2 for the black powder bombs on the arrows, and a whopping +4 for the sorceress's "Ball of Abyssal Flame". Each of these bonuses may only be used once, however, and they can only be used when they make sense narratively. For instance, the catapults can't be used once the orcs have broken into the castle courtyard.

Edward's player decides he will use the catapult's black powder bombs first, while the undead are still at a distance. Edward's Intelligence 3 and Influence 4 combine for a total of seven. He rolls a below-average four and gets a Battle Test total of 13 before any modifiers. With the +2 for the castle walls and +2 for the catapults, he has a respectable 17.

The orc army advances and the skeletons fire flaming arrows. The orc warchief has a Brains Score 12 (which already includes his roll result of six). He gets to add +6 to his Battle Test for his numbers and the orc fear factor. That's 18 total. Yowch!

The first round goes to the orcs. Each group of Jacob's men must make a Constitution roll at -2. He rolls for his Swordsmen first (Constitution 3). They roll a four, add three, but have to subtract two, so their total is five. They fail, so one out of every 10 drops like a sack of potatoes. Since there were 25, 2.5 guys—rounded to three - are out of the fight.

The archers have Constitution 2. They roll a six, add two, subtract two because they lost, and get a six. They also suffer 10% casualties, or two bowmen. Jacob's knights get a little luckier. Their Constitution provides a bonus of four, and they roll an eight. Subtracting two gives them a 10. They suffer no casualties. If they had failed the roll, one knight in shining armor would turn into a knight in a shining pile of goo.

Now it's the bad guys' turn. You make a Constitution roll for the orcs. They have Constitution 3, so their bonus is three. They get unlucky and roll a one, so they suffer 10% casualties, and 45 of them splatter beneath a barrage of black powder arrows and catapult-bombs. The orc sergeants have a Constitution 4. They roll a five and get nine, so they're fine.

The goblins dodge around the battlefield like crazed dope fiends but roll a four. Combined with their Constitution 3, that's less than nine. Three of those nasties get caught in the crossfire. Huzzah!

You describe numerous orcs and goblins blowing up, but a number of archers and swordsmen are pinned by crossbow bolts or flee in terror at the advancing orcish horde.

Now it's time for the good guys morale roll. Do they really want to stick around and fight some more. The troops are still at over half strength so Edward's Willpower Attribute is doubled (to eight). He can't fail. That's good - at least until his troops suffer more than half casualties.

Whether to make The orc warchief roll for morale depends on how mindless you think the orcs and goblins are. They could be immune to fear but, at least with the orcs, it seems unlikely. If you go that route, The orc warchief's Willpower 4 also leads to an automatic success.

Time to move on to the next round ... and pray for rescue.

EXPERIENCE AND IMPROVEMENT

Keep doing something, and you are bound to get good at it. Buffy is stronger and more skilled by series end than when she first arrived in Sunnydale. Willow eventually went from being a sweet computer nerd to a powerful witch able to change the nature of the Hunter line. Characters improve over time.

At the end of each Episode (or game session if the Episode lasts more than a session), you should give players experience points. These points can be used to improve Attributes or skills, to gain new Qualities or buy off Drawbacks, or to buy Drama Points.

Typically, each player should receive between one and five experience points in a game session. Everybody who participates gets one experience point (call it the “You Drove a Half Hour ... oh, and Picked Up Twizzlers Before Playing” award). If the characters succeeded in thwarting evil through teamwork, heroic butt-kicking and creative thinking, an additional one or two points should be awarded. Players who stayed in character and helped move the story along should get another one or two points. At the end of major story arcs, another point should be awarded to everyone in the group, plus one more at the end of the Season Finale.

Using Experience Points

Experience points help characters improve in several ways. They represent wisdom from fighting and investigating the supernatural (after months of reading occult books, some knowledge is bound to stick, for example), physical improvements due to the Hunter Complete Body and Soul Workout, and learned abilities (maybe something from high school or college managed to stick).

In general, all experience point expenditures and ability improvements should be explained in some manner. Practice, training, a new teacher, special equipment, and storyline events are all possibilities. “I want to” as a rationale should be frowned upon. This is particularly true for Quality gains or Drawback losses.

IMPROVING ATTRIBUTES: Swing axes enough and your axe-swinging arm is going to get stronger. Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution can be improved through physical training. Explaining improvements in Mental Attributes is a bit harder, but not impossible. Perception can get better if the character learns to pay more attention to the world around her. Willpower improves after undergoing severe ordeals; whatever doesn't kill you only makes you stronger, and all that jazz. Intelligence might get better as a result of maturity and simple exercise—give those neurons a workout and they may start improving. Usually, humans can improve each Attribute by one level and no more. If the character starts out fairly young (somebody with the Teenager Drawback, for instance), you may allow her Attributes to improve by up to two levels, allowing for those pre-18 growth spurts. Slayers, Vampires, and other special critters are not limited to a one- or twostep increase in Attributes, and can improve them up to level 12. Some beings have Attributes well above level 12, but they are not meant to be Cast Members. They should also be approached very respectfully.

Varying Awards

With a set number of experience point awards, the rate of character advancement is highly dependent on the frequency of game sessions and the specifics of the Episodes played. Groups that play more often will see their characters become very powerful very quickly. The same is true for groups that are more intensely focused on moving through your storylines, and thus have more opportunities of experience point awards. On the flip side, a group that meets only infrequently or treats their sessions more as social gatherings may find their characters stagnate a bit. To avoid these problems, experience awards can be adjusted to suit your group's playing frequency and style.

The Movie: These groups meet relatively infrequently or take their time advancing the storyline. A Series is more likely to avoid the typical Episode structure of most television shows, unwinding more like a movie or mini-series. Cast Members should earn up to seven points per session and rarely less than two or three (unless they prove to be real sloppy).

Short Season: Under this option, you have planned out a continuous Season over twelve Episodes or so (like Buffy Season One). The characters are still considered to experience a year's worth of storylines. This is the default level where Cast Members earn between one and five experience points per session.

Extended Series: This is the complete set. You all have the time and craving to run full-throttle with this game, so you plot out a twenty-two Episode Season just like the TV show's later years. Moreover, you plan to continue the game over the course of several Seasons. To keep the incidences of uber-Cast Member down, award at most three points per session.

ATTRIBUTES: Improving an Attribute costs five times the next level, with a minimum of fifteen. So, raising an Attribute from one to two costs fifteen points; raising it from five to six costs 30 points. The player must pay for each level increase. The Attribute Improvement Cost Table summarizes these costs.

SKILLS: Raising a skill has a cost equal to the new level times two (i.e., to raise a skill 3 to skill 4 costs eight experience points). A skill cannot be improved by more than one level at the end of a game session. There is no limit to skill levels. The Skill Improvement Cost Table runs these costs down.

Getting a brand-new skill (i.e., one that is at level zero at the beginning of the game) costs five experience points for the first level. After that, it improves normally. This assumes the Cast Member was able to learn the skill somehow, either by having a teacher or through plain old practice.

LANGUAGE: Language is a special case; no matter how active the Cast Members are, they are not going to pick up a new language from one Episode to the next. To improve this skill, the character needs to spend at least a month studying each language intensively. Only then can she spend the points to gain it.

QUALITIES AND DRAWBACKS: A few Qualities may be acquired after character creation. Most are inborn, and if a character doesn't have them now, she will never have them (Acute Senses, for example; vision or hearing rarely improves with time). However, since this is the Ciniverse, perhaps the character discovers a talent they never had before? Perhaps exposure to the supernatural has awakened something in them that lay dormant until now? Or perhaps they just had a spell cast on them to grant them a Quality. This shouldn't be abused, of course. Don't feel afraid to tell your players "Nice try, wiseguy" when they start wanting to buy 5 levels of sorcery after seeing a spell occur. Likewise, a character might become an Cop or an Occult Investigator during the course of a Season, but that doesn't grant her the Quality of the same name (which represents years of training and preparation).

Attribute Improvement Cost Table		
Old Attribute Level	New Attribute Level	Cost
1	2	15
2	3	15
3	4	20
4	5	25
5	6	30
6	7	35
7	8	40
8	9	45
9	10	50
10	11	55
11	12	60
+1	+1	5 x New Attribute Level

Skill Improvement Cost Table		
Old Skill Level	New Skill Level	Cost
0	1	5
1	2	4
2	3	6
3	4	8
4	5	10
5	6	12

Skill Improvement Cost Table		
6	7	14
7	8	16
8	9	18
9	10	20
10	11	22
11	12	24
+1	+1	2 x New Skill Level

In some cases, the Quality costs no points—if the Cast Member becomes rich through her own efforts, she should not be charged for the increase in Resources Level, for example.

Regardless of how the Quality is attained, it needs a compelling story rationale. Saying “I’ve got some experience points burning a hole in my Capri pants and I want my character to be a Witch now” is just not going to cut it. You Directors should always feel free to deny the purchase of any given Quality if it doesn’t fit your “vision” or you don’t buy the rationale.

Similarly, some Drawbacks can be “bought” off, although again some reason for the change should be provided. The change in the character should develop over time, culminating in some eye-opening, life-changing, pants-wetting (perhaps) event. In other instances, a Drawback is imposed on a character for the sake of the storyline. A White Hat might get bitten by a werewolf and become one. That character would gain the 3-point Werewolf Drawback, but would not get three character points to spend elsewhere. It is also possible for a player to take on a new Drawback, and receive the character points for it. For example, the Impaired Senses (Hearing) Drawback might be voluntarily accepted by a character who spends a great deal of time practicing with her loud industrial music band.

DRAMA POINTS: Players can also buy Drama Points with experience points, at the rate of one Drama Point per two experience points spent if the Cast Member is a Hero or Experienced Hero, and one for one if she is a White Hat.

Wherefore Art Thou, my Sidekick?

After a sufficiently large number of sessions of the Cinimatic Unisystem RPG, and the experience point awards that follow, White Hats can become quite powerful. They will even begin to make the starting Hero Character Type seem puny. At some point, you may want to call quits to the White Hat’s ability to purchase Drama Points with experience points on a one-for-one basis. Declare them at Hero level and require them to spend two experience points per Drama Point. Alternatively, leave them at the same purchase ratio and just throw in a few more nasties. Up to you, really.

Improvement Costs

Just as you can vary the amount of experience points you award to keep the power levels among characters to a dull roar, so too you can adjust the costs of improvements. If Attributes and skills seem to be rising too fast, bump up their cost by one to five. Another adjustment could be to charge twice or thrice the amount of points for any new or increased Qualities. If you go that route though, you may want to think about expanding the Qualities available for purchase. The rationales for the improvements are going to get harder to swallow, but hey, it’s a wild and wacky world out there. No reason the characters can’t be also.

Magic & the Primal Arts

The dark (and not-so-dark) arts are part and parcel of the Ciniverse, where anyone with the right books can summon forces from the beyond. Of course, calling on these occult powers does not mean your character can control and use them with impunity. Or even get them a little bit right—and not-right in magic is not right, as Willow might put it. More often than not, magic has unintended consequences. A mispronounced word or a missed cue and the result may be the total opposite of what your character intended. But the real kicker—the thing that drives practitioners straight to over-consumption of ice cream goodies—is that even succeeding does

not mean everything works perfectly.

In the hands of those with true power - Witches and Warlocks - magic can do almost anything its wielder desires. Spells can affect hundreds of people at once, reshape reality to suit the magician, and even bring back the dead. There is always a price, however, both for success and failure. You have been warned.

MAGIC: WHAT, HOW AND WHO

Magic is the supernatural power to make changes in the world through an act of will rather than physical action. Magic predates humankind; the demons that ruled Earth in the distant past used a variety of dark magical rituals, and some of these rites have survived, preserved by sorcerers with more guts than good sense. Other magicks appear to be the domain of humanity, powers of the Earth used by the Wise Ones—the Wicca—to heal and protect. The lines between dark and light powers are blurred, however. The intent of the magic's wielder, her skill and strength of will, and plain dumb luck all seem to play a part in determining the difference between a spell that helps or heals, and one that corrupts and destroys.

Magic in the Ciniverse works in a number of ways. Most commonly, spells and rituals are used to appeal to, or invoke, some supernatural entity (including spirits, gods and demons) to produce an effect. Powerful magicians (the true Witches and Warlocks), on the other hand, can use their own will to affect the world directly. Finally, there are objects—leftovers from the demon age or artifacts from different dimensions—that hold great power.

Knowledge is all one needs to perform magical feats in the Ciniverse. Rituals, incantations and old formulae have great power, should one dare to use them. It's like baking a cake—as long as you have the recipe and ingredients, you're all set, more or less. Skill and practice are important, too. Even with a recipe, an inexperienced cook can ruin the cake, and it's the same with magic. And of course, if your character screws up, she often gets something a lot worse than a face full of frosting. Using magic is always dangerous, and the wise only use it as a last resort.

Hitting the Books: Magic Libraries

Your character won't find true magic in the Mysticism section of the local chain bookstore—that's for the wanna-blessed-bes. The real spells are usually found in ancient books, scrolls or stone tablets, often hidden for centuries by dark cults. Then again, the most amazing things are on eBay these days, and a few occult books have been scanned into computer databases (with disastrous consequences).

Access to occult books is essential for a budding magician. Less fortunate magicians have to make do with a single book of spells. If the spell is not somewhere in her collection, the magician is out of luck, unless she wants to try and devise a spell on her own.

Creating new spells requires a lot of work and is risky. Re-treading all over the cooking analogy, it's basically like using a lot of recipes to make a new one. Your character might create something really good, or end up with the magical equivalent of chocolate-frosted stuffed crust olive loaf.

Your Cast Member's best bet is to look up a previously developed spell. Most old spells are tried-and-true formulas, developed over centuries of trial and error (and when we say error, we're talking about the kind of error that leads to the sudden onset of galloping leprosy, spontaneous combustion, rains of toads and other fun stuff). The prudent magician goes for the tried-and-true ways. The daring magician risks making a mistake (which brings us back to the galloping leprosy and other nonsense).

True Witches and Warlocks (i.e., people with the Sorcery Quality, see p. 34) have an easier time improvising spells or casting them "on the fly," but even they have to hit the books for the really impressive mojo. Characters who want to sling spells around need to have some level of the Occult Library Quality (see p. 17) or know someone who does (this is where being best buds with an Occult Investigator really pays off).

In the latter case, of course, access to the books is going to be limited; they are someone else's books after all, and you know how people hate it when you borrow their books and don't return them. Now imagine if the book revealed how to make an inchworm the size of an SUV ...

The Ritual

Once your character has found the right spell, whether motivated by desperate need or self-destructive whim or something in between (that's ... desperate whim?), it's casting time. Most spells require a ritual of some sort. This can be as easy as reading or speaking the words of the spell, or as complicated as dancing for three hours under the full moon, wearing nothing but the fur of a freshly killed animal (can you say blech?). Most spells use ancient languages—Latin, Sumerian, Sanskrit, or even one of the languages that were old before men walked the earth. Your character needn't be fluent in the language in question, but if she stumbles and

mispronounces a word, there's a chance that the spell might go bad—as in “no-longer-have-ears” bad.

Many rituals also require special ingredients or components (the ever popular eye of newt, or the dust of twenty-seven old vampires, or a mint copy of Superdude Comics #1). The items are usually destroyed or consumed during the ritual (the sacrifice needed to appease or pay off whatever Powers the sorcerer is invoking), so kiss that valuable Superdude comic goodbye. Also, Powerful spells often need rare and unique components (the horns of a demon lord or a supermodel without an eating disorder), so even if your character manages to learn the spell, she still may not be able to cast it.

Rituals usually take some time—no less than a few minutes, and often several hours, or even days. More powerful spells tend to require longer rituals, although the exact length can vary a lot. If the ritual is interrupted before it's completed, the spell will fizzle or worse, have some unexpected effect—sorcerers with weak bladders take note.

Aftermath

Once the ritual is complete, the magic happens. The effects may be subtle (the victim's personality changes over a few hours, for example) or spectacular (your basic rain of locusts, pillars of fire, explosions, or other FX-laden extravaganzas). Much of the time, the spell's effects won't be exactly what the caster had in mind. And even if they are, you can't discount the potential for nasty side effects later on. There's no such thing as a free lunch with magic. The fabric of reality cannot be altered cheaply, and there's always a price to pay. A spell could kill a targeted enemy, for example, but the forces invoked to do the deed may run rampant afterwards, killing indiscriminately. The more powerful the spell, the more likely that there will be unexpected occurrences.

BASIC SPELLCASTING

So, despite all our doom and gloom, your character is ready, willing and able to use magic. What next? Spellcasting takes some preparation and some thought. Can't just start tossing fireballs left and right at the drop of a top hat, y'know.

Game Lingo

Magical incantations and invocations have a few features that must be taken into account when using the art of mojo in the game. Each spell has a Power Level. This determines the overall strength of the spell—a spell that helps cure a toothache is less powerful than one that can transmogrify (as that old lady who turns into a cat likes to say) the population of a small city into barnyard animals, for example. The higher the Power Level of a spell, the more difficult it is to cast properly, and the more damaging the consequences of failure. Additionally, spells have Requirements—the ingredients or ritual components needed to attempt the magical endeavor. Finally, spells have an Effect. This is usually descriptive (“all the body hair is removed from the victim,” for example), but can also include rules concepts like damage inflicted, area affected, and duration.

Purpose

First, your character needs to know what she wants to do. Okay, that's sort of a “duh” statement, but it's not as straightforward as it first sounds. With magic, being specific is key. If the caster's intentions are too vague, the powers invoked by the spell may “interpret” them as they wish, and that's rarely a good thing. “I want to make my ex-boyfriend's life miserable” sucks as a “mission statement.” Such a spell might do almost anything, including killing the caster herself (if her death would make the ex-boyfriend miserable), turning him into a demon (bad if he holds a grudge), or killing everybody he likes (which may include people the caster likes). “I want my ex-boyfriend's nose to spew a constant stream of mucus for five hours starting at 7pm next Saturday” is much better (pretty gross, granted, but better).

So, what can a magician wish for? In theory, anything; in practice, not so much. Magic can affect living and non-living things, can build and destroy, affect people's minds and manipulate matter and energy. There are limits, however. Making objects appear out of thin air is exceedingly difficult, for example. It is a great deal easier to transform or destroy something that already exists rather than create something out of nothing. Permanent effects are more difficult than temporary ones: your character may be able to turn lead into gold, but the gold reverts to lead a short while later. Healing some diseases may have unfortunate side effects—this is especially true of any problem affecting the patient's mind. The more ambitious the purpose, the harder it is to find a spell that can accomplish it. The best spells have simple and straightforward goals.

Finally, spells that squash enemies like bugs or overwhelm all challenges in the Series are not going to

be available for the most part (and when they are, they will exact a high price from those who use them). Other than being silly and rude to the Director who has worked so hard to entertain you, that's way too much of a cop out. Magic cannot solve all or even most problems.

Research

Alright, your character knows what she wants, and has formulated it with some specificity. Is she going to get it? That depends on how good her research is. This step is mostly under the Director's control. Once you decide what type of spell your character needs, the Director must decide two things: Is the spell available, and how difficult will it be to find?

The first part is the trickiest one; does the desired spell exist? Generally speaking, any reasonably effective spell should be available—if the spell works within the plot of the Episode, or at least doesn't get in the way. By the same token, once a spell is "discovered," the Cast will have continual access to it, so your Director must consider whether the spell in question is potentially unbalancing or inappropriate in the long term. Alternatively, the spell may exist, but it may require unique components. Of course, you will not know if the spell is available until your character spends some time looking for it (and how much time is up to the Director and your character's research skills).

If the spell exists, the spellcaster needs to find it. Research is mostly done "off camera" in the Ciniverse, so it should be solved with a couple of rolls in the game. Finding a spell takes one hour per Power Level of the spell, minus half an hour per Success Level in an Intelligence and Occultism roll, to a minimum of half an hour (multiple researchers can combine their Success Levels). Or your Director might just say, "you stay up until 6 am and finally locate the proper incantation ... oh, by the way, not too long 'til class starts."

In some cases, the spell may exist, but is not in your character's collection. In that case, finding the book (or scroll, or stone tablet or whatever) with the spell would be part of the Episode's plot.

Creating new spells works along the same lines. First, the Director decides if the right "raw materials" are available. If so, your wannabe spell-slinger can devise her own charms and enchantments. If they aren't, she is wasting her time (a kind Director might allow her to come up with something less effective than she hoped—and a less kind one might have her create a spell with some seriously unintended effects).

Starting Spells

Characters created to be spell-casters might logically have a couple spells under their belts when the game commences. If you can convince your Director of this, she might allow your character a number of spells equal to her Occultism skill. Your Director will choose the spells and might even include some of a higher-than-safe Power Level (dastardly, eh?).

Spells as Plot Devices

In the Ciniverse, magic is often used as a plot device. These spells are found just in time to save the day or start the trouble the Cast has to deal with during the Episode. They are usually powerful, world-changing, and play a vital role in the storyline, be it good or evil. After playing that role, most of those spells disappear, never to be mentioned again.

Plot device spells should be given special consideration. Generally, they should be one-shot rituals: they can be used once, and cannot be repeated afterwards, for any number of reasons. Some possible explanations include special requirements (like needing an alignment of stars and planets that only happens once every 6,000 years, give or take), components (a unique item that can never be replaced after being consumed by the spell), or circumstances (the spell to summon one demon doesn't work for all demons, just that one). These special spells should not be too difficult to cast, either, so Success Level requirements can be waived or reduced - some spells just "want" to be cast, and anybody with a modicum of skill can use them (not necessarily a good thing).

Finally, plot device spells should be very rare - one or two per Season are probably as common as they should be. If you player types start waiting for some mega-spell to save the day, your Director isn't doing it right.

Preparations

Setting up the spell may require very little effort (cracking open a book and reading it, for example), but preparations often must be made beforehand. They include things like setting up a ritual site, finding all the ingredients to be used in the spell, or waiting for the right time (midnight, the full moon, a total solar eclipse, or a Jackson Five reunion). Common elements used in many spells include:

CANDLES: Electricity is for muggles—magic works best in flickering candlelight, just like grandma used to spellcast. Many rituals call for lighting a number of candles (four to thirteen, usually), generally arranged in a

circle, square or pentagram.

ITEMS: Some spells need specific items to be effective. These objects have a special meaning or inherent trigger. They may be crucial to the ritual's success or they may simply make it easier.

MAGIC CIRCLE: Gather a few of your best friends in a circle, have them hold hands and chant and presto! - they'll definitely think you're insane. In the Ciniverse, that's the way a lot of rituals work, though. Sometimes the circle is drawn on the ground, and if someone smudges or erases the lines, the spell fizzles—or does something unexpected (and keep in mind there are precious few good surprises when you're using magic).

OCCULT SYMBOLS: Some spells work better when you paint a few pretty pictures. You've got pentagrams, hexagrams, candygrams, runes, Sumerian cuneiform writing, and Amazon Indian pictographs. Stick figures might do it, but don't count on it.

These preparations are plot-driven, not rule-driven. Most of the time in the show, setting up the spell is no big deal and is done largely off-camera. For minor spells, the prep work should be insignificant. If the preparations are important, then getting it done should be part of the Episode's plot or subplots. Fighting a pack of demons to obtain a mystic crystal, maxing out your credit card to buy that last fragment of the Scroll of Butt-kicking, or making a pact with dark forces to get what's needed—these can all be possible plots and subplots dealing with the preparation of a spell. See Appendix II for some ideas for trappings.

Spellcasting

Once everything is in place, casting a spell requires a Willpower and Occultism roll. Drama Points can be used normally to increase the spell's chance to succeed (but your Director may bar such use unless the need is dire). If the roll fails (i.e., the total is less than nine), the spell doesn't work—the ritual simply fails. Generally, there's no other down side here; your character just wasted some time, candlepower and pretty speechifying. Actually, it's when the roll succeeds that things get interesting ... in the sense of the ancient Chinese curse “may you live in interesting times.”

The roll's Success Levels are compared to the spell's Power Level. If the number of Success Levels is less than the spell's Power Level, something magical happens— but it is rarely what the caster intended. The spell's intent may be twisted or perverted, and the caster may be injured—or even killed—as the magicks draw on her life force to fulfill their purpose. The Director can decide what happens, or she can roll on the Spell Side Effect Table below.

If the roll results in Success Levels greater than or equal to the spell's Power Level, the spell works perfectly. Unless, of course, it takes an unexpected turn no matter how many Success Levels were rolled. But no good and true Director would do something like that, now would she? Scratch that—in the Ciniverse, any frequent use of magic is going to go wrong at some point. Best to expect some nasty consequence with magic (regardless of the die rolling result), and plan accordingly.

Casting multiple spells without resting is very difficult, as the magician's will is sapped by the constant strain. Every successive spell cast without a significant period of rest (at least two hours per spell Power Level) suffers a cumulative -2 penalty. So, the second spell of the day is at -2, the third at -4, and so on. Only powerful Witches can cast multiple spells in a row, and even then they'll probably have to burn some Drama Points to keep it up. Even worse, using the same spell more than once adds an additional -1 to the penalties above.

EXAMPLUS TOTALUS: Ericka is trapped in a room. The door has several locks on it, and the walls are reinforced steel (although she doesn't know that). First she tries to unlock the door with a spell. It works, but only one of the locks is released. Frustrated, Ericka decides to try and blow out a portion of the wall. That spell suffers a -2 penalty given Ericka's fatigue. Reinforced steel says “no way”. Realizing now how strong the walls are, Ericka returns to the locked door. She attempts the unlock spell again. This time it suffers a -4 penalty due to fatigue, and -1 for repeated use—the total modifier is -5.

Togetherness

Spells that require multiple magicians don't require multiple rolls. The participant with the highest casting bonus (Willpower + Occultism + Sorcery [if any]) or Quick Sheet Magic Maneuver Score is called the primary caster. She does the rolling. The casting bonus of other participants is not used.

When more than the required number of participants is available, the extra help comes in handy. Every magician above the minimum needed adds +1 for every Success Level she achieves on a separate casting roll. So, if a spell normally requires three casters and four Witches are around, the one with the lowest casting bonus adds +1 per Success Level to the primary caster's casting total. The bonus for a single helper may be small, but it could be the difference between arcane achievement and pain-inducing prestidigitation. Making magic with a full coven of 13 Witches can really put some mustard in the mojo. There is a downside though—each additional caster's failure subtracts two from the primary caster's final result. Regardless of the quality of the help though,

the total bonus added by the additional magicians cannot exceed the primary caster's Willpower and Occultism (and Sorcery) bonus. In effect, the primary caster's bonuses can be doubled, but no more than that.

Virtual Magic

With the rise of the Internet, Technopagans (see p. 135) have developed rituals for combining computers and magic. The most common of these techniques is the virtual circle. If a character needs to perform a ritual that requires a number of participants, but doesn't have the proper number of magically inclined friends around, virtual magic can be a great way to go.

Everyone involved blesses her computer, burns incense and lights candles - to set the proper atmosphere. Then each participant types the various invocations instead of speaking them aloud. Non-wired magicians can help out but they must be close by the wired ones.

Spells cast using a virtual circle receive the usual "working together" benefits. Simply add the bonus from every additional magician involved in the ritual just as if everyone were performing the spell in the same place. On the other hand, virtual magic is slower than normal - all rituals so cast require twice as much time to perform. Also, the effect is centered around the primary caster.

Magic In Combat

In your typical fantasy roleplaying game, magicians are walking artillery pieces, able to fire spells left and right and smite orcs and goblins by the cartload. In the Ciniverse, only Witches and Warlocks can use magic effectively in combat, and even they can't just blast away at their enemies for very long. Magic is mostly the stuff of lengthy rituals and careful preparation, and a fistfight isn't the right place for it. Practitioners should do their spells before or after a fight.

Any spell that requires a ritual fails if the caster is attacked before the ritual is complete. Witches can use their speed-casting ability to invoke spells in combat, but even they are hindered by the roll penalties for multiple castings. Again, feel free to impose a magical downside even when combat spell-casting rolls are succeed cleanly.

Magician, Heal Thyself?

Most fantasy roleplaying games have powerful healing magicks—a cleric says a quick prayer, or a warrior chugs a potion, and presto: wounds disappear, and people are hale and hearty again (until the next time they get clobbered by orcs or what have you, that is). Magic in the Ciniverse doesn't work like that though. (Unless your director says otherwise, of course)

Undoing damage, curing disease and the like are not things that can be done lightly in this setting. At best, magic can accelerate the natural healing process, but trying to instantly cure someone is likely to have serious side effects—for example, a spell that regenerates a wound might also give the patient cancer, as cells start multiplying without rhyme or reason.

Since no healing spells have been used in the source material, this is open to interpretation of course. We suggest that healing spells, if any exist at all, speed up regular healing (doubling or tripling the normal rate, for example; see p. 63). If you want flashier "poof, you're all healed" magic, you can use the magic damage guidelines (see p. 93) and reverse them for healing effects. Directors should be aware, however, that such a spell will be used regularly and will radically alter the feel and tone of the Series (unless frequent side effects are imposed). On the other hand, it will be very useful in combat, particularly for White Hats.

Effect

Finally, we get to the streams of pretty sparkles, big flashes of light, clouds of smoke, thunderous roars and other heady stuff that happens when a spell goes off. Most spell effects are pretty straightforward—somebody gets turned into a rat, a magical portal opens or closes, a spirit is summoned or exorcised. A few spells have variable effects—the duration or damage of the spell is determined by either the Success Levels of the casting roll or the magician's Willpower.

Summoning

Summoning is a special category of magic. With very few exceptions, almost no summoning magics can be quick cast—calling gnarly creatures from the spirit world or one of the hundreds of demon dimensions takes time, especially if the caster wants to do it safely. If the caster's roll succeeds, but fails to achieve the spell's Power Level, something is always summoned. Often, it doesn't arrive immediately, so it can be doubly surprising when it finally shows up (see Summoning Spells Side Effect Table, p. 91). For the most part though, succeeding

in a summoning spell is not overly difficult.

Demons and spirits make their summoning spells particularly easy because that promotes mortal world tourism (a favorite demon vacation spot). They love to have a chance to cause trouble, break things, and maybe engage in an evisceration or two.

Summoning spells are also devised to be easy to perform accidentally. Most summoning spells require not much more than the creature's special symbol. There are far too many old, interesting-looking books (and more modern books copied from them) that contain these symbols. If someone draws a summoning symbol accidentally, she is halfway to completing the spell. The final component can easily be as simple as reading the caption of the old drawing out loud or spilling a single drop of blood. Most of the truly lame amateur magicians are summoners—it's just that easy and it impresses the locals (in the run-screaming kind of way). The real trick is learning how to survive the experience.

When someone intentionally summons a creature, she generally hopes to use it to perform some fairly difficult and nasty task. Otherwise, the caster would simply ask a good friend and not something with five horns, alligator scales, and bad breath. The problem is that almost no summoning spells are also binding spells, forcing the creature to do the caster's will. Demons and spirits hate those sorts of spells and do their best to kill anyone who uses them. In addition, binding spells are much tougher to cast.

Summoners with sense have prepared a binding circle (see p. 97). This precaution keeps the creature from eating the summoner and heading out on the town. Even assuming that's successful, the caster must make a deal with the being. Sometimes this is easy—asking a demon to kill someone in particular doesn't take much convincing. Keeping that demon from killing or maiming one or two other people along the way is a bit more difficult. If the caster wants the critter to rob a bank for her, kill someone tough like a vampire or a Witch, or do anything else fairly complicated, she needs to find something that likes to do what she wants—or she needs to do some fast talking.

Even creatures who like doing what the caster desires may want a token payment, like the caster's left eye or something equally icky. Avoiding this is going to take an offer of something equally desirable to the demon or spirit. Often, a magical item with a Power Level equal to that of the summoning spell is acceptable. Not that those things grow on trees, but it's better than one of the caster's body parts. Whether the creature takes the treasure and backs out of the deal is another story. Absent self sacrifice or objects, demon or spirit bargains tend to get ugly fast. Elaborate human sacrifices, the head of a Hunter, and the heart of a virgin are only the beginning of the nastiness. The caster can walk this dark road but there will be repercussions (see p. 87). Anyone who doesn't want to become some sort of black magician had best leave demon summoning to someone else. Threats could also work. Hellgods or even kick-butt Witches can often simply tell the creature that if it doesn't do what she wants, she will stomp it into a pile of broken horns and green goo. On the other hand, if the caster has the juice to back up that threat, why summon the creature in the first place?

Magicians can summon almost any demon or spirit imaginable. Most summoning spells are Power Level 3; powerful unique demons like Machida require level four spells; real nasties can bring the Power Level to five. Casting a summoning spell takes between ten minutes and a half an hour.

Dispelling Magical Effects

Some spells have continuing effects (curses, for example) or may even be permanent (some transformation spells). Canceling their effects requires access to the spell itself (ideally taking it directly from the magician's own books) and a spellcasting roll as above with the effective Power Level of the spell reduced by one (it's easier to undo a spell and return nature to its natural state). There is another way to stop an ongoing magic effect—find the caster and get her to stop the spell, say by cutting off her head or turning her into a sports trophy. Either way, continuing spells stop working, but permanent ones may not. For this reason, and others, wholesale slaughter is discouraged.

Recycling Spells

Once a spell effect is out there, players are going to want to use it again. And again. And a few times more after that. If the spell in question creates some light, it's not a big deal. If it is something a little more serious like an "Instant Bad Guy Kill in a Bottle" spell, you've got a problem. Still, this is easily handled as long as you act fast.

Mega-powerful spells should require special "ingredients" that cannot be found easily (and often can only be found once, period), or require a special time and place. Spells that are not too overpowering don't need much in the way of control, and occult-oriented Cast Members should be able to use them as often as they need. If it turns out later that the spell is ruining too many stories by making them too easy, you can render it inert or adjust the requirements. Magic is nothing if not unpredictable.

WITCHES AND WARLOCKS

Anyone can use magic, but Witches and Warlocks live, drink and breathe magic. They are the pros of the magic biz. In the Ciniverse, these powerful humans are able to apply their will directly on reality. They can skip some or even all of the ritual steps and components, at least for the simpler magicks. It's not clear whether this is an inherited trait, but it does seem to run strong in some families. The power can be awakened by exposure to the supernatural— usually (but not necessarily) by studying and practicing magic. A Witch who has mastered her powers can be the match of a werewolf or a powerful vampire. Of course, getting to that level isn't easy, or pain-free.

Sorcery: Power of the Witch

Witches and Warlocks must have at least one level of the Sorcery Quality (see p. 34). A beginner Witch has one or two Sorcery levels. A powerful Witch may have five or more levels. Sorcery goes beyond mere spellcraft, and provides a number of special abilities for those who can wield it. Either through practice or because of some inherent power, Witches can use magic more easily than your average student of the mystical arts. In the end, none of these abilities take the danger out of magic. Any regular use is going to lead to problems.

Witch and Warlock Powers

So what can your character do with all those shiny levels of Sorcery? Among other things, Sorcery helps her improve spell casting, use magic more quickly and efficiently, move objects without casting spells, and, last but not least, gives her that cool solid-black-eyes look that helps make friends and influence people (okay, that last part isn't always a perk).

Improved Spellcasting

Characters add their Sorcery level to any spellcasting roll, to a maximum bonus of +5. After that, additional levels of Sorcery stop adding to any one spellcasting roll. Still, levels over five do help with the repeat casting penalties (the decreases can be absorbed by levels of Sorcery above five, thus leaving the full, allowable +5 bonus intact). Thus, Witches can cast high-power spells with a better chance of success than your typical bookreading spell-flinger. This can come in handy when the final showdown with a Big Bad is at hand.

Quick Casting

Most spells require the caster to recite a formula or incantation out loud, or perform some type of ritual. All that hooah takes time. Witches can cast some spells almost instantly, with only a single word or phrase, or even just a simple gesture. This won't work on spells that require a very specific ritual and cannot be sped up, but some can be cast in a few seconds (as an action in a Turn). Whether a spell can be quick cast is indicated in that spell's description. At your Director's option, spells that feature a decreased Power Level due to special ingredients lose that benefit when quick cast. This not only makes sense (can't be futzing with demon's blood when whipping off spells) but it reigns in the casters a bit.

Telekinesis

These rules on telekinesis (whether sorcerous or psychic) clarify and enhance those abilities. Use them to give a little oomph to your player's Witches and psychics. When tossing people around using telekinesis, the Bash damage is two times the Success Levels. The telekinetic Strength (the Success Levels in the Willpower and Sorcery/Telekinesis roll) must be sufficient to lift the person off the floor though (see p. 7). Precise tasks (guiding a key into a keyhole, manipulating a keyboard) require a Perception and Sorcery/Telekinesis roll (with appropriate Success Levels as you demand).

Attacks use Dexterity or Perception (player's choice) and an appropriate Skill (stating the vamp would use Getting Medieval, firing a gun would use Gun Fu). All remote tasks suffer a -1 penalty because the telekinetic manipulates the object at a distance. Damage is a function of the Strength of the effect.

Tossing small objects at someone requires only a Willpower and Sorcery/Telekinesis roll, and must overcome the target's defense roll. The damage value of such an attack is two times the Success Levels rolled. Finally, rather than forcing a reroll as time passes, a sufficiently experienced magician or psychic could choose to keep the previous roll and simply apply a -2 penalty. This would kick in with four or more levels of Sorcery or

Telekinesis. Say, a character with Willpower 4 and Sorcery 4 remotely swings a large axe. If she rolls an eight, she uses it with Strength 4 ($4 + 4 + 8 = 16$; four Success Levels). After the applicable time period expires, she could reroll or simply assume a 14 total ($16 - 2 = 14$). For the next time period, she keeps the same roll, subtracts two, and has three Success Levels or a Strength 3.

Power Boosting

Sometimes a magician knows that she simply doesn't have the stuff for a big magical battle or intensive power draining event. In such situations, the tough and canny (and sometimes evil) magician looks for a little extra juice. We present here four methods of power boosting - from Magic Pushers, from the Boost Power spell, from other magicians, or from draining powerful enchanted items.

Whatever the source, the mechanics are the same. Power boosting grants the recipient additional levels of the Sorcery Quality. These bonuses add to both telekinesis and casting rolls (and ignore the normal +5 maximum for Sorcery bonuses). This enhanced power can be used on a number of spells or uses of telekinesis equal to the amount of the boost. After that, the extra power vanishes, leaving the person utterly exhausted. Reduce the magician's Strength, Constitution, Willpower, and Life Points by half (round up) until she both eats a meal and sleeps at least eight hours. With such rest and replenishment, all lost Attributes are fully recovered.

The boost is not without worries. The nature of the boost's source can influence the character. Being given power by a coven of loving and honorable Witches is very different from draining power from a vile enchanted blade that centuries worth of cultists have used to sacrifice innocent victims. Whenever a magician uses a power boost, she must make a Willpower (not doubled) roll to retain control (anyone addicted to magic automatically fails this roll). If the additional Sorcery levels gained are less than or equal to the character's Willpower, only a single Success Level is required. If the amount of the boost is greater than her Willpower but not over two times that Attribute, she must roll three Success Levels. A power boost equal or greater than twice the character's Willpower allows the character no control roll. Casters who succeed may act normally. Casters who don't are temporarily overcome by the emotions connected to the source of the power boost.

Draining power from a item used by generations of magicians sworn to selflessly protect all innocents from harm, and then failing the control roll would cause the boostee to be filled with compassion and urges towards self-sacrifice. In contrast, gaining power from a group of demons cultists would fill a person with hatred and the overwhelming desire to do evil. Someone beholden to a Magic Pusher (see p. 86) would simply be filled with mind-numbing ecstasy. The exact effect on the character is dictated by the circumstances, but it may involve you taking over for a time (no doubt one of those Drama Point award deals). These feelings persist until the character uses up the entire power boost.

Characters who accept a power boost greater than twice their Willpower may retain the boost's influence. You could allow the character a Willpower (not doubled) roll to shake off these effects, or you could just impose them automatically. An otherwise good person who used a demonic source of power might gain the Cruel or Covetous Drawback. Someone who was normally selfish and cruel might gain one or more points of the Honorable Drawback. Thus, there's grave risk involved in attempting to destroy an evil artifact by magically draining it. It'd be a kick in the pants if neutralizing the item caused the Cast Members to assume the very traits they sought to extinguish. No good deed goes unpunished.

Magic Pusher Source

Magic Pushers (see p. 86) are more than willing to give power. The boost is normally between +4 and +8, depending upon the power of the pusher. Pushers can give power to characters who do not have the Sorcery Quality. For the duration of the boost, the person is able to cast spells as if they had the Sorcery Quality.

Boost Power Spell Source

This spell (see p. 97) is the easiest and safest way of enhancing power, but it requires a group of 13 magicians to cast. The effects of this boost depend upon exactly who is providing it. The spell can give power to characters who do not have the Sorcery Quality. For the duration of the boost, the person is able to cast spells as if they had the Sorcery Quality.

Magician Draining Source

For those with little compunction about personal space or dignity, sucking the Sorcery levels out of a magician is a quick way to more power. A character must have seven or more levels of Sorcery to be a sucker, and the victim must have one or more levels of Sorcery to be a suckee. Each level drained adds one to the magician's Sorcery and subtracts one from the victim. As you can imagine, being drained is very debilitating -

victims lose one point of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution (to a minimum of one) for each level of Sorcery lost. Lost levels and Attributes are not restored until the boost is used up.

This source is even more risky given the extreme personal nature of the power absorbed. Retaining control requires double the normal number of Success Levels required on the Willpower (not doubled) roll. Even when control is retained, the shards of personality absorbed are highly disturbing. It's a method reserved for only the most desperate or deranged.

Enchanted Items Source

Only those with the Sorcery Quality can drain power from enchanted items. The process is quite simple - the character touches the item or items, and makes a Willpower and Occultism and Sorcery roll. If she gains four or more Success Levels, she succeeds. The character receives a power boost equal to the total Power Level of all enchanted items she is touching. At the same time, every one of these items is permanently drained of all magical power.

Using this type of Power Boosting is relatively easy and potent, but few magicians can afford to permanently destroy entire shelves of enchanted items. Also, if the boostee doesn't know the history and associations of an item, she could wind up temporarily overcome with an overwhelming desire to do great evil. Using this method of boosting is definitely a buyer beware sort of deal.

Magic Addiction

Magic is heavy stuff—a powerful Witch can teleport, toss knives and soda machines, rodenticize, and exfoliate at the drop of a hat. The simple fact is that magic can be used to do whatever the magician desires. This is quite the mind-warping trip.

More than one magician has lost her perspective, has gotten caught up in using magic to fulfill her every whim and fantasy. This sort of power can easily become psychologically addictive, especially in the hands of the teenage and college-age misfits who are typically drawn to the occult. Still, a darker and more insidious type of addiction takes over Witches and Warlocks who consistently push the limits of their power. The act of magic itself can produce a profound feeling of ecstasy. This ground shaking joy leaves a void when it dissipates and the magician usually wants more. Such a person is well on her way to magic addiction. Ordinary magicians rarely suffer from this sort of addiction—they simply cannot work with enough power to obtain the needed “rush.” True spellcasters (those with high levels of Sorcery) regularly work with dangerous levels of magical energy. Those are the folks who often succumb.

Witches and Warlocks who regularly cast spells with Power Levels equal to or greater than their Willpower Attribute are at risk. Performing more than ten spells in a month triggers a Willpower (doubled) roll at the end of that time. If the caster rolls a number of Success Levels equal to or greater than the number of high level spells over ten previously cast, she fights off the burgeoning need. Even so, if she repeats the risky behavior the next month, her Willpower roll to maintain control suffers a -1 penalty. This penalty accumulates each month that she overuses magic, and decreases by one each month she refrains from using high power magic.

Should the character fail her addiction Willpower roll, she gains a 3-point Addiction (Magic) Drawback. The magician must cast a spell at least once every other day, and must cast a spell with a Power Level above her Willpower at least once a week. If she fails to do so, she enters Withdrawal. While in Withdrawal, she feels emotionally uneasy and may even develop physical side effects (shaking, nausea, chills). She also must perform a weekly Willpower (doubled) roll and gain a number of Success Levels equal to (5 - the number of weeks since the character last used magic). If not, she relapses and must use magic. At the end of five magic-free weeks, the character finally kicks her addiction. Still, for the next six months she must make an addiction Willpower roll if she casts more than three spells with Power Levels greater than her Willpower in a month (requiring Success Levels equal to the number of such spells cast over three).

Magic addicted characters often gravitate toward power boosting, which only deepens their problems.

Darkening the Dark Side

Addiction adds to the already considerable dark side of magic and may not be desirable for every group. Consider carefully before including these rules in your Series. The rules presented here assume that the cause of magic addiction is the rush experienced from using powers that are almost beyond the character's control. This is only one option available.

You could just as easily rule that magic is addictive solely because all power is addictive if overused. Magic allows a person to do whatever she wants, regardless of the wishes of others—that's bound to mess with your mind in time.

Alternately, you might well rule that magic is only potentially addictive if it is not being used for good or altruistic purposes. This sets “white magic” as not addictive. That requires a careful review of how and why magic is being used. Remember, however you play it, someone’s bound to get hurt ... which is par for the course in a Darker Universe.

Magic Pushers

Some practitioners or creatures have the ability to power boost magicians. While most simply sell their services to Witches and Warlocks in search of more wherewithal, some find the lure of power too great. These weak-willed become Magic Pushers. Since most pushers lack the discipline or power to be potent magicians in their own right, they use another’s power to work their will.

As stated (see p. 84), anyone who receives a power boost may be overwhelmed by the emotions and energies associated with the source of the magic. If the character is already addicted to magic, she automatically fails this control roll.

Such a failure allows the Magic Pusher to freely make use of the power of the person boosted. For the next hour, the Magic Pusher can use the magician’s new Sorcery levels for telekinesis purposes, and new casting bonus to perform any spell the magician knows. The enraptured character cannot resist this control. After “crashing,” the magician only half-remembers this lack of control and any spells that might have been cast.

Anyone who loses control during more than two power boosts a month must check for magic addiction (needing Success Levels equal to double the number of times over two that they lost control). Anyone can experience the rush of a power boost, even those who do not possess the Sorcery Quality. They too may become addicted to magic. Those who lack the Sorcery Quality can only avoid Withdrawal through additional power boosts - these wretches typically frequent magic pushers several times a week and are often willing to do anything to obtain their next fix.

Sacrifice

Certain ingredients are needed for certain spells. If you ain’t got the goods (or something like them), you ain’t got the mojo. But what if you got something better?

Magical Items

Using a potent magical ingredient in a ritual makes casting much easier—a bonus is granted to the casting roll equal to twice the magical object’s Power Level. For example, if the spell calls for the crushing of an ordinary emerald into powder and the enchanted emerald of ValZan (Power Level 3) is used instead, the casting total gains a +6 bonus.

Unfortunately, this bonus only arises if the item is actually destroyed in the ritual. Sacrificing an enchanted object in this fashion is more effective than draining it for power boosting (see p. 84), but the power gained is only useful in a single spell. Few people are willing to destroy magic items to cast one spell.

Life Force

Magicians can sacrifice their own life force to aid in their casting. Every five Life Points a caster voluntarily loses during a ritual adds a +1 bonus to the casting total. No single caster can gain a sacrifice bonus greater than her Willpower, but a strong-willed, weak-bodied magician could do herself serious damage to ensure that she successfully casts a potent spell.

Unlike the other bonuses, a Life Point sacrifice bonus can be added after the die has been rolled. Boosting magic in this fashion does not require any actions on the caster’s part—glowing magical energies simply suck the life out of her body. Afterwards, the caster suffers nosebleeds, severe headaches, and in extreme cases internal bleeding or deep bruises. Magic cannot be used to heal sacrifice injuries—they must be allowed to heal normally.

Multiple magicians can donate life force to a single spell, but each one must suffer at least five Life Points of damage. A lesser sacrifice just is not potent enough to affect the magical energies. On rare occasions, magicians have given their lives to ensure that a spell succeeds.

Causing ritual damage to others works the same way. This, of course, is strictly the province of the vilest of Adversaries. Anyone engaging in that sort of activity performs the blackest sort of magic and permanently allies themselves with the powers of darkness (see p. 87). Redemption from such deeds may be possible, but it’s not likely.

Demonic Pacts

Many demons enjoy working with humans, especially with powerful human magicians. A normal person can potentially cause a lot more harm than a demon, simply because the monsters have trouble walking the streets without attracting notice. Furthermore, by working through an agent, demons remain safe from retaliation. A magical pact governs most demon-human relations. These pacts (usually signed in blood) bind the demon to perform certain services for the human. In return, the human promises to do things for the demon. Since people have souls, compelling them to keep the entire bargain is quite difficult. Still, signing a pact with a demon means that the signer cannot attack the demon in any way. If she tries, all of her attacks miss and any hostile spells she uses against the demon automatically fail. Moreover, a pact insures that the demon cannot be separated from the signer. Even if the signer enters an area that's completely warded against all demons, the wards do not keep out pact-ed demon as long as the signer remains inside this area.

In short, signing a pact with a demon means that the character has no protection against the demon and the demon is completely protected from the character—definitely a bad deal for the character, but then again dealing with demons usually is. In most cases, it doesn't matter what the signer thinks she had agreed to do for the demon. Once the contract is signed, the demon is free to attempt to intimidate and terrorize the signer until she agrees to do its bidding.

Naturally, demons write these contracts so that they promise to do as little as possible for the signer. Also, demons are under no obligation to accurately describe the details of the contract, to have it printed in a language the character can read, or even to reveal their demonic nature. The human must sign voluntarily but may be tricked into doing so.

Black, White, and Shades of Grey

We've all heard talk about black magic and black magicians, and occasionally about white magic and white magicians. Unfortunately, the reality is a whole lot less simple. Some magicians use their powers for selfish and harmful purposes. Even they are not all darkness though. Other spellcasters do their best to fight evil and save innocent lives. These worthies sometimes find it hard to avoid the occasional bit of selfish or even harmful casting though.

Magic and Morals

They don't call them the dark arts for nothing. People can mess themselves up pretty seriously with magic. Even if a magician is careful, lucky, and never accidentally substitutes mugwort for mandrake root, she can get herself in trouble if she frequently uses magic for selfish and hurtful purposes.

In and of itself, magic is fairly neutral. On the other hand, some demons can sense and use it as easily as you can walk and chew gum at the same time (or maybe more easily than that ...). Also, magic creates connections between the multiverse of dimensions out there. If a Witch uses magic to protect others or for other positive purposes, whether she is casting spells to heal her best friend's broken arm, or to save the world from demonic invasion, she is building ties with the positive dimensions that some people call the heavens. If this same Witch is instead using spells to kill her enemies, get rich, or force people to fall in love with her, she is building equally strong ties with some of the nastier demon dimensions. Doing a little bit of both mostly cancels everything out. It's really tough for a magician to untangle herself from the ties she creates when she uses magic to commit cold-blooded murder or similarly heinous acts. However, using magic to help others most of the time, while occasionally using it for slightly selfish reason like cleaning her room or keeping her teachers from realizing she didn't get her paper done on time, is basically a wash. The Witch gets neither benefits nor penalties.

Demon Dimension Ties

The first bad thing about ties to demon dimensions is that demons tend to notice the character. If a Witch does something particularly impressive, she may even have a demon show up and try to recruit her, say as a Vengeance Demon or maybe as an assistant torturer in some hell dimension. While these demons sometimes take no for an answer, other times they don't. Also, whether coercive or not, having one show up in her room tends to scare friends and family. Not to mention that it's a definite sign that the character has been into some radically nasty stuff.

That's also only the beginning—the consequences of some actions never go away, no matter how much good a person does. If a Cast Member engages in enough evil, eventually demons may start showing up on their own "just to hang." If she has turned the corner and is trying to work with the good guys, having something with scales and sulfur-y BO drop by to party significantly raises the suspicion factor.

When a character takes a serious turn to the dark side of the street, add three to her rolls on all Spell

Side Effects Tables (see pp. 89-91). This modification is imposed only if she has been doing the majority of her magics for selfish and hurtful purposes, or if she has committed at least one truly heinous act like summoning a demon to kill an innocent.

Positive Dimension Ties

On the other side of the coin, using the forces of magic for unselfish purposes can be extremely rewarding. White practitioners do everything they can to avoid killing defeated enemies—instead sending their human enemies to jail and banishing their demonic foes. With a rep like that, a demon summoned to kill such a magician might simply warn her that someone is calling nasties to hunt her down. It's impossible to count on this sort of thing, but it's not uncommon for good Witches to enjoy a number of allies, including a few who have way too many legs.

Also, magic tends to affect such people less seriously. Witches with ties to positive dimensions subtract three from all rolls on Spell Side Effects Table (see pp. 89-91). This subtraction is only made if they have never used their magic to do anything truly nasty, and if they almost always use their magic to help others and for other unselfish purposes like saving the world.

When Spells Go Wrong

Magic can be a lot like trying to juggle eggs—if a magician makes a mistake there's going to be a big mess somewhere. Several things should be kept in mind when a character makes a magical mistake. First off, how important was the spell to the plot? If the character is simply casting a spell to blast a nameless vampire or to locate a minor demon that has run off, allowing the side effect cards to fall where they may (using the tables on pp. 58-59) is fine.

On the other hand, some spells are crucial to the plot. When these sorts of big and important spells go wrong, random rolls can be unsatisfying. It's probably better to look at the sort of spell being cast and the way it fits into the plot, and decide what goes wrong. A D10 roll can still be helpful to give you an idea of just how bad the screw up was—a one result reveals that only minor problems arose; a ten result means that some seriously bad mojo is about to go down. The way the spell goes wrong works as a logical extension of both the spell that was cast and the reason it was cast.

Even more care must be taken with a misspell that could totally screw up the plot and kill off the entire Cast. In this case, you could always just end that Series and start anew, but that tends to toss away a good deal of time and effort. We suggest that you let the spell work anyway, but exact a heavy price. Having magical feedback injure or even kill (if you roll a 10 when checking to see how bad the spell went wrong) one of the Cast Members is tragic, but it doesn't end the Series. In fact, the rest of the Cast survives, the world is saved, and the magician dies a hero. Not a bad way to go out at all ...

Alternately, if a character is casting dark magics and things go wrong, giving her some comeuppance is usually the order of the day. Side effects for a good person casting a selfish and harmful spell should follow the model of the punishment fitting the crime. If your players are up for talking about metagame issues, you might even ask them what the character should have to pay for casting that sort of spell. Of course, you don't have to use their suggestions ...

Finally, it's worth looking at the Power Level of the spell. If the character has cast spells of that Power Level or higher before—especially if she has cast this same spell before—she likely made only a minor error and the consequences shouldn't be too bad. Everyone has an off day sometimes. A character who has never cast a spell of that power before is usually skating on thin ice and should suffer the consequences of her arrogance. These issues are dealt with in the Spell Side Effects Modifiers Table (see pp. 89-91), but are important to keep in mind even if you are not using that table.

The first time a character tries to cast a Power Level 5 or 6 spell is always a big deal, and if she tries the spell and makes a mistake, big stuff should happen. You might also want to tell her that until she either gets some advice from more experienced magician or raises her Sorcery Quality or Occultism Skill, she has no chance of successfully casting that particular spell again.

Alternately, if the character frequently tries to cast spells that she is unlikely to succeed in casting correctly, you could bar her from casting any spells of that Power Level or higher until she either get some advice or learns more about magic.

Expanded Spell Side Effects

Different types of spells can go wrong in different ways and certain types of magical energies are more dangerous than others. The following tables take these differences into account as well as adding in additional

modifiers that can affect how badly the spell goes wrong. In each case, roll a die and add the spell's Power Level and any other modifiers. Consult the most appropriate table for the spell being cast and apply the result there.

Modifiers

The Spell Side Effects Modifiers Table accounts for special circumstances when a spell goes wrong. All modifiers are cumulative—casting a brand new ritual in the back of a moving SUV while really angry is a good way to bring the bad.

Spell Side Effects Modifiers Table	
Modifier	Circumstance
+1	The caster is upset or otherwise highly emotional when casting the spell.
-1	The caster spends at least ten minutes sitting and quietly meditating just before casting.
+3	The caster attempts to rush the spell. Rushing a spell halves the time needed for a ritual spell, but mistakes are far more costly.
+3	The casting occurs somewhere that is extremely noisy or unstable. Trying to work even the simplest ritual in the back seat of a moving car or in the restroom of a crowded dance club is generally a bad idea.
-3	The caster has successfully cast the spell in the past.
+3	The caster has never attempted the spell before.
+1	The caster has never successfully cast the spell before, but she has tried and failed.
+1	The caster has never successfully cast a spell of this Power Level or higher before.

Quick Cast Spells

Quick casting releases a great deal of magical energy all at once. The results of mistakes tend to be fast and extremely dramatic. The one advantage with quick casting missteps is that the magical energy is often visible. If the spell goes wrong the character should get some idea where the energy went—the massive nosebleed and whamming headache are solid clues.

When a quick cast spell goes wrong, the caster can make a Perception and Occultism roll. Two or more Success Levels gives some clue toward exactly what went wrong. Such a successful roll won't reveal all the details, but it could indicate that the spell was actually reversed or that it struck someone else.

Quick Cast spell Side Effect Table	
Roll Total	Result
4 or less	Phew! Lucked out—the spell still works.
5-7	The spell works, but is less effective than expected. The duration, damage, or effect is halved. If not applicable, the spell may have a partial effect—"rat-ifying" someone may only give them a long rat tail, or even worse, the head of a rat.
8-10	The spell works, but the caster is damaged by its energies. The magician takes five Life Points of damage per Power Level of the spell.
11-13	The spell is completely reversed in effect. An attack spell heals the target instead, a spell to weaken a monster makes it stronger, and a spell to make someone invisible makes everyone notice her.
14-15	The spell affects the wrong target. You decide the lucky recipient or object. If not applicable, a damaging effect is created as above.
16+	Spell has a completely unexpected effect. The magical energies run rampant, often causing physical damage to the area or summoning dangerous entities from beyond our reality. This can also happen if the spell is disrupted during a critical point before it is completed.

Altruistic Spells

If a character casts a spell designed to help someone or aid a situation, magical mistakes tend to be somewhat less painful. Many Wiccans talk about Karma, the concept that all good done by a person is returned in kind. Less positively inclined magicians believe that any magic not designed to help them or to smite their enemies is weak and unimportant, and so naturally, the consequences of miscasting such inferior spells are less severe. Regardless of the reasons they give, most experienced magicians are aware of this effect.

Altruistic spell Side Effect Table	
Roll Total	Result
4 or less	Phew! Lucked out—the spell still works.
5-7	The spell is delayed. It appears the spell failed, but it takes effect normally at a time of your choosing (ideally, a dramatically appropriate time).
8-10	The spell works, but is less effective than expected. The duration, damage or effect is halved. If not applicable, the spell is delayed as above.
11-13	The spell works, but has only a trivial effect. A spell to remove a curse might only work for ten minutes; a spell to open a dimensional gate might open a portal large enough to fit only an apple through.
14-15	The spell affects the wrong target. You decide the lucky recipient or object. If not applicable, a trivial effect is created as above.
16+	Spell has a completely unexpected effect. The magical energies run rampant, often causing physical damage to the area or summoning dangerous entities from beyond our reality. This can also happen if the spell is disrupted during a critical point before it is completed.

Harmful Spells

Evil magicians tend to be the sort of people who consider the side effect risk a natural consequence of the fact that dark magics are simply more powerful than less nasty spells. When practicing black magic, only the strong and the lucky survive.

Harmful Spell Side Effect Table	
Roll Total	Result
4 or less	The spell is delayed. It appears the spell failed, but it takes effect normally at a time of your choosing (ideally, a dramatically appropriate time).
5-7	The spell works, but the caster's energies are disrupted by it. For the next 24 hours, she gains a number of levels of the Bad Luck Drawback equal to the spell's Power Level.
8-10	The spell works, but the caster is damaged by its energies. The magician takes five Life Points of damage per Power Level of the spell.
11-13	If the spell was meant to harm an enemy, it affects the caster or one of her allies (you decide the lucky recipient). If the spell was meant to aid the caster or one of her allies in a harmful purpose, the affects are reversed (a spell to heal the caster or make her grow younger instead harms her or makes her grow older).
14-15	The energies of the spell go out of control, doing five Life Points of damage per Power Level of the spell to the caster and to everyone in the same room. These rogue energies also set fire to nearby flammable objects, knock things off of shelves, and generally cause enough random destruction that the room looks like it has just endured a moderate earthquake.
16+	Spell has a completely unexpected effect. The magical energies run rampant, often causing physical damage to the area or summoning dangerous entities from beyond our reality. This can also happen if the spell is disrupted during a critical point before it is completed.

Summoning Spells

Summoning spells call things to our reality. When they go wrong, they almost always call up something; the question is what do they call and where to they call it.

Summoning Spell Side Effect Table	
Roll Total	Result
4 or less	Phew! Lucked out—the spell still works.
5-7	The spell is delayed. It appears the spell failed, but it takes effect normally at a time of your choosing (ideally, a dramatically appropriate time).
8-10	The spell works, but the creature appears somewhere else, like the middle of main street, or in the character's parent's bedroom.
11-13	The spell summons something other than what was desired (you decide). The summoned creature is the same power level, but any control efforts or precautions fail or are weakened.
14-15	The spell summons a creature different and more powerful than the one the caster wanted. Also, the creature does not appear instantly—it arrives a short while later at some location near where the spell was cast. The caster may not know until much later (when the dead bodies start showing up or the demon arrives looking for a “ride” back home) that she summoned this creature.
16+	The spell opens a dimensional gateway to a random dimension. At your discretion, the caster or even everyone present could be pulled through the gateway, or something could come through from the other side. This gateway can last anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 days.

Finding New Spells

The spell list in Chapter Four: Magics, Light and Dark is quite extensive. Players are greedy little cusses though (we mean that in the nicest possible way) and no doubt will want more, particularly those really powerful ones. In most cases, the character scours all her books and any books she can beg, borrow, or steal looking for a spell that does what she wants. Even if she finds it, the text might be in ancient Sumerian—that sucks if she doesn't speak ancient Sumerian. Making a character find a translator or translation for a spell book she bought or found adds a wrinkle to the process of finding a new spell. It's particularly poignant if the person who sold her the book said it contained a spell for slaying vampires and the translator tells her she is the proud owner of a Sumerian recipe for party-rocking sheep dip.

Remember that you are under no obligation to let the character find the Spell of Massive Monster Killing or whatever. Also, if they don't have the spell in their spell book, you can take this wonderful opportunity to create an Episode out of locating the proper casting. Maybe the character and her friends need to do a favor for a powerful magician, or perhaps they have to steal the spell book from the lair of a three-hundred-year-old vampire. Even if the character has friends who are magicians, they may well want a favor in return for letting her borrow their rare and precious spell book.

Creating New Spells

Power Level

Determine the Power Level of any new spell by referencing the various aspects below. Each aspect generates a Power Level modifier. Add those all together (with a minimum of one) and voila—the final Power Level of the spell.

Remember that combining effects is difficult but may be done. Each added effect of the same or lower power level increases the effect level by one. For example, working magic on both body and mind (turning someone into a demon but keeping their mind and soul intact is more difficult than just turning somebody into a demon with all natural demon thought processes) accounts for two Major-level effects and suffers an Awesome-level modifier. Combining Awesome-level effects is asking for trouble, if it's even possible. No such spell should go off without some dire repercussions—some things you just don't mess with.

The suggestions for Power Levels are just that. Your Director may decide to bump up a spell's Power Level (either at the start or later once the full effects can be seen).

Participants Needed

DUAL CASTERS: The spell requires two people to cast properly. -1 Power Level.

MULTIPLE CASTERS: The spell requires three to nine magicians working together. -2 Power Level.

GROUP CASTINGS: The spell demands ten or more casters to complete. -3 Power Level.

CASTER REQUIREMENTS: If the primary or additional casters must have certain requirements, the Power Level is decreased by one per requirement. Thus, if a spell requires three participants and each one must have Sorcery and be devoted to Ra, the Power Level decreases by four (to a minimum of one as usual).

Casting Time

INSTANT: The spell may be quick cast by anyone, even those without Sorcery. +2 Power Levels.

RECITATION: The spell may be cast in a couple minutes or less. +1 Power Level.

RITUAL: The spell requires a ritual lasting more than a few minutes, but less than half an hour. No modifier.

LENGTHY RITUAL: The spell needs a ritual lasting from half an hour to several hours. -1 Power Level.

VERY LENGTHY RITUAL: The spell needs a ritual lasting more than several hours. -2 Power Levels.

QUICK CAST: Those with Sorcery can cast the spell quickly. +1 Power Level.

MAGICAL ITEM: The spell creates a one-shot item that stores the effect in some manner until triggered, used, or exhausted. +1 Power Level.

Scope

MINOR: The spell does not directly affect a person or object, and only covers a small area (room). No modifier.

NOTICEABLE: Affects one being, one small hard object (book or table), one human-sized soft object (sofa), a target in the same room (or nearby), or an area the size of a small house. +1 Power Level.

SEVERE: Affects two to ten beings, one human-sized hard object (refrigerator), a target in the same small house (or similar distance), or an area the size of a large building. +2 Power Levels.

MAJOR: Affects up to 100 beings, a huge large object (car), a target in the same large building (or similar distance), or an area the size of a neighborhood. +3 Power Levels.

A large percentage of people in a town (everyone downtown, for example), a target in the same neighborhood (or similar distance), or the area the size of ward or district: +4 Power Levels.

AWESOME: An entire town or city. +5 Power Levels. Anything bigger. +6 Power Levels.

LIMITED TARGET SELECTION: The spell only affects a specific subset of beings—vampires, demons of a given subspecies, Slayers, redheads, etc. -1 Power Level.

Duration

For spells that create an on-going effect, like breathing underwater, a glowing light, or disguising a person's appearance, the following aspects are used.

SHORT: One Turn per Success Level. -1 Power Level.

MEDIUM: One minute per Success Level. No modifier.

LONG: One hour per Success Level. +1 Power Levels.

VERY LONG: One day or longer per Success Level. +2 Power Levels.

PERMANENT (OR UNTIL DISPELLED OR CANCELLED): +3 Power Levels.

For damage-causing or healing spells, the duration is usually instantaneous. It happens and it's over. Such an effect works no modification on the Power Level. If the damage or healing is spread out over time though, the Power Level decreases.

SLOW: Effect spread out equally over a minute. -1 Power Level.

SLOWER: Effect spread out equally over an hour. -2 Power Level.

SLOWEST: Effect spread out equally over a day. -3 Power Level.

So a spell that normally does 15 points of damage instantly would have a -2 Power Level if it inflicted one point every four minutes for an hour. Imposing the full amount of damage over a longer period of time requires repeated castings. Thus, a spell doing 15 points of damage each Turn for five successive Turns is simply an instantaneous 15-point damage spell cast five times in a row. That's a bunch of damage but something is bound to go wrong at some point.

Spell Requirements

The more complex the requirements of the spell, the lower the Power Level. That means that some very powerful spells can be cast fairly easily — as long as all the ingredients and requirements are in place.

NO SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Just recite a few magic words, and perhaps use some simple ingredients (candles, herbs and spices, last week's copy of TV Guide), and you're all set. No modifier.

UNUSUAL INGREDIENTS/DIFFICULT USE: Atypical materials or specific ongoing actions by casters. Examples: hair, blood, or other artifact specific to the target; rare herbs; mundane but not commonly found object; obscure or ancient text; continual chanting. -1 Power Level.

RARE INGREDIENTS: The spell requires some hard-to-find materials. Examples: human sacrifice; a rare magical artifact; a body part of a specific demon (most demons are really uncooperative about giving up body parts). -2 Power Levels.

WAY-RARE INGREDIENTS: This requirement is not unique, but it's close. There won't be many on any given continent, if not dimension. Examples: the feathers from an endangered species of bird; ancient relics found only in museums or really good occult collections. -3 Power Levels.

RESTRICTED USE: The spell can only be cast under very specific conditions. This limit should prevent the spell from being cast more often than once or twice a year. -4 Power Levels.

WAY-RESTRICTED USE: The spell can only be used once, or once every several years (at least five years, and it could be centuries or millennia). This effectively allows one chance to cast the spell for the entire Series. Alternatively, the spell needs a one-of-a-kind ingredient. Once it gets used, the spell can never be cast again. Use it wisely, 'cause you'll only get to try it once. -5 Power Levels. Only the highest level requirement applies. If a spell can only be cast once a year (restricted use) and uses demon blood (rare ingredients), the Power Level modifier is simply -4.

Effects

The following lists cover various forms of spell effects. Pick the one that most applicable.

Harm

MINOR: Inflicting one point of damage per Success Level; breaking a nearby fragile object; causing an unsightly skin rash; imposing a Strength 1 poison or disease on a person. No modifier.

NOTICEABLE: Inflicting damage equal to the magician's Willpower for every Success Level on the roll; shattering all the glass or other fragile objects in an area the size of a room or a small house; imposing a poison or disease with a Strength level equal to the Success Levels (max three). +1 Power Level.

SEVERE: Inflicting damage in the amount of Willpower doubled per Success Level; striking somebody blind, deaf, or mute; imposing a poison or disease with a Strength level equal to double the Success Levels (max five); enfeebling a victim (reduce one Attribute by one per Success Level); shattering or molding rock or metal. +2 Power Levels.

MAJOR: Inflicting damage at a rate of three times Willpower points of damage per Success Level; imposing a poison or disease with a Strength level equal to triple the Success Levels (max seven); seriously enfeebling a victim (reduce one Attribute by two per Success Level, or two Attributes by one per Success Level). +3 Power Levels.

AWESOME: Inflicting five times Willpower points of damage per Success Level; imposing a poison or disease with a Strength level equal to five times the Success Levels (max 10); incapacitating a victim (reduce one Attribute by four per Success Level, or two Attributes by two per Success Level, or four Attributes by one per Success Level). +5 Power Levels.

With spells causing poison or disease damage, the harm is instantaneous and finished. If it's drawn out, apply the "damage over time" rules in Duration above (see p. 92).

Mind/Emotions

MINOR: Causing momentary joy, sadness, or anger; creating a flash of light. No modifier.

NOTICEABLE: Calming intense emotions; creating visual illusion. +1 Power Level.

SEVERE: Changing a person's feelings (a love spell, or turning grown people into teenagers); creating illusions that fool at least three senses. +2 Power Levels.

MAJOR: Turning a person into a willing slave; creating illusion indistinguishable from reality. +3 Power Levels.

AWESOME: Rewriting memories over an entire lifetime. +5 Power Levels.

Conjuring/Summoning

MINOR: Creating a small globe of light; locating a familiar object in the same room. No modifier.

NOTICEABLE: Creating strobing or moving light; starting a large fire; locating a familiar object in the same small building; bringing a familiar object from the same room to your hand. +1 Power Level.

SEVERE: Summoning beings from other dimensions; raising a zombie; locating a familiar object in the same large building; bringing a familiar object from the same small building to your hand. +2 Power Levels.

MAJOR: Summoning a dangerous spirit entity or a powerful demon (not quite Big Bad level, but lieutenant-chief henchman types); locating a familiar object in the same neighborhood; bringing a familiar object from the same large building to your hand. +3 Power Levels.

AWESOME: Summoning a Big Bad-level creature; locating a familiar object in the same continent; bringing a familiar object from the same city to your hand. +5 Power Levels.

Spells which summon a force or being which is not under the caster's control decrease the spell's Power Level by one. This sort of effect just runs rampant once it's invoked, with little or no regard for the desires of the person who actually did the invoking.

Manipulating/Transforming

MINOR: Unlocking simple locks; marking materials with design or coating. No modifier.

NOTICEABLE: Sliding a deadbolt; bending or denting hard materials (rock or metal); breaking or molding fragile materials. +1 Power Level.

SEVERE: Opening large or complex locks; shattering or molding rock or metal. +2 Power Levels.

MAJOR: Changing the properties of a material—turning metal as soft as mud, or “hardening” air into a barrier. +3 Power Levels.

AWESOME: Creating impenetrable walls of force. +5 Power Levels.

Summary Effect Strength

For those that don't want to work through all those prior lists (face it, sometimes lots of detail is just ... too much detail), here's a handy one-stop shopping effect strength summary.

MINOR: Anything that does not significantly alter or damage the subject. The spell may annoy or amuse, or create momentary effects. No modifier.

NOTICEABLE: The effect is strong enough to injure people, break things, and produce impressive lightshows. Objects (and living beings) cannot be transformed (either physically, mentally or spiritually). +1 Power Level.

SEVERE: The effect can alter a person's emotions and senses, inflict severe injuries, and reshape (but not transform) matter. +2 Power Levels.

MAJOR: The spell can transform living beings and objects, reshaping their very essence, properties, or soul. +3 Power Levels.

AWESOME: The spell can do incredible things, like restore a vampire's soul, return life, reshape areas or populations, blast objects or people, or cause earthquakes. +5 Power Levels.

Bolt of Apollo

Alright, let's take the spell creation rules for a spin. Say your character is a hotshot Witch and she wants to find a spell that lets her blast vampires. “Slayers have stakes. I want to have a cool ‘blast vampires’ spell.” Your Director says, “Not unreasonable.” Besides, she knows that you get cranky when she says no.

Your Director decides that the spell is about as damaging as a regular weapon, with a few extra whistles, and should not be too unbalancing. Your Witch won't be able to cast it a lot, not without using lots of Drama Points, and it could make a neat “signature move” for the character.

“Make an Intelligence and Occultism roll to see how long it takes you to find the spell,” she says. Then you and she start going down the checklist. For people affected, you pick “one”—the spell can affect one vamp at a time. That gives the spell a base Power Level 1. On the other hand, only vampires are affected, so the Limited Target Selection modifier applies, bringing it back down to zero. Next you turn to Spell Effect. It seems to be Severe—it does a base damage Willpower doubled (eight points in this Witch's case) per Success Level. So, if the roll gives your character three Success Levels, the spell inflicts 24 points of damage to the vamp, and the spell is especially damaging to vampires. Your Director decides it acts as fire, making the damage hard to heal. Severe Effects increase the Power Level by two; since an additional feature of the same level (lasting damage) is added, this raises the effect level to Major, for a total of +3 to the Power Level.

Duration is meaningless—the spell strikes, does damage, and it's over, and no Requirements apply either, so the base Power Level plus modifiers is three. “The spell is called the Bolt of Apollo,” your Director

explains when you are done rolling for research. “When you cast it, you can throw a piece of sunlight that will toast vampire flesh.”

Magics, Light and Dark

For you budding-but-still-somewhat ignorant casters out there, we have run down many spells from the first six seasons of the BtVSTV show.

We’ve covered spells most likely to be used in a BtVS RPG game. Spells that were primarily plot devices (like the Mayor’s Ascension spell or Jonathan’s Superstar spell) have been omitted. If you like, those should be relatively easy to devise using the spell creation system in Chapter Three: Playing with Primal Forces.

This chapter contains a list of spells that have appeared in the Ciniverse games in alphabetical order.

On the TV show, spells are used as dramatic aids—some aspects are discussed, some are only mentioned. To make the spells more playable and to settle Power Level questions, we’ve filled in duration, area of effect, and other aspects where necessary. Also, limits have been placed on various spells and items to allow their use without overpowering the characters or storyline. These additions or limits do not contradict anything in the actual show—they are merely extrapolations designed to provide maximum fun. The aspect analysis at the end of each spell makes all its features clear. Adjusting these aspects and the Power Level to better suit your storyline is simplicity itself.

As the Chapter: Playing with Primal Forces mentions (see p. 82), dispelling effects requires access to the spell and a casting roll at one less Power Level. Counterspells (like Break the Wards of Magic, see p. 97) on the other hand, are different evocations that reverse effects. These spells do not enjoy that Power Level decrease.

SPELL LIST

AESCULUS’S DIVINE FAVOR

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: A bunch of healing herbs like echinacea or goldenseal and a half-hour ritual. The ritual produces a poultice or potion that the caster must rub on the patient or get them to drink.

EFFECT: This spell allows a patient to heal any injury ten times faster than normal. It even works on most diseases—the patient recovers from a ten-day head cold in one day. Care must be taken with health problems that do not normally get better over time. A broken arm heals faster; cancer, AIDS, or even bacterial infections will simply get worse faster. The spell also doesn’t do anything for arthritis, allergies, or the like, since these problems are chronic. The moral of the story is that magic is pretty fly, but it ain’t all that.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), creates magical item (+1), instant duration (+0), severe effect (+2).

AIR BECOME FIST*

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must punch her fist in the direction she wants the attack to go and shout “Air Become Fist!” in Russian. Non-Witches are much less dramatic, taking several minutes.

EFFECT: This spell delivers a punch to the target. While it only inflicts Willpower (doubled) points of damage per Success Level, it also throws a human-sized target back a number of yards equal to the caster’s Willpower times the Success Levels. This should keep even the toughest demon off the caster’s back for a while. It can also be used to move a car or something similarly large one yard per Success Level, assuming the caster doesn’t mind major dentage on the vehicle. If used with the right timing (Resisted Dexterity (doubled) roll), the spell can even push a car that is speeding directly towards the caster into another lane, or at least far enough so that it misses. If this spell is used on a breakable object like a large mirror or window, it shatters into hundreds of sharp pieces.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), major scope (one huge object) (+3), instant duration (+0), severe effect (+2).

AMY’S “RAT-IFICATION” SPELL

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: A short phrase invoking the power of Hecate.

EFFECT: The victim is transformed into a rat, with normal rat intelligence and instincts. The victim's Life Point pool is reduced to 1/3 normal and her behavior has to be ratty-like (i.e., care only about finding food, mating with other rats, and hiding from cats and exterminators). The spell remains in effect until reversed or dispelled. This effect only works on humans, not on vampires, demons and assorted non-humans.

ANTI-MAGIC PROTECTION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must continuously recite in ancient Sumerian. Once she stops, the effect ceases.

EFFECT: This spell can protect anyone the caster chooses from all direct magical effects, as long as all the people designated are within ten yards of the caster. The caster can do nothing other than stand or walk while reciting a complex magical formula over and over again. Also, this spell does not protect the caster from nonmagic damage like that caused by falling roofs or a kick in the teeth (which could be aided by magic). A caster can chant for a number of hours equal to the Success Levels of a Constitution and Languages roll.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (+1), severe scope (ten yard radius) (+2), difficult use (must keep chanting) (-1), major effect (+3).

BARRIER DISMISSAL

Power Level: 3+

Requirements: The caster must be able to see the moon (as the spell draws upon the power of the lunar cycle) and speak a Latin incantation. The caster must also pick a Power Level for the spell.

Effect: This spell dismisses mystical barriers. As the spell is cast, lightning appears over the barrier and a distorted blue light shines for a few seconds. If the difference between the chosen Power Level of the spell and its base level (2) is equal to or greater than the Success Levels of the barrier casting, the barrier falls when the light fades away. Insufficiently powered dismissal spells can have no effect, or may trigger a roll on the Spell Side Effect Table. If the spell is cast during the new moon the Power Level increases by one; if cast during the full moon, it is decreased by one.

BLOCKING THE MOUTH

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: A doll with some personal effect of the victim attached to it and an hour-long ritual where the caster ties a gag around the doll's mouth.

EFFECT: This spell renders the target mute by removing her mouth. In addition to being unable to speak, the target also dies of thirst or hunger unless given medical attention. The target's mouth can only be restored if the spell is reversed, countered, or dispelled. This spell only works on humans (including Slayers)—it does not work on vampires or other demons.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Lengthy ritual (one hour) (+1), noticeable scope (one target) (+1), only affects humans (-1), permanent duration (+3), unusual ingredients (-1), severe effect (+2).

BLOODSTONE VENGEANCE SPELL

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: A personal effect of the victim, a lengthy ritual (about an hour's worth).

EFFECT: This spell eventually kills the victim, draining her of one Constitution level every hour. When Constitution is reduced below zero, the victim dies. At first, the victim appears to have had a bit too much joy juice to drink (as in a gallon or two too much). Then her immune system shuts down, and she becomes weak and feverish. If the spell is reversed before death, the victim returns to normal in a matter of seconds.

BOLT OF LIGHT

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Witches need only shout "Dissolvo." Other magicians must meditate for a minute.

EFFECT: A ball of light shoots from the caster's hand and shoves the target Willpower feet per Success

Level rolled. This spell could knock a person down or push her free from someone who was holding her. The spell normally causes no damage, but if the target is shoved into a wall or some other hard surface, she takes two times the Success Levels in damage.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (a minute) (+1), can be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), instant duration (+0), noticeable effect (+1).

BOOST POWER

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: A group of thirteen or more Witches or Warlocks must work together, performing a lengthy chant that lasts an hour. The person being boosted must be present when the spell is cast.

EFFECT: The target borrows power from the magicians who cast this spell. She gains one level of the Sorcery Quality from every participating Witch. Those without the Sorcery Quality cannot assist in performing the spell, but can be the target. Until the target has entirely used up this power boost, everyone who donated power to the target halves (round up) her Sorcery Quality (see p. 34).

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), lengthy ritual (an hour) (-1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), awesome effect (+5).

BREAK THE WARDS OF MAGIC

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: A purple magical powder is sprinkled directly on the magical wards. Creating the powder takes thirty minutes or so and requires some sage, lavender, and powdered moonstone. Using the powder takes only a few seconds.

EFFECT: This counterspell instantly cancels any type of magical ward of equal or lower Power Level. The ward glows briefly, outlining the protected area, and then vanishes. This spell is the quickest and safest way to get rid of a magical barrier. Since this powder remains good for one full lunar month, many magicians keep some around for emergencies.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (magical ward) (+0), creates magical item (+1), permanent duration (+3), major effect (+3).

CALLING SPIRIT GUIDES

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: This spell must be performed in a graveyard with a lit candle with a Latin or Aramaic invocation of approximately twenty minutes.

EFFECT: This spell causes the secretive and mystical Spirit Guides to appear. The guides are extremely wise and have access to all knowledge of the past, present, and future. When this spell is performed, they appear as ghostly apparitions and talk with the caster.

Unfortunately, in addition to being highly cryptic and mysterious in their statements, the Spirit Guides are deeply concerned with cosmic balance and with the consequences of their actions. They make certain that nothing they do negatively influences the cosmos or disrupts the “greater” plan. As a result, they rarely divulge information, especially if the need is exceptionally great.

While many desperate magicians have summoned the Spirit Guides, only a few have ever received useful information from them. Some magicians attempt to use threats or magic to coerce the Spirit Guides. The guides are immune to all such dangers—if the caster attempts to harm them, all attacks rebound and affect her instead.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), severe scope (more than one being) (+2), medium duration (one minute per Success Level) (+0), usual ingredients (-1), major effect (+3).

CIRCLE OF BINDING

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must draw a large and complex circle on the floor. If any portion of the circle is broken or smudged, the spell fails. This drawing takes twenty minutes and can be no more than thirteen feet in diameter.

EFFECT: This circle cannot be crossed by any ghost or demon whose Willpower is less than twice the Success Levels of the casting roll. While drawing a complex circle around a dangerous creature is rarely easy, it

is possible to draw all parts of the circle except for one tiny final line, entice the nasty inside, and then complete it, trapping the demon inside. This usually requires that the circle be hidden under a rug or drop cloth, since few creatures freely walk into uncompleted circles. The target cannot leave the circle as long as it is intact, and is magically prevented from affecting it in any way. Magicians, ordinary mortals, and even vampires are unaffected by the circle, and can mar it with nothing more than a penknife, some paint remover, or even the scuff of a shoe. Trapped creatures use all their wiles to either trick or bribe a human into breaking it deliberately. Circles of binding can also be used as places of refuge from demons. Some Watchers maintain almost completed circles in their libraries or homes in case their Slayers ever face a threat that they cannot handle. Unfortunately, monsters can use weapons like guns or bows to simply shoot the people inside. Good thing few demons use guns.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (twenty minutes) (+0), minor scope (small area) (+0), only affects spirits or demons (-1), permanent duration (+3), unusual requirements (circle cannot be broken) (-1), awesome effect (+5).

CIRCLE OF KAYLESS*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: This spell requires at least six casters who know the demon's name and location, and have some form of connection to it. A fragment of a horn, the blood of a victim it killed by hand, or performing the ritual on-line for a demon that is possessing the internet are all suitable connections. The casters must light some candles and chant for an hour. This spell can be performed using a specially prepared binding object, but does not require one.

EFFECT: This spell has been used to bind demons throughout history. Most casters prefer to keep the demon in a book or other object rather than sending it back to its hell dimension, since as long as the binding object is kept safe, the demon is effectively neutralized. To bind the demon into a specific object, the binding object must be purified for one full month by keeping it in total darkness and anointing it daily. If a demon is bound using the Circle of Kayless, all attempts to summon it automatically fail. Once the demon is bound into the object, it is covered in text. The demon is freed instantly if the entirety of this text is ever read, transcribed by a single individual, or even electronically scanned. If the book or statue is destroyed, the demon is banished from our world, but it can be summoned normally. If the caster doesn't have time to prepare a suitable binding object, or if she does not know how to prepare the binding object, the demon is merely forced out of its current habitation—a person, a building, or even the Internet. If the demon has formed its own physical body, this body is dispersed. Without a specified binding object, the demon is free to choose an object to move into. This can be any object that the demon is touching or otherwise connected to at the instant that the ritual is completed—if it has no place to move, it is destroyed.

During the last five minutes of the ritual, the demon can feel what is happening and can either attempt to disrupt the ritual or make certain to be in contact with someone or something that it wants to possess. Once the demon has entered its new habitation, it cannot leave on its own. Most often, the demon chooses something mobile and useful to possess, like a suit of armor, a robot body, or the body of one of its enemies. The demon is banished if its new home is destroyed or killed. The Circle of Kayless can be used multiple times to force the demon out of an undesirable binding object.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), lengthy ritual (one hour) (-1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), awesome scope (area of entire city) (+5), permanent duration (+3), rare ingredients (-2), major effect (+3).

CORSHETH'S BIND PERSON

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 8

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must look directly at her victim, point at her, and say a short incantation to the demon prince Corsheth.

EFFECT: The target of this spell is instantly transformed into magical energy and stored inside an object that the caster must have designated earlier by anointing it with dragon-blood oil. While stored in this fashion, the target is awake and aware, but cannot use magic or do anything other than helplessly observe the world around her. Most victims of this spell go mad after several months in this state. Breaking the object instantly frees the victim. The one danger of this spell is that it affects whoever the magician is looking at in the instant the power is released. A well-timed shove could result in the caster imprisoning one of her allies instead of her enemy. Even worse, she could end up in statuesville herself (as long as there's a mirror handy).

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), may be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one target) (+1), permanent duration (+3), major effect (+3).

DEMONIC BLINDNESS

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: Powder made from amber, mandrake root, and demon blood. The caster blows the powder into the area with the targets and says a several minute incantation to the blind goddess Cadria.

EFFECT: This spell causes the targets to be completely unable to see or hear any form of demon. Even if the demon is standing right in front of them, or striking them with a sword, the folks affected are unable to perceive the demon. The targets can hear, smell, and feel what the demon is doing and can see the results of its actions, but they cannot actually see it. This spell lasts for 24 hours or until a counter spell is cast.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), may be Quick Cast (+1), severe scope (up to ten beings) (+2), long duration (+1), unusual ingredients (-1), severe effect (+2).

DEMONIC BLINDNESS (Reversal)

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: A several-minute chant to the blind goddess Cadria.

EFFECT: This spell instantly reverses the effects of Demonic Blindness, allowing all of those who were affected to once again clearly see any demons that aren't invisible.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), may be Quick Cast (+1), severe scope (up to ten beings) (+2), instant duration (+0), severe effect (+2).

DEMONIC TRANSFORMATION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: A small amount of powder or pill containing mandrake root and several other rare herbs. The caster must empower this powder or pill during a three hour ritual that invokes the power of Proteus, the god of change. To cause the spell to take effect, the powder or pill must be eaten or drunk by the target. Since mandrake tastes really nasty, the caster must conceal the pill in a glass of scotch, pot of chili or a banana-strawberry Go-Gurt (for the health conscious).

EFFECT: This spell transforms the target into a demon specified by the caster when the powder is created. Unlike purely illusory transformations, the target doesn't just look like a demon, she actually becomes a demon.

She can only speak demonic languages. Her personality takes longer to change than her body. Still, within six or nine hours, she is going to be thinking just like a demon—including all that desire for violence, human hearts, and other sorts of nastiness. After the target has been a demon for three hours, she must succeed at a Willpower (doubled) roll to resist giving into her demonic nature. Another roll, with a cumulative -1 penalty, is required every three hours after that. After 15 hours as a demon, the rolls cease becoming more difficult (-5 penalty max).

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Very lengthy ritual (three hours) (-2), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), unusual ingredients (-1), major effect (+3).

DIMENSIONAL REPAIR

Power Level: 6

Requirements: First, the caster must discover the precise location of the damage to the dimensional walls. The ritual involves throwing a specially prepared powder at the place where the damage is, followed by a small incantation in a demonic language.

Effect: This spell repairs any damage that has been caused to the dimensional walls, closing any rifts through them. Lightning is created as the powder reacts with the tear in reality. Then it's sucked into the tear, repairing the dimensional fabric.

DREAM TRAVEL

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must meditate for several minutes next to the body of the sleeping person whose dreams she wishes to enter.

EFFECT: The magician can project her consciousness into the mind of someone who is dreaming. The

caster can communicate with the target and can affect her dreams in the same way that she can affect the waking world, by picking up and moving objects, opening doors, or talking to the dreamer. If desired, the caster need not appear in the dream at all and can simply watch, or she can take on the appearance of anyone she desires, effectively impersonating someone else in the dream. While this spell can be used to help someone who is having nightmares or other similar problems, it is most often used to spy on the target's inner thoughts, or to attempt to discreetly influence her by either delivering messages or by impersonating someone (and having that person say or do something fairly dramatic). The caster can also ask the dreamer questions that she would not normally answer while awake. While the dreamer does not believe that the created or altered dreams are anything unusual, they are always vivid and exceptionally easy to remember. Most people do not base their attitudes about people upon events in dreams, but a consistent series of dreams where a friend does or says lots of mean and horrible things should cause some loyalty doubts.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), severe scope (two beings) (+2), long duration (+1), noticeable effect (+1).

EARLY WARNING

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must draw a line of symbols in colored sand all around the area being protected and then say a short incantation.

EFFECT: This spell warns anyone inside the protected area if any hellgod or exceptionally powerful demon comes within 100 feet. The spell is good for one warning. This warning is quite loud and wakes everyone inside the area, even if they are quite soundly asleep. Also, the spell only warns of the approach of extremely powerful demons. It does not react to the approach of vampires or other ordinary demons. The spell remains in place until it is either banished or triggered. Once the spell is cast, the sand need not stay in place; the effect remains even if the sand is disturbed or swept up.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (less than a few minutes) (+1), noticeable scope (one room) (+1), permanent duration (+3), minor effect (+0).

ENERGY BARRIER*

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: Two or more Witches need only chant, "Enemies, fly and fall ... circling arms, raise a wall!" Everyone else needs to spend several hours drawing a fancy circle around the protected area in colored chalk.

EFFECT: An invisible energy barrier springs up around the caster. It can be as small as desired or as large as 99 feet in diameter. The barrier is pretty much impassible—enemies can't get through and neither can any weapons they use. The barrier lets air through, but stops any poison gas the caster's enemies try to send her way—magic is handy like that. The caster can open or close a temporary gate in the barrier and dissolve the entire barrier at will. It naturally disbursts in Success Levels x 4 hours.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Dual casters (-1), lengthy ritual (several hours) (-1), can be Quick Cast (+1), severe scope (100 feet) (+2), long duration (+1), awesome effect (+5).

ENERGY BARRIER (Lesser)

Power Level: 5/6

Requirements: A lengthy ritual in Latin. Must be performed within the area that is to be surrounded by the energy barrier.

Effect: This spell seals off an area with an energy barrier so no one can enter or leave. The barrier only affects living or undead beings—objects may be tossed through the barrier walls. It is possible to add a small portal in the barrier to allow those with a special password to pass through. This must be specified as the ritual is cast and it adds one to the Power Level.

ENERGY TRANSFER

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must touch two people, envision a type of energy, and recite a several minute incantation.

EFFECT: This spell transfers mystical energy between two individuals. The caster can either give or receive energy, or she can merely serve as a conduit between two other people. The spell is often used to steal

energy from another Witch, to both weaken them and temporarily strengthen the caster. If used this way, the target's Sorcery level is reduced by half (round down) for the next hour, while the caster temporarily gains a number of Sorcery levels equal to the number the target lost. This bonus can only be used on the next spell or telekinesis attempt that the caster performs. Once this spell has been cast, no further bonus is gained. The spell can also be used to reverse the effects of energy draining abilities, or spells like Steal Strength (see p. 113). This potent spell can actually steal energy from vastly powerful beings like True Demons or hellgods.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), severe scope (two beings) (+2), instant duration (+0), major effect (+3).

ETHERIC SCANNING*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Two Witches, candles, a pot of herbs for anointing the participants, and a personal item of the person being scanned.

EFFECT: One Witch sends her consciousness into the nether realms, while the other acts as an anchor, keeping her soul from becoming lost. While in the nether realms, the Witch can perceive any ongoing mystical effects in the vicinity of the person being scanned, including possession, curses, or magical transformations. This is a highly dangerous spell—a mistake most likely results in the projecting character becoming lost and unable to return to her body. In this case, the body becomes an immobile, soulless husk that must be fed and given water. Even worse, the body dies within a month unless the Witch finds her way home. While no safer, the easiest way to help a lost Witch find her way home is for another pair of Witches to perform this spell using an item belonging to the lost Witch. The projecting Witch must then go into the nether realms, locate the lost Witch's spirit, and guide it home. Then again, if this second spell goes awry, two Witches are lost in the nether realms.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Dual casters (-1), casters must have Sorcery (-1), recitation (couple of minutes) (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), medium duration (one minute per Success Level) (+0), major effect (+3).

EXORCISM

Power Level: 3

Requirements: A binding powder is spread around the target, and crosses, holy water, and a Latin supplication are used to hold the demon in place while the exorcism begins. The caster thrusts a cross in the possessed's face and begins the Latin liturgy.

Effect: Upon a successful casting, a contest of wills begins between the caster and the possessing entity. The caster makes a Willpower (doubled) roll, adds the Success Levels of the exorcism ritual, and compares the result to the Brains Score of the possessor. If the caster has a higher result, the entity is cast out of its host body. How the nasty reacts to this varies depending on the creature. A vampire can perform this ritual, but suffers a -5 penalty on all rolls while holding the cross. Using something to wrap around the cross or his hand lowers the penalty to -2.

EXPECTATIONS FULFILLED

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Witches and Warlocks need only make a gesture of handing over the expected object while whispering a few magical words. Ordinary magicians must perform the same gestures preceded by a five minute ritual.

EFFECT: The caster creates the illusion of a small object that a single target expects to see. This is the perfect spell for creating a fake ID or an overdue term paper. Everyone other than the target sees the magician handing her target empty air, so this spell is best done without bystanders. The illusion looks, sounds, and feels just like the real thing to the target, but vanishes as soon the target puts it down or looks away from it. Fortunately, the impression remains that the item was exactly what was expected; most targets assume they simply lost the item and not that they were handed an illusion.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (five minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), short duration (-1), severe effect (+2).

FALSE RESURRECTION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: A photograph of the person the caster wishes to raise, the egg of a Ghora demon, and a short ritual.

EFFECT: This spell raises the target from the dead. This is not one of the most powerful resurrection spells though, and the results are somewhat incomplete. All of the target's injuries are healed, but her soul and mind are gone and she retains only fragments of her memories. The target's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution are unchanged, but her Intelligence, Willpower, and Perception are all reduced to one. At best, the person can still recognize her loved ones and engage in extremely simple, halting conversations. Many magicians are extremely displeased by the result of this spell—fortunately, it is extremely easy to reverse. If the photograph used in the casting of this spell is ever ripped in half or otherwise destroyed, the target instantly returns to their grave. A few seriously nasty Witches and Warlocks use this spell to turn their dead enemies into helpless slaves—that's about all it is good for.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), rare ingredients (-2), severe effect (+2).

FINDING THE LOST

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: Two witches and a representation of the item that was lost. The caster also needs a large handful of pure sacred sand and must make a supplication to Eyrishon, the endless one. One of the casters also needs to know exactly where and when the item was lost. The ritual only requires about ten minutes.

EFFECT: This spell reaches through time and even the barriers between parallel worlds to recover lost or destroyed items. If used on an object that has merely been lost or stolen, the spell can actually cause more than one copy of the object to exist in the same world. During the ritual, both casters see flashes of the events that led up to the object being lost or destroyed. When the spell goes awry, it can bring back people who have died or vanished into another dimension. Unfortunately, it cannot be used to do this deliberately—it can only be purposefully used to find inanimate objects. Also, it cannot be used to bring the dead back to life. At best, this spell can accidentally summon a version of someone who died from a dimension where she survived, causing all manner of confusion for everyone involved. This spell can be cast in reverse to return the item back to where it originally came from.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Dual casters (-1), ritual (ten minutes) (-1), noticeable scope (one object) (+1), permanent duration (+3), rare ingredients (-2), awesome effect (+5).

FOG OF PROTECTION

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Witches need merely say a few words and point their hands in the desired direction. Non-Witches need only chant for a minute or two and let the magic happen.

EFFECT: A white fog billows from the caster's hands. The fog dissipates quickly, but anyone else who is touched by it is rendered completely senseless and somewhat dizzy for a minute. This spell produces enough fog to affect one person (or demon), two if they are close together. This effect doesn't last very long, but it can allow the caster to duck around a corner or into a closet. That should give a bit of a breather from whatever nasty thing is chasing her.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (less than a couple minutes) (+1), may be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (nearby target) (+1), short duration (one Turn per Success Level) (-1), severe effect (+2).

FORGETTING

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6-8

REQUIREMENTS: To alter one person's memory, the caster only need recite a simple spell while holding a lethe's bramble. To affect multiple targets or more extensive memories, the caster also needs a pure quartz crystal. She must burn a fire around the crystal. The crystal gradually turns jet black—when it is fully black, the spell is in effect.

EFFECT: When cast in its simplest form, this spell removes a single memory from the target's mind. This covers one discrete incident—a lovers' fight, a serious fright, viewing The Postman. The caster need only state the memory to be removed, cast the spell, and it is gone. Add one to the Power Level to affect the memories of up to ten people; add one to the Power Level to affect more than a single memory. When cast in this expanded manner though, the spell is unstable. If the black crystal is broken or destroyed, the spell is instantly broken and all lost memories return.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), noticeable effect (+1).

GLAMOUR*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must have an image of what she wants the subject to look like—a retouched image of the subject's face or an image of someone else's face. She must burn this image in a brass bowl. While the image is burning, the caster chants an incantation to Janus and the subject must inhale the fumes.

EFFECT: Glamours are simple illusions that can be used to do anything from hiding blemishes and bruises to making the subject look more or less attractive to disguising the subject completely. A glamour can add or subtract up to four points of Attractiveness. In addition, the glamour can change the subject's face, hair, eyes, and general skin tone enough to disguise them as someone they look vaguely like. The magician can cast a glamour on herself or on anyone else who is present during the ritual. It is impossible to use this spell to disguise someone beyond what normal makeup and lots of theatrical experience could manage. This spell also doesn't make the subject act any more like the person, nor does it change any of his Attributes. It is also instantly canceled if the subject ever gets a significant amount of water in her face.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (ten minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), very long duration (+2), noticeable effect (+1).

GYPSY SHAPE-SHIFTING

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 8

REQUIREMENTS: Training by a gypsy Sorcerer (and they won't train just anybody).

EFFECT: The shape-shifter transforms into another form. The exact form varies depending on the training and inclinations of the magic user. The shape-shifter retains her own thoughts, personality, skills and abilities—she just embodies a different form. The exact effects of the new shape vary, and should be devised in consultation with the player. At Power Level 8, the spell grants one possible new form. Each additional shape adds one to the Power Level. Thus, with three potential shapes, Dracula's Gypsy Shape-shifting spell is base Power Level 10. Given their demonic nature, vamps (and certain other types at your discretion) are closer to the supernatural. For them, the Power Level of this spell is halved (round up) when considering the Success Levels necessary for casting.

The shape to be taken must be specified when the spell is cast. The new form lasts until the spell is cast again to adopt another, or to return the character's "normal" shape. While only one shape is taken per casting, the Power Level remains the same throughout—it is defined when the spell is learned and is determined by the number of shapes that are possible for the caster.

Adding another shape to the spell requires research, training, and study. Once this process is completed, the spell base Power Level increases by one immediately and it becomes a bit harder to cast successfully.

HOLD PERSON

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Witches simply incant and gesture at their target or targets. Other magicians must also meditate for several minutes.

EFFECT: This spell causes the air around the target to solidify. The target can breathe normally, but she is stopped in her tracks. Since this spell prevents all gestures, most forms of magic are impossible, but psychic powers can be used normally. If not dispelled, the binding naturally fades in one Turn per Success Level.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), short duration (-1), severe effect (+2).

HUNTING SNAKE OF SOBEK

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: Khul's Amulet, a Sobekian Bloodstone, a large container of ceramic or stone, and a snake of the kind specified by the bloodstone. Place the snake and the bloodstone in the container and chant an incantation while holding Khul's Amulet and chanting in Arabic over the mouth of the container.

EFFECT: This spell transmogrifies a specific type of snake into a large demonic servant. The snake demon is completely loyal to its creator (as long as the caster doesn't mess up the ritual—if she screws up, the snake likely tries to eat her) and possesses keen supernatural senses. These snakes can sense and locate

supernatural manifestation unfindable by other means. The only limit on this spell is that a given bloodstone can be used only once, and these bloodstones are quite rare—Egyptian priests skilled in dark magics inscribed them all long ago.

IGNITE FIRE

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Witches and Warlocks need only shout “Ignis Incende.” Other magicians must also meditate for three minutes.

EFFECT: This spell ignites any flammable object up to the size of a large fireplace full of thick logs. The caster must be within two yards of the target. If used to light an enemy’s clothes, it does three times Success levels damage to the target, doubled against vampires or other especially flammable creatures.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (few minutes) (+1), may be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being/object) (+1), instant duration (+0), noticeable effect (+1).

IONIZE AIR*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: A dolls-eye crystal and a ten-minute incantation to the elements.

EFFECT: This spell ionizes the air in a one-block radius. Within this area, static cling is seriously harsh and all forms of TV, radio, and cell phone communications are cut off. The effect is stronger in the immediate vicinity of the spell, and everyone within a few yards of where it is cast winds up with a serious bad hair day until the spell is over. This spell only lasts for about an hour, but during that time it is a truly awesome way to keep someone with a cell phone from calling for help, or to really annoy someone who wanted to watch the big game.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (ten minutes) (+0), major scope (neighborhood) (+3), long duration (+1), minor effect (+0).

JET OF FLAME

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Witches need only shout “Incindere.” Other magicians must meditate for a few minutes.

EFFECT: A gout of flame shoots from the caster’s hand. The flame is five yards long and does Willpower times Success Levels in damage to whatever it hits (double against vampires and other particularly flammable creatures). The spell also ignites flammable objects.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (a few minutes) (+1), may be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), instant duration (+0), noticeable effect (+1).

LEVITATION

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Several minutes of incantation.

EFFECT: This spell allows the caster to float in the air or even to fly slowly. The spell lasts Success Level hours as long as the caster concentrates on it and does nothing else (including casting other spells). If Quick Cast, a Witch who falls off of a tall building can float gently and safely to the ground. Alternately, a Witch can use this spell to fly from the ground to the top of a twenty story building. The pace is not terribly rapid—a caster can’t fly any faster than she can run.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), long duration (+1), noticeable effect (+1).

LIFTING THE VEIL

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: Prior to using, the caster must mix wolfsbane, satyrion root, a toadstone, and some pure water in a bottle. To use the spell, the caster must say a short incantation in German and throw the bottle at the feet of the target.

EFFECT: When the bottle breaks, fumes rise up and instantly banish all illusions. This spell does not affect Power Level 6 or greater spells or illusions produced by very powerful entities, like hellgods. It does reveal the

truth behind all other demonic and magical illusions. It causes someone who has used a spell to make herself invisible or to disguise her true appearance to revert to her true form. Demons who hide in human form must also take on their true visage, and vampires must assume their “game face.” The spell does not cause werewolves to revert to human form; both forms are equally real to a shape-shifter. Those affected cannot use another spell to disguise her appearance for at least one hour.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), may be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), creates magical item (+1), long duration (+1), unusual ingredients (-1), severe effect (+2).

LIGHT OF GUIDANCE

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Witches only need to say a quick incantation. Everyone else must light a candle and chant for five minutes.

EFFECT: As soon as this spell is cast a tiny light as bright as a small flashlight appears. The caster can ask the light to lead her to anyone or anyplace she knows well enough (pretty much your call here, obviously Willow knew her friends well enough to use it but that level of intimacy may not be required). It leads her towards this destination, moving a few feet ahead of her, regardless of whether she is walking or running. If the caster keeps changing her mind about where she wants to go or who she wants to find, she may end up with half a dozen little lights playing Christmas tree every which way around her face.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (five minutes) (+0), may be Quick Cast (+1), severe scope (area of a large building) (+2), medium duration (one minute per Success Level) (+0), minor effect (+0).

LIGHTNING BOLT

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: Access to the book of Darkest Magick. Half an hour's worth of casting; for Witches or Warlocks, a mere gesture.

EFFECT: Lightning strikes the victim (who can be anywhere in line of sight of the caster), inflicting five times Willpower points of damage per Success Level. This powerful spell is one of the flashier magicks available. Unfortunately for the forces of goodness and light, it is not easy to cast, and requires access to the book of Darkest Magick, which can't exactly be found at your local Barnes & Noble, or even your typical witch's library.

LOVER'S CURSE

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: Various herbs and potions, as well as a picture of the caster's lover or ex-lover. To complete the spell, the caster must burn the lover's picture. Only someone who once had a strong positive emotional connection with the target can cast this spell.

EFFECT: This is the standard curse used by jilted lovers, angry business partners, or anyone else who believes someone has betrayed them. While the caster is no doubt convinced that her victim is getting what she deserves, this spell is not about justice—it smacks the target with the angry hand of vengeance. Once cast, the target finds that everyone who previously loved her now hates her. Lovers and ex-lovers that the target cares about tend to die messily and pretty much anyone or anything else the target loves falls apart or turns against them. Like many of the seriously dark spells, this one also tends to have a nasty twist. If the target still loves the caster, the caster might end up messily dead, ensuring that both she and the target come to grief over this spell. As a final kicker, the spell imposes bad luck on the target. She gains five points of the Bad Luck Quality. The spell itself doesn't cause the target harm, but the bad luck might, as might the badness happening to those around her.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (couple of minutes) (+1), caster must have strong connection to target (-1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), very long duration (+2), unusual ingredients (-1), awesome effect (+5).

MAGICAL BLINDFOLD

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Witches need only shout “Obfuscate.” Other magicians must meditate for a few minutes.

EFFECT: A gray blob appears in the caster's hand. When thrown, it unerringly aims for a nearby target's face. There, it transforms into a mass of sticky goo that covers the target's eyes. The blob temporarily blinds the target

(-4 to all actions requiring sight). The goo is extremely sticky and the target must pull at it for two times Success Levels Turns to remove it (otherwise it lasts for one minute per Success Level). The target can do nothing else during any Turn that she attempts to remove it.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (a few minutes) (+1), may be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), minor effect (+0).

MAGICAL DISGUISE

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must recite a short incantation for approximately one minute.

EFFECT: This spell disguises the target as someone or something else—from an elderly dwarf to an eight-foot tall demon with wings and horns. The target's Attributes and capabilities remain the same though. Also, the spell does not change the caster's clothing or accessories. The spell lasts for two hours per Success Level. The caster can use this spell on herself or on anyone she touches.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (one minute) (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), long duration (+1), severe effect (+2).

MAGICAL WARD

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: Repeatedly draw a circle around the protected area with a special wand and chant for fifteen minutes.

EFFECT: This spell creates a barrier around an item that can only be pierced by someone who helped cast it. The protected space is only a yard or so in diameter. The barrier protects the item from all harm and keeps all from touching it. One good counterspell is Break the Wards of Magic (see p. 97).

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (fifteen minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one object) (+1), permanent duration (+3), major effect (+3).

MAKE CORPOREAL

Power Level: 6

Requirements: These spells vary depending on the entity involved. For a Thesulac demon, an Orb of Ramjarin, some sacred herbs, and divining powder are needed. For a demon like Sahjhan, darker magic must be used, involving a pentagram and human blood.

Effect: Several kinds of entities are incorporeal in this world, but all can be made corporeal through magic. The exact ritual is slightly different as no two entities are the same. Further, the specifics of the entity's corporeal form (physical Attributes and attacks) vary. As a default, equate Strength with Intelligence, Dexterity with Perception, and Constitution with Willpower. Life Points, Scores, and attack damages are derived from those. Of course, these defaults can be changed as the plotline demands. Also, the entity may have supernatural powers when corporeal that it does not possess normally.

MANGUS TRIPOD*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 1

REQUIREMENTS: One magician must chant this exorcism where the supernatural manifestation is the strongest, while three assistants perform similar chants and light candles in a triangle that encloses the haunted area. The entire procedure only takes five minutes once everyone is in place.

EFFECT: This spell banishes ghosts—cast it and they return to wherever ghosts go so that they never trouble any living person again. Unfortunately, this spell does not work on the most powerful and angry ghosts. If the ghost is too buff, it laughs off the exorcism and keeps right on haunting. Still, the exorcism is easy to pull off and only takes five minutes, so many magicians try it before they move on to tougher (and riskier) magic.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), ritual (five minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), limited scope (less powerful ghosts) (-1), instant duration (+0), major effect (+3).

MENTAL COMMUNICATION

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must look at and whisper the name of up to ten people she wishes to "speak with," and perform a ritual to Mercury.

EFFECT: Until the sun next crosses the horizon, the caster can mentally communicate with everyone she designated, as long as she can see the person (even if only as a small dot in the distance or by using camera or other visual link). This spell does not allow the caster to read the target's mind, merely to communicate silently with people. Telepaths (see p 36) can overhear these mental conversations. Many folks find this spell somewhat disconcerting since the caster's voice comes directly into the target's head and is not heard with the target's ears. The target does not need to be able to see the caster to respond. The caster can make these mental messages public, so that they can be heard by everyone she named when she cast the spell, or each message can be sent to specific persons.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), major scope (up to ten people in sight) (+3), long duration (+1), minor effect (+0).

NON-VIOLENCE SPELL

Power Level: 8

Requirements: Three or more casters get together and perform a mysterious ritual that takes a great deal of time to complete. The spell can be cast from one location to any other within the same city (at least).

Effect: Successful completion of the spell causes a barrier to permeate the area targetted by the spell, providing a nigh unbreakable force field to anyone within the building. The barrier blasts any hostile being attempting to harm someone inside the area of effect, inflicting damage equal to three times the caster's Willpower per Success Level of the initial casting. The original spell only affected demon violence, but a later variation provided the same effect against human violence as well (add one to Power Level). The barrier proved ineffective against a grenade tossed in from outside the its effect though.

OPEN GATEWAY

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: An hour-long ritual performed by three magicians starting at noon. The casters must have a map and a drawing (or photo) of the destination, and some item associated with that location.

EFFECT: This ritual opens a round gateway to another location on Earth. The portal remains open only a short time, but it allows up to two-dozen people or a dozen riders through. Due to the powerful energies involved, electronics and delicate machined tools do not survive transport intact. Modern vehicles or firearms are instantly transformed into useless pieces of junk. Thus, horses and melee weapons are the preferred accoutrements of gateway travelers. This spell always opens a portal to the location in the photo. If the photo, map, and item do not match up properly for some reason, the spell automatically fails and side effects are generated.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), lengthy ritual (one hour) (-1), major scope (over ten people) (+1), awesome scope (the world) (+6), medium duration (+0), unusual ingredients (-1), awesome effect (+3).

PARALYSIS

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 2

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must spend five Turns chanting an invocation to Medusa and the Gorgons. Then, she must touch the target with her left hand.

EFFECT: This spell completely immobilizes the target for a number of Turns equal to the Success Levels gained. This spell is also most dangerous. Since the caster must be close to the target and loads of brightly glowing magical energy surrounds her, she makes a dandy target. During the time she is chanting, if anyone kills the caster, knocks her unconscious, or even interrupts her chanting by tossing her against a wall or slapping a big piece of duct tape over her mouth, the spell automatically fails. Even so, the caster must roll for magical side effects. This spell is the ideal method for paralyzing critters too nasty for even a Hunter to easily defeat. Still, those are exactly the sorts of monsters who can easily smash a Witch to a pulp before she can finish this spell.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (five Turns) (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), short duration (-1), unusual requirements (must touch) (-1), severe effect (+2).

PASSION OF THE HUNTRESS

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: A personal object of the target, a large symbol representing the sex of the target in red chalk, a candle with the target's name written on it, a boiling cauldron (or beaker) with herbs, a picture of the target, and a fifteen-minute ritual that calls upon Diana, the goddess of the hunt.

EFFECT: All of the books on magic label this a love spell, but it's best not to believe everything written in

books. After all, it calls upon the power of Diana the huntress, not Venus, the goddess of love. More than a few Witches have cast this spell on someone as a curse. Regardless of why the spell is cast, over the course of the next day or two, the target becomes increasingly infatuated with the recipient, and incredibly jealous of anyone else the recipient sees. She happily stalks the recipient and may even attempt to kill him if she becomes convinced that her love is not returned. This spell normally lasts for at least several months, but usually folks dispel the effects long before this. Lots of Witches have gotten more money or favors by offering to remove this spell than by casting it in the first place. Dispelling won't remove the target's memory of being madly infatuated, and she often blames the person she was infatuated with. Love spells are bad news all around.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (fifteen minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), very long duration (several months) (+2), unusual ingredients (-1), severe effect (+3).

PORTAL SPELL

Power Level: 5

Requirements: Find a location with a suitable amount of mojo and recite the appropriate incantation to unlock the potential energy, rending the barriers between dimensions. The exact requirements for and effects of the portal spell vary depending on the destination (and starting) dimensions. You should apply bonuses or penalties to the casting roll based on how "flexible" or "rigid" the walls are between dimensions. This explains why it was so hard to get to Quar'toth and so easy (or easier) to get to Pylea.

Effect: A successful casting opens a portal to another dimension, as dictated by the incantation. A metal "box" of some manner-such as a car-is required to keep a group of beings together after entering the portal, at least en route to Pylea. Miscasting is bad-as usual-but even success usually brings trouble. The portal in Caritas brought a Drokken through for no apparent reason-it's pretty clear the creature wasn't much in the brains department. When Landok returned to his dimension in the same place, Cordelia got sucked through the portal. When Angel found a way to access Quar'toth, he got Connor ... and a kicker. Feel free to add similar extras to any attempt to mess with dimensional borders. That's just the way it works sometimes.

QUENCHING LUST'S FIRES/REKINDLE LOVE'S FLAME

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5/6

REQUIREMENTS: Boil skink root, essence of rose thorns, and raven feathers (or canary feathers to rekindle love) in a pot, and chant an invocation.

EFFECTS: Everyone who breathes the fumes from the pot while the invocation is chanted is instantly freed from any infatuations or lusts that afflict her. This spell cannot interfere with the course of true love, but handily removes any inopportune romantic or lustful feelings. Using the converse spell to rekindle an old love only works if both parties were once truly in love and still retain at least some vestige of feeling for each other. Both people must breathe the fumes of this spell while the invocation is chanted (Power Level increases by one). Since this spell is often used on someone involuntarily, the boiling pot can be disguised with herbs (to seem like an oddly fragrant potpourri) and the invocation can be whispered. Under either version of the spell, the effects only last one lunar month. However, if love has truly been rekindled during this time, it continues to grow normally.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), very long duration (+2), severe effect (+2).

QUICK ILLUSION

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 1

REQUIREMENTS: This spell can only be used by Witches and involves a short incantation, generally only a word or two.

EFFECT: This spell creates minor illusions. Whether the caster is changing her jeans into a sparkling ball gown or decorating a room with ribbons and tiny glowing lights, almost any type of minor illusion can be produced. The spell cannot harm anyone and the caster must be no more than three yards away from the object she is changing. Furthermore, the illusions are completely insubstantial and fade in Success Level hours.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Caster must have Sorcery (-1), can be Quick Cast (+1), long duration (+1), minor effect (+0).

THE RAISING

Power Level: 6

Requirements: A wooden cage, anointed with oil and human blood, is placed on consecrated ground. Five vampires are chained up near the cage and an incantation is invoked from the Scroll of Aberjian.

Effect: At the conclusion of the spell, a wind arises, dusts the five vampire sacrifices, and carries their ashes to the cage. Light explodes from the cage and the vampire that the casters attempted to summon appears, undusted-restored back to life as a human.

RAISING ACATHLA

QUICK CAST: Heck no!

POWER LEVEL: Not high enough!

REQUIREMENTS: Are you nuts? What makes you think we're going to provide the specs on a spell to destroy the world? Not much point in involving the actual completion of this spell in a BtVS RPG. Okay, maybe you make it your Big Bad's goal, but a successful casting by anyone (particularly a Cast Member) is going to put your world in a world of hurt. Post-apocalyptic settings are all well and good (we set one up in the Hunter's Handbook, plug, plug), but this one is just plain game suicide! Raising Acathla is exactly the kind of plot device spell that we already said we ain't touchin'. You're on your own here, bucko.

REMOVE BONDS

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Witches say "Exegete" and gesture at their target or targets. Other magicians must also meditate for five minutes.

EFFECT: This spell removes bonds from any target within five yards. The bonds instantly vanish in a flash of light. This spell works on ropes, handcuffs, or silk scarves (don't ask), but does not open locked doors.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (five minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), minor scope (one binding) (+0), instant duration (+0), severe effect (+2).

RESTORE THE UNDEAD

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must have the Du Lac Cross or another similarly powerful and blasphemously blessed item. The vampire being restored must be tied on an altar with her sire, and the caster must stab a knife through both of their hands while saying an invocation to the demon-lord Eligor. If the two vampires are separated, the spell ends before the subject is fully healed.

EFFECT: This spell can restore a badly injured vampire to full health. In addition to rapidly healing fire damage, it can even remove lingering injuries caused by magic or long-term exposure to crosses or others items that are similarly harmful to vampires. This spell drains "life" from the sire into the injured vampire.

If used on a very badly damaged vampire the spell may kill the sire. If the spell is ended early, the subject will be at least partially healed, which may allow her to recover more rapidly from the remainder of her injuries. Ending the spell early also ensures that the sire will survive. He will be weakened by any use of this spell, but will recover fully in a day or two if the spell is ended prematurely.

RESTORE SOUL

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must light candles and perform an incantation lasting approximately ten minutes. The caster also needs a bit of hair, blood, toenail, or some other fragment of the body of either the demon who is stealing the soul or the person whose soul is being stolen (but not both).

EFFECT: The instant this counterspell is completed, the target's soul is returned and cannot be stolen again for the next three hours. The spell aids any being with a soul, but will not work if the target's soul has been banished by a spell like Soul Reave.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), unusual ingredients (-1), major effect (+3).

RESURRECTION OF OSIRIS

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: A priceless Urn of Osiris, a chant, a group of four in a circle with candles above the one to be raised, blood from an animal sacrifice.

EFFECT: This spell quite literally raises the dead. It grows new flesh around the subject's corpse and then

restores her life, her soul, and her memories. The ritual is a difficult one and even if the spell is completely successful, the caster takes five Life Points of damage and is totally exhausted from the strain of performing the it.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), way-rare ingredients (-3), awesome effect (+5).

RETRIEVAL SPELL

Power Level: 8

Requirements: A pentagram within a circle drawn in black, five black candles (each placed on a point of the pentagram), and spell components by three of the candles (a horn, some black stones, and some fur). A small pile of stones is placed in the middle of the pentagram.

Effect: The spell brings back something that has been lost-it may be a thing the caster misplaced or a person that has left him. If the spell is successful, the thing retrieved replaces the pile of stones in the middle of the pentagram. If not, something particularly nasty could show up. Whether the spell works for stolen as well as misplaced items is for you to decide.

RETURNING THE VAMPIRE'S SOUL

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must perform a complex and difficult invocation in front of an Orb of Thesulah. These orbs are fairly common, but the text of the spell is exceedingly rare. Each orb may be used only once - if the ritual succeeds, the Orb crumbles to dust. This ritual takes about a half an hour to perform.

EFFECT: This spell suppresses the demon spirit that inhabits all vampires and installs the soul that the body had when it was alive. The vampire's superhuman abilities remain but the monstrous urges are no longer in complete control. Gypsies created this spell as a curse and it is truly a dark one. The person is forever haunted by memories of all of the dark deeds that she did while she was a normal vampire. In addition, she instantly loses her soul once again is she ever becomes truly happy. Fortunately, such happiness is quite rare and generally only comes when someone finds a true and enduring love. Doomed to never find a true and lasting love, haunted by memories of murder and death, and still forced to shun the daylight and drink blood, a person affected by this spell bears a terrible burden. Still, in some ways, it is perhaps a less horrific fate than being a normal, demonic vampire.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), limited scope (soulless vampire) (-1), permanent duration (+3), rare ingredients (-2), awesome effect (+5).

REVERSE TRANSFORMATION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 8

REQUIREMENTS: Read a short but exceedingly difficult to find incantation.

EFFECT: This spell reverses the effects of any transformation spell, including powerful spells like Ratification. Unlike other reversing transformations, this spell can even reverse transformations performed by another magician even if the caster does not know the original spell.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (few moments) (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), rare ingredients (-2), awesome effect (+5).

REVERSE WITCH'S SPELLS

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: Eye of newt, boiling water in a cauldron or pot, and a personal object that belongs to the target. Ritual takes about twenty minutes; halfway through, the target knows that this spell is being cast and roughly where the caster is.

EFFECT: This spell immediately cancels all ongoing spells cast by a particular Witch, Warlock, or other magician. It has no effect on spells cast by demons or gods. It also cannot cancel spells cast by multiple Witches or Warlocks unless the caster knows who all of the casters are and has a personal item from each of them. Also, if the targeted Witch healed someone with magic, the person who was healed won't suddenly have her wound reopen; someone killed by a curse won't suddenly hop out of the grave if the caster uses this spell on his killer.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), major scope (all ongoing spells) (+3), unusual ingredients (-1), major effect (+3).

REVOKE INVITATION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Moss herbs (burned during the ritual), some holy water, crosses, and a Latin incantation rescinding the invitation.

EFFECT: Say, for one odd reason or another, you invite a vampire into your home. This can lead to no end of trouble. In those cases, this spell fixes your mistake and prevents that particular bloodsucker from darkening (or at least moving beyond) your doorstep again. Once successfully cast, the vamp is again incapable of entering your dwelling. Of course, another invite undoes the whole thing, and you are back at mistake one.

RITUAL DESTRUCTION OF THE LIVING FLAME

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Essence of toad, three pieces of gold, a bundle of twice-blessed sage, a ritual cauldron on a pedestal, an incense called Breath of the Atropyx, and a ritual lasting thirty minutes. Even using the cheapest toad essence around, the caster needs to spend several hundred dollars to purchase all these items. To cast the spell, the magician lights a fire in the cauldron using the various special ingredients and then drops the item being destroyed into the burning cauldron.

EFFECT: Most things can be destroyed with a sledgehammer or a can of gasoline. The most powerful magical items and other similarly tough things require a bit more—say ... magic. When the living flame of this spell consumes an item, not even ashes remain. The same spell can also be used to destroy a powerful demon, but the only problem is that the demon must remain still (in a magic circle?) for the entire duration of the ritual. And if the caster can do that to a demon, she likely doesn't need this ritual to get rid of it. Oh, and the Finding the Lost spell (see p. 102) cannot bring a destroyed item back.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being/item) (+1), instant duration (+0), unusual ingredients (-1), major effect (+3).

RITUAL OF MOK'TAGAR*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: This ritual can only be performed when the victim is sleeping. The caster must pour a small amount of blood down the person's throat, drop poisonous insects or draw symbols on her skin, and whisper an incantation that lasts half an hour.

EFFECT: The ritual gives the target exceptionally vivid and disturbing dreams while it removes a portion of her soul. The soul bit is absorbed by the caster. Each night that the ritual is repeated, a little more soul is transferred. Since certain detection and protection spells only work on beings without souls, having a soul can be quite useful. This spell can only be used on humans and other creatures that naturally have souls. It cannot be used to temporarily remove the soul from vampires or other demons who have found a way to gain or regain their soul. This spell may be exclusive knowledge of the Mok'tagar demons or it may be more widely known.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), unusual ingredients (-1), major effect (+3).

SCAPULA OF PROTECTION*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must make a small bundle of herbs and other components, including both iron nails and sulfur. To be effective, the scapula must be worn around the neck.

EFFECT: This simple but effective spell repels most varieties of ghosts. Unless the haunting is particularly strong, ghosts cannot approach within one yard of a scapula. A ghost can scare or throw something at the charm wearer, but cannot possess her or directly harm her. Unfortunately, a scapula doesn't protect the wearer from the most powerful ghosts. Also, it only protects the wearer for a single night.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), creates magical item (+1), long duration (+1), minor effect (+0).

SHOWY GLAMOUR

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: Varies

REQUIREMENTS: Whatever the magician decides at the time of casting

EFFECT: This creates a minor to spectacular light show and other very showy but otherwise meaningless effects. The caster sets the Power Level at the time of casting. The higher the Power Level set, the more impressive the pyrotechnics and other showy effects. Won't get you a bunch of respect among true Witches and Warlocks, but it sure does impress the rubes.

SNACK OF REBELLIOUS YOUTH

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: A large amount of food. The caster makes a series of incantations over the food and touches each item.

EFFECT: Any adult who eats any of this food thinks and acts like a particularly irresponsible teenager for the next half day or so. Those affected ignore responsibilities they dislike and may even engage in petty theft, vandalism, and other forms of rebellion. Teens and children who eat this food are unaffected. The food remains enchanted for the next full lunar month.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (more than a few minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), limited scope (only adults) (-1), creates magical item (+1), long duration (+1), severe effect (+2).

SOLIDIFY SPIRIT*

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: Witches (with Sorcery 5 or better) need merely say "Solid." Other magicians must sit and recite a lengthy chant over and over again for nearly twenty minutes.

EFFECT: This spell makes a ghost or other insubstantial creature solid for the next hour. In this state, the creature can interact physically with the world and be attacked with ordinary physical weapons—often a great boon when fighting certain types of creatures. Creatures made solid by this spell also become fully visible. When solidified, a ghost has Life Points equal to three times its Brains Score.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), long duration (+1), major effect (+3).

SOUL REAVE SPELL

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 10

REQUIREMENTS: A ritual involving blood and an Arabic incantation

EFFECT: Once a chalice of blood is splashed on the victim of this spell and an Arabic phrase is spoken, the victim's soul is torn from her body. This is extremely painful: the victim suffers a -10 penalty to all her actions during this time. The length of time that this takes is a number of Turns equal to the Power Level of the Spell minus the Success Levels over ten (minimum of two Turns). When the spell is completed, the victim no longer possesses her soul. If this is done to an ensouled vampire, it reverts to its old mean and vicious self. If this is done to a human, she gains a new mean and vicious self. If the magician really doesn't want to remove a person's soul after all, the whole thing could be faked with a glamour spell and some acting.

SPEAK WITH LOA

Power Level: 3

Requirements: The caster must first locate a place where a Loa resides—they are generally embodied in a statue. The caster must then spread powder in front of it as an offering, followed by an incantation and the ritualistic phrase "accept this offering and open the gates of truth."

Effect: As the spell is cast, the Loa manifests in the statue—animating it during the conversation. Loa possess great knowledge and the caster may ask a number of questions equal to the Success Levels of the casting. Even so, the Loa resents being queried and can be very abrupt. Also, it seldom provides a straight answer to any question. Instead, its answers are cryptic and leave the caster much room for interpretation. If the Loa is called several times in short succession, there could be severe repercussions.

SPELL OF BLINDNESS

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: A doll with some personal effect of the victim attached to it, and a lengthy ritual (about an

hour long).

EFFECT: The victim is blinded until the spell is reversed or dispelled. Neat way to get back at people you don't like, or want to put out of commission for some reason (it can be a really, really weak reason, depending on who you are).

SPELL OF LOCATION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: The caster needs a special magical disk inscribed with many concentric magical symbols. While these disks are not enchanted items in their own right, they are difficult to create and most magicians purchase or steal already existing disks. The caster must tie the disk to a string and sprinkle it with a special purple powder that can easily be made with any good chemistry set. Next, the caster must spread out a map of the area being searched and light a red candle

EFFECT: This spell can be used to locate any person or object the caster knows about. When the spell is cast, a beam of purple light shoots out from the candle, passes through the disk, and strikes the map at the place where the person or item is located. Naturally, the smaller the area covered by a map, the more exact the location shown but the greater the potential for no result to occur (as the subject is not in the map area). This spell may need to be recast several times to narrow the search. Oh, and a fireproof map is recommended as the beam of purple light ignites ordinary paper within 15 or 20 seconds (this feature is not commonly known nor is it explained in many spell books). Fortunately, observant magicians should be able to note the target's location well before the map bursts into flame.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (few moments) (+1), awesome scope (map area) (+5), rare ingredients (-2), minor effect (+0).

SPELL OF SECRET PROTECTION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 1

REQUIREMENTS: Three witches, a U-shaped mystical symbol, herbs, liquids, candles, and chanting. Also, the recipient of the protection spell can't know about it or the spell is instantly broken. This spell can only be cast on the Spring Equinox.

EFFECT: The next time the target is hit by an attack that would either kill her or do half or more of her Life Points in one blow, the attack miraculously does no damage. This protection lasts until it is used, or until the target finds out that the spell has been cast on her.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), permanent duration (+3), restricted use (-4), major effect (+3).

SPIRIT BINDING

Power Level: 2

Requirements: Hawthorn berries, lungwort, and stones are placed in a binding circle. Bile is also used in some indeterminate manner. The person who the ghost has been in contact with stands in the circle while the caster reads a Latin incantation. At the conclusion of the incantation, the contactee strikes at the center of the circle, which is supposed to reveal the ghost's "center."

Effect: If the spell is successfully cast, the ghost's "center," or the trauma that has bound it to Earth, is revealed. This strips the ghost of all its power and gives its victim the ability to send it to its resting place.

SPIRIT CALLING

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Three magicians, a table draped in a red cloth, several candles. Everyone joins hands and after a short invocation, the spirit or spirits appear.

EFFECT: This spell can be used to summon anything from a single ghost to a vast accumulation of poltergeist energy. It can also be used to communicate with a spirit that is willing and able to talk. Although the spell need not be cast on the haunted site, at least one of the magicians must have been to that site. Once the spell is cast, the spirit shows up, and while it is present, it does not notice events occurring in the area it normally haunts. The problem is that the spell does not compel the spirit to remain. Once it shows up, it is up to the caster and the other people present to keep it engaged. If the caster has something to offer the spirit, she might be able to keep it around. She might even be able to deal with the problem that is causing it to hang around the world of the living. If the caster doesn't have anything that the spirit wants or if the spirit is merely an accumulation of

energy and not an actual ghost, it generally sticks around for only five or ten minutes. Also, if someone at the site of the haunting does something that directly threatens the spirit, it notices the attempt and instantly pops back to the place it haunts, unless the caster offers it something very desirable. The spell can only cause a spirit to appear visibly and to become audible, it cannot force a spirit to take solid form—this is not a means to physically attack an otherwise immaterial spirit.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), recitation (couple minutes) (+1), severe scope (up to ten spirits) (+2), instant duration (+0), severe effect (+2).

STEAL STRENGTH

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 6

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must touch two people (one of which may be herself) and incant for five minutes.

EFFECT: The caster can temporarily steal someone's strength and either take it for herself, or give it to someone else. Successfully casting this spell reduces the target's Strength and increases the recipient's Strength by one point per Success Level. The duration of this transfer is one hour per Success Level; Strength levels are restored in full once the spell dissipates. The spell can only be used to transfer Strength from a stronger person. It can't take strength from an average person and give it to the Hunter. Also, it can't reduce a target below a Strength 1.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (five minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), severe scope (two beings) (+2), long duration (+1), severe effect (+2).

SUMMON DRACONIAN KATRA

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Powdered phoenix egg, a shed snakeskin, and two Witch casters.

EFFECT: This spell is used to summon a draconian katra from the distant demon dimension in which they are found. Katra appear as glowing gemstones of various colors. All of these stones are small, flat, and fit easily within a human (or demonic) hand. A draconian katra is a one-shot mystical item that can switch the caster's mind with that of someone else. The caster need only arrange to hold the katra and touch it to the target's hand and whisper a short incantation. In an instant, the caster's finds herself inhabiting the target's body and vice versa. Both parties retain all of their skills and mental Attributes, as well as any mental or magical traits like Emotional Problems or Psychic Visions. Their physical Attributes and traits like Jock, Werewolf, Hunter, or even Vampire remain with their bodies. The transformation may only be reversed by summoning another katra. The caster can only use this spell to switch targets who have some connection to humanity—hell gods, demons, or other completely inhuman creatures are immune.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Dual casters (-1), casters must have Sorcery (-1), ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one item) (+1), creates magical item (+1), permanent duration (+3), rare ingredients (-2), major effect (+3).

SUMMON HELL HOUNDS

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: Draw the hellhound-summoning symbol in blood and have at least one fairly fresh brain ready for it. Omitting this last detail causes the hellhound to attempt to eat the summoner's brain. This ritual can only be performed at night.

EFFECT: This ritual summons a single hellhound (see Monster Smackdown, p. 43) but it may be repeated as needed. Once summoned, the hellhound spends five or ten minutes devouring the brain and ignoring everything else. During that time, the summoner can either cast some control spell on the creature or he can simply place the brain in a large cage and close the door before the hellhound finishes. Hellhounds are easy to train as long as they are well fed.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), severe effect (+2).

SUMMON JANUS*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: A sharp blade, a statue of Janus (male on one side and female on the other), and any number of masks and costumes dedicated to Janus are needed (dedicating a mask or costume requires a

simple ritual that takes less than five minutes). The day before Halloween, the caster must make a small cut in the palm of her hand and ask Janus' blessing. On Halloween (and Halloween only), she must chant an invocation to Janus.

EFFECT: This spell makes masks real. Anyone wearing a dedicated mask or costume transforms both mentally and physically into the person or creature represented by the costume. The person can be transformed into a ghost, demon, soldier, or even animal—toy guns become real and glowing plastic magic swords become infused with supernatural power. Because people become the characters their costumes represent, they forget who they are until the spell ends. The spell ends at sunrise, when the statue of Janus is destroyed, or when the caster asks Janus to depart.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Very lengthy ritual (couple minutes over course of two days) (-2), awesome scope (entire town) (+5), very long duration (+2), restricted use ingredients (-4), major effect (+3).

SUMMON MARK OF EYGHON

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 2

REQUIREMENTS: The target must be tattooed with the Mark of Eyghon and must be asleep, unconscious, or in a drugged stupor. The caster performs a complex invocation while assisted by at least two other magicians. Eyghon arrives by possessing the target (see *Monster Smackdown*, p. 95).

EFFECT: Eyghon's possession causes a euphoric feeling in the target. This possession normally lasts for only Success Level hours. If the spellcasting roll result is over nine but fails to gain the proper Success Levels, the possession is permanent. In that case, the only way to depose the target in that case is to entice Eyghon into another dead or sleeping target, or to slowly kill the target and hope that Eyghon departs before she is dead.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), ritual (half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), major effect (+3).

SUMMON SERPENTS

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 5

REQUIREMENTS: A short incantation and a gesture to indicate where the serpents should appear. Those without Sorcery must also perform a ten-minute ritual.

EFFECT: The caster summons a number of highly poisonous snakes to the indicated location. These serpents are typically enraged by the summoning spell and attack anyone who is nearby, except the caster. The caster's friends and foes within reach are all fair game. The number of snakes and the Strength of their debilitating venom (see p. 63) equal the Success Levels. If bitten, the victim must roll against poison every minute for ten minutes. This spell is only a temporary summoning and with another gesture and a short incantation, the caster can end the spell and instantly return the serpents to their home dimension. Although the serpents depart, any damage they cause remains, allowing them to be used as a highly discreet and untraceable form of attack. If the caster does not bid the serpents to depart, they vanish in one hour.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (ten minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (several snakes) (+1), long duration (+1), severe effect (+2).

SUMMONING THE MATERIAL

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 8

REQUIREMENTS: Witches need only say "Revealed." Other magicians must sit and meditate for nearly twenty minutes.

EFFECT: This powerful spell can summon any small item the caster can imagine (except enchanted or superscience objects). The item summoned must be something that can easily be held in one hand, like a piece of paper, a baseball, or a banana. The summoned item must also already exist—it is not created by the spell.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (twenty minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one item) (+1), awesome scope (the globe) (+6), instant duration (+0), noticeable effect (+1).

TELEPORTATION

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: A powder made from silver, mandrake root, and vervaine must be thrown over the target by two magicians simultaneously. Unless the caster is a Witch or Warlock, this spell also requires a five-minute ritual involving extensive chanting.

EFFECT: The target is instantly teleported up to 100 miles away from the caster. If the caster scores one Success Level more than is necessary to cast the spell, she can determine roughly where the target ends up. However, such statements must be fairly vague, like 100 miles straight up, 100 miles south, somewhere in downtown San Diego (assuming downtown SD is approximately 100 miles away). If the caster rolls two or more Success Levels above what is necessary and has a map handy, she can determine more precisely where the target arrives. The spell isn't exact, but if cast in this fashion, she can send someone to the top floor of a skyscraper 20 miles away, or onto the deck of an oil tanker 90 miles offshore. If desired, the caster can teleport either herself or the magician she is working with instead of another target. While the target can be made to appear in midair, she will not appear inside a solid object, underwater, or in any other position that results in instant death. On the other hand, while appearing several miles above the ground might not kill the target, the long fall likely will.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Dual casters (-1), ritual (five minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), awesome scope (100 miles) (+5), unusual ingredients (-1), major effect (+3).

THESPIA'S DEMON DETECTION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Four crystals and some string to define a square representing the area to be searched, two casters, some sand blown into the square.

EFFECT: The sand will turn different colors, indicating different species of demons in the area. The spell can locate all demons in an area as large as a small town or several city blocks. Unfortunately, the spell has a very short duration, so the caster knows where the demons are at the moment the spell is cast, not where they will be later on.

TIME LOOP*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Three magicians must sit in a triangle of red chalk. The primary caster burns a piece of paper bearing the goal of the spell inscribed in Latin, then recites *opus orbit est, et ea in medio, tempus ad calcem intendit* (the work is a circle, and she is in the middle, the time stretches out).

EFFECT: This spell places one target within sight in a time loop, repeating a short segment of time over and over again until some predetermined condition is met. This condition must be possible for the target to fulfill — selling someone a shirt or throwing a ball through a hoop are both reasonable conditions; successfully putting together a puzzle with half the pieces missing is not. Whenever the target fails to complete the task or even when she gives up, the time loop resets and she is once again back at the beginning. The casters and the target remember the events that occurred before this reset, but no one else does.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Multiple casters (-2), recitation (few minutes) (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), long duration (+1), major effect (+3).

TIRER LA COUTURE (PULL THE CURTAIN BACK)*

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 3

REQUIREMENTS: The caster must draw a circle in blessed sand around herself and light some incense.

EFFECT: This spell allows the caster to see all magic around her. Even the most powerful illusions appear false and transparent, and the reality underneath them is apparent. Curses and boons on people or places appear as swirls of malevolent or benevolent light and take on an appearance similar to their effect. A spell that is being used to spy on a location might appear as a large floating eye, while a curse would be seen as a horribly twisted parasite feeding on its victim. This spell continues as long as the caster maintains her concentration, providing she succeeds at a Willpower (not doubled) roll once per minute. This spell demands serious concentration and the caster can't enter combat, engage in intense conversation, safely drive a car, or perform any other focused activity.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (a couple minutes) (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), noticeable effect (+1).

TRANSFORM REALITY

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: The caster decides on the particular transformation she wishes to occur and conducts a

ten minute ritual.

EFFECT: This is a generic illusion spell. It can be used to do anything from changing clothes to reforming someone as a large animate strawberry. At the caster's whim, those in the area may notice the odd events or simply believe that it's perfectly natural for a guy to be dancing in a cage while wearing a loincloth. The effects are really nothing more than powerful illusions that fade in Success Level hours. Also, the changes do not affect either the target's Attributes or abilities. To end this spell, the caster need only successfully perform a Power Level 1 spell and say "Return." Anyone else attempting to reverse this spell needs to roll a number of Success Levels above those achieved by the caster. The caster can decide if those affected remember any of the changes. Anyone who remembers suddenly being, or even seeing, a large animate strawberry will almost certainly assume that someone slipped her a powerful hallucinogen.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (ten minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), severe scope (area of a large building) (+2), long duration (+1), major effect (+3).

TYR'S WARDING HAND

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: A raised hand and a short invocation to Tyr for Witches. Add a five-minute ritual for others.

EFFECT: The caster holds up her hand in front of her to ward off damage. Bullets and magical effects automatically miss the caster and anyone standing behind her. Fists, swords, and other implements of destruction bounce off empty air. The spell only keeps working as long as the caster keeps her arm up. Worse, the spell only protects the front of the caster. If she is trapped between a vampire and a mucus demon, either fangs or slime are getting through.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (five minutes) (+0), can be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), difficult use (arm forward; only front protection) (-1), major effect (+3).

VAMPIRIC REVIVIFICATION

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 7

REQUIREMENTS: The remains of a vampire with the Revivability Quality, a bit of ritual, and the blood sacrifice of those near her when she died.

EFFECT: The relatively intact remains of a slain vampire are laid out and soaked in the blood of those who were near the vampire when she died. This can be done by hanging the victims upside down over the bones and slitting their throats (yuk!). When the ritual is finished, the blood of those witnesses to the vampire's death allows her to form a new body and rise up again.

VAMPIRE WITHOUT A HEART

Power Level: 3

Requirements: The caster "simply" removes a vampire's heart while filling its body with mystical potions through an IV.

Effect: Successful completion results in the vampire's existence being sustained without a heart. He becomes completely invulnerable, immune to stakes, sunlight, holy water and crosses—even decapitation. The spell ends after six hours, however, and the vampire promptly turns to dust. This appears beneficial only for vampires with a last ditch suicide mission to perform.

VOICE FROM THE BLACK PORTAL

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 1

REQUIREMENTS: A relatively intact murder victim that has been dead no more than one month. The corpse must be placed inside a large pentacle with a black candle at each point. This spell can only be cast during the three days of the new moon.

EFFECT: This spell allows the caster to speak to the spirit of a recently deceased person. The corpse's spirit cannot volunteer information and need not provide accurate answers. However, most spirits are quite eager to aid someone in avenging their murder—asking questions about the spirit's death generally provides a wealth of information. Of course, this doesn't help much if the spirit did not see its attacker. Also, a magician who does nothing to help quiet the ghost may find themselves haunted (represented by levels of Bad Luck or other not-so-pleasant stuff). The spell lasts one minute per Success Level.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (several minutes) (+0), noticeable scope (one being) (+1), medium duration

(+0), somewhat restricted use (once a month) (-2), severe effect (+2).

WEAKEN

QUICK CAST: Yes

POWER LEVEL: 4

REQUIREMENTS: Witches need only shout “Fragile.” Other magicians must meditate for a few minutes.

EFFECT: A ball of light shoots from the caster’s hand and strikes a nearby object no larger than a baseball bat or a rifle. The object is severely weakened—next time it is used it harmlessly falls to pieces. This spell is typically used to destroy weapons and works exceedingly well on guns, clubs, and swords. It does not work on enchanted or superscience items.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Recitation (a few minutes) (+1), may be Quick Cast (+1), noticeable scope (one object) (+1), noticeable effect (+1).

WITCHFINDING

QUICK CAST: No

POWER LEVEL: 1

REQUIREMENTS: Some of the witch’s hair, a little quicksilver, aqua fortis (nitric acid), some eye of newt. Heat the ingredients together and apply to witch’s skin.

EFFECT: The spell produces a liquid. If spilled on a Witch who has cast a spell in the previous 48 hours, the liquid turns her skin blue—it looks like a bright turquoise pen exploded on the Witch. This spell only affects Witches and Warlocks. Once made, anyone can apply the liquid to the suspected Witch. However, the liquid only remains good for seven hours after it is made.

ASPECT ANALYSIS: Ritual (less than half an hour) (+0), noticeable scope (one target) (+1), only affects those with Sorcery (-1), creates magical item (+1), long duration (+1), unusual ingredients (-1), minor effect (+0).

Superscience & Enchantment Chapter

It ain’t the only game in town

Magic, that is. There are a number of supernatural powers that Cast Members, Supporting Cast, and Adversaries may know. None of them are actual magic and most actual magicians don’t know them. Psychics and others who possess these powers can be powerful allies and dangerous foes in their own right though. Better yet, you could have Cast Members who read minds or are invisible or who invisibly read minds. Just the sort of twist that your Series needs, right?

The majority of the psychic stuff is covered in Chapter Two: The Magical You. We just give you some quick suggestions and rules here. Most of the chapter is devoted to enchanted and superscience items.

This chapter is written for you Director types, but there’s no reason some or all of it can’t be shared with players who aren’t psychic or superscience types, but play them on TV. Strictly on a need-to-know basis, of course.

Enchanting/Superscience

A number of demons and a few gifted humans have a knack for creating both permanent and temporary items of great power. Although a few spells result in minor magical creations like potions of witch detection and talismans of protection, such items are limited in both power and duration. Only skilled Enchanters or Superscientists can create powerful permanent items like the infamous Glove of Myhnegon.

Enchantment

Just like spells, all mystical items have a Power Level. These items also require certain ingredients—the more powerful the item, the more exotic the ingredients needed to create it. While the hand of a murderer, vampire dust, or wolfsbane might suffice for low-powered objects, the big whammies require a small amount of 2,000 year old wine, the horn of a demon, the egg of a dragon, or the like. Also, Enchanters can only create items with Power Levels equal to or less than their Enchanter Quality level. For example, a third-level Enchanter could freely create items of Power Level 2 or 3, but no higher.

Superscience

A few practitioners create devices that seem to be advanced technology, but are really just unusual

enchanted devices. Like other magic items, their operation defies accepted scientific principles and they cannot be duplicated by anyone other than another Superscientist. Putting together the same parts in the same manner produces a nifty looking, but totally useless, object.

Superscience inventors have managed feats ranging from animating the dead and building sentient robots to creating invisibility belts and freeze rays. Like magical enchanting, superscience creations also require rare ingredients, but these are often more scientific, like huge diamonds, skin from the Loch Ness monster or other cryptozoological creatures, pieces of rare meteorites, or even solidified magnetism. Superscientists discuss their creations in scientific or pseudo-scientific terms—they don't talk about the laws of magic or mystical energies, they pontificate on energy fields, capacitors, circuits, quantum instability, and photonic resonance. Like ordinary Enchanters, Superscientists can only create items whose Power Level is no greater than the number of Superscience Quality levels they possess.

Superscientists may be employed by a few top-secret government agencies. If so, we're guessing that everyone involved, including the Superscientists, have no idea of the mystical roots of the devices they make. They just view the items as incredibly complex, buildable only by highly skilled and exceedingly brilliant technicians.

Location

Par for the course with the supernatural, Enchanters and Superscientists work best in locations of great magical power, like hellmouths. Naturally, such characters are drawn to these areas. That means anyone living there is far more likely to run into items of unnatural power than people living elsewhere. If forced to create an mystical item away from such a location, the magician suffers a two level decrease in her Enchanter or Superscientist Quality. If this reduces her level below two, she cannot create any sort of mystical object.

Assemblages

Enchanting items is a long and complex process that takes a minimum of several weeks. In a pinch though, an Enchanter can use relatively common items to create effects identical to those produced by ordinary ritual magic. With access to a spell book, crystals, incense, some herbs, and perhaps one or two newt eyes, Enchanters can concoct an assemblage—an item that may be used to duplicate the effects of any sort of magic spell once. The magic effect is “cast” as normal—the Enchanter must gain Success Levels in a Willpower and Occultism roll greater than the spell's Power Level. Each Enchanter Quality level grants the character a +1 bonus to all Occultism rolls when making assemblages.

Unlike Witches and Warlocks, or even magicians without Sorcery, no spell effect may be created quickly. The minimum time necessary for an Enchanter to make an assemblage is twenty minutes plus the regular casting time. Assemblages are “cast” when they are completed; if the spell creates a stored effect with a timed or trigger aspect, it is strictly a one-shot deal.

Also, without a well-supplied ritual space, even the most skilled Enchanter is helpless. To people who don't know much about magic, assemblage creation looks like any other type of magician casting a spell.

Superscientists can also rapidly cobble together assemblages by using circuits and other technological paraphernalia. These devices work just like enchanted assemblages and use the same rules. The only difference is that Superscientists use Intelligence and Science, with a bonus for each level of the Superscientist Quality. While each assemblage can only be used once, a skilled Superscientist can easily whip up a device that can zap an intruder or hide her from her enemies for a short while. Superscientists need a lab and a good supply of equipment to create any of these assemblages—without a lab a Superscientist is pretty darn helpless.

Creating Enchanted or Superscience Items

While assemblages can be created on the fly and generally only require a well stocked magic shop or lab, producing an enduring enchanted or superscience item is a far more difficult and time consuming venture. Still, when done properly, the results are extremely impressive.

The Process

Before starting on any enchanted or superscience item, you and the player must first work out the Power Level of the proposed item. The list on the next page provides some guidance on Power Level (the Spell Creation lists may be consulted as well). Essentially, an enchanted or superscience item is one Power Level higher than a comparable spell effect given its on-going “triggerable” aspect. If the item's Power Level is greater than the character's Enchanter or Superscientist level, negative modifiers must be added (see p. 94) or its creation is impossible for that crafter.

The next step, as usual with magic, is research. An Enchanter reviews numerous dusty compendia for theories or examples of the item she wants to create. She must succeed at an Intelligence and Occultism roll. Of course, the more potent the device, the more wide-ranging the research. The Enchanter needs a number of Success Levels equal to the Power Level of the proposed creation. Superscience is a bit different in that it doesn't require mystical tomes. Instead, the Superscientist reviews old science textbooks and Internet articles. Also, the research roll tests Intelligence and Science; again, it requires a number of Success Levels equal to the Power Level of the device desired. In either case, don't be afraid to require a few more Success Levels if the object is particularly unusual or odd. As usual with research, how long it takes is basically your call.

An Enchanter or Superscientist must then work on the item for two weeks per Power Level. Creating a level two item requires one month of work, while a level six device takes three months.

In addition, the maker must acquire a special ingredient with a Power Level equal to or greater than that of the device. Adding additional special ingredients can reduce the time necessary to create the item.

Finally, the character must spend a number of experience points equal to twice the Power Level of the item being created. Essentially, the deviser is putting a bit of herself into the item. Found or stolen mystical items need not be purchased with experience points because you (not the player) get to decide the exact features of the object.

After the time and experience are spent, and the special ingredients used, the character makes a Willpower and Occultism and Enchanter (or Intelligence and Science and Superscientist) roll. If the Success Levels in the creation roll are equal to or above the item's Power Level, everything works out okay. If the roll is over nine, but insufficient Success Levels are obtained, it's side-effect city. If the roll is under nine, the big nothing happens (but the time, experience, and ingredients are still used up).

Side effects from less than totally successful item creation attempts are quirky things. The crafter knows something went wrong (hard to avoid that unless you perform the creation roll in secret), but not exactly what. For all intents and purposes, the item appears to be come out just as planned. Still, the Mystical Item Creation Side Effect Table must be consulted each time the item is used to determine the exact effect produced. Roll D10 and add the item's Power Level. It shouldn't take long for the creator to realize that using the newly devised item brings a certain uncertainty to life.

Power Level

The paragraphs here give some suggestions for how to assign Power Levels to mystical items.

LEVEL 1: None—Cast Members with only one level in Enchanter or Superscientist can only create assemblages to duplicate spells effects.

LEVEL 2: Improved versions of a standard item, like a blessed sword that does extra damage to demons or a pistol that has a rifle's range and damage. Items that do a number of points of damage equal to Willpower per Success Level of the creation roll, or do additional points of damage equal to Strength per Success Level (for swords, guns, or other implements that already do damage); that make minor to moderate changes in someone's appearance (change a Cast Member's face to make them look completely unrecognizable); that affect a target's emotions (make someone angry or sad).

LEVEL 3: Items that raise a mindless zombie; that are robotic and closely mimic intelligence (but aren't really a full person); that do twice Willpower per Success Level in damage, or add twice Strength per Success Level points of additional damage; that add or subtract one point to any single Attribute; that sense specific magical energies, including items that can detect residues of magic, dimensional weak points, the magical energy given off by the casting of powerful rituals (Power Level 5 or higher), or the supernatural energies found in enchanted items.

LEVEL 4: Items that significantly affect someone's behavior in a directed fashion (cause the target to love or feel loyalty toward someone); that do three times Willpower per Success Level damage, or add three times Strength per Success Level points of additional damage; that make someone look exactly like a specific other person; that add or subtract two to any single Attribute, or one to two Attributes; that activate latent sites of power, including opening a dimensional or teleportational gate at a single specific dimensional weak point.

LEVEL 5: Items that reanimate a person as a zombie that retains the original person's memories and personality; that cause someone to fall deeply in love, become completely obsessed with someone, or deeply hate someone; that are robotic and as intelligent as a person; that turn someone or something invisible; that do four times Willpower per Success Level damage, or add four times Strength per Success Level points of additional damage; that make someone look, act, and sound exactly like a specific other person.

LEVEL 6: This is the minimum Power Level for items that can strengthen or weaken hellgods or other vastly powerful beings. Items that that cause five times Willpower per Success Level damage, or add five times Strength per Success Level points of additional damage; that add or subtract four to any single Attribute or two to two Attributes; that create powerful and obvious physical effects like opening dimensional gates to anywhere

or splitting someone into two people.

LEVEL 7: The ultimate—powerful items that can affect hundreds (or more) people at once, or could potentially end the world. Regardless of how many levels of Enchanter or Superscientist they possess, Cast Members cannot create Level Seven items. Also, these items cannot be reduced in power through Power Level modifiers.

Mystical Item Creation Side Effect Table	
Roll Total	Result
4 or less	Phew! Lucked out—the item works as planned.
5-7	The effect is delayed. It appears the item failed, but it takes effect normally at a time of your choosing (ideally, a dramatically appropriate time).
8-10	The item appears to work as planned but no immediate effect is apparent. That's because the effect appears somewhere else, like at the character's homeroom period, the girl's locker room, or the downtown coffee shop. The item need not be anywhere nearby for the dislocated effect to take place.
11-13	The item effect is something other than what was planned (you decide). The effect is roughly the same power level (consult the Power Level list suggestions).
14-15	The item glows, sparks, or fizzles but no other effect is apparent. The effect is actually different and more powerful than the one the crafter planned. This increase in power causes a delay in the effect though. It appears a short while later at some location near where the item was used. The caster may not know until much later that anything happened at all.
16+	The item glows, sparks or fizzles but no other effect is apparent. In truth, it has sent a special invitation (in the form of an embossed letter, magical beeper pulse, or just high-pitched, hard-to-ignore whining) to some major league nasty (in our or some other dimension) to come visit. The creature knows the exact location of the item and will come calling at a time of your choosing (time does flow differently in different dimension, y'know). How the monster reacts to the item and the user is up to your plot needs and devious imagination.

Special Ingredients

As stated, all enchanted and superscience items must use some form of special materials in their construction. The number or type of special materials depends upon the Power Level of the item. The list below provides some examples of various ingredients and their Power Levels.

LEVEL 2:

ENCHANTED ITEMS—a piece of a common demon or supernatural creature: a pinch of vampire dust or a vampire fang, a fragment of zombie bone, a strip of werewolf hide. **SUPERSCIENCE ITEMS**—a circuit board that has been struck by powerful destructive magic, a piece from an unusual meteorite, a small amount of a rare or valuable chemical.

LEVEL 3:

ENCHANTED ITEMS—a piece of a rare and extremely dangerous demon, a pinch of dust from a vampire that was over 500 years old, mud from the footsteps of a hellgod.

SUPERSCIENCE ITEMS—a sample of metal that has been into space, a medium-sized flawless gemstone, a sample of a rare manmade chemical that cannot be bought on the open market.

LEVEL 4:

ENCHANTED ITEMS—blood from a thousand year-old vampire, a type of crystal found only in the skull of a dangerous demon.

SUPERSCIENCE ITEMS—a perfect quartz crystal that has been taken to another dimension and returned, a piece of moon rock.

LEVEL 5:

ENCHANTED ITEMS—the tooth of True Demon, fresh blood from a human sacrifice to a specific demon, a sacred artifact that has been venerated for centuries.

SUPERSCIENCE ITEMS—a huge, unique, perfect gemstone, the fresh brain (blech!) of a certified genius, top secret electronic components whose existence is known by only a select few.

LEVEL 6:

ENCHANTED ITEMS—the blood or hair of a hellgod, a sacred and rare herb from a dangerous demon dimension.

SUPERSCIENCE ITEMS—a rare and valuable gemstone only found in another dimension, a sample of a unique alloy recently created (purely by accident) in a secret government lab.

Power Level Modifiers

Every item created by an Enchanter or a Superscientist is unique and special. To help reflect this fact, characters can tailor items for specific uses, increase their utility, or limit them so that creation is easier. The following modifications can increase or decrease the Power Level of an item.

SIZE: Standard items are assumed to be about the size of a briefcase or a rifle, or some other item that can be easily carried, but which cannot be hidden in a pocket or purse. Items that range in size from heavy steamer trunks to those that can only be moved with a fork lift subtract one from their Power Level. Items that range in size from a paperback book to a ring, or any other items that can be easily concealed in a coat pocket add one to their Power Level.

RANGE: Ordinary enchanted or superscience items only affect the person who wears or carries it. An item with a range of no more than ten yards or less adds one Power Level. An item that has a range of between ten yards and one mile adds two to its Power Level. Any item that has a range of more than one mile is automatically Power Level 7.

AREA OF EFFECT: Ordinary enchanted or superscience items can affect, create, or control a single target at once. Any item that can affect between two and ten targets at once adds one to its Power Level. Any item that affects, creates, or controls between up to 100 targets at once adds two to its Power Level. Those affecting more than 100 targets at once are automatically Power Level 7.

USES: Enchanted and superscience items can be used as often as desired. Limits on how frequently the item can be used (once an hour, once a day, etc.) only reduce the time necessary to create it. On the other hand, items that can only be used a limited number of times cost less. Having an item that can be used less than ten times reduces the Power Level by one. If the item can only be used once, it is an assemblage (or a spell) and not an enchanted or superscience item. As with the other modifiers, this modifier cannot be used to reduce Power Level 7 items.

DURATION: Damage effects are instantaneous and last until healed regardless of the level of the item. Otherwise, item effects generally last for one minute per Success Level in the creation roll. Those that last one hour per Success Level increase the Power Level by one; one day per Success Level raises it by two. Items that have longer or permanent durations are automatically Power Level 7.

Item Creation Times

Enchanted and superscience items take a long time to make (two weeks per Power Level). Still, shortcuts can be taken that significantly reduce this time. Naturally, there's a price—more or more powerful special ingredients, or limited frequency of use.

Using twice the required number of special ingredients, or using special ingredients one or more Power Levels above the item's Power Level (e.g. using a Power Level 3 or 4 special ingredient to create a Power Level 2 item) halves creation time (round up to the nearest day). So too does limiting the frequency of item use to once an hour. So, a Power Level 4 item normally takes eight weeks to create. Making it work only once an hour decreases that to four weeks. These factors stack—using higher Power Level ingredients and reducing the frequency of use quarters the creation time.

Limiting the frequency of item use to once a day divides creation time by five (round up to the nearest day). A once-a-day Power Level 4 object would only take twelve days to make. This factor does not stack with other time modifiers.

Modifying Items

If you don't have to build it from scratch, it's easier and less time-consuming to create enchanted or superscience items. This includes making minor or moderate modifications to an existing item, such as transforming a flaming sword into one that instead crackles with blue lightning, or transforming a brooch that makes observers hate the wearer into one that causes observers to love the wearer. In such cases, the character must make a creation roll, treating the item as one Power Level lower than usual. Also, the time spent is only half normal. Changing the entire purpose of an item (such as transforming an invisibility ray into a mind control ray) is not possible.

Controlling Items

A true mystical item can be used frequently with no more effort than dialing a cell phone or firing a crossbow. Consider carefully the wisdom of having such enchanted or superscience items around in your Series. The more powerful the item, the greater the potential problems are.

We don't recommend that you allow Cast Members to regularly create items greater than Power Level 4. Higher-level items can be created by Supporting Cast or Adversaries, and may occasionally be used by Cast Members. A character may even work up a single Power Level 5 or 6 item as part of the climax of a long-term conflict. Still, in general, items above Level 4 should be limited to dangerous creations that must be kept out of the hands of demons or evil magicians. Such an item should end up vanishing or being destroyed before the Episode is over (after the Cast Members have used it to save the day in several impressive scenes of course). Always remember, the creation of enchanted or superscience items should be a rare and impressive event that happens relatively infrequently. Having an abundance of such items around takes away from the wonder and mystery of such creations.

Special ingredients are your primary tools for keeping the creation of enchanted and superscience items under control. It is up to you to determine exactly what special item or items are needed. Keep two things in mind when devising ingredients for new enchanted or superscience items.

First, the special ingredient must in some way relate to the purpose of the device being created. A piece of bone or clothing from a pure and good warrior who died battling evil would be perfect for creating a blessed sword, but would make little sense for an item that could render someone invisible. Also, while there is some overlap between the enchanted and superscience ingredients, in general enchanted items require things like creature parts, special herbs, or perhaps the assistance of a demon or other being that possesses powerful, innate magic. Superscience items require ingredients like large high quality gems, special materials that can only be made in minute quantities in a few highly advanced labs, or exceedingly rare experimental chemicals or circuits that are only available to specialized groups.

Second, you must decide if you want the Enchanter or Superscientist to actually be able to create the item in question. This is a difficult and important question. Think about what the item would do to the types of plots you tend to run. If an item simply makes one Cast Member a lot stronger, tougher, or more powerful, all you need to do is to beef up the opposition somewhat. An enchanted radio that allowed the user to speak to recently dead corpses is an interesting item that could further many plots. However, it would also make murder mystery scenarios fairly unchallenging. A magical staff that allowed the user to banish all demons with a touch is a bit over the top, and would likely make any Series considerably less interesting for everyone involved.

Sometimes a comparable but not-so-powerful item can be substituted. An item that allows one or more Cast Members to become invisible at will undermines scenarios involving sneaking around and spying. If you frequently have situations where you must keep the Cast Members away from certain heavily guarded locations, an invisibility item could be a disaster. One solution would be to suggest an enchanted makeup kit instead— this would allow the user to disguise herself as someone else. The potential for mistaken identity or slip-ups (because the disguised character doesn't know everything about the person she is imitating) could add a great deal to your game. In any case, the key is to think about the type of Episodes you plan to run and decide what affect the item would have upon them.

Even if one of the Cast Members wants to create a powerful item that you think is acceptable, you should still make the character earn the item. One of the best ways to do this is to turn obtaining the needed special ingredient or ingredients into an adventure in itself. Then spend an Episode or two working through the challenges inherent in securing the ingredient. The enchanted or superscience item will then seem "earned." 'Course securing those ingredients could also upset some folks (maybe some folks not of this dimension) and that could prove ... unhealthy later on.

Saying No Without Saying Sorry

If one of your players proposes an item that you think would unbalance or otherwise ruin your game, you have a more difficult issue. Players hate to hear the word "no." Still, that does not mean you should let one of your players create dozens of items that can smite hellgods. We have several suggestions.

- Tell the player that research reveals that the item is too powerful (Power Level 7). Lead her (through research rolls or other in-game clues) to a more limited version that will not do such damage to your game.
- Tell the player that the item requires an ingredient that they simply have no way of obtaining, such as the tooth of a hellgod that lives in a dimension they have never heard of and have no way of reaching. Then inform the player (after some research by her character) that a more easily available ingredient can be found for a less powerful (and less game-disrupting) version of this device.
- Tell the player that the device in question is so powerful that her Cast Member can only make one that

will work a limited number of times. There is a big difference between allowing a Cast member to have an item that they can use at will, and letting them have an item that they can only use once or twice. The first can be a constant source of trouble, which you may eventually need to have a demon steal or destroy. The second equips the Cast Member with a powerful effect that they can only perform if there is no other solution. If the Superscientist can only blast three monsters into oblivion, she is going to make certain each use is a truly meaningful one. In that case, you can likely predict exactly when this item will be used and tailor each of these encounters so that they are fun and exciting.

- Use the plotline to remove the item from the character's possession. Any truly powerful item will soon become the envy of others (such as the Gem of Amara). They should start arriving in droves to take it away.

The BtVS Corebook indicates that Science Skill 5+ folks can create weird and wacky devices (see p. 42). There's a couple options here. You could keep that rule but only allow assemblages to be created by those without at least one level of the Superscientist Quality. You could get hard core and just say that if you don't have Superscientist, you can't go beyond normal high-tech devices. Or you could make both Superscientist and Science Skill 5+ pre-reqs for mystical devices. We'd go with the last option, but we're harsh that way.

Enchanted and Superscience Items

BLESSED SWORD

POWER LEVEL: 2

APPEARANCE: Blessed swords are almost all well-made ancient blades that mystically repel rust and corrosion.

REQUIREMENTS: A blessed sword only provides bonuses to someone who is pure of heart and is either fighting evil or protecting innocents.

EFFECT: Blessed swords do Strength times (5 + Success Levels) Slash/stab damage to all soulless beings and to humans who are truly evil. They also add a +1 bonus to the user's Getting Medieval Skill. Blessed blades are fairly rare, not because they are difficult to create, but because they can only be made by enchanters who are pure of heart and filled with a devotion to the cause of smiting evil. Using a blessed blade against an innocent in the service of evil causes it to break and lose all of its magic.

GLOVE OF MYHNEGON

POWER LEVEL: 6

APPEARANCE: This potent item is an ancient-looking glove made of leather, chain mail, and plate mail. The glove is covered in small spikes and there are ten very sharp, hinged claws arranged around the opening for the arm.

REQUIREMENTS: The user must place her arm in the glove. Claws around the base of the glove pierce the flesh and bond the glove to the wearer. To use the glove, the wearer need only aim her arm at the target and shout "Tauo Freim" (be free).

EFFECT: The glove is a most potent offensive enchanted item. The wearer gains a +1 bonus to both Strength and Constitution (with an increase in Life Points). But the lightning bolts are the real kicker. Firing requires a Dexterity and Getting Medieval roll or Combat Score, and the range is 100 yards. A successful hit inflicts five times Willpower points of Fire damage per Success Level. Once put on, the glove cannot be removed while the wearer is still alive.

GEM OF AMARA

POWER LEVEL: 7

APPEARANCE: A large green stone set in a copper ring.

REQUIREMENTS: Functions if worn by a vampire.

EFFECT: This ring is the most prized and coveted item known to vampires. It grants them immunity to all harm—sunlight, fire, and crosses are ineffective; all wounds heal at a rate of ten Life Points per Turn. Taking the ring off the vamp's finger or hacking off her arm are good attack strategies. A directed attack on the arm imposes a -3 penalty. If the attack causes a third of the vampire's Life Points or more, the arm is severed. If the vampire can grab the ring and put it on its other hand, or retrieve its severed hand and stick it back on its wrist, the ring protects again. Of course, once word of the ring's presence gets out, pretty much every vampire in the area will be angling to get their mitts on it.

FERULA-GEMINA

POWER LEVEL: 7

APPEARANCE: The Ferula-Gemina is a long, narrow staff of dark wood.

REQUIREMENTS: The wielder points the rod at a target within ten yards and wills it to fire.

EFFECT: The rod attack is fired using a Dexterity and Gun Fu - 4 roll or the Combat Score - 4. A hit with the Ferula-Gemina has two effects. First it does five Life Points of damage and throws the target off her feet. Five minutes later, it causes the target to split into two parts. The first version remains where the individual currently is; the other version manifests where the bolt was fired. One version has all of the individual's innate Drawbacks and none of her Qualities. The other possesses all of her innate Qualities and none of her Drawbacks. Only Qualities and Drawbacks that are an intrinsic part of the individual's body, mind, or spirit are split. Hunter, Luck, Werewolf, Vampire, Sorcery, Talentless, Reckless, or Misfit are divvied up; Occult Library, Secret, or Enemies are not. Additionally, the copy that receives the Qualities gains a temporary Good Luck 3 Quality (in addition to any Luck already possessed). The "bad" copy gains a temporary Bad Luck 3 Drawback (in addition to any other Bad Luck already held). Removing Qualities or Drawbacks can affect each version's Attributes and skills, but otherwise both versions are identical in abilities, skills, and memories. Despite their differences, the two copies remain permanently linked. If either one is killed, both die. A base Power Level 4 (noticeable scope/major effect) spell is necessary to restore anyone who has been affected by this device. Alternately, the Ferula-Gemina can be used to restore someone affected by it.

DAGON SPHERE

POWER LEVEL: 6

APPEARANCE: A faintly glowing, red-gold crystal-like orb the size of a softball.

REQUIREMENTS: This item must actually touch a demon or a hellgod to harm it.

EFFECT: When the Dagon Sphere touches any hellgod, True Demon, or other unique being of vast power, it reduces the creature's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution by three points each (with a corresponding reduction in Life Points) for the next hour. Multiple touches are not cumulative. No one knows where these spheres come from. It may be that the earthly Dagon Sphere is merely one of many, with at least one sphere in each plane of existence, each serving to balance the danger posed by hellgods and similarly power beings. If so, when a Dagon Sphere on any given plane of existence is destroyed or removed, another sphere should spontaneously come into existence within a few weeks.

ORB OF NEZZLA'KHAN

POWER LEVEL: 6

APPEARANCE: A faintly glowing, blue-green crystal-like orb the size of a softball.

REQUIREMENTS: This item must actually touch a demon or a hellgod to harm it.

EFFECT: These mystical artifacts that grant whoever carries them superhuman strength and serious toughness. The orb holder gains Strength +15, Life Points +100, and Armor Value 20. This allows the holder to flip armored vans on their side, go mano a mano with the Hunter, and beat up everyone who was ever mean to her in High School. The effects only last as long as the orbs are on a person—at least in a jacket pocket or a clip pouch. The effects also end as soon as the orbs are destroyed (and powerful though they are, these mystical artifacts are pretty easy to smash).

OMEGA PULSE TIME STOP DEVICE

POWER LEVEL: 5

APPEARANCE: This tiny device is only a few millimeters across. To work, it must receive special broadcasts from a large base station (requiring a large van or fixed location), which can be no more than 200 yards away. When operating, the emitter gives out a high-pitched whine.

REQUIREMENTS: Extremely advanced microelectronics and a base station full of rare circuits.

EFFECT: The emitter slows whomever it is placed upon. Time flows 100 times slower than for everyone else—a minute seems like less than a second and an hour seems like only a little over a minute. The only limit on this device is that the emitter must be placed on the skin or clothing of the target. If the target removes the emitter or if the emitter is destroyed, time slowing immediately stops.

MAGIC BONE

POWER LEVEL: 4

APPEARANCE: These items look like large limb bones, often of a cow, deer, or a person.

REQUIREMENTS: The means of creating magic bones are very obscure. For the most part, they must be bought or stolen, either from demons or other magicians.

EFFECT: A magic bone grants the holder +5 to all magic rolls.

FREEZE RAY

POWER LEVEL: 3

APPEARANCE: This short, high-tech rifle looks like it belongs in a science fiction movie.

REQUIREMENTS: This item requires a large amount of complex electronics and a number of unstable chemicals. The weapon must be refilled with expensive chemicals after every three uses.

EFFECT: When fired, the weapon shoots a stream of icy cold liquid at targets up to three yards away. The user must make a Dexterity and Gun Fu roll to hit the target. Every Success Level on this roll reduces the target's Dexterity Attribute by one. If the target's Dexterity is reduced to one or lower, the target is frozen solid. Frozen targets are still alive and fully recover if thawed out under medical supervision. If left to thaw normally, they suffer fifteen Life Points of damage. Frozen targets who are struck hard can shatter, causing instant death. Targets who simply lose Dexterity recover within an hour (half an hour if they are kept warm and treated as if they have frostbite). This weapon works most effectively on humans and animals. When used on vampires or other demons, two Success Levels are needed to remove one point of the target's Dexterity.

INVISIBILITY RAY

POWER LEVEL: 6

APPEARANCE: Another science fiction movie rifle.

REQUIREMENTS: A single, large flawless diamond and a bundle of complex electronics.

EFFECT: This item turns people and inanimate objects invisible (see p. 55). The range is ten yards, and objects as large as a compact car are affected. The ray also renders targets highly unstable. Inanimate objects turn to dust within eight hours and living targets suffer five Life Points of damage every hour. These harmful effects are nullified if the ray is used to turn someone visible again. An invisibility ray can also be set to greatly enhance the target's instability. In this mode, it causes thirty Life Points to a target with every shot.

CEREBRAL DAMPENER

POWER LEVEL: 5

APPEARANCE: A silver ball the size of a golf ball.

REQUIREMENTS: The musk gland of a homja-maleev demon, an incantation, and various magical chemicals. The item needs to be recharged with more mystic powder after every use.

EFFECT: This item can turn anyone into the user's utterly devoted slave. The user need only hold the device within a foot of the target and softly command it to work. It emits a brief flash of red and yellow sparkles, and anyone who is looking directly at it (and is not wearing specially tinted red sunglasses) becomes the user's slave. Unfortunately, if the user also looks at the dampener when it is activated, the target simply stands dumbly until the effect wears off. Regardless of who is affected, the effect wears off in an hour or two, and while the target does not remember what happened under its influence, the effect does wear off without warning. Like many spells and items used to control the will of another, using this enchanted device is an explicitly evil act.

FLYING BOMB

POWER LEVEL: 2

APPEARANCE: A fist-sized box that extends a pair of small but powerful wings.

REQUIREMENTS: Military grade explosives and powerful batteries. This item only works once—it is designed to find a target and explode.

EFFECT: The flying bomb can be verbally instructed to attack any target within 100 yards. It immediately flies to its target and explodes, doing 40 points of damage to everyone within three yards.

BLUE CAPTURE GOO

POWER LEVEL: 3

APPEARANCE: A tennis ball-sized lump of blue goo.

REQUIREMENTS: A variety of rare and expensive chemicals that have been infused with powerful magic.

EFFECT: The user throws this item at the target using a Dexterity and Getting Medieval - 1 roll or her Combat Score - 1. If the user hits, the goo expands over the target, preventing her from speaking or moving. The target can free herself by gaining six or more Success Levels on a Strength (doubled) roll. If the target is a Witch, she can also free herself with five or more Success Levels on a casting roll. Otherwise, the target is held immobile until the caster recalls the goo. As long as it has not been destroyed, the goo can be used repeatedly.

Cabals, Covens, and Agencies Chapter

The Basics: Why, When, What

Institutions don't just appear out of thin air. They have goals, a history (during which the goals may take some turns or be hijacked across state borders), and members who shape it. When creating an organization, figure out those basic elements before moving on to the point creation bit (see p. 128).

Why: Goals and Agenda

What's the purpose of the organization? It can be something simple and generic, like "We help the helpless " (how lame is that?) or a bit more detailed, like "To stop the incarnation of the Dark God M'aabulthezar on this Earth." In your typical Angel Series, a group's agenda involves fighting the forces of darkness in some way (if you ain't fighting the darkness, just what are you doing here?). Hunting vampires for fun and profit is a typical example; acting as the self-appointed guardians of a specific location (town, city, Indian burial grounds, fast-food restaurant) is another. Maybe the group is thrown together in self-defense, to battle a common foe. Or its main goal could be more "selfish," like protecting the interests of all club members.

The Cast should give this some thought. Obviously, the group's goal should be something all its members can agree on, or belonging to it isn't going to make much sense (unless the pay is just too good to turn down-your typical W&H employee is in it for the money or power, for example). This is particularly important for the larger organizations-the ones where the Cast Members are going to be given marching orders more often than doing the ordering themselves. If you aren't square with goals and methods of the higher-ups, following orders is going to get ugly fast.

The more structured groups have a charter or a statement of purpose, maybe even a business plan (forces of darkness looking pretty good right now, eh?). This may include a set of rules of behavior expected from members. Others play it strictly by ear and the goals may change from day to day. Angel Investigations is more like the second type. Still, just 'cuz that's how they run their show doesn't mean your group has to be that anarchic. And to add to the fun, many groups have a hidden agenda or secondary goals. Just about every large institution sets its survival and well-being as a major priority. Sometimes the original purpose is all but lost-the group becomes focused in amassing power and influence instead of fighting evil or doing whatever it was intended to do. Large organizations also have factions, each with differing goals. That side is left to the Director to organize, as it will no doubt provide a lot of plot fodder for Episodes.

When: Origins and History

If the group is brand new, that's a cakewalk: the Cast Members are creating its history from the get-go. As you play, history gets written. Not too fascinating until some time has passed, but that's history for ya. But let's face it, an ancient mystical order of monsterslaying champions seems more interesting than a vampire hunting version of the Little Rascals. A group that has been operating more than a few years probably has an official history, and most likely a much more interesting unofficial one. Assuming the group didn't get started last week, when did it first appear? Who were its founders and what was the reason they started it? You players get to decide on the official history, and your Director can then install a few closets with skeletons along the way. You don't need to outline the entire backstory to the present day, just give some basic outline of when the group started and what it's been up to, more or less. The details will come up as needed in the course of the Series.

What: Current Affairs

So what's the group up to these days? Who belongs to it and what do they do? Here we start getting to the nuts-and-bolts bit. Once you've figured out what the group does, why it does it, and how long it's been doing it, you have a good idea of what its resources and abilities should be. A brotherhood of kung-fu monks who wander the world fighting evil is going to have a different set of abilities than a scientific foundation focusing on the supernatural in the hopes of understanding its principles ... or a culinary institute specializing in demon delicacies (imagine the Health Dept. regs for that place).

Organizations are created with points, much like characters. You buy special abilities for the group and you get points for special drawbacks of the organization. The more points the Cast has to create their organization, the more powerful it is.

The amount of points available is determined by the characters' position in the organization. Are your heroes chiefs or mere spear carriers? The more control the Cast has over the organization, the less points the players get to build it. On the flip side, if your heroes are in the lower ranks of the group, you get a lot more

points to play with.

This is a crucial decision for you players to make. Do the characters belong to a large and powerful society, at the price of having little say on how things are run, or would they rather be in the driver's seat, even if the driver's seat belongs to a rather clunky domestic car with a few too many miles on the odometer? Choose wisely, grasshopper.

Generally, organizations are built with 10-30 points. At over 30 points, you have really powerful groups, something on the level of Wolfram & Hart or the CIA. Typically, the Cast doesn't get to run such groups; they're just low-level flunkies, doing their job and not asking too many questions (if they know what's good for them). Your typical anarchy-oriented small organization is built with 10 points or less, giving your heroes a few bennies without too many responsibilities.

Your Director may choose to give you a few more points to spend, or even less points than normal, just to make sure the group works properly. If the Cast needs a couple of points to get that extra level of Supernatural Clout they so richly deserve, we say your Director should show mercy and let you have it. Unless, of course, there's a very good plot reason for denial. Only your Director can make that call.

Director-Created Organizations

The rules in this chapter assume the organization is being created by players, not Directors. Still, your Director shouldn't be shy about using these guidelines to create whatever adversarial or supporting (or a little of both) group he likes. 'Course, he can pretty much decide what bennies or drawbacks an organization has and damn the costs. In that case, how powerful or what vulnerabilities a group may have are pretty much contingent on the plotline your Director plans. Still, the guidelines in this section should help significantly in giving depth and power to any organization. Furthermore, if your Director has definite ideas about the agency he wants all or most of the Cast Members to belong to, he can use the lists in this chapter to create the basic elements. He could then go further and set up the entire group by his lonesome, or he could let you players flesh out some of the details in a gang brainstorm. Wouldn't that be accommodating of him? Yah, don't count on it.

Oh the Power!

Organizational capacities are specifically designed to be inverse in proportion to the amount of control characters have over them. This is an attempt to balance out the benefits and obligations of larger groups, and to provide plenty of adventuring opportunities to characters.

A game could be structured to allow the Cast Members control over very powerful entities but that would radically change the nature of the playing experience. Group members at the highest levels do not regularly risk themselves traveling about in the night dueling with demons. Even if they had the time to spare from general organization, administration, and oversight, they are just too valuable to lose. It's questionable enough when the captain and his top advisors regularly beam away from hundreds of crewmembers to personally immerse themselves in a hostile or dangerous situation. It's worse when the organization is even larger and no "exploration" mission exists. In truth, no top player would be allowed anywhere near danger without a phalanx of armed bodyguards. Re-arranging the plot so a central group can "escape" their keepers and get down and dirty with demons gets old fast. Not doing so leaves the characters as order-givers and manipulators, not adventurers.

In Control: The heroes run the show. Maybe one of them is the leader and everyone else has a vote on how things are run, or there's no leader and everybody is equal. The characters don't have to answer to anybody.

On the other hand, they are the only ones responsible for running the organization. The buck stops at their desk. And the desk isn't all that big-the group has limited resources and influence. You start with five Organization Points, plus one point per Cast Member involved in the group. Your Director may also count important Supporting Cast Members who qualify to provide a few extra points. The group can get a maximum Clout level of two in any category (see p. 128).

Second Rank: The group has a boss, and the Cast Members ain't him. The leader of the organization is a Supporting Cast Member, created and controlled by your Director, and the other characters work for him. On the other hand, it's just one boss and our champions are important enough to try and influence or persuade him directly-they do have a say on how things are run. The Cast Members are the seconds-in-command (though that doesn't mean much if there're no thirds-in command). On the plus side, the group will be a bit larger and more influential. At this level, you get ten organization points, plus one point per Cast Member involved in the group. The group can purchase a maximum Clout level of three in any category.

Agents: The Cast are part of the rank-and-file. They don't give orders; they take them. Missions and assignments are handed to them. In other words, it's a lot like work, except with more late nights, back alleys,

and violence. The Cast Members are the equivalent of field agents, with some influence on the organization but still bound by its rules. There should be at least two layers of oversight above the Cast (i.e., their boss has got a boss, and he might have a boss over him-and if that boss' boss' boss wants to see you, you're in deep kimchi). The characters should have a one- or two-point Obligation (see p. 17) to the organization. You get twenty points, plus one point per Cast Member.

Bottom of the Totem Pole: The Cast Members are grunts, salarimen, worker bees. They are at least three or four ranks removed from the top leadership (and they might not even know who the top leadership is). This doesn't mean the Cast Members don't have any say on what they do, just that they are a lot more constrained in their choices. Also, while the organization may have a lot of power and resources, the characters probably don't have access to much of them, and those they can tap, they need to justify using to their bosses. Characters belonging to this level of organization must accept a two- or three-point Obligation to it. You get thirty points, plus one point per Cast Member, to spend like drunken sailors.

Alternatively, your Director could build organizations of this size and play "hide the assets" with you. The characters only know the group's reputation, public face, and certain of its abilities. When they have need of something, you must check with your Director (in the form of the characters' superior) to check to see if it's available and what they need to do to secure it (no doubt lots of paperwork).

Being A Member

Given the balance between control and organizational capacity discussed previously, there's no need for you to worry about including something like a Group Member Quality on your character sheets. Your character's ability to tap into the organization's assets is directly balanced by a matching Obligation Drawback to that group. Furthermore, the full benefits of a large organization are rarely realized by the lower level employees. This means that the characters need not view their group Obligation as all encompassing in the case of large organizations. They don't enjoy all the benefits so don't suffer all the drawbacks. If your Director wants to attach the Cast Members to an organization but somehow not balance the assets and obligations, care must be taken. Keeping the characters from enjoying all the benefits of a group is relatively easy, but they should be compensated by lowering the Obligation to the organization (and the commensurate Drawback points). On the flip side, if the characters can use company assets without matching responsibilities, they should be charged with a Group Member Quality equal to one-tenth of the organization's points (round down). We don't recommend this for groups with over thirty points in capacities (the rough guidelines begin to break down at that point and the benefits far outweigh the costs).

Gaining Organization Points

Basically, you don't. Assets can be gained or lost but these occur in the context of roleplaying and storyline developments. It's possible that folding a new member into the team would bring in a point's worth of change, or somehow adjust the group's capacities. Take it up with your Director after a couple of adventures.

Organization Abilities

So you want a cool car, loaded with weapons, and a secure facility to park it at night? Join the club. No, really, join the club. If it's the right club, you get all that and more. When creating an organization, let your fingers do the walking among the list of goodies on the following pages and buy what suits you. Much like a valley girl in a mall, your only limit is your line of credit (i.e., how many points you've got).

Clout

This ability is the group parallel to the Contacts Quality (see p. 12). It shows how much influence the organization has with different aspects of society. The more Clout the crew has, the easier it is to get help, information, or equipment. This ability combines things like reputation, connections, and sheer power. Clout gives a benchmark of what the group can accomplish. It also can be used as a bonus on certain rolls, mainly to determine if Cast Members in the group can get something done through their organization.

Clout is measured in levels, ranging from one to five, each costing one point. The levels determine how much weight the group can throw around. Clout is divided into four spheres of influence: Criminal, Financial, Governmental, and Supernatural. Most groups have Clout in one or two areas; only the most powerful organizations pull strings in every walk of life. In some cases, levels of Clout subtract from the cost of some equipment and facilities. This is noted below. When creating an organization, up to half the total points available can be spent on Clout.

Using Clout

Clout levels can be added to a number of rolls. Namedropping works wonders in many situations. If you belong to the right group (and wear the right clothes), you can make a few phone calls and things just seem to happen.

Getting Things Done: So you were out battling demons and the cops found your stash of illegal weapons; now there's a warrant out for your arrest. Who you gonna call? Or you've discovered that the only way to destroy this week's bad guy demon is to get your hands on a unique mystical dagger. When you need something that's not available from the Yellow Pages or Google, it pays to belong to the right outfit. In some cases, getting the stuff is going to take some roleplaying-the Cast has to make calls, find people, get all intimidating, bruise some knuckles ... all that fun stuff. In other cases, your Director may not want to take time from the butt-kicking and soap-opera, and a quick roll can determine if you can get the stuff ... or not. Use an Intelligence and Clout level roll, plus any levels of Contacts (see p. 12) in the same area of influence, to determine if the Cast can pull strings to get what they want. Use the Cast Member with the highest Intelligence, unless one of the characters is the clear leader, in which case his Intelligence gets used even if it's not the highest (yet another reason to hate having a boss).

Influence: When making Influence rolls, you can add the group's Clout if the target is someone who would be impressed or intimidated by the fact the characters belong to that group. A lawyer working for Wolfram & Hart is going to get more attention than a member of Skippy, Dippy & Bobo, Attorneys at Law. Obviously, a secret organization only provides that bonus if the influencee is in on the secret. Saying "I'm a member of the Holy Knights of Galbarash" is going to get a lot of blank stares from the local bartender ... or your average stoolie. Secret organizations do have that whole secret aspect to them.

Clout Spheres

Clout comes in many flavors. Some groups really know how to deal with criminals, while others are better at the "cops" side of the "cops-and-robbers" game, and neither group may be wholly comfortable dealing with demons and Things Beyond The Pale. Described below are the four major spheres of influence and what they are all about at each level.

You can't amass Clout above a certain level in one sphere if you got no juice in other areas. Big time criminals usually have big time money, and having a lot of money gives you a measure of political influence. Beyond level three, some forms of Clout require a minimum level of Clout in other areas, just to be realistic. And these ain't freebies-you got to buy them separately. Such a cruel world.

Criminal

A group with Clout in this area has connections or influence in the criminal underworld. Maybe the group is itself a criminal organization, or just happens to work with a lot of criminals (thin line, sure, but it's there). Through a mixture of favors, bribery, or intimidation, the group can get criminals to provide information or services.

Level 1: Street cred. The group has some measure of respect from local "businessmen." Informants and other lowlives know the group and are willing to divulge what they know ... for the right fee (be thankful when it's only dollars).

Level 2: Street force. The group is owed a few favors and has connections with a good number of underworld figures. Its connections allow it to find all kinds of illegal goodies, from illegals to information to special services (leg-breaking, arson, and the like), often at a discount. A medium-sized criminal crew (a drug dealing gang or a ring of car-thieves, for example) would have Clout 2.

Level 3: Major connections. The organization is well known and feared in the criminal underworld. It can hire (or already has in its payroll) all kinds of "specialists," ranging from your basic "hired goon" to safecrackers, counterfeiters, forgers, hitmen, and the like. Your typical mob outfit is at this level. This group needs to have a minimum Financial Clout 2, just to meet expenses.

Level 4: Big player. The group controls a small army of assorted thugs, mixed fixers, and various garden-variety sociopaths. They have fingers in many illicit pies. Few people knowingly mess with the group, unless they're looking forward to finding out what "execution style" really means. The organization likely has a lot of contacts and influence in "legit" businesses and agencies. Big players on the crime scene must have a minimum Financial Clout 3 and Governmental Clout 2. The largest organized crime group in a city or state would have clout at this level.

Level 5: Crime-lord time. The group has national or multinational influence. Resources are as Level 4, but scratch the "small" bit from "army." At this level, the group can pretty much get anything that can be got,

whether legal or not (and is probably involved in the sale and distribution of a lot of the latter). A minimum Financial Clout 4 and Governmental Clout 2 are needed to run with the crime lords.

Financial

Money talks and ... well, you know. A group with large bank accounts can afford to hire the best, provide your heroes with lavish expense accounts, and throw money at problems until they go away. Financial Clout represents the income and cash reserves of the group. The source of the money depends on the group. A criminal ring gets its money the old fashioned way- stealing, cheating, and deceiving. A scientific foundation may depend on a trust fund from a wealthy sponsor, or may need to regularly apply for government grants or bank loans. Angel Investigations gets its money from paying customers (who are always depressingly thin on the ground).

If the group doesn't have even one level of Financial Clout, it means it has no money or source of income. It's Bring Your Own time for everybody concerned. In that case, the group doesn't support the members; the members support the group.

Level 1: Struggling. The organization barely has enough money to meet basic expenses, and members get very little in the way of pay (a stipend barely enough to supply room and board, or minimum wage). Characters with high Resource levels (see p. 19) are clearly getting their money from somewhere else (their day job perhaps). The group can disburse a few hundred dollars in cash for your basic bribes and pocket expenses, and can raise a few thousand bucks for an emergency, usually by pawning, selling off, or mortgaging its assets. That's about it. More scratch than that just ain't happening.

Level 2: Holding its own. Represents up to a million dollars in assets (a lot less in cash, though). The group has enough money to pay members a regular salary or stipend. It can cough up modest amounts of dough (up to a few thousand dollars) in case of need, and maybe as much as \$100,000 in a dire emergency (and the group would be bankrupt or nearly so after such an expense). Impressive, but not so much that the big boys are even going notice.

Level 3: In the money . The organization has ample funds including at least a few million dollars in assets. Members are paid handsomely (associates should have at least Average Resources-probably one or two levels above it), and "petty cash" can cover things up to several thousand dollars easily. Major projects involving expenditures in the six-figure range are affordable, although only for good reasons (building a beach house for the chairman of the board is not a good reason-but might get done anyway). The group needs to have Governmental Clout 1 at this level, to reflect the influence all that money represents.

Level 4: Big bucks. The group has tens or even hundreds of millions in assets, can pay lavish salaries for dozens or hundreds of people, and resources to match a major corporation. Assuming the expense reports can be justified, money is no problem for most things (up to a couple of million in cash). This level has Governmental Clout 2 as a prerequisite.

Level 5: Powerhouse. The group has resources equivalent to a multinational corporation, with assets and holdings worth billions. The organization can pretty much buy anything that's for sale ... and a few things that aren't. That doesn't mean the Cast Members can go on random shopping sprees on the corporate card, of course. Expenses still need to be justified. Governmental Clout 3 is required as well; a group is hard pressed to amass this amount of money without having a few Congresscritters in its pocket.

Governmental

This sphere covers access to government services and law enforcement. Groups at the higher levels pretty much have to be government agencies themselves - nothing stopping them from being secret government agencies though.

Level 1: Connected. The level group has some connections with local police or other authorities, and has access to a few official sources of information. The agencies know of the organization, and cooperate with it on occasion. Still, the group doesn't get a lot of slack unless it's in return for a favor or two.

Level 2: Influential. These organizations have strong connections with the law, and enough pull to get some transgressions (misdemeanors or minor felonies) overlooked or forgiven. The group may have access to some government facilities and resources (either legally or through corrupt contacts). It also has some connections with important government figures (town mayors, state representatives, precinct chiefs) and has a few favors it can call on if needed.

Level 3: Major contributor. The group can be effectively above the law if it wishes to be. Although overt crimes still result in arrests and investigations, a combination of political favors, soft money, connections with law enforcement, or legal tricks prevents most criminal convictions. The organization has major connections with state and national politicians. Gotta have some money to get this done though; this level has Financial Clout 2 as a prerequisite.

Level 4: Agency. The organization has the power to conduct investigations and make arrests; it is equivalent to a local or national law enforcement agency. If the group is covert or secret, its members can commit all manner of illegal activities while on a mission and expect the more legit members of the government to cover them up. Members have the proverbial license to kill, within certain parameters, of course (no, you can't shoot people you don't like and claim you were on a mission). Contacts include senators and governors, maybe even the president. A Financial Clout 3 prerequisite grants the group the wherewithal it needs.

Level 5: Shadow Government. The organization is the government, or might as well be. The group has almost unlimited access to government sources and facilities, and can do pretty much as it wishes, as long as it keeps things relatively covert. Its connections include heads of state, military leaders, and just about anybody who's anybody. This level has Financial Clout 4 as a prerequisite.

Supernatural

This sphere of influence deals with the occult underground-demons, undead, and practitioners of the dark arts, both on Earth and on other dimensions. Supernatural Clout represents the reputation of the group, its influence in paranormal affairs, and its magical "muscle."

Level 1: Arcane. The group has contacts with assorted demons and other supernatural creatures, and knows all the "basics" (i.e., the abilities of vampires and the typical demon, the powers and limitations of magic, and so on). While in the know, it's not much of a player. Best to stay under the big boys' radar.

Level 2: Occultists. The group has extensive occult knowledge, including a large collection of arcane tomes (minimum Occult Archives 3, purchased separately). Members have basic magical training. Contacts with the supernatural may include spirits or demons who are obligated or willing to offer information.

Level 3: Exotics. Supernatural mercenaries or servants are available to act as agents, enforcers, or guardians. The group has direct access to powerful supernatural beings (greater demons, oracles, one or more of the Powers That Be administrative assistants) or is under the control of such a being. At this level, the group needs to have a minimum Financial Clout 2. Mystical, yes; cheap, no.

Level 4: Potent beings. The group has a small army of magicians, psychics, and demons at its disposal. It is aware of several occult secrets and these are shared by few, if any, other groups in the world. Its contacts span dimensions and the group may have control over portals to other worlds. A minimum Financial Clout 3 (the really exotic is even more expensive) and Criminal Clout 1 (to supply some of the illegal needs of its members) are needed for this level.

Level 5: Power, pure and simple. As above, but even larger. The group can routinely summon or recruit potent supernatural beings. At this level, the top leadership of the group cannot be human; only the most powerful demons and spirits qualify. The group needs a Financial Clout 3 and Criminal Clout 2 to meet its "mundane" needs.

Quarters

No one gets harsh in your house ... unless you want it that way. Nothing says player like having your own HQ. If it doubles as a place to sleep, eat, and throw the occasional bash, that's fine-as long as there's room for all.

An HQ has three components: Size and Location, Physical Security, and Supernatural Security. If you are messin' with the arcane, deadbolts and armed guards just don't cut it.

Size and Location

How large and widespread is the organization's HQ? You guessed-the bigger it is, the more it costs. The more money and influence the group has, the better their quarters are: each Governmental Clout level and each Financial Clout level purchased previously provides one free point to spend in this section.

Small: A small apartment or office; the gang can barely all fit in there at once. No point cost here.

Medium: Decent office space (with multiple offices), a warehouse, or other large location. This costs one point.

Large: An entire office building or hotel (the Hyperion, perhaps), with multiple rooms and storage space, maybe even covered parking. Three points must be spent.

Huge: Something the size of a small shopping mall or military base. Plenty of room for parking, not to mention training facilities, shooting ranges, laboratories, and a bowling alley (if you're pinning for pins). This runs five points.

One Location: The group has only one "home office." If the agents travel away from it, they have to make do with hotel rooms and expense accounts like us ordinary mortals. This does not cost points.

Multiple Locations: The agency has several bases or branches around the world. A group with a Huge

HQ gains an additional two to three Large branches, three to five Medium branches, and six to ten Small offices (smaller main HQs have a correspondingly lesser number of branches). At the lowest level, you get two Small offices. Multiple locations have a basic cost equal to that of the HQ or one point, whichever is higher. Thus, giving a group with a Huge HQ Multiple Locations costs five points (in addition to the five points that must be spent getting the Huge HQ in the first place).

Worldwide: The group has quarters on at least three continents, and has dozens of facilities all over the globe. There're two to three bases of the main HQ size, twice that many one size smaller, and so on. This feature adds double the HQ base cost or three points, whichever is higher. A Huge HQ with worldwide facilities costs 10 points (plus the five points for the original Huge HQ).

Physical Security

How safe are the headquarters? Are the secrets of your group entrusted to a rusty lock you can pick with a credit card, or something just a bit fancier? Like the various forms of Clout, Security comes in five levels, each better than the last, costing one point per level. If no levels of Physical Security are chosen you got the aforementioned rusty lock and little more. Better be packing heat (or cutlery) yourself.

Level 1: Standard. Decent burglar alarms, decent locks (penalties of -3 for Crime rolls to break in), walls that can withstand a ball peen hammer for more than fifteen minutes. For the do-it-yourself types who aren't overly worried about the law, there may be some spring traps or deadfalls. No guards, unless the Cast is up to doing the watchman bit their own darn selves.

Level 2: Good. Good alarms and security devices (-6 to Crime rolls), security cameras in strategic locations, and, for Large or greater facilities, human guards (use the stats for L.A. Police Officer, p. 179).

Level 3: Excellent. The facility is really hard to get in to or out of-ID cards are required to open doors, and all the security devices are top-notch (-8 to Crime rolls). Large facilities also have a security force (use the stats for W&H Goons, p. 208) that is plentiful (at least ten guards) and well-armed.

Level 4: Military-level. We're talking armed checkpoints, cameras everywhere, armed guards on at each corner, and so on. You'd need a small army or a master thief to break in here, unless you've got inside help. The security forces are large and well-trained (use the stats for W&H Paramilitary Team, p. 209).

Level 5: Best money can buy. The whole place is locked like a bank vault (-12 to Crime rolls), retina or DNA scans are used for identification, and multiple secure doors (each requiring separate rolls to defeat) lead to any reasonably important area. This hardass stuff is supplemented by death traps like poison or knockout gas, electrified walls or floors, and other fun stuff.

Supernatural Security

This being the Ciniverse, where demons and warlocks are but a cell phone call away (or closer), supernatural devices are available to those with the right connections. Like Physical Security, there are five levels and each costs one point. Also, you need at least one level of Supernatural Clout (see p. 130) to get any level of Supernatural Security.

If no levels of Supernatural Security are purchased, you got nothing, nada, zip. You are supernaturally exposed. It sounds bad but it's basically the state the vast majority of us are in. No reason to protect against something doesn't really exist, right? ... right?

Level 1: Believers. Basic safeguards (like making sure the location is not a public place so vamps have to be invited in) and dedicated, and isolatable, facilities for conducting magical rituals.

Level 2: Protected. Security systems that alert the owners if a supernatural being enters the area uninvited. This can be a spell or ward, a guardian entity that "sniffs out" supernatural presences, or even a scientific device that somehow detects abnormal life signals.

Level 3: Warded. Protective spells like the one making violence impossible at Caritas or preventing uninvited beings from entering (much like the traditional limitation against vampires, but applied to all supernatural beings). Note that such barriers can be overcome by creativity and ruthlessness (like firebombing a place from the outside).

Level 4: Invulnerable. Magical defenses that make it impossible for anyone to enter unless invited (or unless the place is physically destroyed). Or magic could have been used to place the HQ in a pocket dimension, reachable only through magical portals.

Level 5: Otherworldly. The location is totally removed from this reality-there's only one way in and out, and only those with arcane and specialized knowledge can get through. The locale is effectively inviolable, unless a traitor brings enemies home to roost.

Gear

The one who dies with the most toys wins. The one who stays alive with the most toys gets to keep accumulating. One of the cool things about joining an organization is that you usually don't worry about where you'll get more stakes or a new sword. But there's more to it than that. You've got facilities, computers, and vehicles to go with all that sweet weaponry. Clout plays a big role here-for every level of Criminal, Financial, or Governmental Clout of the organization, one free point may be spent on Gear.

Facilities

A big centrally located HQ isn't worth much if the walls are bare and the rooms empty. Got to have some stuff to fill your digs with. We're not going to be too concerned with furniture and such. It's the special stuff that really gets the blood boiling (assuming the members are not all circulation-challenged).

Unless otherwise noted, all Facilities cost one point per level.

Computers

A typical home computer is not much of a stretch. It goes up sharply from there.

Level 1: Basic. About the same as a typical office, with networked computers or terminals for every employee.

Level 2: Advanced. As above, plus some advanced workstations to assist in research.

Level 3: Top-notch. Even better, with powerful systems that can run face recognition software, enhance video, and do all kinds of cool research.

Level 4: Cutting Edge. Supercomputers good enough to play chess against a master while sorting through massive amounts of data.

Level 5: Futuristic. Seriously high tech systems, maybe even with primitive (or not so primitive) Artificial Intelligence. Of course, the artificial being has a personality and no doubt engages in a bit of backtalk to keep the gang on their toes (or just to annoy the bejeebers out of them).

Laboratories/Research Facilities

Sometimes you need to run blood tests and don't want to go to a lab, mainly because the blood came from a supernatural being and the critter wasn't a, er, willing donor.

Level 1: Basic. A basic lab facility, the kind of place where you can run blood under a microscope and perform some basic tests.

Level 2: Advanced. This is a large lab facility (full chemical analysis). You still need to roll up your sleeves, curets, and test tubes and do it yourself.

Level 3: Top-notch. Extensive lab equipment and personnel (an on-call specialist and assistants complete with Science Skills 3-5) are available.

Level 4: Cutting edge. You can conduct original research in this level of lab. The area is festooned with all kinds of gizmos like electron-tunneling microscopes, MRI scanners, and more. A team of specialists (Science Skills 4-6) is available to spout technobabble at the drop of a hat.

Level 5: Full-scale. With these facilities, the group has the equivalent of a university or corporate research laboratory at its disposal, capable of running hundreds of different projects at the same time.

Medical Facilities

A first aid kit costs nothing. After that, it costs ... more.

Level 1: Basic. These moderate medical facilities are enough to conduct essential paramedic treatment (giving a +1 bonus to Doctor rolls).

Level 2: Advanced. This medical room is as good as a doctor's room aboard a ship (giving a +2 bonus to Doctor rolls).

Level 3: Top-notch. The basics above with a dedicated nurse on call. Okay, more than one nurse-up to three trained nurses and paramedics (Doctor Skill 3-4).

Level 4: Cutting edge. These full facilities are equivalent to a small clinic, with up to five doctors on call (Doctor Skill 5-6)

Level 5: Full-scale. Now we are talking mini-hospital -a full clinic, able to deal with several casualties at once, conduct surgery, and do all kinds of neat medical stuff that you probably don't want to watch.

Workshop/Repair Facilities

Keeping the company ride on the street takes some amount of equipment and know-how. If the company ride is a Lear Jet, it takes even more. Also, when a crazed vampire takes out your lobby plate glass window, it's nice to have a place to organize the rebuilding.

Level 1: Basic. This room has some tools in it, space for the car or boat, maybe even a hydraulic lift.

Level 2: Advanced. Large garage with fairly complete supply of hand and power tools, not to mention the electronic diagnostic ace in the hole. Strictly BYOM (bring your own mechanic).

Level 3: Top-notch. Very large garage with extensive equipment, or hanger for smallish organizational plane. Personnel come in the package (on-call specialist and assistants complete with Mr. Fix-It Skills 3-5).

Level 4: Cutting edge. As well as plenty of storage space, you can build complex machinery, including vehicles, from scratch here. Lots of gizmos with dials and flashing light, and probably a clean room or two. A team of technicians (Mr. Fix-It Skills 4-6) is available and eager for the next local Trek convention.

Level 5: Full-scale. A "wow, that's big" facility that would make Bell Labs or Boeing proud, including more technicians and craftsmen than you can shake a wind tunnel at.

Occult Archives

This works just like the Occult Library Quality (see p. 17), but with twice as many available spells at each level. Better yet, everyone can use the place and its benefits are cumulative with any personal library. This costs one point per level.

Special Training

The group offers advanced training to its members. This is the equivalent of re-upping in the Army, a full stint at the Police Academy, or some other similar years long course of study. As a result, members have access to a special Training Package Quality (see p. 22). This costs two points.

Training Facilities

An empty room that can be used as a gym is free. A real gym with assorted equipment is one point; a full gym/martial arts/fencing area and equipment is two points. A shooting range costs two points as well. Or get the package deal gym/range for the low, low price of three points.

Vehicles

This gear is just the machinery. Storage, repair, and maintenance facilities are purchased elsewhere. Once you start dealing with a fleet of aircraft, the costs spiral like automobile insurance after a "no-fault" accident.

Company Car: The organization has access to a single car, functional but otherwise unremarkable. This has no cost.

Vehicle Fleet: The group has several cars at its disposal, about one for every five employees. This costs two points.

Tricked-Up Car: The group's ride has some extra goodies, like mounted weapons, souped-up engine, and other tricks up its fenders. This baby runs two points.

Aircraft: A company jet is available, and boy is it swank. Two points sets you up nice.

Air Fleet: Your organization has multiple aircraft, including helicopters. Five points covers it.

Military/Exotic Vehicles: The organization can get its hands on some military or exotic vehicles, like minisubs, military helicopters, maybe even some actual tanks or armored personnel carriers. This costs five points.

Weapons

Unlike vehicles, these bad boys come with those spiffy wall display racks that the camera loves to pan over. You also get all the supplies needed to keep the cache in good blasting, bursting, or bashing order.

BYO: Members have to get their own implements of destruction. This costs nada.

Getting Medieval: The group has a nice armory of archaic weapons, everything from basic pointy sticks to Bavarian fighting picks. One point gets this done.

Gun Bunnies: This gives access to a small armory of legal firearms-pistols, shotguns, hunting rifles. This costs one point.

Paramilitary: The organization can call on military small arms like assault rifles, sub-machine guns, and other "whoa, back away quick" stuff. This runs three points.

Full Metal Jacket: Serious military weapons and explosives are available but you still need a darn good reason (say express orders from some major authority) to use them. All this for five points.

The Morningstar Foundation

Type: Goal-Oriented

Number: 10,421 at last HR count

Why: Officially, the Morningstar Foundation is a perfectly respectable philanthropic and scholarly organization. It funds a number of charities-everything from runaway shelters to soup kitchens. It also sponsors scientific research at many universities along the West Coast. Its goal is to "help humanity realize its potential free from fear, ignorance, and tyranny."

Unofficially, the Foundation spends most of its funds on paranormal research and, to put it bluntly, monster hunting. The charities are not so much a cover as just a small part of what the organization is there for-to help humankind.

When: Morningstar is the brainchild of billionaire Phil D'Agostino, a software engineer who hit it big in the mid-eighties, made his pile, and decided to do something productive with all his loot. D'Agostino used the foundation for charity but set aside a substantial amount of funding for unconventional research projects, including parapsychology. Some of the research uncovered some really scary stuff-y'know, vampires, demons, evil ghosts, some of the karaoke performers at Caritas. D'Agostino himself was nearly killed by a demonic monstrosity that crawled out of thin air. Realizing he couldn't go public, he shifted the foundation's focus to battling supernatural evil wherever it could be found.

What: D'Agostino himself is largely removed from the organization. The man in charge is an old college buddy of his, Lawrence Kepler, an eccentric British archeologist and occultist. Under his supervision, the Foundation has recruited several dozen agents (the official term is "researcher") spread in several sites around the world. These researchers are drawn from law enforcement (mostly former cops and federal agents who saw too many strange things on the job-somebody much like ... say, Kate!), from science (psychologists, "ghost hunters," and the like) and from "fringe" fields (psychics, former priests with a penchant for exorcism, neo-shamans). The agents investigate claims of supernatural activity (ghost and UFO sightings, strange murders) and, if they find true occult forces at work, do their best to stop them.

The group has a great deal of money and power, and over the last few years has developed a lot of connections with police agencies around the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Most members are normal humans, though a few psychics and even a handful of actual demons and half-demons (the nicer kind) can be found among their ranks.

Total Value: 25 points.

Clout: Criminal (Street cred) (1), Financial (Big bucks) (4), Governmental (Major contributor) (3), Supernatural (Occultists) (2). Total Cost: 10 points.

Quarters: Large (3), Multiple Locations (3), Physical Security (Excellent) (3), Supernatural Security (Protected) (2). Total Cost: 4 points (reduced by seven from Financial and Governmental Clout levels).

Gear: Computers (Cutting edge) (4), Laboratories (Top-notch) (3), Medical Facilities (Top-notch) (3), Occult Archives (2), Training Facilities (3), Vehicles (Vehicle Fleet) (2), Weapons (Getting Medieval) (1), Weapons (Gun Bunnies) (1). Total Cost: 11 points (reduced by eight from Criminal, Financial, and Governmental Clout).

The Technopagan Alliance

Type: Mutual Aid

Number: Nearly one hundred

Why: Despite the fancy name, this is mostly a collection of somewhat geeky magicians who like both magic and computers. Members regularly chat on-line in one of several members-only chat sites. While they have occasional physical meetings, geographic considerations keep all but a handful from any "face time" with other members. This group is a good place for young magicians to learn more about magic, but more importantly, it can also serve as a useful early-warning system about the troubles magic use brings. An interesting addition to the group would be a number of moderately powerful seers who openly share any predictions or warnings they receive. This would allow the members time to prepare for powerful attacks by black magicians and demons with nasty plans (and which demon doesn't?).

When: The group has no set foundation, sometime around early 1990 is the accepted 'start' date of the group, having found each other through arcane chat rooms, forums, bbs and email.

What: This extremely loose-knit group is open to any magical practitioner who pledges to use her magic for good, who is willing to share magical information on-line, and who is capable of performing virtual circles. Most members are Wiccan and almost no one in this group is over 40 (most in their late teens or early 20s).

Clout: Criminal (Not a playa') (0), Financial (Struggling) (1), Governmental (Off the Grid) (0), Supernatural (Arcane) (1) (2 points)

Quarters: Home users, based in individual homes. Varies depending on the member.

Gear: Computers (Cutting Edge) (4), Laboratories/Research (Basic) (1), Workshop/Repair (Top-notch) (3), Occult Archives (Impressive) (3), Vehicles (Tricked-Up Car) (2), Weapons (BYO) (0) (11 points, reduced

Something Wicked Chapter

Demon Hangouts - Places to escape in the Ciniverse

Demon Dimensions

Demon dimensions are a myriad number of otherworlds outside Earth populated by demons and other strange beasts. They do not often naturally intersect with Earth and they do often have rules that are at variance with what's normal here. Time may pass at a different rate, or the inhabitants (including visitors) may be bound by specific rules of behavior. The laws of physics may vary, allowing for Escheresque landscapes, and life forms that could not evolve on Earth may thrive in great numbers. Demon dimensions, often thought of as "hells," have little directly in common with each other. Not all serve as places of punishment for damned souls, and some may seem outwardly pleasant, if shockingly different, once the Cast has the opportunity to explore beneath surface appearances.

Demon dimensions are not so much places to set a Series as they are to drop Cast Members into for an Episode or two. They primarily serve as plot devices. Or they can be ignored completely-it's your call. For those interested in trying out a demon dimension or two in your Series, here's a few to get you going.

The Burning Dimension

The realm of the Burning King is a non-Euclidian (fancy word for "doesn't use our Earthly rules") maze of free-floating platforms, staircases, ramps, palaces, and battlegrounds floating in otherwise near-perfect darkness far above an inferno of many-colored flames. This dimension is populated almost entirely by demons of various sorts, including the dreaded crimson-banded demons. The Burning King's created these distinctively marked pawns and uses them as personal servants and soldiers to control the dimension.

The center (if infinity can have such a thing) of the dimension is a vast palace with structures in numerous architectural styles from Greek to Gothic and beyond. Elements as modern as a New York skyscraper may stand alongside dark temples with more than a coincidental resemblance to the Parthenon. At the center of this mind-twisting labyrinth is the Burning King's throne, from which he rules the Burning Dimension, only rarely coming forth to chastise a mortal witch or warlock for calling unwisely upon his name or to claim his due on bargains owed.

The Burning King would love nothing more than to lead his armies of demons to Earth and claim it as his personal dominion. So far, he has been constrained by bargains made in the past with cunning sorcerers. Still, the King endlessly seeks a loophole or a means to annul the agreements completely. Until that time, he may act only through intermediaries and pawns.

Hell Mall

This is a gigantic shopping mall-nine levels of stores with a food court and ice-skating rink on the bottom two levels. The shoppers are damned souls who have arrived through the use of dark magic, were abducted by demons from this dimension, or simply happened upon a portal into this place. It does not seem so bad at first blush- stores of all kinds fill each level. Escalators and elevators whiz folks throughout the sprawling complex.

Unlike Dante's Inferno, the mall's various levels do not correspond to any particular sin. Rather, it's the shops themselves that fill that purpose. The food court punishes gluttons (the food is awful and the portions are much too small), the clothing stores taunt the vain (it's never quite the right style, and usually doesn't fit), and so on. The lowest level, the skating rink, is home to the ruler. He sits partially frozen in the ice, his three heads representing Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and a big yellow smiley face. He continually tosses screaming children into his three mouths, all the while asking what they want for Christmas, offering Easter eggs, or telling them to "have a nice day."

Numerous demonic inhabitants staff the various shops and information desks, although they're never any help. The mall has no obvious exits, although the proper ritual or spell can open a doorway back to Earth.

Leviathan

Leviathan is not just a dimension, but an immense corpse, perhaps the remains of an ancient True Demon. Whatever it is, it contains vast vaulted chambers of decaying flesh and stained bone, and hundreds of miles of empty corridors and cavernous organs teeming with demonic parasites. Some property of Leviathan's decaying flesh releases phosphorescent chemicals, providing an eerie, omnipresent light that banishes all

shadows.

Leviathan's inhabitants are of particularly gruesome aspect, many lacking skin or bones, and scuttle about in the stygian depths of the dead hellgod's remains, feeding upon the architecture in which they exist. They take baroque forms with far too many teeth, limbs, and claws, and breed by inserting their eggs into the corpses of their prey. Fortunately for any Cast Members who find themselves in this fetid place, many hiding places are available to the dedicated searcher, and most of the demons are not pack hunters.

Every so often, the rhythms of life within Leviathan change ever so slightly, announcing the gathering of the Hunt. Swarms of demons sweep through the dimension like locusts, devouring all they find and leaving nothing but a trail of blood and a keening wail wherever they've fed. The wailing's source is not obvious, but would assume it comes from Leviathan itself.

The Laboratory

This is one of the smaller demon dimensions. The inhabitants of this sterile, institutional place have taken it as the mission of their species to understand the nature of humanity and what separates us from them. To that end, they abduct humans and vivisect them, grafting demon parts onto their bodies and using various chemicals and diseases to transform them into other forms of life. The meticulously clean hallways and meeting rooms are belied by the screams of those poor souls condemned to suffer the transformations inflicted upon them by the natives.

Long ago, the inhabitants were just another variety of demonkind, similar in form and nature and possessing an overwhelming need for knowledge. They also were obsessed with "difference." Thus, over time they've modified and adapted their own forms. Now, each is unique in its own way—from the hybridization of two or more demonic races to the inclusion of human traits to the addition of cybernetic parts in their own experiments and more. They have no name for themselves, as they see little commonality beyond their desire to understand what makes a human a human and a demon a demon. They've exhausted the possibilities on themselves long ago but must make much progress before they've passed the tip of the human iceberg.

Fairy-Tale Land

Fairy-Tale Land is among the easiest of the demon dimensions to enter accidentally. All it takes is a wrong turn in a dark wood or exploring the mysterious old house at the end of the street and you're there. The wolf is waiting for you in grandmother's house, the wicked queen has sent the huntsman to take your heart, and a witch wants to bake you into her pastries.

Fairy-Tale Land is not a reflection of the modern sanitized fairy tales one reads in children's books or sees in animated films. This is the unadulterated product, the home of creatures like Der Kindestod or the Gentlemen.

In short, this is a land where nightmares come true. Everything in Fairy-Tale Land works according to certain rules; you can't kill the witch with a stake, you have to throw her in the oven. You have to figure out the rules of the story you've landed in before you can use them to your advantage. This is not to say that any stay in Fairy-Tale Land is necessarily linear and unvarying, but it does mean that if you understand what's going on, you have a much better chance to survive or escape.

Leaving is as simple as resolving the tale in your favor, whatever that requires. Be careful that some nightmarish creature does not follow you back to Earth where it has much greater freedom to act. This could be how such creatures as Der Kindestod are unleashed.

Arashmaharr

There is a dark and timeless realm outside of our reality where the lower beings hold court. This is the world of Arashmaharr, where demons are spawned. D'Hoffryn holds council there with other cloaked demons, observing events on earth through a mystic portal. This is also the home of the Vengeance Demons, those who have become demons to serve those who have suffered pain and loss. Vengeance Demons can detect when someone has had her heart broken—if that pain is powerful enough. Indeed, the demon is drawn to the sufferer. In the guise of a human, the Vengeance Demon interacts with the person whose pain has summoned her until that person expresses a wish. The demon grants the wish and returns to Arashmaharr until another chance comes to serve the pestilent gods with an act of vengeance carried out through the power of the Wish.

Vengeance Demons aren't exactly evil, but they certainly aren't entirely good either. Good and evil are not really important to a Vengeance Demon. The only thing that is important is vengeance itself. They see their calling as a noble one, righting the wrongs propagated by humanity. Some even prefer to be called Justice Demons (it sure sounds more just and true). But try telling that to a guy turned into a thousand-pound meat zeppelin because of one indiscretion.

Becoming a Vengeance Demon

As far as we know, Vengeance Demons all start out as human girls who were transformed into demons by D'Hoffryn. D'Hoffryn and his coterie appear to be able to sense when a person is suffering great emotional pain. If that woman decides to seek retribution through an act of vengeance, especially one involving magic, D'Hoffryn takes that woman to Arashmaharr and offers to make her an instrument of vengeance. Anyanka was called when she turned her boyfriend Olaf into a Troll for cheating on her (see p. 118). Willow was offered the chance to become a demon when a spell she cast almost killed the friends that ignored her pain after Oz left town.

Women who accept D'Hoffryn's offer are made into powerful demons. They immediately gain the Vengeance Demon Quality and must pick an Obsession to go with it (see p. 136). They are also given a pendant which acts as a nexus for their powers. Woe be to the demon who allows her pendant to be destroyed.

Perhaps the realm of Arashmaharr also creates other types of demons from other types of humans, all embittered by one sin, sadness, or pain of one sort or another?

Creating New Monsters & Recycling Old Ones

Most of the critters below have already appeared in the original show. While bringing back the "classics" can be fun, it's best to add new monsters and dangers in your Episodes too. Let's face it, if your cast is hunting "all vampires all the time," it would get stale a long time ago. One of the great things about a TV show is that you never quite know who (or what) is going to pop up next. Here we provide a few ideas and advice on creating new threats to delight and horrify your Cast.

Monster Types

There are a lot of monster types out there in the Ciniverse. And we mean *a lot*. From the common vampires and demons to the less common creatures which act like they stepped out of a Fairytale, there's no shortage of monster types that you can choose to terrorize your Cast members with. Here's a few sample examples, and some tidbits you can use to cook up your own variants.

Vampires

In the Beginning

Many people assume that demons are invaders from another dimension. Giles has informed us, however, that the demons were the original inhabitants of our world. If so, demons most likely had been tormenting mastodons and taunting sabretooths long before certain types of apes in Africa began debating between staying in the shrinking forests and giving the whole "walk upright through the steppe grass" thing a try. As humans spread throughout the world, they couldn't have avoided encountering the various demonic races. It had to be tough going at first since most demons are way more tough and vicious than even our savage missing-link ancestors. In the end however, it seems evolution favored the smart tool users with the year-round ability to breed. Demons were pushed into hiding or left the planet entirely.

As demons are a diverse sort, it's not hard to imagine that more than a few merged or interbred with humans to create new hybrid forms. Certainly, we know of one that demon was a predatory entity that somehow grafted itself into a human being. Like all those hybrids who followed and came to be known as vampires, we're guessing that the human kept her form, her memories, and parts of her personality. She lost her human soul though, and found that she now possessed demonic strengths, powers, and a strong predatory instinct. She was the first vampire, and she soon joined with others of her own creation.

Shortly after the first vampire was created, the First Hunter was called. No one's quite sure how this happened. Well some folks are sure, but they can't be trusted. The Watchers probably claim that a group of shamans banded together to magically call a champion who would be able to fight the new supernatural threat. And such a claim could very well be true. The average demon has been shown to be more powerful than the average human, but it's also likely that there have always been humans who could throw obscene amounts of magic around to accomplish things that demons can only dream about. The Watchers might claim that they are descended from this congregation of shamans-indeed, that may be why they believe the Hunter is their tool in the war against the vampires. Not to burst the tweedset's bubble, but perhaps the coming of the Hunter was some kind of cosmic balancer of good and evil, or heck, it could have all been a tragic mistake that worked out very well thank you. There are also indicators that the Hunter's powers are demonic in nature (but again, corroboration has been hard to come by). Regardless of where she and her power actually came from, the First

Hunter seems to have proved quite capable of holding her own against the increasing plague of vampires. When she was finally killed, it turned out the Hunter had one final trick in her clutch bag of kewl powers: her abilities were passed on to another young human girl. At some point, the Watchers attached themselves to the Slayers, seeking them out and training them to be more effective against the vampires.

Now this was all welcome news for the humans, but it probably didn't cause too much fuss among the vamps. The Hunter obviously couldn't be everywhere at all times, and we've heard a great deal about their lack-of-extended-lifetime problem. Vamps, on the other hand, have the whole immortal-I-can-make-more thing going. This most likely explains why they continued to increase in numbers and spread throughout the world.

Your Basic Bloodsucker

Most of the demons found on Earth are some form of demon/human hybrid. They are basically humanoid in form rather than being some massive Thing That Man Was Not Meant To See. Vampires are one of the most extreme examples of this. They are created from human beings. Once a human rises from the grave as a vampire, she retains the appearance, the memories, and aspects of the personality of her former self. That personality is perverted though, because her human soul is replaced by a demonic spirit or entity of some kind. Still, the type of person someone was in life is a good indicator of what she will be like as a vampire.

As hinted at in the Angel TV series, the original vampiric demon may have been a fierce reptilian looking creature filled with bloodlust. The behavior of most vampires seems to indicate that this demon was a pack hunter. That instinct is preserved in the human/demon hybrid known as a vampire. They tend to congregate in groups, with a "master" leading a group of "minions" (similar to the way alpha males lead wolf packs ... if the wolves looked human and drank people's blood instead of chasing down caribou). The instinct to hunt living humans for their blood is extremely strong-it easily and often overwhelms the "human" aspect of the creature.

Most newly risen vampires care for little else beside feeding. These savage creatures attack the first thing with a pulse they come across. The part of their brain that retains human memories and the ability to reason is completely superseded by an animalistic desire to eat and kill. This makes them dangerous, but it also makes them kind of stupid. It can be a bit of hard work killing a newly arisen vampire, but this is actually the best time to destroy them. The ironic thing is that many vampires end up dying shortly after they rise, completely defeating the purpose of being an immortal monster. Dummies!

If a vampire can make it through this first stage of unlife, she begins to strike more of a balance between her human half and demon half. This doesn't mean she is any nicer or humane, what with losing her soul and all. What it means is that she starts to use her knowledge and intelligence. A vampire that has been around for a few weeks is less likely to charge straight into a Hunter and her pointy stake. The more experienced vampire might try an ambush, or even curtail its hunger at least long enough to find someone really weak. These vampires seek out a lair, and maybe join some gang as a minion. The disadvantage of being a minion is that you are the first one staked when the White Hats arrive. The advantage is that someone older and more clever than you is making the plans. In theory anyway-the minions who attached themselves to Harmony found that to be a bad career choice.

The longer a vampire survives, the more powerful she becomes. Vampires like Angelus, Drusilla, and Spike have existed long enough to become rather skilled in the arts of terror and destruction. A few centuries of death and mayhem give a vampire a serious edge over the average minion. The oldest vampires sometimes develop their own unique powers. Dracula has Gypsy Magic that he can toss around, and he's really only six hundred years or so old. The Master was even older and had all sorts of surprises up his sleeve. An old and experienced vampire like Darla is still a pile of dust when she gets staked, but the truly ancient and powerful vampires can sometimes find a way to come back (okay, so Darla came back too, but that's a different story).

Vamp Abilities

The basic skinny on vamp abilities was laid out in the vampire Quality (see p. 37-38). They are strong and quick, never grow older, can't be killed by most weapons, and don't need to breathe. A few additions and clarifications can't hurt though.

Senses

Vamps have excellent hearing and a keen sense of smell. They gain a +2 to all Perception-based rolls that involve hearing or smell. Further, when we are talking blood, they are regular ... ah ... bloodhounds. They can smell blood inhumanly well (which makes sense, what with them being inhuman and all). For any Perception based tests to detect nearby humans (and their coursing blood supply) double the bonus, to +4. This has a range equal to the vamp's Perception times ten yards.

Some vamps are really, really good when it comes to blood. As an option, you may allow a vamp to identify a person's blood type, blood-related health issues (like alcohol content, hardening of the arteries, etc.),

or even disorders. Finally, a vamp might be able to identify a person just from a sample of her blood, or determine that a sample of blood did not belong to a particular person. This information should only be available with three or more Success Levels on a Perception-related roll.

Recovery

Vamps still feel pain-they still bleed and bruise and get broken. But the demonic part of them allows them to recover from these injuries much quicker than a human would. Bloodsuckers recover one Life Point per Constitution Level per hour (except for fire damage).

But this is more than just a combat bennie. We are talking serious damage being no real biggie for a vamp. What would cripple a human for life might only inconvenience a vampire for a month or so (Spike ditched his wheelchair in record time). Permanent disfiguring or debilitating injuries take some time to heal, but heal they do. The precise time frame is up to you and the demands of your storyline. Another interesting subject is regrowth. Obviously, beheading a vampire is going to curtail healing but quick. Still, what about losing an arm, leg, eye, or ear? This has not been settled on the TV show, but given the fact that vamps live forever, we would surely have met a crippled vamp by now if regrowth were not possible.

Since all those we see are hale and hearty, it seems safe to assume that absent decapitation, pretty much everything else will grow back over time. The Black Knight ("None shall pass!") probably wants to look into this.

Now, this doesn't mean that prosthetics aren't possible. If something is used to replace the missing limb or organ, it seems that regrowth can be stopped. Or perhaps a special ritual must be conducted to keep the regrowth from occurring.

Non-physical damage is another story completely. Vamps do not recover from insanity or mental deterioration any better than regular folks. In fact, given their extended lives and generally evil leanings, they can get pretty screwy in the mental department. Getting them back to their normal sociopathic ways is going to require some serious therapy.

Large Blunt Trauma

At various times and places, vamps have taken a serious licking and kept on ticking. The bloodsuckers also seem to be able to drop from fairly large heights without shoving their ankles into their intestines. To simulate this in the RPG, large blunt trauma and falling damage is halved for vamps. Large blunt trauma only covers being hit by vehicles or wrecking balls-bats and other melee weaponry still do the job just fine.

Mirrors and Mind Reading

Vamps have no reflections. Photos, video and film are effective though. One nasty trick would be to declare that cameras that use mirrors don't work, but that probably introduces a bit too much detail to the game.

Active telepathy (as opposed to mind reading) seems to work okay though.

Sleep

It's not clear that vamps need to sleep. They can do it but that's doesn't mean they must do it. They spend a lot of time indoors during the day. Given what we have seen on the level of intellectual pursuit by regular vamps, they probably don't spend that time reading or thinking deep thoughts. Sleep would be an effortless (the most effortless) way to wile away those hours. Then again, it would be poetic justice if sleep were very difficult for vamps. Just another feature of living with a demon inside of you.

Vampire Special Abilities

The basics will only take you so far in vampville. It's the special abilities that set the real nasties apart from the real newbies. Some special abilities come from great age (like the Master), some from before the vampire was turned (like Drusilla), and some from other sources of power (like Dracula's showy gypsy magic). These vampires had an advantage over the average bloodsucker, which is why each one has lived for over a hundred years. As discussed in more detail in Monster Spawning, vampires can have other capacities as you deem appropriate. We suggest things like flight, hypnosis, natural weaponry, and psychic visions. A couple other abilities deserve a few words.

Magic Shape-shifting

Dracula could shape-shift into a bat, a wolf, and a cloud of mist. Described as "showy gypsy stuff," it's entirely possible that Drac's powers derived from magic. If this is the case, shapeshifting actually requires some spell slinging. For those "showy gypsy" vamps (or anyone else who might have this ability), shape-shifting

effectively requires that the vampire also possess the Sorcery Quality.

The specs of the Gypsy Shape-shifting spell are shown on p. 102-103. The nature of the new form varies widely and grants different benefits. Some possibilities are discussed below. Feel free to devise your own.

Bat: Grants the ability to fly. Hiding in ceiling shadows is much easier (+8 to Crime when used to hide). And the whole sonar thing is an addition, not a replacement shape-shifted bats see just fine in the light. Only attack is a bite doing Strength points of Slash/stab damage.

Cat: Add +5 bonus to Crime (when used to sneak or hide) and Acrobatics. Also, if there's even a little light, cats can see as if it were daylight. No self-respecting vamp shifts to anything but a midnight black cat. The others are way too colorful. Only attack is a claw or bite doing Strength points of Slash/stab damage.

Cloud of Mist: Not much in the way of fast movement, but the cloud can drift through any sized hole. Makes barred doors and windows pretty much useless. Also, no touchie-can't hurt a cloud of mist with close or ranged attacks. A powerful fan will make a mess of things but the cloud can always pull itself back together in time. No attacks possible.

Rat: Add +10 bonus to Crime (when used to sneak or hide). Also, rats can get into very tight places (though the vamp better not change back while crawling around inside a wall. Only attack is a bite doing Strength points of Slash/stab damage.

Raven: Grants the ability to fly. Keener sight provides the Acute Senses (Vision) Quality. Attacks include talons for 2 x Strength of Slash/stab damage (only when combined with a swooping approach) and peck for Strength points of Slash/stab damage.

Snake: Add +8 bonus to Crime (when used to sneak or hide) and the ability to slither through many small places and entries. Only attack is a bite doing Strength points of Slash/stab damage. A nasty poison with a Strength equal to the vamp's Constitution is a highly preferred option.

Wolf: Double movement rates (if used; see p. 47). Add +3 bonus to Crime (when used to sneak or hide) but only at night. By day, this is strictly in the not-subtle camp. Attacks include a bite and claws each doing 2 x Strength points of Slash/stab damage.

Revivability

Where most bloodsuckers explode in a cloud of dust that briefly exposes their skeleton before that also crumbles, very old vampires don't always do this. Revivability is a Quality worth 10 points that allows a vampire to leave behind her bones (or some other portion of her body) after being dusted. The being doesn't necessarily die any easier or better than her lesser brethren, but she does enjoy the potential for returning to unlife. If the vamp's remains are used in a Resurrection ritual conducted by her friends or minions, death could not be so bad after all.

Revivability is useless in and of itself. Someone else must perform the Vampire Revivification ritual (see next page). Also, it requires some remains of some kind. On the ball Cast Members will notice something odd about a vamp that leaves such remains and will most likely do something about it (involving sledgehammers maybe).

Vampire Vulnerabilities

Vampires are strong and powerful, but they also have a number of weaknesses not possessed by humans. A stake through the heart is one of the main ways to kill a vampire. It's also a good way to kill a human. The difference is that most things stabbed through the heart leave a huge bloody mess. A vamp merely leaves a vacuum cleaner's nightmare.

The combat maneuvers section nicely covers the ol' stake in the heart and beheading. Again, a few new tidbits on the others might prove useful.

Looks

Face it, vamps in game face are downright ugly. All vamps showing their natural look gain Attractiveness -2 (and thus the standard -1 modifier on Fear Tests).

Sunlight

We've seen Angel and Spike run about in daylight using a trusty old blanket but it's not recommended. This counts as being in sunlight for less than a Turn and causes only two points of damage. Still, it better not be a long trip. Spike seems to make some serious cross-country trips in a car with painted windows. A vamp would take no damage in that situation, but it's got to set off some alarms with the local highway patrol. Being pulled over for a traffic infraction in daylight is not going to be good for either the vamp or the cop.

No vamp has tried SPF 1000 sunscreen-or least we haven't seen it. Let's presume the vamp Einstein who tried that is blowing in the wind.

A complete bodysuit made of heavy, tightly woven or rubber clothing might work. It could leave no portion of the vamp exposed (clear face plates should cause trouble) and even the slightest tear will expose the wearer to the two-point per Turn damage rate. Big rips are big trouble. Or you could just rule that it doesn't work at all. Depends on how uppity you want your vamps in daylight.

Private Dwelling

Vamps are unable to enter a private dwelling without being invited. Seriously, humans can stand inside a doorway and blow raspberries or mock a vampire's minions. It ain't classy, but it can be fun. Still, there are a few things to keep in mind on the whole private property front. This limitation only works on human dwelling places. Demon lairs are open to all vampires. Also, hotel rooms count as public places and are not barred to the undead. Faith was completely vulnerable to vampiric attacks from her room at the Downtowner Apts. Eighteen (or even eight hundred) dollars a day buys you no safety here. Only someone who lives in a particular dwelling can remove the barrier against vamps. Friends, relatives, door-to-door salesmen, and cat burglars won't do. Little sister invites are effective and oh-so-annoying.

Not being able to enter does not mean unable to affect. Nothing prevents a vampire from attacking or destroying the private dwelling itself. During her ... ahem ... crime spree, Harmony and her minions tossed a rock through Buffy's window. The clueless ones won't think of this, but the real Bads will no doubt come up with something sooner or later to take down those walls. When all residents of a dwelling are dead, the barrier drops immediately. So, make sure to lock your little sister in a big metal box in the basement ... and then don't let anyone near her ... ahhh, never mind-probably get some flack for that from your folks.

Crosses

Perhaps due to some conflict between the early Church and the vampires, crosses and holy water can cause pain and even injure a vampire. What is important to note here is that this vulnerability has nothing to do with the faith of the person holding the cross or water. Be they Christian, Jew, Muslim, or member of the Transcendental Skeptics Church, the object carries the power, not the wielder.

Why would this be, you ask? No one has really explained it on the TV show (indeed, the true answer may be lost to antiquity). Still, we wouldn't be doing our job if we didn't have a theory or two. Let's start with the beginning. In the ancient time, the shamans called the Hunter using a powerful ritual (or at least that's one theory).

What if, by some twist of fate, the ritual used the symbol of a cross? Remember, the cross has been around far longer than any of the major religions that have adopted it. The use of the cross to call the vampire's bane may have emblazoned that symbol on all demonic essence, and that imprint was passed along to the hybrids created since. In effect, the calling of the Hunter has left a residue that has tainted the vampires' racial memory. Hey, it's as good a theory as any.

Another approach would be to play with the cross vulnerability. Perhaps it has to do with the subconscious of the person who was turned. That means only those raised in a society heavily influenced by a church that uses the cross will be affected by it. Vamps who grew up in India or China or some other country where cross heavy churches are not so predominate might be unaffected by crosses in your campaign. No doubt some other symbol causes them distress, but we leave that to your fiendish imagination.

Garlic

Garlic seems to be a deterrent of sorts for vampires. It has never been shown what touching a clump of garlic does to a vampire, but Buffy hung garlands of the stuff in her room during the earlier episodes. If it does anything, it probably just causes a vampire to recoil, much like holding a cross. With such a reaction to the lovely little garlic clove, vamp meals are probably going to be a little bland, particularly if they are Italian vamps. 'Course, since all they ever eat is human blood anyway, variation in diet most likely isn't a major concern with the critters (Spike, always the exception, does like adding the occasional crumbled-up Weetabix cracker for texture).

Starvation

Vamps can live without blood-they have that whole immortal thing going for them. But it ain't pretty. They get extremely weak; after a time, they even have trouble walking. They also get thinner and thinner-some to the point of looking skeletal. How long this takes to happen is unclear. Spike has shown that they can last at least a day or two without food, though they are none too happy about it. We recommend that after two days, each day without food lowers the vamp's Strength and Constitution by one. Once the vamp reaches zero in both, it can't move.

Starvation causes other problems. Starvation causes a vampire's skin to crack. You could add skin discoloration, loss of hair, rotting of teeth, and even the smell of decomposition. Could be the whole body

returning to that "being-dead" state. There's also talk of mental destruction due to starvation in the extreme cases. An insane, catatonic, skeletal living dead. There's a pretty picture.

Restoring the vamp could be as easy as a few drinks of blood, though human blood is required in the most extreme cases. Or you might decide that an entire human's supply of blood (to death that is) is needed. Hey, it could be that several humans' worth are necessary. That's going to cause serious problems for any "humane" vamp who wants to be good, but also wants to walk again.

Bodily Functions

With that famous line, Angel raised a host of questions about vampires. He could not perform CPR on Buffy when she needed him most and Xander stepped in to save the day. Thus, it seems that a vamp's dead body cannot perform certain natural functions. Still, in 1.12 Prophecy Girl we see the Master breathe deeply while on the roof of the library, Spike has smoked like a chimney for as long as we have known him, and there's no shortage of vamp heavy panting in Season Six. Oh, and there must be some air movement through the old trachea and voice box to be able to speak. That means vamps have to be able to use their lungs to move the air. And it's not just air that's at issue. There're also questions about how dead organs process food and drink, why alcohol should get a vamp drunk, how Buffy could get all smootchie with room-temperature Angel and Spike ... and what about the whole visit to the little vamp's room biz.

How do we make sense of this? Well, we have some theories (as usual). Perhaps vamp organs don't work unless they want them to. Basically, they don't rot, but vamps don't need them for any specific function, unless they intentionally want to process something or take on the semblance of being alive. Of course, this raises the potential that a vamp might get stuck in a port-a-john until sundown, but that's most likely just a newbie mistake.

With lungs, vampires can exercise these muscles if they choose, but the breathing reflex is no longer autonomic. The body doesn't need it so it disconnects the nervous functions that keep it working. Also, it may be that the vamp can bring up enough wind to blow out a candle or exhale smoke, but not enough to perform mouth to mouth resuscitation which requires forcing air through the trachea and down into the lungs. Being able to simulate breath is also a good idea for vamps that pick up young college girls and don't want them to notice that the guy they are dancing close to isn't breathing on their ear or neck ... or at all. When a vamp wishes to breathe, she concentrates just a little, expands her ribcage and pulls air into her otherwise-vestigial lungs. Of course, it could be that brand new vamps keep on trying to breathe and don't realize until later that they don't need to bother. (Again, older vamps most likely laugh at this "dumb rookie" thing.) Finally, the heavy breathing thing (or deep sighs) could be a vestige from their living days. They got used to such activities back when they needed them and it's hard to break old habits (even if your unlife lasts centuries longer than your previous life).

In the game, you could have vamps perform bodily functions in the normal course. When it really mattered though, make the action impossible (performing CPR, breathing on something to heat it up, using the moisture in one's breath to clean a window) or require a Willpower (not doubled) roll (blowing out a candle, breathing on the victim's neck, raising their body temp).

Damage Types

Vamps react differently to various types of damage. For the vampire hunter, this is mostly bad news though.

Bash: Vampires absorb Bash damage just like humans. The only exception is the falling and large blunt damage mentioned earlier.

Slash/stab: This sort of damage hurts vamps just like it hurts humans, double damage once armor is penetrated and Success Levels added. It is inapplicable for stakes through the heart though. If your character doesn't dust the vamp, she just does base stake damage (2 x Strength; no other multiplying). Again, tenderizing is highly recommended. For the Decapitation maneuver, the targeting and the slash/stab damage is all factored into the x5 damage. If the attack takes the undead to -10 Life Points, she goes poof. If not, there's no dust, but the damage remains the same.

Another special case involves arrows and crossbow bolts. These usually cause Slash/stab damage, but for vamps they are treated as Bullet damage. That's right, they just don't hurt that much-assuming they miss the heart, that is. A Through the Heart maneuver using an arrow or bolt will do the dusting thing (if the damage threshold is met - x5 greater than the vamp's current Life Points). If it doesn't dust, the arrow or bolt does it's usual 1/5th damage.

Bullet: Bullet damage is divided by five (after armor reductions and Success Level bonuses; rounded down). It also never leads to dusting.

Fire: Fire damages a vampire normally, but heals much slower than usual (one Life Point per Constitution level per day, instead of per hour).

Other: With your approval, a creative Cast Member may attempt to use bullets or weapons containing holy water. Bullet or Slash/stab damage breaks the skin and could be treated as internal application of holy water (x20 damage). The amount delivered in this way would no doubt be small, but even so it could really hurt. Blessed weaponry or those shaped like crosses could also cause extra damage at your discretion. This could even be seen as part of canon if you credit Kendra's mention of a blessed weapon in 2.21 Becoming - Part One as being an instance of a more widespread phenomenon.

Slash/stab Revisited

As we have noted, pointy and sharp implements of destruction really mess up humans. Sharp stuff also does a number on vamps, but given their partial Bullet immunity, that may not be the case for stabbing weapons (other than arrows or bolts).

So, for those gaming veterans among you who want to add a bit more "realism" (whatta concept!) to your session, we offer the following rule. Decide which weapons are primarily slashing (axe, knife, sword) and which are mostly stabbing (pigsticker, spear, stake). The former do regular Slash/stab damage; the latter are treated like Bullets for vamps (that means a failure to dust with a stake really causes problems). It's more complex to do it this way but you may like it better.

Vampire Special Vulnerabilities

We don't have much to go on here, but we figured that some folks might like to play a bit with the usual vampire stereotypes. The following Drawback could be imposed on a particularly hide-bound vamp, or one that spent a bit too much time with Bram Stoker and Anne Rice.

Superstitious

A lot of people know a lot of stories about vampires, but not everyone knows fact from fiction. Unfortunately for this bloodsucker, she doesn't either. Whether she is newly arisen or a vamp that has never really been around others of her kind, this undead has no clue about her powers or limitations. She believes that she must sleep in a coffin with dirt from her grave, that she is unable to cross running water, that a crossroads poses insurmountable decisions, that killing her sire will restore her humanity, or that she can become a bat or a wolf (if she just concentrates hard enough and "gets the hang of it"). Each misimpression is a separate Drawback. When she is confronted with any of these situations, the vampire suffers a -1 to -3 penalty to all actions and cannot be convinced otherwise.

For example, the vampire can be led across water but won't realize she could have done it by herself. This Drawback can be great fun, particularly if more knowledgeable vampires are around. This Drawback grants one to three points depending on the penalties imposed.

The Biting Thing

The sharp-eyed among you may have noticed that once a vamp gets a bite attack in, the victim is allowed no defense roll. The cause is the intense though macabre pleasure inherent in being bitten. Vamps have been associated with intense pleasure as far back as Dracula, and Lestat certainly didn't dispel any of those myths. And the evidence is just as strong on the BtVS show. In Season Five, Riley becomes a vamp-bite junkie. That addiction may have been the result of physical or psychological changes induced by getting bit, but we're going with the simplest explanation: being bit gives the victim a feeling of euphoria not unlike sexual release.

Always the opportunists, some vamps use this byproduct of their feeding to their own advantage. By offering free bites (or even asking for money) to willing humans, the vamps get all the blood they need and the humans get a nice "rush." Above and beyond the "eww" factor, there's got to be some serious downsides to this practice - this is the Ciniverse after all. It precipitated the end of the relationship between Buffy and Riley but that's not enough for us. We've got some other suggestions.

As creatures beholden to evil, vamps don't suffer from any moral quandaries in offering "services" to humans. Indeed, it might be seen as a particular enterprising way of laying low and staying full. On the other hand, some-perhaps most-vamps might consider this activity unseemly or slavish. These "traditional" vamps might think that hunting is the vampire way-humans are to be stalked, attacked, and drained. This touchie-feelie, free exchange, cooperative attitude only weakens a vamp and is just another sign of a weakening moral fiber that has plagued the risen for generations (and since this practice has been going on for centuries, at least according to Anya, we mean "generations!"). So those vamps who get involved in bite dens may be shunned among their peers.

They might be upset by this and change their ways, but we doubt it. Shame isn't real big in the vamp psyche. For the humans, we're guessing things are much more dangerous. First off, people get hurt-each Turn

of consensual biting costs two to five Life Points. And this would only apply for vamps who drink slowly to extend their "client's" pleasure. Less experienced vamps might be hard pressed to keep from chugging-causing standard 3 x Strength damage. You might want to force the vamp to make a Willpower (doubled) roll to avoid that.

Also, a vamp might lose herself in the drinking and go a bit too far-have the vamp make a separate Willpower (doubled) roll to stop before killing the human. Too much of that is going to do a number on customer relations, but that's probably not a great concern for the vamps. There's also the whole issue of infection. Vamps don't fear germs from their clients but they may pass them along from one to the other. If you decide the vamp is "carrying," have the human make a Resisted Action against the Strength of the particular infection you've settled on, but only allow them a Constitution (not doubled) roll. Can't get a much better vector than direct fluid transfer. Finally, there's the inevitable fang marks on the victim's arms or other body part. In fact, they look a lot like a nasty form of those lovely needle tracks born by drug addicts. That's going to go over real big at swim parties.

Besides the immediate threats, a vamp-bite habit is highly addictive. Each bite requires a Willpower (doubled) roll by the victim. Penalties may be applied to this roll for continual bite den visits. Or you can simply say enough is enough and dictate an addiction. However imposed, bite junkies suffer a four-point Addiction Drawback. Between the overzealous vamp, the disease, and the addiction, it's clear this pleasure has a real cost. Hey, it requires systematic vamp biting-what'd you expect?

Oh, and we'd be remiss if we failed to mention that vamp-bite dens are usually not in the nicest parts of town. Getting mugged, murdered, or otherwise mistreated in or around these locales is not unheard of - especially if the character is staggering around with a good chunk of Life Points sucked out of her. Now, there may be high-class vamp bite dens serving exclusive clientèle (including clean, strong-willed vamps), but that's not going to come cheap.

Another angle to explore here is the mental repercussions of bite junkies. Perhaps they get a sense of aggrandizement ("I've got my own pet vamp"), self-loathing, depression, or emotional dependency. Maybe they become crueler or develop delusions about their own invulnerability or the harmlessness of vamps. These can be represented by various forms of the Emotional or Mental Problems Drawbacks.

Or you could just avoid the whole distasteful and dangerous business, and leave it out of your game. We're just offering options here.

Ecology

Vampires are not the most powerful type of demon in existence, but they are among the most numerous. This is because of the way vampires are created. While demonic reproduction most likely varies widely in process and time consumed, vampiric "reproduction" is much simpler. As the BtVSTV show states, when a vampire wishes to sire another, she bites the victim and feeds. Before the victim dies from blood loss though, she is made to drink the blood of the vampire. The victim then dies, only to rise as a vampire shortly thereafter. Now, the timing of the rise is not certain. We've seen many, many vamps claw their way out of the ground only to be quickly dusted by the Hunter, but there are counterexamples -in Season One, a vamp rose in the mortuary (1.5 Never Kill a Boy on the First Date), in Season Three, a watcher flunky was drained and raised almost immediately to free Kralik (3.12 Helpless), and in Season Four, Eddie rose the same night Sunday turned him (4.1 The Freshman). If you need a default time, let's say the night after the body is buried the vampire rises from the grave.

On the other hand, if your plotline demands it, rising at a quicker or slower time is fully justified. Given how many times the Hunter is around when a vamp rises, you could even make the call that the undead "wakes" when one of the living (or maybe just the Hunter) is nearby. That's going to cause real problems if they don't also intuitively know whether it's day or night up above though.

Sometimes vampires and their sires become sort of a surrogate family. Darla sired Angel, Angel sired Drusilla, Drusilla sired Spike, and all four of them hunted together until Angel changed because of the whole cursed-with-a soul thing. That grouping, as well as Drusilla and Spike's relationship, indicates that vamps can find strength in numbers and can even feel affection for each other. Even among the most monstrous of them, companionship runs strongly-the Master was quite fond of Darla. For others, there appears to be some instinct to group together and form packs or gangs. All in all, this would seem to increase the vamp survivability rate and thus be good for the "species."

On the other hand, it's unclear how common "familial " groupings are. A great number of vamps appear to take a bite 'em and leave 'em attitude. The dozen cemeteries of Sunnydale have seen the rising of countless vampires who had been turned and left to their own devices. That raises the question of why a vamp would make the seemingly conscious decision to turn a human, but then not stick around to get her through those first few "bestial" days.

It might be that this turning and leaving process is part of the vampire's evil nature. They might delight in

creating offspring and letting them fend for themselves. Perhaps the sires even watch over their "young," delight in their depredations, and find joy in their dusting at the hands of the heroes. We are talking evil here, right? Perhaps there's more to it. Maybe a secret group of vampires exists that turn humans to increase the number of vampkind, but then impose on them a survival-of-the fittest regime. That means for those who do survive, companionship or a societal structure will be offered.

Alternatively, perhaps the "turning" practice is not so "conscious". It may be that a vamp instinctively begins turning certain of her victims as a means of propagating the "species." Only those who are older and more interested in allies or minions use that innate drive to build a group of followers. The less evolved do the deed and simply forget about it afterwards.

Finally, there might be other means of creating vamps. While we have been told about the whole "one sucks, the other sucks" routine, maybe that's just one-particularly disgusting-way to turn a human into a vamp. If, under certain circumstances, a simple vamp bite and draining will create another undead, the numbers of bloodsuckers rising each night would be better explained. Or perhaps we can blame it on the Hellmouth. Maybe those bitten near a mystical nexus are more likely to rise even without the whole "sucking" thing. A creative Director who wanted to add her own twist on the Ciniverse could devise any number of alternative "turning" processes that could explain the frequency of vamp encounters.

Slayers and Vampirism

Slayers have always been a willful lot. That combined with their Hunter's powers may make them immune to being "turned" by a vampire. That's not clearly spelled out in the BtVSTV series. Indeed, the Fifth Season premier suggests the opposite and BtVS stories in other media have explored the idea of a Hunter vamp. We've got some ideas on this subject too (big surprise!). We are going to say that Slayers are naturally resistant to being turned into a vampire. They have a natural aversion to anything vampy and the whole hate-hate relationship between vampires and the spirit of the First Hunter going for them. In our view, the demon blood is going to have a hard time surviving its trip into the hostile territory of the Hunter's digestion. Unlike other normal

Janes out there, Slayers can make a Resisted roll pitting Willpower (doubled) roll against a Willpower (doubled) roll for the invading vampire spirit, to resist the turning. If successful, the ancestor of the First Hunter spirit beats the vampire spirit back and keeps it from taking over. Of course, the Hunter may still die, unless a friend is nearby to help out with a blood transfusion or keep her alive long enough to get her to the hospital. If the Resisted roll is failed, the Hunter will eventually turn into a creature of the night and rise from her grave to terrorize yadda yadda yadda. In that case, she ceases to be the Chosen One and her powers pass onto the next girl.

Still, an interesting twist allows some residual power to stay in the body of the former Chosen One. A Hunter who dies and returns as a vampire loses much of her former glory. However, she gets to keep +2 Strength, +1 Dexterity and Constitution along with the level of Getting Medieval and Kung Fu. She also gets to keep her Fast Reaction Time and Nerves of Steel. Her levels of Hard to Kill remain as does her fast healing ability. Lastly, she no longer has the Hunter ability to sense the presence of vampires and she may still be attacked by other vampiric Adversaries until she's proven she's one of the gang now.

Combined with the Vampire Quality benefits (where not duplicated), this makes a former Hunter vamp a pretty tough cookie. But we'd expect no less.

The Other Kind of Vamp

Some players may wish to use vampires as Cast Members. Being a vampire is a Quality that costs 12 points for a normal vampire (in which case it is a predatory creature who will want to eat everyone and therefore probably be inappropriate for your average Series) or 15 points for a vampire with some kind of control over her demonic instincts. Any vampire able to control her demonic instincts needs a background explaining that whole biz. These types of vampires are rare, and the reason they are so "humane" is hardly ever entirely beneficial (at least that's been the case with every example shown so far).

Angel has a soul because he was cursed by gypsies for killing a young woman who was very special to them. The purpose of giving him his soul was so that he would be wracked with guilt over the terrible things he had done. If he ever knows a moment of true happiness his soul will be lost once more (as happened on Buffy's seventeenth birthday).

Spike has a behavior modification chip in his head that was a "gift" from the Initiative. Every time he tried to attack a human in any way, he would be overcome by intense debilitating pain. He could still fight demons though, which led to him becoming an ally of the White Hats. At the end of Season Six, Spike made a pilgrimage to Africa and after surviving a number of combat ordeals was granted one wish. Because of that wish, Spike now also has a soul (but not a gypsy-curse-prohibiting-happiness one). What exactly this means remains to be seen.

It's probably not all, or even part, good though. Finally, on the Angel TV show, Darla became pregnant with Angel's child and as a result conceived a "human" child. Well, "human" might be a stretch, but it seems to have a human soul in any case. While Darla was pregnant, that soul was inside her (the baby's soul) and this seemed to affect her behavior.

It should be noted that in all three cases, the vampires still had desires based on their instincts. Even with Angel's curse, Spike's chip, and Darla's pregnancy, they still wanted to feed on humans (or at least missed it with the guilty longing of a recovering addict). They just couldn't or wouldn't. So along with her "gift" being a serious mixed blessing, a non-bestial vamp is not always so ... non-bestial.

No doubt there are other ways to be a "humane" vampire besides gypsy curses, Initiative chips, and the one vampire pregnancy in all of history. There are entities who can grant wishes. For example, what if Harmony had stumbled across a Vengeance Demon sometime during Season Four? A simple "I wish that Spikey would feel bad about all the mean things he ever did to me" could have resulted in an ensouled Spike during Buffy's freshman year at college.

A similar thing could happen to a Cast Member vampire. Most of Angel's early vampire-with-a-soul existence was spent pining for Darla, feeling guilty about his past, and just generally being miserable. He even fed on humans at first-he just made sure that they were bad humans. Now, what if during these early years, maybe during a fit of misery and loneliness, he sired another vampire? Nobody knows what would happen if a vampire with a soul sired another vampire-maybe this would create another vampire with a soul. Heck, maybe Angel got drunk, sired someone and forgot about it, and that vamp sired another, and another ... You could even postulate a whole secretive line of vampires, each one with a soul. And maybe they are organized in some way-a support group for human-souled vamps!

Finally, what would happen if a vampire's former soul decided to re-possess its old body? It's clear that ghosts exist in the Ciniverse; what would happen if a vampire met the ghost of her old self? Maybe the result would be a creature at war with herself, the demonic vampire and the human ghost each fighting for control. Perhaps a strong-willed human ghost could gain a measure of control. Sort of gives a new meaning to the term "haunted," no? And "humane" vamps don't have to mean "ensouled" vamps. As we saw with Spike's chip, it's possible to have a vamp work with the Good Guys even if she doesn't possess that spark of human soul. It's going to be a delicate balancing act, keeping control of all that evil, and the impetus is going to have to be darn strong, but it is possible.

The exact nature of this "evil-control" is left to the player's imagination. No doubt clever players will devise other circumstances for Cast Member vamps. Once you have the rationale set, you can proceed onto building the critter's actual abilities. That drops you back into the whole character generation thing.

Vamps and Morality

The discussion of human morality has occupied philosophers and evangelicals for nearly as long as humans have been around. Some of your players may want to play vamp Cast Members and you may want to devise more subtle vamp plots exploring the gray areas of their behavior. So, we figured a few words on the subject wouldn't be out of place.

As has been stated, vampires are basically dead humans possessed by demons. The human soul is gone, and with it goes the conscience or any kind of remorse. The demon brings a hunting instinct and all sorts of supernatural powers (the power to walk around after being killed being the main one). Still, the vamp has all the thoughts, the memories, and may adopt portions of personality of the person that was killed. So there seems to be some kind of unholy merger of the former human and the demonic monster. In many ways, the vampire is a reflection of the person turned.

So, perhaps it's the twisted human portion that's to blame for the really powerful vamps. It would be the height of irony if the demon aspect of a vamp were simply a mindless feeding machine (sort of how newbie vamps appear) and it was the human remains that ultimately exerted a measure of control over that beast. In that way, the humanity left in a vamp could be seen as the means of making real evil manifest. The demon side makes a vampire a monster, but the human side makes the vampire capable of great evil. Pretty depressing, no? In the Ciniverse it seems the human soul is the seat of goodness. It's the feature of humans that makes them feel good about doing good, and bad about doing bad. Maybe the soul even requires humans to do some good sometimes. There've been a few human Bads, but none of them were entirely evil. They each did a good turn at some point. Still, it's far from clear that a soul compels goodness in some way, however minor. Taking this view, the absence of a soul should remove any inclination toward goodness. That doesn't mean a soulless character would be unable to do something good or kind, it's just that they wouldn't think to do it on purpose. It would be accidental or tangential.

Given natural vamp proclivities, the demon spirit appears to be a comparable seat of evil. Maybe the demon in a vamp makes them feel good about doing bad, and bad about doing good. In this view, bad need not

be an all-consuming requirement, just an inclination or tendency. A vamp could do good but most likely it would be an aberration or accident.

Or maybe it's worse. Maybe the demon spirit forces the vamp to do bad at some point and in some way. Or it could just be a byproduct of the lack of a soul. The vamp may be experiencing a huge morality head rush-"I'm no longer human. I need not be saddled with human right and wrong. I'm strong and immortal, I can take life, I live on human blood, yadda-yadda-yadda." Superhumanity might create vamp mentality. This also brings in the point that the vamp spirit carries some knowledge with it. Newbie vamps come out of the ground bestial, but they aren't confused about what they are or what they want. Introspection comes, if at all, only much later in a vamp's unlife.

Now, once a vamp reaches some kind of self-inspection (if ever), it seems entirely possible that it could decide to adopt a human code of conduct. This might result from a calculation of pure self-interest. The vamp might think she'll live longer if she befriends some humans and works with them. The whole feeding on blood thing is a problem but it can be surmounted, as we have seen.

Another possibility is upbringing. Without getting into the whole nurture vs. nature debate, we could posit that a vamp trained by a powerful but humane disciplinarian could learn to behave. The vamp could have been conditioned to do good even if she gained no deep-seated pleasure from it. Over time, a sympathy for "fellow" humans could develop and the worst inclinations of the demon spirit could be contained.

None of this conjecture is possible if the demon spirit is deemed more compelling than whatever remains of the human. If the drive to evil is overwhelming, a "well behaved" vamp is an impossibility. Worse still, those who believe it possible could be deceived by a vamp and allow her to work even greater evil, pain, and harm.

Then again, if a "civilized" vamp is possible (whether as a result of the human remainder or because demon spirits aren't naturally beholden to evil), that throws a whole monkey wrench in the Hunter game. If vampires are redeemable, even in the most obscure and difficult ways, the job of the Hunter loses a great deal of the moral high ground. Is it right to kill what you could heal, just because it is difficult to do otherwise?

Dang, it's so much easier when things are black and white, no?

Suicide

It's difficult to imagine any circumstances that would cause your run-of-the-mill bloodsucker to commit suicide. Just doesn't jibe with the highly self-centered and instant gratification-oriented vamps we see nearly every week.

Now, a vamp with a soul might feel so rotten about her actions or nature that she would want to rid the world of her evil. A human soul brings with it all the human baggage that normal people suffer from. So it's not so hard to see why an ensouled vampire would contemplate suicide. Indeed, it's easier to see why she would become obsessed with it. An ensouled vamp Cast Member should probably face these questions sooner or later, and must decide whether she is too cowardly-or too driven to use her powers for good-to succumb to this way out. Non-souled vamps would need a darn good reason to contemplate suicide.

As this has been such a rare occurrence (one is about as rare as you get), it's hard to determine exactly what forces were at work here. Maybe this particular vamp had serious mental problems. Perhaps it's a special vamp power of Angelus' ... though that seems unlikely as he used it only once. It could have been a very unusual spell that compelled this behavior or maybe an item that we never saw or heard of again.

A cruel explanation involves the extreme evil that is Angelus. Let's say he drained a young girl, then forced her to drink and become a vampire. He could have waited until she rose and then fed her. Once she was sated and calm, he could have spun a terrifying story about what she had become. He could have told her that her unlife was only a fleeting thing, and that she had a special mission to perform before she returned to her "final rest." Or he could have explained that unless she performed this service, she was doomed to unlife and worse.

Maybe Angelus convinced his first victim by playing on her youth and inexperience, and managed to overcome the natural inclinations of the demon inside. We know that Angelus can be very convincing when he wants to be. It's even more horrific if the first few attempts didn't "take" though. He might have gone through several young girls to get one impressionable enough to do the task he asked.

Then again, it could also have just been some serious Drusilla hypnotism. But that's way too simple ...

Society

Regardless of the whys and wherefores (just what is a wherefore, anyway?), vampires do have their own society. They have their own holidays, their own beliefs.

They do often gather in groups (which makes them very susceptible to pyramid schemes). We have seen glimpses of a whole occult underground, where vampires and other demons spread news and help each other out. They drink together, party together, even play cards together. Maybe this is the human side of the

vamp manifesting though that doesn't explain the demon part of the society. In any event, over time, the newbie vamps are taught the unwritten rules of undead society (we assume they are unwritten; no one has mentioned a Vamp Civics 101 offering).

Holidays

One of the most universal observances among vampkind is the lack of activity on Halloween night (so maybe it is more of an anti-observance). This seems to be practiced by most of demonkind, not just vampires. Imagine Saint Patrick's Day with everyone in Leprechaun costumes and no beer to be found anywhere. Think about Cinco de Mayo being celebrated by everyone wearing ugly sombreros and talking like Speedy Gonzalez. We imagine that no self-respecting Irish or Mexican person would want to go anywhere on nights like that. Well, that's sort of what it is like for monsters on Halloween.

Or maybe there could be a deeper reason for staying inside on Halloween. That celebration is derived from the old Celtic holiday of Samhain, the start of their new year. Samhain was believed to be the night when the barriers between the otherworlds were thinnest and spirits could walk among the living, so ritual fires were lit to keep the spirits away. In other words, Samhain was the one night that humans were actively looking for demons and prepared to do something about it. It is easy to see how a superstitious belief could develop among the demons that attempting anything on Halloween would be bad luck (and in point of fact, no demonic plan that was carried out on Halloween thus far has ever been successful).

Now let's be clear. The demons' general distaste for Halloween doesn't mean it's always a quiet night. Some demons or vamps may decide to join the festivities and add a bit of edge to the holiday frights. Others, like human sorcerers or newly summoned fear demons, get right into the spirit of things and see it as the perfect time for mayhem. Perhaps they figure the field is basically clear of competitors that night and it's a good time to make a play.

In contrast to Halloween, many vampires celebrate the Feast of Saint Vigeous. The Night of Saint Vigeous is a lunar holiday so there is no set date for it (it's kind of like Easter, only evil), but it occurs sometime in late September. Tales tell of Saint Vigeous who led a crusade of vampires through Russia and Persia—one of the largest organized vampiric attacks in history. The Feast is celebrated by a form of self-flagellation; vampires spend the three nights scourging themselves into a berserker fury. This all culminates on the Feast of Saint Vigeous when a vampire's power is at its peak. Only the most traditional of vampires actually observes the holiday in this manner, but it is still a good excuse for a party.

The actual effects of Saint Vigeous are up to you.

Vampires might be granted five extra Drama Points or a +1 to all Tasks on this unholy night. Then again, it might all just be superstitious nonsense. Anyone who spends three nights working herself into a frenzy is going to feel like her powers are at their peak, whether they are or not. Another special night among vampkind is the Harvest. This "holiday" occurs once every hundred years and vampires consider it the most hallowed of all nights. A ritual can be performed on this night transforming a vampire into a Vessel for her sire. The Vessel drinks blood from her sire's wrist and the sire uses that blood to draw a three pointed star on the Vessel's forehead.

For the entire night of the Harvest, everyone killed by the Vessel will feed the sire. The wording of the ritual actually states that their souls will be fed to the sire, which makes it sound more powerful than just regular feeding (normally the bloodsucker just sucks blood as far as we know). You may wish to grant certain benefits to a sire for every victim killed by her Vessel. Perhaps every victim killed grants a +1 to the vampire's Life Points, every fifth victim also grants an extra Drama Point, and every tenth victim also grants a +1 to any Attribute. These bonuses might only last until sunrise and the end of Harvest Night.

Organizations

Vamps appear to have a pack instinct. The actual trappings of that grouping arise from the alpha vamp, or whoever else is in charge.

Order of Aurelius: This vamp gang seems to have been one of the most respected. It was symbolically represented by a stylized sun surrounded by three stars (the sun weakened and the night triumphant is one possible interpretation). Aurelius was a vampiric prophet from the twelfth century whose writings were the basis of a religious movement. For six hundred or so years, this movement was led by Heinrich Joseph Nest, a vampire better known by the epitaph of the Master. Aurelius spoke of the Old Ones who could be brought back to Earth by opening the Hellmouth. He also spoke of a special vampire, the Anointed One, who would aid in this great unholy work. The Master believed that vampires were superior to humans and as such they should not seek to emulate the mortals. Human society was a plague, and vampires should keep themselves separate from that contamination. Humans were meant for food and making more vampires, nothing more.

The Order of Aurelius finally had the chance to attempt this great work when they found a Hellmouth.

The Order moved their operations, feeding on the townsfolk until the time was right to attempt opening the Hellmouth so that the Old Ones could reconquer the world. An earthquake put an end to the Order's plans and trapped the Master for sixty years until the approach of the Harvest allowed him to awaken. The Harvest was the Master's chance to escape, but it was ruined by the recently arrived Hunter. In less than six months, she managed to wipe out the Order of Aurelius. After nine hundred years as one of the most feared and powerful vampire cults, they were gone. Well, maybe not entirely gone. Several who survived attempted to later raise the Master and restore their order. That too was unsuccessful, but who knows if every last one was dusted. Further, what if an enterprising young vampiric decided to adopt the legacy of the Order of Aurelius (no doubt there are histories that could be learned and incorporated)? Worse yet, perhaps the vamp learned of a ritual that would restore the Master without an intact skeleton.

El Eliminati: The fifteenth century brought not only an organized cult of vampires, but one that centered around dueling. This highly advanced cult was known as El Eliminati. They were powerful enough in their day, but eventually grew weak (partly from being hunted by humans and partly from pointlessly dueling all the time). The cult was ultimately taken over by a demon named Balthazar, who brought them to the New World.

Balthazar and his vampiric minions were a force to be reckoned with for a time, until the demon was defeated and crippled by Richard Wilkins. Many thought that Balthazar was dead, but he was merely bloated and grody. Most of his power had been invested into an amulet and that amulet now belonged to the Mayor. Balthazar and his vampire acolytes hid for the better part of the century. They attempted one last attack on the Mayor to prevent his Ascension. The attack failed and the amulet was never recovered. Balthazar and what remained of El Eliminati were completely wiped out by two Slayers.

Still, like the Order of Aurelius, El Eliminati may survive. Removed from the corrupting influence of their former demon overlord, perhaps the cult returned to their origins and became unbeatable swordsmen (... swordsvamps?). Lord knows, immortality brings lots of practice time. Some may seek to reestablish the cult's former status and influence. Some may desire a new leader or patron. Some may simply desire revenge against the Hunter or any of her progeny.

Lesser Lights: Smaller and younger gangs of vampires are probably the most common. A relatively small group of vamps gathered around the Anointed One/Spike/Drusilla in Season Two, the Mayor in Season Three, and Adam in Season Four. This goes to show that vamps are not hugely particular about their leaders. They are perfectly willing to go along with those strong enough to keep them in line and powerful enough to make sure they get fed regularly.

Sunday was a strong-willed vampire who led a group that consisted of only a few vampires at any given time. They took over the Psi Theta house in the 1980s after that fraternity had lost its charter and the building had been condemned. Sunday's gang preyed on freshmen at the University of California Sunnydale. The vampires would kill the freshman, take all her stuff, and then leave a note that made it look like she could no longer take the pressures of college life and so had to get away from it all. This system worked until the Hunter started attending UC Sunnydale. Like the Order of Aurelius, Sunday's gang was completely wiped out by the Hunter.

In contrast to the ultra-cool and effective (for a time) Sunday Gang, Harmony and her minions were the ultimate in lightweight from the beginning. Were it not for the blunders of the Scooby gang (particularly Dawn's inexperience), their efforts would have been laughable at best. Certainly the fisticuffs between Xander and Harmony can't be confused with anything approaching a "dance of death." As nemesis-es go, Harmony and gang worked the laugh track overtime.

Another group of vamps decided to hole up in a crypt in one of the many Sunnydale cemeteries. We didn't get to see this seemingly leaderless crew in action enough to know what their plans (if any) or capabilities were (though one did manage to tag Buffy with her own stake). They seemed a bunch of rough and ready gang-types with more hunger and muscle than brains. Riley wiped out the bunch with a well placed, if far-too-reckless grenade attack.

Any of these groups could be reformed and sent to plague Cast Members. Bringing Sunday back would be great as she seemed to be a very promising character. Getting her past the whole dusting thing would be tricky, but it's been done before. Also, Harmony's not dead (well, not dead again) and she could rebuild the group to give a newbie group of Slayerettes a night or two of concern. They should definitely be played as bunglers, at least at first. It would be a real kick in the pants if they later turned out to "have a clue." Could be a good lesson in underestimating foes. Alternatively, these minor gangs could simply serve as templates for a new group, created out of whole cloth. Vamps often attack in a group. That doesn't mean they have to be a functioning gang with plans and a hierarchy, but that would sure make them tougher to handle.

Vampire Hunters

No chapter on vampires would be complete without a word or two about those who hunt them. It takes a

certain sort of crazy to accept the reality of vampires; it moves to a whole 'nother level when you actively seek them out and fight them. Oh sure, into every generation a Hunter is born, but there's just the one. Watchers are much more plentiful, but most of them ... well ... just watch. The vampires and demons are everywhere, so what are you going to do when that darkness comes to your door? You can do what most people do: scream, run and try to ignore the whole thing, or you can pick up a sharp wooden object and get even.

No town sees as much vamp activity as a Hellmouth, but the toothy buggers still get around. Mostly their victims end up on the missing person list and are eventually forgotten about. Every so often though, the vamps pick on the wrong person and someone comes looking for revenge. On rare occasions, the victim survives the attack and decides to hand out some payback. More often, the hunter is the victim's lover, friend or relative who can't accept her loss and realizes very quickly that the police aren't going to get the job done.

Such an individual is exceedingly rare. The hunter is dedicated and vengeful in the extreme, far more than any Scooby Gang member. She allows her life to go to hell so she can spend all her time getting even. This dedication is one of the things that keeps the hunter alive. On the other hand, this sort of person does not play well with others. No one understands the pain she is going through and no one can help her do what has to be done. Few take up such a suicidal burden. If life still had any meaning for her, she would try and deal with the pain another way. So, driven by a need for justice and revenge the hunter goes out hunting. She finds a vamp, hopefully the one who killed her friend and stakes him. If she has any sense, she will locate his lair, watch him to find out his habits, and plan the best moment to attack. That's beyond most though, and roughly ninety percent end up the next meal of the first vamp confronted. The ten percent who survive necessarily show an aptitude for tactics and personal combat. That hunter proves very resourceful and, most of all, knows the value of patience.

No normal untrained human is going to survive a fight with a vampire. A hunter who makes a career of this terminal hobby learns to pick her moment. Take on the vamp from behind or lock him outside his crypt just before dawn. The only advantage a hunter has derives from surprise. No vampire expects a human to be so stupid as to try and take him on. The experienced hunter knows that she can allow no compromise or mercy. In a fair fight, she won't just lose, she will be lunch. Every fight is very likely to be her last. This means the hunter can't allow morals or fair play any place in her mind. To some, putting other people in danger is an unbreakable line. To them, everyone is someone's mother, brother, or best friend. These types risk their lives for total strangers, because every time a vamp is denied a meal they gain a small victory. To others, all is fair game. The dusting is the ultimate goal ... and the only one.

Playing a group of hunters with no Hunter back-up can make for a dangerous and dark campaign. The characters are outgunned and have very little idea about the enemy.

Everything must be learned from trial and error and mistakes usually cost a teammate. It also makes for some pretty intense roleplaying. Being in desperate life or death situations on a constant basis will do that. To even the score a little, you might allow one of the characters to play a rogue Watcher. She can provide enough basic vampire knowledge to give the group a fighting chance. Also think very carefully about the sort of group the characters are to become. They could be a gang like Gunn's, all bound in a common cause but only willing to defend their own turf. Another option is the way we see Giles, Oz and their small group in the alternate Slayerless Sunnydale. Such a gang works on desperation and hope more than anything else. No matter who they are, they will have to be extremely resourceful to survive. Vampire hunting has a very steep learning curve and it rewards improvisation and cleverness. This is a game centered on hopelessly outmatched White Hats. In fact, given the chances of survival, such a game might make a good break from an existing campaign.

"Okay folks, here are some new characters you are going to play until they are all dead. Should run about four sessions."

But it isn't a game about waiting to die. It is a struggle against terrible odds to fight a cause that's right. Lord knows, the Hunter ain't around and someone's got to do it.

Demons

First of all, talking about demons is a little bit like talking about dinosaurs. Yes, they are all labeled alike but they can range from tiny protobirds to massive behemoths (in truth, that applies to both dinosaurs and demons). This chapter runs down the general specs on demons and is mostly composed of demons that are part of a group or race, or that don't exhibit much in the way of smarts or personality. Special demons-those that can string two or more sentences together and might even develop a plan for world conquest-are elsewhere.

A Walking Study in Demonology

According to Ciniverse lore, demons existed on Earth billions of years ago. That means that even before life developed on this planet, there were demons. It was the development of life that became a curse for

demonkind. As life became more complex, the demons were pushed off of our world into other realities, the hell dimensions, and demon realms. By the time scrawny hairy rodents had evolved into the earliest forms of man, the demons were no longer the dominant form of life on Earth. The Old Ones had left this world completely only to find themselves unable to return. Of the demons that remained, some went into hiding while others interbred with humanity to create new hybrid beings.

The first demons were the Old Ones, ancient powerful creatures best described in rambling capitalized adjectives. They are the Ancient Chthonic Horrors Incomprehensible To Man. When they first enter our world, they merely appear as gigantic monsters, masses of tentacles and claws and teeth. Sometimes this form will vanish, and a true, more horrifying form will take its place.

The Old Ones are the True Demons-demons in their most basic form. A human can figure out a vampire's motivations and concerns, but there is no way to actually think like an Old One. There may still be some True Demons, or at least entities akin to True Demons, on Earth. Lurconis may have been one of these and the Mayor (in his snake form) was briefly on our world. But True Demons are a huge, huge drain on property values and should be almost as rare as soulful vampires in your or any other Ciniverse.

The demons commonly encountered in this world are hybrids. Many are some form of human-demon hybrid (though they would never admit that), but others are more primitive than that. Most demons are bipedal and have a basic humanoid form (two legs, two arms, one head), but some of those are nothing more than animals. They have failed to achieve sentience. Creatures like the Hellhounds and the Queller are beasts who simply reproduce and feed, just like any other animal. These survival traits often require killing off humans, which drops them squarely into the "evil" category, but they aren't the type to summon dark forces and open the Hellmouth. Now, that doesn't mean they won't completely destroy a town from time to time, but that is more from hunger than maliciousness. Some bestial demons are huge creatures like the Bezoar and the Ghora who in no way resemble a humanoid form.

The other type of demon hybrid is one that actually thinks more like a human. They may be evil, but they have language and culture (y'know, culture as in killing people with a weapon instead of just claws and fangs).

Worse still for the dedicated vanquisher of evil, a few of these sentient demons are not actually 100% evil. The thing about demons is that they tend towards evil the way humans tend towards good. Most people are decent enough, but then you get someone like Hitler or Stalin. Most demons are evil (or at least very, very violent), but then you come across someone like Clem or Whistler. Some demons join apocalyptic cults (like the Sisterhood of Jhe), some work for the highest bidder (like M'Fashnik), and others just relish wanton destruction (like the Fyarl).

Many demons belong to a warrior culture and are often used as foot soldiers in extra-dimensional armies. On Earth, they mostly cause trouble and play poker for kittens. So far all the demons discussed have had a physical form, but some entities are insubstantial. These are mainly the possessing demons, entities like Eyghon who take over a host so that they can feel physical sensations-or just cause some random destruction. Having no physical form, it often takes magic to defeat such a creature. Either that or tricking it into an ambulatory corpse.

Along with sentience and form, there appears to be no uniformity in social patterns. Demons can be found as individuals or in tribes. The Fyarl, the Sisterhood of Jhe, and the Queller are all races of beings. There isn't just one of each running around. Other demons, like D'Hoffryn or Sweet, seem to be the only one of their kind. These types of demons often assume mythical roles-for instance D'Hoffryn is the Lord of Vengeance Demons while Sweet is an Underworld Lord of the Dance. These individuals are smarter, more powerful, and often have a group of minions to test the heroes, bring in victims, fetch coffee, and inflate their egos.

Those Things That Demons Do

As we mentioned, demons come in all shapes and sizes. It makes sense that they also have all sorts of different powers. In fact, it's probably safe to say that there're no "standard" demon abilities. In this way, they are quite unlike vampires. All demon powers are special ... just like all demons are special (awhhh).

Demons are tough. Demons are strong. Demons are ugly (though usually not to each other). Demons can have claws, fangs, horns, spikes that shoot out of their arms, pretty much any natural and unnatural attack that can be imagined. Some demons also have natural armor. A number of other powers are discussed in Chapter Six: Monster Spawning (see p. 129). These are mentioned in the individual demon write-ups, and may be used for do-it-yourself demons.

Cast Member demons gain the benefits of whatever demon "race" they choose when they build their character. Thus, their standard powers and vulnerabilities are circumscribed. Only the special ones show variations.

Demons and Morality

While there is some question about vampires, their demon spirits, and their human remainder (see p. 28), it's pretty clear that demonhood is not the same as evil in the Ciniverse. From Whistler to Clem to the circus folk to Anya, we've seen lots of "non-evil" and even some "good" demons.

This capacity for good could be upbringing, control by a more powerful master, or ... gasp ... the result of the demon version of the soul. Some demon races may have it, some may not. But you can't judge a book (or a demon) by its cover (or seriously wrinkled skin). As we mentioned in the vamp discussion, that makes the metaphysics of Slayerhood very messy. If demons (or at least some of them) have souls, why is it okay to kill them and not humans? Is a demon soul necessarily worth less than a human one?

Perhaps it's best not to focus on the whole soul vs. no soul aspect. In some ways, we can see that Buffy has taken this tack. If a demon is being bad, a soul (as in capacity to be good) shouldn't matter that much to a Hunter. The problem with that line of reasoning is it frees up the Hunter to take out bad humans without messing about with the whole soul question.

'Course all this is only for those roleplayers who want to get into it. For the rest, drop the ethical dilemmas and just kick serious evil butt!

Demons and the People Who Worship Them

As if demons by themselves weren't bad enough, sometimes the Cast will run into humans who worship demons. Usually this is part of a mutually beneficial arrangement-the demon grants boons or powers in exchange for offerings. For example, the demon Machida granted prosperity and good fortune to the members of the Delta Zeta Kappa fraternity in exchange for an annual human sacrifice. The Mayor had many demons that he served; he made sure that Lurconis got a bunch of babies to eat every thirty years and Lurconis granted the Mayor ... well, something good (evil?) obviously. A person wouldn't go around offering babies for nothing-that would be insane (oh, a little late for that as well).

In any case, the human demon worshipers seen in the Ciniverse are usually in it for the power. They are granted Boons, which are just conditional Qualities. This can be anything from increased Resources to something supernatural like Sorcery or an increased life span. The Boon(s) is balanced by an Obligation(s), something like the Obligation Drawback (see pp. 43-44).

Having to sacrifice animals for the Boon would be relatively minimal and equivalent to an Important Obligation. Sacrificing a human would be equivalent to a Major Obligation. So what kind of person would kill another human being for their own gain? A bad one, obviously. Some are those with the Zealot Drawback-insane cultists serving the forces of evil out of some misguided fanatical delusion. This is relatively uncommon from what we have seen of the Ciniverse so far. Zealot demon worshipers are usually just lesser demons, dreaming of the Old Ones and the pre-human "golden age" when demons ruled the Earth.

Human worshipers are usually in it because they have the Serious Covetous Drawback or worse. They aren't fanatical, just ambitious or greedy. They are not sacrificing humans out of a deep-seated religious belief, they are killing because they want a nice car and a big house (or eternal youth or whatever). It's hard to say which one is more evil.

Spirits and Ghosts

Perhaps the easiest way to remain with the living in the Ciniverse is to become a ghost. No need to become a demon or invoke dark magic-a ghost is merely someone who died and now remains in this world as a spirit. Of course, the reason a ghost remains behind is usually something horrible that it wishes to make right. This often has to do with the way that the ghost died. So, if a Cast Member can interact with the dead and word gets out to that effect, she's going to find herself spending a lot of time helping dead people resolve their issues. And ghosts are not the only spirits to be found in the Ciniverse. There are all sorts of incorporeal beings, many of which seem to be manifestations created by a particular action. It could be something mundane and tragic or it might be the result of a powerful ritual. It could even be a ritual that was conducted because of something mundane and tragic. The spirits can be even more dangerous than ghosts, though both types of creatures are generally driven by a particularly obsessive desire. Whether this is for forgiveness from a murdered teacher and lover, or retribution for the extermination of an entire race, or something completely different depends on the spirit in question.

This category covers animated or possessed objects, poltergeists, and all kinds of spirits, from emotionally overcharged poltergeists to spirits awakened from and by magic as a backlash.. Quite a line-up, don't you think?

Zombies and the Undead

Of course, it is no fun coming back from the dead if you are going to just be an incorporeal spirit. Having

a body is kind of the whole point of the world of the living. The most common corporeal corpse is the vampire, but there are ways to have a physical post-mortem existence without the inconvenience of losing a soul and gaining a demonic spirit. These full-body non-breathers are mummies and zombies. The absence of a demonic spirit means that they have a more difficult time staying not dead. This could mean that they never look more alive than they did at the time of their rising (in other words, most look like rotted corpses). If they can assume the appearance of life, it usually takes the life force of other people to prevent them from looking like the rotted corpses they are.

Where the Wild Things Are

A sect of animal worshippers known as the Primals believe that human consciousness is a perversion and that the true spiritual state is an animal one. They developed rituals to draw animal spirits into themselves, such as the Masai ritual for hyena possession. It is unknown if the werewolf curse is derived from a similar human source or if they are merely some kind of antivirus that Mother Nature has come up with to fight back at mankind. In any case, Primals (and here we are not talking about a specific cult, but rather human-animal hybrids in general) are different from other monsters. Demons belong to an order of life that was pushed off the planet a long time ago; Primals actually belong here. That might give them a greater right to continued existence ... or not.

Some Primals can shape-shift into an animalistic form; others merely experience an internal change. Also, Primals are always predators (no sheep, hippos, or canaries). And for some reason, they usually prefer human prey.

Witches & Weird Science

The Ciniverse includes vampires, demons, ghosts, and werewolves. It also includes things like robots, chemically mutated humans, witches and warlocks. Through magic, all sorts of miraculous enchanted items may be created. Science (or at least the Weird Science from pulp stories and comic books) can also be used to create some fantastic items, but in truth this is merely a different form of magic. The same forces that are used to create Dagon Spheres can be used to create androids and transformative chemicals. Magic and Weird Science are just two sides to the same paranormal coin (which we will not be calling the para-dime, because that would just be wrong). The rules for using Weird Science and creating fantastic devices are covered in superscience and enchanted devices chapter earlier, but the more animated results of these experiments are listed below.

Once Upon a Time

The Hunter has fought some monsters that may very well just be demons, but that's not entirely clear. Just in case (we don't want any monster coming at us for misclassification, y'know), we are going to describe them as bogeymen. Bogeymen are strange. They don't easily fit into any category-they do things for unknown reasons and according to bizarre rules. They're eerie and unsettling when they appear, striking with disturbing subtlety rather than outright force. They're Fear given form and flesh. Most bogeymen are difficult to harm-the Gentlemen were practically invulnerable and only children could see Der Kindestod. To defeat a bogeyman, you really need to understand its rules.

The Evil that Men Do

We've covered all sorts of monsters from the Ciniverse. With all of that supernatural peril running (crawling, swimming) around it can be easy to forget that the evil perpetrated by human beings can be just as bad. Buffy has run into her share of humans who make Norman Bates look like a rock of sanity. Still, there are some major differences between evil humans and evil monsters. The main one is that Buffy can't justify offing them in her role as the Hunter. That's a line she works very hard not to cross (with good reason, considering what it did to Faith). Another difference is that even with all their powers and abilities, no supernatural creature has ever hurt Buffy as deeply as a human has. From staking Ford to dealing with Faith and Angel (or Faith in Buffy's body on Riley's body), these folks gave twisting the knife new meaning for Buffy. This was even truer with Willow and what she went through because of Warren Mears. Humans always make a good twist for a season's Big Bads.

Monster Concepts

In the show, monsters are often more than simple killing machines that need to be put down like mad dogs (although there're plenty of those, too). Before jotting down stats and numbers, it's a good idea to think

about the concept behind the monster. What role will the critter play in the Episode? Does the monster have any symbolic or hidden meaning? A lot of Buffy monsters are metaphors for the trials and tribulations of growing up, cloaked in the supernatural and given a fangs-and-latex coating for good measure. Here are some possible concepts.

Cannon Fodder

Easy enough—these monsters get no lines; they just show up to act as punching bags for the Cast. They are the simplest (and usually the most boring) monsters available. Your typical vamp fills that role, but demons, human cultists and other miscreants can be tossed in for extra variety.

The Archetype

Some monsters are embodiments of classic characters from mythology and fiction. Examples include the Trickster (who deceives and misdirects the characters), the Tempter (who offers a deal that is actually too good to be true), the Great Beast (think Jaws or Moby Dick; the hunt for the Great Beast is the story itself), the Guardian (the creature bars the way to the characters' goals), and the Dark Reflection (the villain is the moral opposite of a character, but has enough in common with her to create a great deal of self-doubt).

Picking an Archetype is a good way to start. Let's take the Trickster, for example. Unlike your typical monster, the Trickster rarely attacks the characters directly. Instead, it uses lies, illusions or word-games to get the victims to do what it wants. A Trickster should not be very powerful (otherwise why resort to trickery?), but its machinations should be nice and convoluted. Demons make good Tricksters, although a wily vampire or a cunning human (like Ethan Rayne) would do as well.

The Hidden

These are the creatures for Whodunit Episodes—the monster is striking from the shadows, disguised in a human shape or otherwise protected from discovery. Discovering its identity is half the battle (the other half is an appropriately violent ass-kicking session, of course). When designing a Hidden monster, you need to figure out its modus operandi, the nature of its disguise/ hidden place, and what clues will eventually (or hopefully) lead the Cast to it. A number of red herrings can be tossed in along the way to send the characters off in the wrong direction.

The Metaphor

Then there's the symbolic monster, a creature that represents some facet of being a teenager or young adult, of dealing with life or facing moral dilemmas. You can take any problem from school and turn it into a monstrous encounter with a bit of exaggeration and dramatic license. Confronting a bully, for example, can be used for inspiration to create a monster whose power terrifies a Cast Member, but must be dealt with by that character alone. Or take the "Just say no" situation and turn it into a demon who offers "happiness" in return for the victim's soul or moral principles (making her perform crimes as "payment" for example).

When creating a metaphor, it's important not to lay it on too thick, and keep the preaching to a minimum.

Recycling: Return Appearances

Not every monster has to be brand-new either. There's something almost comforting about seeing an old fanged, demonic or gross-out face make a return engagement, especially when the villain in question was challenging and memorable. Coming up with a rationale for the monster's return can be tricky though, especially when the monster came down with a bad case of the deaths in the prior meeting.

This Time It's Personal

Sometimes a villain gets away, and promises to return to get some payback. Assuming the critter in question didn't get killed (in which case turn to Sometimes They Come Back just below this section), having it return to punish the Cast for their deeds is a natural. The old villain may be working alone, or might have brought some new friends along. Since it was defeated before, it should have some sort of enhancement—a mystical weapon, some new kewl powerz, or a master plan to destroy the Cast and take over the world—to ensure (at least in its mind) that there is no repeat defeat.

Sometimes They Come Back

Bringing back dead villains is a tried and true plot device. Maybe somebody can figure out how to gather the dust of the Master's bones, for example. Any dead Big Bad could somehow be brought back from the afterlife to further torment the Cast. Just as in *This Time It's Personal*, the returned Big Bad should have some new edge or trick up its sleeve, since the Cast has already kicked its buttocks once. On the other hand, if the Cast Members were lucky or were able to use some one-of-a-kind plot device to destroy the villain, then its return makes things fairly desperate for our heroes, as they scramble to find a way to defeat the now seemingly unstoppable monster.

“You Killed My (Insert Relative); Prepare to Die”

Rather than bring back the Big Bad itself, have a relative, clone, close friend or associate show up in its stead. This is like *This Time It's Personal*, but with a new villain who may have some similarities to the late monster and probably has its own special abilities as well. An interesting twist is to have the Cast discover that the former Big Bad was just a “baby.” Now Mom's here, and boy is she pissed.

Monster Spawning

It's alive! It's ALIVE!

So you like the range (and research) of the nasties covered already, but what you really want to do is create. No biggie. This chapter contains a grab bag of assorted monstrous abilities and powers to be mixed and matched and shaken liberally. Simply decide what powers you would like your beastie to have, pile them all together, calculate some Scores, and presto-instant bad!

For those looking to devise new races, that process is essentially the same but includes an additional step. First you need to define what Attribute bonuses, skill bonuses, Qualities, and Drawbacks make up that particular race of demon. Once those are settled, bunch them up and call them the Demon (fill in the blank) Quality. That cluster of features then becomes the hallmark of that race of demon. Feel free to add additional aspects to individuals within that demon race, unless of course they are all just demon mooks fit only for stomping in copious quantities.

Please be aware that we haven't provided specific point costs for the various abilities in this chapter; we simply described the general capabilities of the powers. This leaves you Directors plenty of flexibility to sculpt your monster's features as needed (hey, even in the middle of a game session if things aren't going to your liking). The full details for devising all sorts of supernatural and otherworldly Cast Members are found in the Quality section at the start of the book.

We have confidence that the more inventive of you will be able to cobble new character creations together with all sorts of weird and wondrous powers (yah, go ahead and take that as a challenge).

Villains, Henchmen, and Innocent Bystanders: Putting muscle on the Monster Bone

Monsters, cops, teachers, and post office workers- they are the people that the Cast encounter along the way. Some are unremarkable, straight-from-Central-Casting nameless characters. Others are the Cast's friends and family, dangerous foes, or terrible Adversaries. Usually, the Supporting Cast can be created from Episode to Episode. Over time, you'll get recurring characters, and they'll play a role in many a Plot or Subplot.

Most Supporting Cast characters do not need full character sheets, or even Quick Sheets, unless this is one of those games where the Cast are going to be fighting everybody they encounter. For minor roles, all you need is a name, if that, and the role the character is going to play in the Episode. Victim #3, for example, is unlikely to need much development, except to be thankful after being rescued. Your typical cannon-fodder vampire minion rarely needs much beyond the basic Attributes and Ability Scores.

Then you have the “named” roles-relatives, friends, colleagues, or hated enemies of the Cast. A Quick Sheet suffices for the mechanics aspect, but you probably want to spend some time fleshing out that character's personality and attitude. If all the Supporting Cast sound and behave the same, the Series is going to feel like the Clone Wars, emphasis on the “clone.” A teacher should sound and act differently from a police officer, or a Cast Member's father, or an aging Survivalist wacko still living in the 1980s (then again, a Cast Member's father could be an aging Survivalist wacko still living in the 1980s). After the Cast has been created, it's probably a good idea to make some notes fleshing out the people in the character's lives. If they are in graduate school or

at regular jobs, a couple of professors, advisers, supervisors, subordinates, and fresh-faced interns are good to have around. Keep them as recurring characters, and if any of them becomes a victim, their demise will have more than emotional impact than Dead Body #23. Additionally, have a roster of Supporting Cast Members ready to go at a moment's notice. That way, if the Cast decides to do the unexpected, you have something to throw at them.

Determining Attributes and Ability Scores

Many Supporting Cast Members are merely excuses for a good butt kicking by the stars of the show. When it comes to that, having their "stats" handy keeps the action flowing. This does not mean that you have to go through the entire character creation process for each and every enemy the Cast encounters. Far from it-all you have to do is assign Attributes, put together the Ability Scores, figure out any attacks or special abilities the characters have, and you're good to go.

Attributes: Unlike players, you don't need to divide a set amount of points among the six Primary Attributes. Just pick and choose what fits. If you need to stat out a couple of lounge lizards with roving hands, you could make them average across the board (all 2s), or maybe give them a couple of Attributes at three. If you are casting a team of berserk construction workers, give them a high Strength (4 or 5), above average Dexterity and Constitution (3 or 4), average mental attributes, and you're all set to go. It doesn't matter if the total Attribute points come to 11, 13, or 35, if that's what the character needs.

For vampires and supernatural beings, Attributes are at the high end (4 to 6). After that, just look at the chart on p. 26 to figure out Life Points, add any bonuses for the Hard to Kill Quality (see p. 39; most normal humans will not have any), and the Attributes are done.

Ability Scores: You don't have to figure out the skills of most Supporting Cast Members. Instead, use the Ability Scores (Muscle, Combat and Brains; see p. 113) to get a rough idea of what the character can do. As discussed, Ability Scores are determined by the character's Attributes. Most regular folk will have Ability Scores in the 9-13 range. Vampires and extraordinary people will be in the 14-20 range. Nasty Adversary types will have even higher numbers. Again, if you want to avoid the whole math and guesswork angle, consult the Score Tables (see p. 223).

A good, quick way to determine Ability Scores is to use the Cast's skills and Attributes as benchmarks. Take the toughest Cast Member's Dexterity and Kung Fu totals and use it as the base. A cannon-fodder mook should have a Combat Score equal to the base +1 or +2 tops. That means the best fighter can hit that mook on a roll of one or two-no sweat. A tougher guy should have a Score of +3 to +5 over the base. That means the Cast Member is going to hit on the average, but the villain might get lucky. A challenging opponent is going to use base +6 to +7-the heroes need to roll well to hit them or avoid getting hit. And deadly foes have a Score of the base +8 or more-fighting them is going to require teamwork or Drama Points.

Special Abilities: Most people have no unusual powers or abilities. Monsters may have several, from the proverbial vampire powers and vulnerabilities to magical powers. List them on the Quick Sheet so you don't forget that, say, a demon has a leathery skin that is as good as Kevlar against physical attacks.

Combat Maneuvers: Figure out what attack and defense moves the character is likely to use, their applicable Scores, and the damage inflicted (remember to include the Success Level kickers derived from the Scores listed-remember no rolling for most Supporting Cast).

Supporting Example: Most vampires have your basic Dodge, Punch, Kick, Grapple, and Bite Maneuvers. Parry, Punch, and Bite use the unmodified Combat Score, Kick uses Combat Score -1, and Grapple uses Combat Score +2.

A vampire with Strength 5 and a Combat Score of 15 would have the following maneuvers:

Maneuver	Value	Damage	Notes
Bite	15	19	(base 15 + 4 Success Levels) Must Grapple first
Dodge	15	-	Defense action
Grapple	17	-	Resisted b y Dodge
Kick	14	15	(base 12 + 3 Success Levels) Bash
Punch	15	14	(base 10 + 4 Success Levels) Bash

Muscle Score Table

8	Weak as a Kitten: Fred can arm-wrestle this guy.
9-10	Average Guy: Your average couch potato, capable to lugging a couple six-packs to the car without busting a gut.
11-12	Not Too Shabby: Someone who works out, maybe plays on the company softball team, actively coaches his son's soccer squad.
13-14	Average Supernatural/Tough Human: This is the Muscle Score of a very weak vampire. Very athletic humans are in the same range.
15-16	Tough Supernatural/Weightlifter: A vamp minion, a workout freak, or a pumped-up Marine.
17-20	Human Peak: A vamp whose been around the block a few times, a leg-breaker thug demon, or the best of the best humans are in this range.
21+	Superhuman: Elder vamps, powerful demons, and the like are in this range. Darla during her pregnancy (aided by fetus Connor's supernatural nature) had a 26 Muscle Score (don't mess with the pregnant lady).

Combat Score Table

8	Never Been Punched: With this Combat Score, a character needs to go to Full Offense or Full Defense or he'll just be a punching bag. People who can't throw a punch to save their lives would have Combat Scores at these levels.
9-10	Average Guy: This is someone who knows which end of a weapon to point towards an enemy or has been in a few scrapes in his life.
11-12	Newbie Vampire/Trained Person: This is the Combat Score of your typical freshly dug vamp or a normal human with some training (a beat cop or a regular soldier).
13-14	Minion Vampire/Veteran Fighter: This represents a vamp that has been around for a while, or a tough, well-trained human (rank-and-file W&H goons, for example).
15-16	Veteran Vampire/Expert Fighter: Some of the best undead material out there-these vamps got game! On the human side, we are talking special ops and W&H special agents.
17-20	Lieutenant Vampire/Master Fighter: Now we're talking Champion-level proficiency and better. These guys are hard to beat-time to break out those Drama Points.
21+	Boss: These levels are reserved for the top villains of the setting.

Brains Score Table

8	Duh?: Life is like an open book to this guy, but he can't read a word.
9-10	Average Guy: The character's never going to win at Jeopardy, but is able to hold down a job and live a normal life.
11-12	Smart: Someone with a good education and the smarts to make the most of it.
13-14	Brilliant: Highly educated, very smart, or both.
15-16	Genius: An expert, or just really, really intelligent. Probably a nerd.
17-20	Genius Plus: Kind of guy who tries to freeze time or create portals between worlds.
21+	Just Too Smart: Einstein, Hawking, and other incomprehensible folks.

Drama Points: The Cast Members are not the only ones with Drama Points. Bad guys also have access to them. Most faceless characters have no Drama Points; they are not meant to do extraordinary things. Your average cannon fodder vampire has 1-3 Drama Points, enough to land a good punch or two on a Champion before the kewl dusting FX kicks in. A friend or relative of a Cast Member could have the same amount, to allow for occasional heroics (when Virginia decks her father, for example). Major foes could have 5-8 Drama Points, and the Nemesis could have 10+ Drama Points in store, enabling them to give our heroes a run for their money. Usually, Supporting Cast Members spend their Drama Points for combat purposes (the sample vampire below

could spend a Drama Point to use the Heroic Feat rule and raise his Punch value to 25).

Example Mortals

Name: Typical Everyman Motivation: Critter Type: Human Attributes: Str 2, Dex 2, Con 2, Int 2, Per 2, Will 2 Ability Scores: Muscle 10, Combat 8, Brains 10 Life Points: 26 Drama Points: 0-1 Special Abilities: — Maneuvers Name Score Damage Notes Dodge 8 — Defense action Punch 8 4 Bash	Name: Police Officer Motivation: Serve and protect, "Just the facts, ma'am." Critter Type: Human Attributes: Str 3, Dex 2, Con 3, Int 2, Per 2, Will 2 Ability Scores: Muscle 12, Combat 12, Brains 10 Life Points: 34 Drama Points: 0-2 Special Abilities: — Maneuvers Name Score Damage Notes Baton 12 11 Bash Dodge 12 — Defense action Pistol 12 14 Punch 12 8 Bash Shotgun 12 22 Bullet
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Example Vampires

Name: Brand-New Vamp Motivation: Blood! Critter Type: Vampire Attributes: Str 5, Dex 4, Con 4, Int 2, Per 2, Will 2 Ability Scores: Muscle 16, Combat 12, Brains 9 Life Points: 52 Drama Points: 0-3 Special Abilities: Attractiveness -1, Hard to Kill 2, Vampire Maneuvers Name Score Damage Notes Bite 14 18 Must Grapple first; no defense action Dodge 12 — Defense action Grapple 14 — Resisted by Dodge Kick 11 14 Bash Punch 12 12 Bash	Name: Vampire Minion Motivation: Blood!, follow orders Critter Type: Vampire Attributes: Str 5, Dex 4, Con 5, Int 2, Per 3, Will 3 Ability Scores: Muscle 16, Combat 14, Brains 11 Life Points: 59 Drama Points: 1-3 Special Abilities: Attractiveness -1, Hard to Kill 3, Vampire Maneuvers Name Score Damage Notes Bite 16 19 Must Grapple first; no defense action Dodge 14 — Defense action Grapple 16 — Resisted by Dodge Kick 13 15 Bash Punch 14 13 Bash
Name: Vampire Veteran Motivation: Follow orders, lead others Critter Type: Vampire Attributes: Str 6, Dex 5, Con 5, Int 3, Per 3, Will 3 Ability Scores: Muscle 18, Combat 16, Brains 12 Life Points: 69 Drama Points: 2-4 Special Abilities: Hard to Kill 5, Vampire Maneuvers Name Score Damage Notes Bite 18 23 Must Grapple first; no defense action Dodge 16 — Defense action Grapple 18 — Resisted by Dodge Kick 15 18 Bash Punch 16 16 Bash	Name: Vampire Lieutenant Motivation: Predator, follow orders, rule Critter Type: Vampire Attributes: Str 6, Dex 6, Con 6, Int 3, Per 3, Will 3 Ability Scores: Muscle 18, Combat 19, Brains 13 Life Points: 79 Drama Points: 2-4 Special Abilities: Hard to Kill 7, Vampire Maneuvers Name Score Damage Notes Bite 21 24 Must Grapple first; no defense action Dodge 19 — Defense action Grapple 21 — Resisted by Dodge Kick 18 19 Bash Punch 19 17 Bash

The Power! The Absolute *Power!*

Here are some powers that vampires, demons, monsters, and wiggly wags that come crawling out of a mad scientist's lab have been known to have. Take your pick, mix and match, and make sure to give your Cast Members the fight of their life.

ARMOR

Some demons are tougher than others. Demons can have any type of skin, from insectile carapaces to shiny reptilian scales. Most demons will have Armor ranging from 1 to 20, but higher values are possible (especially during climactic Season finales).

CHAOS POWER

This power makes things go to pot around the character. Items wear out, tempers frazzle, friendships dissolve, memories grow spotty, etc. Depending on how you are playing things, it may affect everything, or just certain stuff (like a Vengeance Demon specialization). Also, the speed of the degradation must be determined. A gun that misfires when it comes near the character reveals a quick acting power; a power that rusts a gun a day or so after it kills the Chaos Power character is not going to be so helpful. This power is not recommended for Cast Members, but might provide an interesting challenge for more adventuresome roleplayers.

DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL

Demons were banished from Earth a long time ago. Though many have settled back on our world and now hide in crypts and sewers, there are many more who still dwell in their own extra-dimensional realm. Being from "way out of town" keeps the demons safe from hunters, Slayers, Witches, and other types of predators. It also means that the only way these demons can get to our world is by being summoned here. One way to get around that is for a demon to come to Earth under its own power. These are the dimensional travelers.

Demons with this power can create a temporary gateway between dimensions that usually manifests as a whirling dark vortex where there used to be a wall or a floor. These demons tend to be the more intelligent of their breed and often possess Sorcery as well.

Demon Idea Sources

Looking at other gaming monster manuals, as well as classic demons and devils is always a good place to start, and a lot of the various ideas have already been written for you.

Using emotions, or concepts and then twisting them so that a being represents a dark or evil side of them has proven popular in the past, and has a heavy dose of symbolic resonance.

You could seek inspiration from myths and goetia (medieval grimoires with big long demon lists in them ... no really, we looked it up), or you could just do what Mutant Enemy does sometimes and make it all up.

DISEMBODY

This nasty can turn its body into some kind of amorphous mass. Whether fog, a swarm of insects, a cloud of darkness, or even purple Jell-O, this is very useful for slipping under doors, floating out windows, and escaping bodily harm. Now, this ability doesn't convey any special protection from harm (though it is kind of hard to get a good whack on fog); that is covered by Invulnerability (see p. 131) or Resistance (see p. 46).

FLIGHT

Vampires and demons don't fly much on the BtVS TV show. Still, examples of flying vamps abound in other stories and some of you might like the idea of a vampire floating outside a window, scratching to be let in. Flight allows the creature to travel through the air with a base speed of (Constitution + Willpower) x 2. Flight is expressed in levels, with each additional level adding ten mph to the speed. A flying vampire or demon would be quite rare in the Ciniverse; maybe not as rare as a pregnant vampire or one with a soul, but they should still be considered exceptional.

HUMAN FORM

Being a big scary demon who strikes fear in the hearts of its victims is all well and good, but what does a demon do if it wants to go to Starbucks for a mocha? This is where having a human form comes in handy. Such a demon can blend in with human society, as Kathy did when she attended UC Sunnydale. It's also useful for others, like Vengeance Demons, who need to approach a human and have her make a wish. Nobody would have told Anya anything (except maybe "aaaahhhh!") if she showed up with the scary skin-deficient face.

HYPNOSIS

The Hypnosis power, as far as we know it from the BtVS TV show, is covered (see p. 165). We have worked up a few new levels just for you Directors that want something new.

At fourth level, the monster can cause a group of people to hesitate for a few moments, plenty of time for her to attack or flee with impunity. A number of victims equal to the hypnotist's Willpower (doubled) roll or Brains

Score can be affected. Victims can only avoid helplessness by spending a Drama Point; those that do not, cannot act for a Turn and have a zero defense roll against any attack. A level four hypnotist gets a +1 bonus to her roll or Score when using the power at level three, a +2 bonus for level one and two uses.

At fifth level, the monster can create illusions and muddle the senses of a number of victims equal to the hypnotist's Willpower (doubled) roll or Brains Score. She can also render herself invisible to the victims, or simply appear to be someone else. Victims can only avoid the illusion by spending a Drama Point. A level five hypnotist can use the level four power against ten times the normal victims. She also gets a +2 bonus to her roll or Score when using the power at level three, and +3 bonus level for level one and two uses.

IMMORTAL

The being does not age. That's the extent of this power though-an immortal can be killed by normal means (unless it possesses certain Invulnerability or Resistance powers). So, no problem wasting time by watching Buffy DVDs back-to-back-to-back, but be careful around pointed weaponry and hostile busboys.

INCREASED LIFE POINTS

This creature has a certain something that makes it harder to put down. The exact nature of that something and the amount of extra stuffing it gives the nasty are strictly between it and its maker. Seriously, there's no formula here. Just give them more Life Points. Stop when you think it's getting excessive. Then give them a few more just to make sure. It's not strictly fair but since when has the Ciniverse (or life for that matter) been fair?

INVULNERABILITY

Some folks just don't DO damage. For one reason or another, the things that hurt don't have the same effect on them. For the most part, we are not talking about the kind of invulnerability possessed by strange caped visitors from other planets when they bask in the light of a yellow sun. Invulnerability in the Ciniverse is usually temporary, like when the Mayor was getting nearer to his Ascension, or only partial, like a vampire's lack of real concern over bullets. Then there are those who can only be killed by silver or when they are in a disembodied worm-swarm form. Now, this isn't to say that you can't soundly thrash a creature with this Quality and put it out of a fight for a time; it's just that you can't kill it in all the usual ways.

Invulnerability has a couple different levels. Because this Quality can vary so widely though, you should modify these as you see fit given the specifics of whatever warped notion of Invulnerability you create (of course we mean warped in the good way).

MINOR: This is more of a resistance than true invulnerability. An example would be partial damage from certain types of harm (vamp's fifth damage from bullets).

PARTIAL: The character can ignore one type of damage or effect. Examples include being unaffected by illusions (Sobekite Spawn), or taking no Slash/stab damage. Ghosts fit into this category, taking little to no damage from physical weapons.

NEAR COMPLETE: This creature is only affected by certain types of damage. Examples include removal of heart and brain (Brotherhood of Seven), destruction in disembodied form (Norman Pfister), or only being hurt by silver (Fyarl).

COMPLETE: The big kahuna; nothing can kill this clown. Fortunately, this kind of thing doesn't last long or come around too often. The only example to date has been the Mayor's total invulnerability during Ascension.

LEAP

Sure, a creature can climb stairs or run real fast, but if it really wants to move in style, the Leap is the way to go. This power allows a character to move 2 x Strength yards vertically or 5 x Strength yards horizontally. Finishing a leap with an attack grants a +5 to the roll and to the damage imposed (before modifiers). 'Course, missing an attack after a leap leaves a body prone (see p. 113). And boy is that embarrassing!

NATURAL WEAPON

Monsters who manifest more ... monstrous features may have forms of attack open to them beyond the garden variety punch, bite, or spin kick. A character with simple claws of some sort (like Kakistos and his cloven fists) does the usual 2 x Strength base damage for a Punch, but it is Slash/stab damage rather than Bash. Having longer talons or other wicked nasty appendages increases the damage modifier by one.

The total multiplier on the natural weapon may not be greater than the character's Strength or Constitution. A monster with a Strength of five and Constitution of four cannot have a natural weapon greater than 4 x Strength damage. Making the claw, spike, talon, horn, or other implement of destruction retractable means easier blending for those who can pass for human. Otherwise, it's just cool among the monster set.

Delivering damage with the natural weapon requires using a maneuver that brings it into play. So, a claw would use Punch, a horn Head Butt, and a serrated shin Kick.

NATURAL RANGED WEAPON

Some critters have claws. Some critters have fangs. Some critters shoot paralyzing mucus out of their nose (lucky buggers). Ranged weapons usually have a base Slash/stab damage from (1 x Strength) to (5 x Strength). The nature of the damage (fire, poison, or even lightning from the eyes) should be determined as well. Natural ranged attacks use a Dexterity and Kung Fu - 1 roll, or the Combat Score - 1.

This power has the same Attribute restrictions on damage that the Natural Weapon ability does. Full damage may be inflicted if the power uses pistol ranges. Rifle ranges halve (round down) the maximum damage modifier. The nature of the damage (fire, electricity, etc.) isn't particularly relevant unless poison or disease is involved (see p. 134).

PSYCHIC VISIONS

Some monsters have visions of the future, courtesy of the Psychic Visions Quality. If a vamp, the character may have had this ability before being turned. Making the psychic vampire completely insane is merely a neat story option and not at all necessary. At the lowest level, this Quality acts just like the Psychic Visions Quality (see p. 45). Not much in the way of control here, but it can still prove awfully handy, particularly when someone's out to get the character and making fiendish plans to do so (that happens way too often, don't it?).

Although not seen on the BtVS TV show, a second level of this power allows some control. The possessor gains a "spider-sense" about nearby or imminent danger. It's not specific but it will give some warning. Also, the power provides a +1 to combat rolls or Scores.

REGENERATION

Some critters don't know when to stay down. In fact, they keep popping up at the worst possible times until you really get them good and dead. Regeneration always works in blocks of Life Points equal to the character's Constitution level. It's the time period that really separates the humans from the ... inhumans. At first level, Regeneration occurs each hour; at second level, each minute; at third level, each Turn.

SUPERNATURAL SENSES

Some beings are just more aware of the world around them than the average Joe. This may be something as simple as nightvision or it could be Doc's ability to check someone's compatibility for resurrection at the genetic level by glancing at a strand of hair against a lamp.

TELEPORT

Popping around all over the place is not just good fun, it's really useful for avoiding midtown traffic jams. Those with the ability to teleport can instantly move from one location to another. Special effects-like a shimmering outline, a puff of smoke, or a watery dissolve -are just icing on the cake.

This is a super useful and super powerful ability. Feel free to limit it to Adversaries and Guest Stars as you see fit. Perhaps the creature can only beam to a place ten miles times their Willpower from the point they start. Or maybe the power can only be used once per hour without injury-any subsequent use causes Life Point damage equal to the character's Willpower. Or maybe a Willpower (not doubled) roll is required each time the power is used. Finally, you are more than welcome to devise means of keeping a teleporting critter out-say, magic wards, lead-lined chambers, those cool invisible dog fences, etc.

'Course, you could take another approach and expand the ability. It would no doubt be very useful if the character could pull a Leo and teleport others around with a shimmering light effect.

TEMPORAL DISTURBANCE

Most monsters are unusual, but some are downright weird. There are those who create a temporal disturbance just by manifesting in our world. Time becomes nonlinear, repetitive, and very David Lynch. The area of effect radius is the possessor's Constitution times four in yards.

All Perception rolls are made at a -5 when the Temporal Disturbance manifests. Another -1 is added for every Turn that the character remains in a temporal disturbance. For example, if the Hunter has been fighting a group of demons for three Turns when such an effect was present, her Perception rolls would be made at a -7 penalty. Worse, a Perception (doubled) roll must be made every Turn to interact with anything while the temporal disturbance is in effect. Failed rolls result in anything from hitting an ally to kicking a wall to staking the wrong

person. Of course the concept of Turn becomes confusing when time gets all nonlinear, but we trust your instincts in this matter. Naturally, those with this Quality are immune to its effects.

Temporal Disturbance comes in two forms. When controlled, the creature can decide when the wackiness manifests. Uncontrolled versions occur randomly or are "on" at all times.

Describing Temporal Disturbances

The main effect of the Temporal Disturbance Power is profound disorientation-characters "under the influence" have trouble getting a handle on exactly what's going on around them. When describing it to the players, focus on how surreal the situation is-the monster appears and disappears at random, things hang for seconds in midair before falling, someone running out of the area of effect just vanishes. You could even make an encounter seem very nonlinear by wounding a character (or having her fall to the ground, etc.) before the critter even touches her. The key to a memorable Temporal Disturbance is creative weirdness.

Optional Temporal Effects

Some of you might want a wider variety of effects for time-distorting demons. Hey, if you're nonlinear, you might as well do something with it. The following are some possibilities-they're strictly optional and probably aren't appropriate for Cast Members who have this power. As these are fairly potent abilities, each one forces the creature to use a Drama Point.

TEMPORAL DODGE: Instead of just ducking out of the way, the creature can blink just a few seconds forward or backward in time to avoid a blow. The demon can either gain a +2 on its next attack or vanish for one Turn (reappearing at a dramatically appropriate place and time).

ALTER TIME: If all isn't going well for the beastie, it can back up time a few seconds and take another stab at things. Damage done within the power's area of effect in the last Turn is automatically healed, broken objects are repaired, crossbows are reloaded, etc. Spent Drama Points (other than the one for using this power) ... well, that depends on how nice you are to your players.

SLOW DOWN!: One target within the area of effect must succeed at a Willpower (not doubled) roll vs. the demon's Brains Score or lose all but one action for as long as she remains in the area. This means she can only attack or defend in close combat once each Turn (regardless of multiaction abilities) and most other actions (including quick-casting a spell) take twice as long as normal.

TOXIN/PATHOGEN

Apart from the usual claws, fangs, and halitosis among the demon set, more exotic attacks are possible. Some nasties deal in poison or diseases. The exact affects of the attack vary, as does the delivery system. Using the following guides, nearly any effect can be categorized.

MINOR: Periodic fits of laughter, bad rashes, headaches, damage up to 1 x Strength in Life Points, and other effects that cause at most a -1 to rolls while infected.

SERIOUS: Double vision, high fever, hallucinations, uncontrollable telepathic ability, blinding migraines, damage up to 2 x Strength in Life Points, and other effects that cause up to -5 to rolls while infected.

DEADLY: Coma, incapacitation, death, or any other effect that completely disables the victim. Effect may have lesser impact if a Survival Test is made (see p. 121).

When a demon infects a human in some way, either inadvertently like the Scabby Telepath Demons from 3.18 Earshot or deliberately like the Glark Guhl Kashma'nik from 6.17 Normal, the antidote can often be found in the very same demon. Buffy's telepathy was cured by consuming a liquid made from the heart of the demon who infected her. The hallucinatory poison of the Glark Guhl Kashma'nik was nullified by a medicine made from the stingers of the same demon.

WALL CRAWL

This creature can move along and stop on any surface, horizontal, vertical, slanted, or contra-horizontal (yah, okay that last one isn't really a word, but it sure sounds better than "the ceiling"). At its lower level, the critter must slow considerably when moving any way but horizontally (one third of normal speed). The higher-level version allows someone to move full speed on any surface.

For the Spidey-wannabe who has everything.

THE WISH

This is the power to grant ... duh ... wishes. No strings attached wishing is a recipe for a busted roleplaying game, so there has to be something to reign in the wisher. As with Teleport (see p. 133), feel free to vary the conditions and limitations of the Wish for Adversaries and Guest Stars or only use it as a carefully

circumscribed plot device.

Wishes should always be used in the service of some specific goal or obsession. Like the calling of a Vengeance Demon, the Wish should be theme-based. It is also best to give the Wish a serious down side. Like it recommends (see p. 176), wishes that come true rarely lead to happiness for anyone.

Episodes, Seasons, and Drama Chapter

Lights ... camera ... action! In the Ciniverse RPG, you Directors also get to produce the show. By now, you should have an idea of how the rules work and the basics of helping the helpless-all the mechanical stuff, the equivalent of FX, fight choreography, and basic acting. None of that is enough to have a full fledged show, of course. You also need the setting-the backdrop for the action-and the framework of the show. To help keep things "in character," the default structure of an Angel game is broken up into Episodes-self-contained scenarios that can be played out in one to three game sessions. A group of Episodes with a common thread-a major villain or plot becomes a Season, at the end of which the villain should be confronted (and hopefully defeated) and most of the plots resolved (although their resolution might spawn other plots to be dealt with next Season). This chapter provides advice and suggestions for all you budding Directors. Use them, modify them, or ignore them as you see fit.

Time and Place

Let's talk setting here-where does your Series take place? Where and when are as important as who stars in the Series-being a Champion does not matter much if the setting is aboard the Titanic, for example (that would be a pretty short Series, anyway). The ideal setting should provide a number of "hooks" for the Cast. It should have interesting locales-cool hangouts, dangerous neighborhoods, and dark secrets buried in unexpected places. The setting should also have interesting people-friends, acquaintances, and foes. These are people the Cast Members can fall in love with, fight to the death, or encounter in their everyday life. Finally, if the Cast is going to save the world, the world should be worth saving; the setting should have some redeeming qualities and sympathetic inhabitants.

Los Angeles

The City of Angels is the setting of the TV show, not to mention about a gazillion other shows, movies, novels, comic strips, plays, and limericks. You've got skyscrapers and tenements, rising movie stars and failed dreamers, street gangs and ritzy lawyers ... and, in the world of Angel, demons, vampires, and dark forces everywhere you look. As long as you know how to look. Using L.A. as the setting has several advantages. There's plenty of information and support available, both from the show and from the fact that L.A. is perhaps the most well known city in the U.S.

So, assuming you want to run the game in Los Angeles, you need to decide what to do with Angel's original cast. If your players are using them as Cast Members, you're all set ... obviously. Otherwise, you need to do some thinking. A couple of possibilities come to mind.

Coexistence

Angel Investigations is in L.A., but the Original Cast are treated as supporting characters, off in the background and showing up occasionally, if ever. The trick here is to keep things entertaining for your players and not let Angel and company eclipse their characters. That shouldn't be too much of a problem-the city is certainly big enough for more than two bands of heroes. You never know, the Cast might actually end up saving Angel and his friends once in a while.

Taking the Angel Out of Town

This option removes the Original Cast from the city. They could come in at the end of Season Three, with the Original Cast either missing in action or likely to leave town. Or it could be a "What If" scenario. What if Angel fell in combat at some other point in the show? Enter our new, improved band of heroes. The entire Original Cast might be gone, or maybe a few of them are still around, to be used as Supporting Cast members (which they can do a lot more easily than the tall, dark, brooding One).

The Cast now would have the challenge of following in Angel's footsteps, facing a triumphant Wolfram & Hart and any new enemies that might pop up. The new heroes could also follow up on some of the leftover subplots from the show, or face their own brand of demons (personal and literal).

Alternate L.A.

A more extreme "What If" has the player's Cast replace the Original Cast. Under this scheme, the Fang Gang doesn't exist and the new characters have to deal with Wolfram & Hart and all the other fun denizens of Los Angeles on their own. In this situation, Angel either never came to L.A., died during one of his many prior battles, or (for a really nasty twist) is still the evil Angelus. Cordelia could have become a TV star. Wesley and Gunn could be fighting the good fight on their own, or missing, or dead. Lorne would still be the Host at Caritas. Fred could remain a slave in Pylea, or perhaps never have been sucked through that first portal.

This is an interesting variant, but the surprise and suspense may be spoiled if the players know how Angel and the gang dealt with their enemies. This gives them an unfair advantage. Of course, you can easily deal with this problem by making a few subtle changes in the villains and plots. Players who try to use their knowledge of the show to deal with L.A. threats may find themselves unpleasantly surprised. This game works best if most of the players aren't dedicated fans of the show and thus don't know what's coming, or if they are serious fanatics and can appreciate how you tweak and twist the canon.

Leaving L.A.

Los Angeles is not the only option for a setting, of course. Your heroes can battle evil in many other places. From sunny small towns in southern California to charming large cities in northern California to places nowhere near California, the forces of darkness can be anywhere, and so can our heroes. Here are some possibilities to inspire you.

Life in the (Other) Big City

If L.A. is a hotbed of supernatural activity, what about New York or Chicago? New Orleans should be easy- throw in voodoo, weird Cajuns, the bayou, and a good dose of Southern charm. Wolfram & Hart has subsidiaries all over the world, so wherever our heroes live, they're likely to run into our favorite soulless lawyers sooner or later. You could even set the game up in your hometown, maybe even get the players to base their Cast Members on themselves, with a few freaky powers thrown in.

An Angel game should have some overarching force of evil to confront. Instead of Wolfram & Hart, you could use Chapter Five: Cabals, Covens, and Agencies to come up with another uber-villainous organization. It could be a government conspiracy to hide the existence of ultra-terrestrials (not that that's even happened before), or an ancient demon cult that recruits the rich and famous, or a multi-media empire run by a vampire rock-and-roll singer. Place the organization's headquarters in the Cast Member's city, and let the games begin. Just as in L.A., our heroes should encounter a wide variety of supernatural threats, confront a myriad of personal issues, engage in romantic pursuits, and generally suffer a lot. This option has the advantage of being full of surprises for fans of the show. On the other hand, players who were looking forward to singing karaoke for the Host will be disappointed (not necessarily a bad thing). Then again, who knows when the Host might decide to launch his first worldwide tour, or relocate his nightclub. The Powers That Be move in mysterious (and often plot-facilitating) ways.

The Wandering Heroes

Another possibility is to have the gang move from place to place, solving mysteries as they go (multicolor van is optional). They could be chasing something or somebody, or something or somebody could be chasing them. Or maybe the Cast is made up of members of a touring band, or carnies in a traveling fair, and gets to travel all over the country, going from job to job, encountering trouble along the way. Every Episode, the Cast gets to see new places, meet new people, and fight new monsters. Wesley did this bit during his brief stint as a "rogue demon hunter"-assuming that wasn't just him blowing smoke to impress his new "friends."

This type of "setting" is interesting, but requires more work. Since the gang is always on the move, you have to create a new "set" every time they reach a new town, with new Supporting Cast, new places of interest, and so on. The Cast rarely gets the chance to bond with anybody other than each other, since they will be riding into the sunset after each Episode. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but you and your players should keep it in mind.

Same Stuff, Different Dimension

No reason why the game needs to be based on Earth. As the end of Season Two shows, there's plenty of adventure to be had on the other side of a dimensional portal. Pylea is a good place for an old fashioned "sword and sorcery" romp. And that's far from the only place our heroes could go to fight the good fight.

Indeed, it makes a lot of sense taking the fight to the demons, rather than wait for them to come to Earth. What if the U.S. government discovered a Egyptian looking portal to demon dimensions, and assembled a paramilitary team to launch preemptive strikes into the hellworlds? The heroes could be tough Special Forces troopers and military scientists; every week, the portal would flash blue light and our heroes would plunge into a different world, weapons and wits at the ready.

Another possibility would follow Fred and Cordelia's fate-the Cast Members could be stranded in a strange new world with only the clothes on their back, forced to rely on their wits and kewl kung fu skills to survive (hopefully they'll have wits or kung fu skills, maybe even both).

This option puts more work on your shoulders. You have to flesh a whole new world. Still, everything will be fresh and new for the players, and you can devise a land with it's own physical and societal rules. That can be great fun.

Same Stuff, Different Time

What about different time periods instead? Vampires and demons have been around since before there were humans, so any time can use a champion or three. Our heroes could be campaigning Crusaders fighting real demons rather than engaging in silly religious wars, or intrepid Victorian explorers uncovering dark forces at work in the colonies or on the streets of fog-shrouded London. Or forget the past, the future beckons: our Cast can hunt vampires aboard space stations, or battle the forces of evil in a wrecked post-Apocalyptic world. Or, for a really weird variant, have Angel and company find a time travel machine (maybe one that looks like an old British phone box or a tricked-out DeLorean) and head out into the sea of time.

Like the "different dimension" option, this type of game demands more work from you, but it opens up just as many possibilities. Also, with historical era games, a bit of real world research can fill in many areas and maybe even teach your players (and you) a thing or two about our past (gak, educational gaming, where's the world coming to?).

Cast Options

So who's going to star in your Series? Angel is an ensemble show, even though it didn't quite start out that way. The show was initially centered on Angel, and he is still the star, but everyone in the cast gets a decent share of the spotlight. In a game, centering the Series around one character is not necessarily a good idea, but that's going to depend mostly on the choices of characters and their actions during the game. Let's explore the pros and cons of a few different options.

One Champion, Many Sidekicks

This simulates the situation at the beginning of Angel's first Season. We had a heroic champion and a couple of much weaker characters who were nowhere near his equal in combat prowess. Such a game would have one or two Champions and the rest of the Cast would be Investigators (or even watered-down Investigators with a few less skill points). The Champions do most of the stomping, while the Investigators do research, provide moral support and comic relief, and (fortified with some Drama Points) do some secondary stomping. Many, if not most of the subplots of the Season involve the Champion.

This pattern didn't last very long in Angel though. Eventually other heroic types showed up (Gunn), and the Investigators got tougher (Cordelia acquired her visions, Wesley became much more badass during Seasons Two and Three). After Angel fired everyone, they became a team that could hold their own for a time. While Angel is still the star, the rest of the Cast cannot be considered merely sidekicks. The "one Champion" theme may work while the audience is getting used to a TV show (doesn't burden them with too many characters to remember), but it probably isn't the best style for a game either. It tends to elevate one character (and player) over the others. Whether this flies for your group depends mostly on what roles the players want. If half of them want to be Champions and other half Investigators, you shouldn't stop them without very good reasons. Remember that the goal is for everyone to have fun, and arbitrary restrictions are death on fun.

A Gathering of Champions

This type of game uses only Champions or Experienced Champions. Investigator types would be Supporting Cast Members under your control. All the characters are roughly the same power level and nobody should feel upstaged. You could have half-demons running around alongside vampires with a soul and powerful psychics or magicians. Or, rather than go the "kitchen sink" way, you can have the Cast belong to an organization or secret society that provides a common ground.

At this power level, random vampires won't be much of a threat to the Cast-finding worthy adversaries might be more difficult. On the other hand, heroes often have fatal flaws. The Champions might end up being their own worst enemies. You might want to take turns having members of the Cast be evil (or antagonistic) or just set them off against themselves from the word go. That's going to take a special group of players though. Don't want in-character conflicts to screw up real life friendships.

Investigators in Action

Or you can go the opposite way and have the entire Cast made up Investigators. Any Champion types are either Supporting Cast Members, or they are nowhere to be found. This is a more down-to-Earth game style, where the Cast has to rely on their wits rather than their brawn to survive. Staking a vampire or killing a single demon is tough and challenging, and fighting a major threat demands some careful tactics and the liberal expenditure of Drama Points.

This type of game tends to be a bit darker than normal. The Cast Members know they are facing powerful forces that often outnumber and outmuscle them. Make one mistake too many, and they are history; nobody is going to ride in and rescue them.

Young Lawyers in Hell

And now ... for something completely different. What if all the Cast Members were employees of Wolfram & Hart? This is a much darker and more morally ambiguous game, but one that echoes a lot of the action during Season Two, where Lilah and Lindsey's machinations got almost as much air time as the goings-ons at Angel Investigations. Obviously, the characters are no heroes, at least to begin with: they are men and women who have chosen to serve evil for personal gain. There could be exceptions, though. How about someone who wishes to destroy W&H by working on the inside? Such a character would need some way to deflect the magical and telepathic screening the firm uses to filter out trouble employees, but it'd make an interesting character concept. And, of course, just because a character starts out evil doesn't mean he has to stay that way.

What happens when the firm demands services too loathsome for the characters? The Cast Members could face the same moral dilemmas that gnawed at Lindsey McDonald during Seasons One and Two. The entire Cast could be playing a deadly game of deceit, pretending to go along with the firm while secretly undermining their missions. But what if the senior partners know all this, and are trying to get the heroes to damn themselves? The road to Hell is paved with good intentions, after all.

For the darkest version, the Cast would be nothing more than loyal Wolfram & Hart employees, jockeying for power and prestige, their deadliest enemies being other junior members of the firm. This is clearly not going to be a game for many or most players, so it's the kind of thing that should be discussed candidly before starting the game. Again, a Series that starts with the Cast as fully engaged members of Evil Machinations and Intrigue, P.C. could veer wildly in other directions.

The Outsiders

One of the fascinating aspects of Angel is the prevalence and status of non-humans. So how about a nonhuman Cast? In such a game, every character is a demon or half-demon of some sort (they don't have to belong to the same species) trying to survive on a hostile Earth where humankind is ignorant of their existence. They might be trying to fight the good fight, seeking to fit in and pass off as normal people, or perhaps trying to find a way back home. Enemies could include other demons (perhaps the racist kind), human hunters, or government agencies trying to capture and study them. This type of game can explore a lot of themes dealing with racism, intolerance, being different, and fitting in. Being hated for the color of one's skin is just as bad when that skin color is bright orange, after all.

Creating a Series

All right. You've made all the conceptual choices, and are ready to go. To help recreate the feel for the show, Angel games should try to follow the same structure- you have self-contained Episodes, linked together to create a Season. Each Episode should contain healthy doses of combat, comedy, horror, and personal subplots. To help you in this holy quest, we have thoughtfully provided some ideas and guidelines. Ain't we the bomb?

A Year in the Life

When doing a game the Angel Way, you should plan out the major story arcs of the Season. This does

not mean that you should know exactly what will happen during that time. After all, the player's decisions and their characters' actions should be major factors in the game. But you should have some idea of what major situations and events will be thrown at the Cast. That sets things up so the characters' reactions and initiatives become pivotal.

First, you need to take care of all the prelim work - building the sets, casting the characters, that kind of stuff. That's been covered in the previous sections. Next comes conflict. Stories (not just violent stories) depend on conflict, and in the Ciniverse conflict usually comes from adversaries. Besides villains, you need Plots and Subplots-stories that flow from Episode to Episode, leading to a climax somewhere down the line. Finally, you need to populate the Season with a nice Supporting Cast, the characters that challenge, relate with, make fun of, or annoy the Cast along the way. You don't have to outline everything before the game starts; you might not even have a main villain in mind for the first couple Episodes. Still, you should have some idea about what they will be like early in the Season or you'll end up with a collection of disjointed Episodes.

Why do we start with the Season and not the Episodes (see p. 224)? If you think about the Season first, you'll have a better idea of the direction of the game. Again, don't try to be too detailed. Think of the Season as a point in the map, like "North." All you need to know is that the game is going to head North. You may not know how it gets there, let alone all the stops along the way, but at some point, the game is going to reach El Norte and, one would hope, the arrival will be worth the trip.

The Symbolic Dimension

Angel is in many ways a metaphor of the process of dealing with adulthood, much like its sister show's BtVS was a metaphor for being a teenager. The terrors are more grown-up in scope: seductive monsters are symbols of the dangers and complications of single dating, for example. 3.6 Billy was a disturbing exposition of the dark side of male-female relationships. The fear of failure, becoming too obsessed with work and success, finding love, settling on a direction in life, handling parenthood-all have been echoed in the themes of the show. Angel is more than just symbols and metaphors, but you should keep them in mind when setting up the Series. An adversary should be more than just a big bad monster. If possible, give it a symbolic dimension -the abusive authority figure, the corrupter of innocence, the ultimate egotist who cares for nothing beyond personal gratification.

Ideally, Episodes should be more than just high-kicking action. When you can, try to throw in something with more depth-all choices should not be clear-cut, and there should be consequences for one's actions, often unintended ones. Do keep in mind, however, that the goal of the game is to have fun, not to become a philosophical treatise.

You'll Rue the Day

Wolfram & Hart. Sahjhan. Holtz. Adversaries are a major element of the Season. Angel does not always have a central villain, a "Big Bad" like its sister show Buffy the Vampire Hunter. Still, the show does have memorable opponents who play major roles through several story arcs and Episodes in a Season. Adversaries provide one major source of conflict (but not the only one). They act as a focal point, something for the Cast to concentrate their efforts.

What makes a good Adversary? First, he should be smart or at least resourceful. A big dumb monster rampaging through downtown L.A. is good for an Episode, not a Season. Capital "A" Adversaries rarely do the dirty work themselves; they use minions instead. They also have goals-important goals. While your Joe Schmoe vampire only cares for the occasional human morsel, an Adversary is far more ambitious-world domination, perhaps, or the unleashing of unspeakable horrors on the entire planet, or performing human sacrifice on a global scale.

Adversaries should rarely last an entire Season. A typical Angel Season has two to three major Adversaries, shifting around as their story arcs are resolved. In some cases, there will be some "baton passing"-Sahjhan and Holtz shared the Adversary role for a while, but then Sahjhan exited stage left (in an urn) and Holtz came back, full of piss and vinegar.

Through all three Seasons, of course, Wolfram & Hart has been the ever-present threat, with its apocalyptic plans and its specific targeting of Angel and his friends. In that sense, W&H is the Nemesis, the ultimate foe that cannot be defeated even through several Seasons. Using Wolfram & Hart as the Nemesis is easy enough (the firm is big enough to keep a legion of heroes busy) but you might want to create a different one. A Nemesis needs to be large-not a single individual, ideally, but rather an organization that, like the mythical Hydra, grows a new head every time you chop one off. The tricky part is to make the Nemesis something that provides conflict without bringing about hopelessness. You might decide you're better off sticking with less potent Adversaries instead.

The Season's Adversaries and Nemesis are not the only major villains, even without counting the

"monsters of the week" that appear on many Episodes. There may also be secondary Adversaries who work for the Big Boss or have plans of their own. Adversaries may not even make an appearance for several Episodes. In fact, it is probably best if the Cast does not even suspect the identity or purposes of the Adversary until they are several Episodes into the Season.

Creating an Adversary is a good start. You don't have to get all his vital statistics down at first (when you turn to that, see Villains, Henchmen, and Innocent Bystanders, p. 221). More important, you want to have a feel for his motives and modus operandi. The villain's plans can be as simple ("I want to unleash Hell on Earth") or complex ("I will gain the Champion's confidence; then I will turn all of his friends against him, and when he is isolated and full of despair, I will claim his soul and damn him to Hell"). The master plan should play a role over several Episodes.

The actual nature of the villain is also important. You can choose among your basic vampires (getting a little old hat by now, but always good for the nostalgia), demons (good because there is a lot of variety among the infernal legions), human warlocks, psychics, freaks, or that paragon of plotting, Something Completely Different (Holtz qualifies). Figure out any powers the villain has—he should be pretty dangerous. Limitations are also good—Sahjhan was an immaterial ghost most of the time, for example; that kind of thing makes the villain more interesting. If the villain is too powerful to be taken out in a straight fight, there should be an Achilles' heel to make up for it (but it should be hard to discover).

Then decide what resources the Adversary or Nemesis has. Most of them have a small army of cannon fodder minions (vampires are a popular choice, for some reason), and a couple of heavyweight lieutenants, good enough to go mano a mano with our fearless heroes. Others may have money, access to powerful spells, connections in City Hall (Wolfram & Hart seems to pretty much own City Hall), and so on.

Finally, at some point or another, the villain has to make things personal. Destroying the world is all well and good, but it doesn't have the same emotional power as torturing a loved one, shattering the innocence of a dear friend, or terrorizing the characters past the breaking point. If you can get the Cast Members to say (and mean), "This sucker is going DOWN!" you know you're getting the Adversary just right. Besides being dangerous and threatening, the Adversary needs to be infuriating. This could be achieved by making him really good at foiling the heroes (maybe as good as, or better than the heroes are at foiling him), by giving him a really twisted or annoying personality, or by having something about the Evil One's looks, behavior, or appearance that produces that endless-car-alarm-on-a-quiet-night feeling. By the time the Final Showdown happens, the defeat of the Adversary should feel good. Damn good.

Once you have the villains of the piece all figured out, you have something to link several Episodes, and the basic skeleton of the Season is set.

The Tangled Skein

Plots and Subplots are the complications and themes that move from one Episode to the next. Since this is a game, not a script, you do not have full control over Plots and Subplots. The Cast has a big role in making a storyline live over several Episodes, or lie forgotten after one or two. You can think of Plots and Subplots as fishing lures. Dangle them out there—if the characters are interested, they'll bite. Here are some suggestions to make sure the Cast bites (er ... are enticed into following Plots).

Plots

These are the big kahunas, the major story arcs of the Season. Darla's rebirth, undeath, and pregnancy were (each in turn) major Plots of Seasons Two and Three. The Season Three Angel-Cordelia relationship Plot runs through several episodes, and is dramatically resolved (avoided?) in the Season Finale. In the same Season, you have Connor's birth, abduction, and return as a teenager. The two plots intertwined and reached a climax in the same final episode.

Typically, a Plot emerges early in the Season and leads to the Season Finale. You should devise at least one Plot. Some possible ideas include:

The Approaching Doom: Some dangerous event is prophesied to take place in the near future. This is usually your basic supernatural event, complete with lots of FX at the end. At some point in the Season, the Cast learn of it and realize they have to prevent it from happening. Over a number of episodes, the Cast acquire more clues about the danger, until reaching the final countdown. Will our heroes stop it in time? This type of Plot is relatively easy to set up. Dire warnings from some unlikely prophet, signs of the upcoming apocalypse, and clues inadvertently left behind by the bad guys can be sprinkled over several Episodes. A little research will do the rest.

Curses! Foiled Again: Your basic "stop the bad guy" theme, this Plot revolves around the plans of the Adversary or Nemesis. Usually the plan involves such charming things as human sacrifice, unspeakable rituals,

and scavenger hunts for mystical artifacts. The Plot is a race between the Cast and the villains. While the Nemesis may be foiled temporarily, the plan should plod along until the Final Showdown. Like The Approaching Doom, this type of Plot is not hard to organize. The tricky bits include arranging for the Adversary to avoid the final showdown until the finale, and doing it without railroading the Cast. Even with Drama Points to "pay off" the characters, they are not going to be very happy if the villain always seems to escape from their clutches. To better avoid a direct confrontation with the head honcho, rely on competent and dangerous henchmen. To keep the Cast busy, set up a minion as the apparent Big Boss, and reveal he's but a servant of a greater power just after the Cast defeats him (that's a great point to end the Episode and roll credits, by the way).

Friend or Foe?: A common Plot in Angel is betrayal and loss. Friends and lovers may become deadly enemies -Wesley is a painful case in point, but it's hard to forget that Angel himself turned against his friends during Season Two. The setup for this plot can be tricky. You need to create and assume the role of a Guest Star, get the Cast to come to like and trust the character, and then betray them. For an even more devious turn, you might recruit one of your players to assume the role of the Judas-after all, another player-controlled character is the last one the other players would suspect. After the betrayal, there may be hope of redemption (again the Wesley and Angel example), either in that Season or as a Plot of Subplot in the following Season.

Love Is A Battlefield: Romance blossoms, but the love don't come easy, as the song says. This can be a Plot or Subplot, depending on how important it is to the storyline. As we've noted, the Angel-Cordelia relationship was a major aspect of Season Three, and ended in the Finale with Cordelia being whisked away by the Powers That Be (oh, and there's Kate/Angel, Wesley/Fred/Gunn, Wesley/Lilah, among others). The setup here is hard, and the players need to pitch in. The relationship can be between a Cast Member and a Guest Star, or between two Cast Members. In the first case, you have some control over how the relationship progresses (you are in charge of half of it, after all). In the second, the Plot is largely in the hands of the Cast Members involved. Of course, you can influence it by throwing in obstacles, romantic rivals, and other complications. If you watch a dozen episodes of any soap opera, you'll learn the tricks of the trade but quick.

Subplots

These are lesser plotlines, major enough to last for several Episodes, but usually not covering an entire Season. Examples include the Billy storyline (which covered two Episodes during Season Three), Gunn's and Fred's relationship over Season Three, and Buffy's and Faith's painful visits during Season One. Subplots can be powerful dramatic story arcs, but they don't quite shape an entire Season the way Plots do.

Try to get at least one or two Subplots going at one time. A Subplot should not appear in every Episode, but it should at least be in the background, providing more axes to grind, bones to pick, and cliches to throw. Subplots often develop on their own, and they may occur to you after the Season has started. Sometimes they wither and die without the players ever noticing. If a Subplot is not attracting their attention, it's time to either spice it up a bit, or let it go and replace it with something else. In the TV show, Kate's relationship with Angel was a fairly significant Subplot that just kinda evaporated after a time.

Subplots include "smaller" versions of all the Plots described above. For example, a doomsday event or nefarious plan can be foiled in a couple of Episodes, rather than through an entire Season.

The Plot Thickens

This is where the action is. Series and Seasons are made up by Episodes. Just like in a TV show, Episodes of the Angel RPG should be entertaining, fun, and moving. If at the end of the Episode the players can't wait for the next one, the game has succeeded in its purpose. And you don't even have to break for commercials. To make things easier, we have broken our Episodes into four Acts. This generally follows the formula of the Angel TV series, but may be varied if an Episode or two needs special treatment. The elements of an Episode include the Setup (where we find out what the Episode is about), Complications (usually two of them, when important things happen), Climax (where the conflict reaches a head), and Resolution (where you wrap up some threads, leaving others to fester). Interwoven with all this you'll have the Season's Plots and Subplots. Put it all together, roll opening credits, get those quips ready, and start tossing dice.

Plots and Free Will

Games aren't scripted, and the Cast Members are going to act in ways that you didn't expect- that's inevitable. So what happens when you were planning a nasty ambush the moment our heroes arrive at an abandoned warehouse-and they decide to go home to rest instead? Or the Cast follows the red herring and ignores the clues that lead to real culprit?

You can choose to let the chips fall where they may-the ambush never happens, and half the city burns down while the Cast follows a false lead-or you can adjust things accordingly. For example, if the ambush is a

vital part of the storyline, just relocate it to wherever the Cast ends up. Or have the false lead actually contain some clue that points them in the right direction. You cannot do that all the time though, or the players will come to realize that no matter what their characters do, it turns out to be right thing. Sometimes, mistakes should have consequences. Maybe the world doesn't end, but something bad should happen if the Cast screws up-a friend or relative might be hurt or even die, for example. Don't do this just to "punish" the characters for not following the script, though. You want the players to add their own twists to things.

Try to be flexible with Plots and Subplots. If you railroad the Cast, the players aren't going to have fun. But don't let the characters get away with totally wrongheaded decisions either.

Sounds hard to do? Yup, and sometimes what you think is a fair decision is not going to sit well with the players. Nobody said being a Director was going to be a walk in the park. The most rewarding stuff never is. It does get better with practice. And the feeling you get when an Episode comes to an end and everybody is caught up in the story is about as good as it gets on the storytelling/creative front.

The Setup

An Episode needs a Setup, where the situation is established. For example, the introduction of 1.2 Lonely Heart was, "A demon is murdering singles in L.A." The episode dealt with the Original Cast discovering a parasitic demon that jumped from one host body to the next as he wore them out, figuring out how to destroy it, and doing it in the final act.

The Setup can be something new and unexpected or a development of a Plot or Subplot. Typically, the Cast doesn't know what the Setup is until later in the Episode. It's up to them to figure it out, and do whatever needs doing. Some possible Setups include:

A Stranger Arrives: There's a new ghoul in town and the Cast must stop it before it racks up a big body count. This is possibly the simplest Setup there is. The Cast finds a victim or two, investigates, discovers who or what the critter is, and takes care of business. You need to create the new threat and figure out what sort of trail leads to its eventual defeat. If the Cast is not on the ball, the Stranger might manage to escape, and even become a recurrent threat, or even an Adversary.

We Meet Again: A recurring villain (an Adversary or the Nemesis) is the main foe of the Episode. This Setup usually helps advance one of the major Plots of the Season. Typically, the villain unleashes some scourge upon the Cast or the world at large. The gang has to deal with the danger and stop the villain. The old enemy may escape, or might finally get his just desserts.

We Meet At Last: These are important Plot-related Episodes. Our heroes finally discover the identity of some important villain or Adversary. These encounters usually end with a nice fight scene, but the unmasked foe may not be defeated this time. The Setup can start with the discovery of the villain, or might provide the clues needed to the revelation near the end of the Episode.

Now You've Done It: Sometimes, the trouble comes from a Cast Member (or a Guest Star friend or ally) rather than from an outside threat. This type of Episode has a complication or danger caused by a screw-up on the part of a "good guy." Maybe somebody cast the wrong spell, trusted the wrong person, or made some tragic error and must now make amends for it (or had to perform some action that the others in the group cannot understand or condone). In this Episode, monsters or villains play a minor role (although they are likely to be around)-much of the Episode is spent dealing with the consequences of the Cast Member's actions or undoing the damage they caused.

The Dead and the Beautiful: Finally, you have Episodes that deal with dramatic situations-falling in love, trying to lead a normal life in the midst of demon hunting, or the resolution of personal subplots. Combat takes a definite back seat to interpersonal relationships, but usually a vamp or two shows their ugly mugs just in time to get stomped sometime between tearful moments.

Episode Subplots

Angel RPG Episodes are rarely about only one thing. Besides the central Setup, you should try to string along at least one Subplot. This can be something from the characters' personal lives-a date, an audition-or part of one of the Season's Plots or Subplots (developing two character's relationship, for example). These secondary storylines can be pretty important, but they don't get as much "onscreen time" as the main plotline.

Common personal Subplots include important celebrations-birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays (what happens when the Cast needs to prepare for that big Thanksgiving Dinner even as they try to end a man-eating demonic bird's reign of terror? Now that's a special holiday Episode). Romantic developments are also important; our heroes may find that a recent breakup from within the ranks is cramping their style.

Ideally, you can find your Episode Subplots from the relationships and personal lives of the Cast. There is a small risk that the Subplot will take over the Episode, but if that's what's important to the players, go with it. The rest of the Episode can always be dealt with later (assuming time is not an issue; otherwise, a vision from

the Powers warning the heroes the world is about to end may break their mood and get their butts in gear).

Complications

After you have your Setup, you need to get the story moving. The Cast does most of the moving, but you can give them directions to get to the good parts. Complications are dramatic moments that advance the story, or turning points that make things more interesting (and dangerous) for the characters. You should try to space out the Complications. Think of them as the high points on a roller-coaster-you get the thrill as you go down, get a temporary break and build-up as you go up (heading for the next Complication), and go through the thrill all over again. Here are some Complications you can use in your Episodes:

He's Dead, Jim: Finding a corpse is always good way to get a reaction, especially if the cause of death is unusual or gross. This situation can be highly dramatic (in the case of a loved one or friend) or for shock value only. The grisly discovery could be used to reveal some dark force is at work or to provide clues as to the nature of the threat.

We're In It Deep Now: You turn around, and face a roomful of vampires. Or the kindly old man you were interviewing turns out to have the strength of ten men and an appetite for human hearts. Or your girlfriend walks up on you having an intimate moment with an old friend. This Complication reveals an unexpected danger (physical or emotional), the kind of situation that has the audience (and in a game, the players) wondering how the hell the heroes are going to get out with their hides intact. Ambushes and surprise attacks make great Complications. Sometimes, you may have to pay off the players with a Drama Point; otherwise the characters with Situational Awareness and Fast Reaction Time are never going to get knocked out from behind while poking their noses where they didn't belong. And where's the fun in that? Setting up these situations can be difficult if the Cast is careful or paranoid enough, but with some creativity, anyone can get ambushed. If you can arrange it, an attack when the characters think they are totally safe can really shake their confidence.

Out of Left Field: This Complication reveals that the Cast Members' had it all wrong-the apparent victim is actually the villain, their suspect is actually a good guy, and the butler didn't do it-his demonically possessed clone did. To develop this Complication, you need to plant a few red herrings and get the Cast pointed in the wrong direction, until the truth comes crashing down (often leading to a "We're In It Deep Now" moment).

The Moment of Truth: A lovesick character confesses her feelings. A secret betrayal is finally uncovered. What was hidden is now revealed. This dramatic Complication can go beyond the Episode and involve the Season's Plot or Subplot (like the discovery of Wesley's betrayal in Season Three). This is a Complication that can be player-driven, especially when it comes to personal revelations.

Climax

Sooner or later, you'll get to the final payoff of the Episode. The Setup is resolved (even if the solution is not completely satisfactory), and the roller-coaster ride comes to its end. Usually, the Climax involves a confrontation with the main threat of the Episode. That could go well, or badly, or could just fizzle out with not much resolved (setting up the next go-round).

Or you could pull a fast one-the encroaching horror that the Cast has been preparing for turns out to be mostly smoke and mirrors. Once they overcome their fear and despair, and actually face up to the Big Nasty, he winds up being something of a push over. He falls and the Cast looks around wondering "what's was that? What else you got?" Then you drop a bombshell on them in the Resolution.

Resolution

Once the big fight is over, the huge revelation is revealed, a major Plot arc transitioned to the next stage, or something completely different, the consequences of the confrontation must be explored. The Cast may be triumphant and unscathed, which is nice, but shouldn't be counted on. Alternatively, the heroes win, but it's not a painless victory; maybe they learn some hard lesson or have to pay some painful cost. The Climax might turn out to be a large-scale Complication instead: maybe the villain is defeated-only to be revealed as the pawn of a much more powerful being. Or perhaps the bad guy is really a possessed friend, and a Now You've Done It Setup flows directly.

Many Episodes should end in an upbeat note-the Cast Members have prevailed, after all. They might be a bit battered, bloody, maybe even frayed around the edges-but you should see the other guy. Most Episodes should give the Cast a sense of accomplishment. If every Episode ends in an ambiguous or bitter way, you'll mire the heroes in a sea of existential angst and that's a lot less fun than it sounds.

Acts

To help organize the various parts of an Act, we've adopted a format for our ready-to-play Episodes. You can mirror this method in your own Episode creations, you can vary things here and there, or you can toss the

whole mess in the trash and do your own thing.

In general, each Act includes one or more Scenes, each described in varying degrees of detail. The scenes need a setting, some Supporting Cast Members and their agendas, and a general overview of what's about to happen. You may have to think through several paths. A well-designed scene allows the Cast to take a number of approaches to the central problem or conflict. If so, you must prepare for different actions and their repercussions on the general storyline. Don't get too detailed or narrow though-you can count on your Cast doing stuff you didn't imagine ... with regularity. That's when you need to go with the flow, adjust your story, improvise, and gently lead the crew back to the main story path. It can get tricky and ragged at times, but that's the fun of a free-flowing, shared storytelling experience. Don't worry, the outcome is almost always more than you could have hoped for.

We suggest that you organize each Act as follows:

Run-Down: A brief explanation of what happens in this section.

Action: This covers the actual events and encounters in the Act, including rules, and maps.

Troubleshooting: Some tips on how to handle problems when the players improvise or go down an unexpected path.

Stats: Game information for the Supporting Cast involved in the Act.

Others Ways To Do It

The Act/Episode/Season/Series structure is a set of guidelines you can use to make the game play feel like the Angel TV show (yup, we love to belabor the obvious). Still, that may not be the best way to run a game, or to run your game. Maybe you don't want to set up Season-length plots, and prefer to let the interaction of the Cast dictate the way the Series runs. Or you want to follow a more traditional roleplaying style. Here are some ideas for those who want something besides the default structure.

The Quest: The game centers around some elusive goal. There are no actual Seasons or Episodes; game sessions lead the Cast from one scene to the next, each leading them a step closer to the final climax. The game focuses on a single major plot and ends when the quest is fulfilled (although a sequel might follow). This structure is closer to a movie than a TV series.

The Soap Opera: These games have no set structure. They depend on the Cast's interacting with the environment. You populate the setting, and let the Cast loose on it. There are lots of Plots and Subplots, but actual resolution points are less frequent. This is more like a soap opera, where by the time a villain is defeated, two more are already prowling in the background.

The One-Shot: This can be a single-Episode game where what happened before and what happens after are not very important, or a series of Episodes that don't have interlinked Plots or Subplots. One-shots are very useful for conventions or pick-up games where you don't have to worry about players showing up for every game session. The structure of those games is more like a movie-it may or may not have sequels, but the story should be essentially over by the time the closing credits start rolling.

Tonight, On A Very Special Angel

Not all Episodes are created equal. Some are going to be almost "routine"-monster shows up, monster rampages, monster gets staked (or knifed, or clobbered with a giant mallet), Cast scores a few funny lines out of it, The End (and there's nothing wrong with that, as long as the execution of the Episode is fun and entertaining). Others are going to play a pivotal role in the lives of the Cast Members or shape the tone and character of the Season or even the entire Series.

Series Premieres

The first Episode is pretty damn important. There we go with the understatement again. This is where the Cast gets together for the first time (at least "on screen"-the characters may have known each other before on paper, but this is where we see what sort of chemistry exists between them). Everybody gets a first glimpse at the setting, and a lot of the tone of the Season or the Series is going to be defined by this first impression. Still, not everything should be set in stone. Just like in television, a game Series may need some "retooling" after the first few Episodes (whatever you do, though, don't introduce cute little kids unless they are whisked off to another dimension or die horribly after a few Episodes; they are the kiss of death). The Series Premiere is usually an extended Episode- a Pilot, if you will-and involves some important Setups and Complications, including the following:

Introductions: Big Setup here. The stars of the show share the "screen" for the first time. Most of what happens next is up to the players and how they "perform" their roles. You can provide a few nudges here or

there. Putting the entire Cast under a little pressure may help them stick together; after the characters have to fight for their lives against a vampire gang, they may feel more respect for each other. Friends don't let friends get drained by vampires; by the same token, people who save each other's lives likely become friends.

Shocking Discoveries: A few things that you should get out of the way during the first Episode include such shockers as "Demons are real," "Demons are real ugly," "Demons are real strong," and "Yikes! There's a lot of them demons in our neighborhood." Some of the "basic facts" of the setting should be described here, especially if the Cast is not aware of them. If the Series starts with a group of experienced monster hunters, of course, it goes without saying that the really basic facts should go without saying, if you know what we mean.

A Glimpse of Things to Come: You don't have to lay out all the cards, or even most of the cards, on the table, but it'd be nice if the Season Premiere gave out some clues as to what's going to be happening. They can include such tidbits as hints of the dark powers involved, a chance encounter with a Supporting Cast character that may play an important role in the Cast's lives, or a "job description" for some of our heroes.

Season Finales

All good things must come to an end. At the Season Finale, the Plots and any remaining Subplots come to a head, the Final Showdown takes place, and the Cast Members' lives are never the same. Season Finales should always be your proverbial doozies. The Setup should be pretty intense; the consequences if the heroes fail must be extreme. Maybe the world will not end, but the survivors might wish it had if the Nemesis' plans come to fruition. The Complications should be powerful; Moments of Truth galore, and when the characters are In It Deep, it should be deep indeed. The Finales are times for the Cast Members to show how tough, courageous, and determined they are. Sometimes, they end with the heroes standing together, brothers and sisters in arms, closer to each other than to anyone else in the world. Other times, they end in a cliffhanger, getting you eager to start the next Season as soon as possible. You get all of these things, and your gaming group will have recreated the magic of Angel.

Season Finales have some of the following Episode elements:

The Agony and the Ecstasy: Romantic Plots and Subplots should reach a major point in the Season Finale. Characters may finally declare their love for one another, relationships may come to a heartbreaking end, or intended declarations of love may get derailed into heartbreak or vice versa.

This Time It's Personal: By the time of the Final Showdown, the Nemesis or Adversary should have gotten the Cast really, really pissed off. The end of the villain should provide a nice catharsis. Few things feel better than seeing the creature that tormented and terrorized the Cast and their loved ones get the proverbial Can of Whoop-ass unleashed upon it. With a combination of Drama Points and creativity, the bad guys should come to an emotionally satisfying end.

The Price of Victory: Victories are not without costs. Maybe the Cast has to pay a terrible price to finally defeat the villain. They might have to compromise their values. They might suffer losses at the end. Good as the defeat of the Adversary should be, the victory should often be bittersweet, flavored with pain.

And Life Goes On: The Season Finale can also be used to mark milestones in the lives of the characters. At the end of each Season, the Cast is going to be older and hopefully a little wiser. Characters grow up, and hopefully become stronger, better people than they were at the beginning of the Season.

Season Premieres

A Season ends, and, hopefully shortly afterwards, a new one follows. The Season Premiere should pick up any loose ends from the previous Season and turn them into new Plots and Subplots. New Adversaries can be introduced, returning Nemesis weigh in, and story arcs blossom. If any enemies survived the last Season, they may make unexpected comebacks. The consequences of the heroes' actions may come back and bite them in the ass in the new Season. And the Season Premiere is a good place to get the ball rolling.

A new Season can herald a lot of changes. Some Cast Members may leave, to be replaced by newcomers. Minor characters may become important Supporting Cast members, or even new Cast Members. The entire Series may take a new turn, perhaps becoming a little darker (or more tongue in cheek). You get a chance to fix any problems the last Season had, and the players should get a better feel for their roles.

The Season can start shortly after the end of the previous one, but sometimes it is better to let a little "down time" pass. That gives the Cast a breather and some leeway to modify their background a bit, and maybe get a few "power ups"-a season learning hidden lore can turn a dabbler in the arts into a skilled magician, for example, and a few months of intensive physical training might transform an Investigator into a pumped-up demon-hunter. The down time allows for new challenges to rise up in the characters' personal lives, and new Adversaries to surface (although they might not make their appearance for the first few Episodes).

In Conclusion

Producing a fun Series requires a good deal of work from both you and the players. Your gaming group is basically doing the work of a team of screenwriters, actors, directors, and lots of support staff. Instead of big salaries and houses in Beverly Hills, you get to have fun making your own stories. The great part about roleplaying is that you can get both the pleasure of reading a good story (and not knowing how it will end) and the creative joy of writing a good story.

When you combine that with your own characters and setting of the Ciniverse, a grand old time is all but assured.

Appendix I

CHARACTER CREATION BASICS

The following tables and charts may be used to aid in the character creation process. Further information is provided on the pages cited.

Creation Process

1. Choose a concept: What's your character going to be like? Noble Hunter, bookish Watcher, beginning witch, or something more daring—a football captain warlock with deep girl insecurities?

2. Choose Character Types: The Character Type determines the general power level and nature of your character. Heroes are tough and skilled. White Hats are normal people who depend on their wits and luck to survive. Type sets the number of Drama Points (10 for Heroes, 20 for White Hats). See p. 4.

3. Attributes: What are your character's natural abilities, both mental and physical? Attributes cost one point per level to level five, and three points per level after that. At least one point must be put into each Attribute. Human maximum is six. See p. 5.

4. Qualities and Drawbacks: What innate advantages or penalties affect your character? A handy list of Qualities and Drawbacks is on p. 137-138; the details start on p. 8.

5. Skills: What does your character know? The possible skills are listed on the character sheet; the details start on p. 39.

6. Finishing Touches: This is where you decide the character's name, appearance and other characteristics. Distinctive habits or mannerisms, hairstyle, scars, tattoos, piercings fashion, music/video tastes.

Character Type Chart

Type	Attribute Points	Quality Points	Drawback Points	Skill Points	Drama Points
Hero	20	20	up to 10	20	10
White hat	15	10	up to 10	15	20
Experienced Hero	25	25	up to 10	40	20

*Add 15 Skill points to each character if you wish to have characters who are in college or older.

Qualities and Drawbacks Table

Acute/Impaired Senses	2-point Quality or Drawback	p. 9
Addiction	Variable Drawback	p. 10
Adversary	Variable Drawback	p. 11
Artist	2-point Quality	p. 11
Athlete	4-point Quality	p. 11
Attractiveness	1-point/level Quality or Drawback	p. 11
Brainiac	4-point Quality	p. 11-12

Qualities and Drawbacks Table

Clown	1-point Drawback	p. 12
Contacts	Variable Quality	p. 12
Covetous	1- to 3-point Drawback	p. 12
Dependent	2- or 3-point Drawback	p. 13
Eidetic Memory	1- or 2-point Quality	p.13
Emotional Problems	Variable Drawback	p. 13
Fast Reaction Time	2-point Quality	p. 14
Good/Bad Luck	1-point/level Quality or Drawback	p. 14
Hard to Kill	1- to 5-point Quality	p. 14
Hero/Big Damn Hero	1- or 3-point Quality	p. 14
Honorable	1- to 3-point Drawback	p. 15
Humorless	1-point Drawback	p. 15
Love/Tragic Love	2- or 4-point Drawback	p. 15
Mental Problems	1- to 3-point Drawback	p. 15-16
Minority	1-point Drawback	p. 16
Misfit	2-point Drawback	p. 16
Natural Toughness	2-point Quality	p. 17
Nerves of Steel	3-point Quality	p. 17
Obligation	Variable Drawback	p. 17
Occult Library	Variable Quality	p. 17
Outcast	2- or 5-point Drawback	p. 18
Physical Disability	Variable Drawback	p. 18
Rank	1-point/level Quality or Drawback	p. 18
Recurring Nightmares	1-point Drawback	p. 19
Resistance	1-point per level Quality	p. 19
Resources	2-points/level Quality or Drawback	p. 19
Schmuck	2-point Drawback	p. 20
Secret	Variable Drawback	p. 20
Situational Awareness	2-point Quality	p. 20
Status	1-point/Level Quality or Drawback	p. 20
Talentless	2-point Drawback	p. 21
Teenager/Youth	2-point Drawback	p. 21
Tool Man	3-point Quality	p. 21

Racial & Training Package Qualities

Commando	4-point Quality	p. 22
Cop/Detective	5- or 8-point Quality	p. 22
Criminal/Wise Guy	2- or 3-point Quality	p. 23

Commando	4-point Quality	p. 22
Occult Investigator	5-point Quality	p. 23
Promised One	16-point Quality	p. 24
Robot	5-point Quality	p. 24
Totem Warrior	12-point Quality	p. 24-25

Supernatural Qualities and Drawbacks		
Age	2-points/level Quality	p. 27
Antisocial Impulses	Variable Drawback	p. 27
Demonic Tutor	2-point Drawback	p. 28
Emotional Influence	Variable Quality	p. 28
Enchanted or Superscience Item	2-points/level Quality	p. 28
Enchanter/ Superscientist	5-points/level Quality	p. 28
Enhanced/Reduced Attributes	Variable Quality or Drawback	p. 29
Hypnosis	5-, 10-, or 20-point Quality	p. 29
Immortal	0-point Quality	p. 29
Increased Life Points	1-point/level Quality	p. 30
Invisible	20-point Quality	p. 30
Iron Mind	3-point Quality	p. 30
Limited Use	1- or 2-point Drawback	p. 30
Magic Magnet	2-point Drawback	p. 30
Magical Family	0 to 2-point Quality or Drawback	p. 30
Natural Armor	1-point/level Quality	p. 31
Natural Weapon	1- to 8-point Quality	p. 31
Psychic Visions	1-point Quality	p. 31
Pyrokinesis	3-point/level Quality	p. 32
Reduced Damage	Variable Quality	p. 33
Regeneration	1-, 3-, or 6-point Quality	p. 33
Sorcery	5-point/level Quality	p. 33
Spirit Medium	2-point Quality	p. 33
Supernatural Attack	Variable Quality	p. 33
Supernatural Form	1- or 2-point Drawback	p. 34
Telekinesis	3-point/level Quality	p. 35
Telepathy	5-point Quality	p. 35
Uncontrollable Power	5-point Drawback	p. 36
Unique Kill	5-point Quality	p. 36

Supernatural Qualities and Drawbacks

Vulnerability	Variable Drawback	p. 36
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Supernatural Race Packages

Demon/Half Demon	Variable Quality	p. 36
Revenant	17-point Quality	p. 37
Vampire	12- or 15-point Quality	p. 37-38
Werewolf	3-point Drawback or 6- or 12-point Quality	p. 38
Zombie	Variable Quality	p. 38

Life Point Table

Constitution x Strength										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	18	22	26	30	34	38	42	46	50	54
2	22	26	30	34	38	42	46	50	54	58
3	26	30	34	38	42	46	50	54	58	62
4	30	34	38	42	46	50	54	58	62	66
5	34	38	42	46	50	54	58	62	66	70
6	38	42	46	50	54	58	62	66	70	74
7	42	46	50	54	58	62	66	70	74	78
8	46	50	54	58	62	66	70	74	78	82
9	50	54	58	62	66	70	74	78	82	86
10	54	58	62	66	70	74	78	82	86	90

Strength Table

Strength	Lifting Capacity	
1-5	50 lbs x Strength	(Strength 5: 250 lbs)
6-10	200 x (Strength - 5) + 250 lbs	(Strength 10: 1250 lbs)
11-15	500 x (Strength - 10) + 1500 lbs	(Strength 15: 4,000 lbs/2 tons)
16-20	1,000 x (Strength - 15) + 5,000 lbs	(Strength 20: 10,000 lbs/5 tons)
21-25	1 ton x (Strength - 20) + 5 tons	(Strength 25: 10 tons)
26-30	2 ton x (Strength - 25) + 10 tons	(Strength 30: 20 tons)

Combat Maneuvers Reference Table

Name	Roll Basics	Damage	Notes
Aiming	Perception + Gun Fu, or Perception + Getting	None	Adds Success Levels to shooting roll, see p. 51

Name	Roll Basics	Damage	Notes
	Medieval, or Brains Score		
Bow Shot	Dexterity + Getting Medieval -2 or Combat Score -2	(4 x Strength) Slash/stab (to maximum of 20)	Ranged attack modifiers apply (see p. 58-61)
Break Neck	Strength + Kung Fu, or Muscle Score	(4 x Strength) Bash	If defender at -10 Life Points, Survival Test or neck broken (dead), see p. 51
Catch Weapon	Dexterity + Kung Fu - 5, or Combat Score - 5	None	Ranged defense action; see p. 51
Chainsaw	Dexterity + Getting Medieval -3, or Dexterity + Mr. Fixit -3, or Combat Score -3	6 x (Strength +1) Slash/stab	Maximum of 60; see p. 58-61
Choke	Strength + Kung Fu, or Muscle Score	(Strength - 1) Bash	Asphyxiation; see p. 51
Crossbow Shot	Dexterity + Getting Medieval, or Combat Score	16 Slash/stab	Ranged attack modifiers apply (see p. 51), see p. 58-61
Decapitation	Dexterity + Getting Medieval - 5, or Combat Score - 5	Varies by weapon	Total damage multiplied by five, see p. 51
Disarm	Dexterity + Getting Medieval - 2, or Dexterity + Kung Fu -3, or Combat Score -2	None	Resisted by Parry; see p. 51
Dodge	Dexterity + Acrobatics, or Dexterity + Getting Medieval, or Dexterity + Kung Fu, or Combat Score	None	Avoid getting hit, duh!; see p. 51
Fast-Draw	Dexterity + Gun Fu -3, or Dexterity + Wild Card (Fast-Draw), or Combat Score -3	None	Gunslinger trick, does not replace Gunshot roll; see p. 51
Feint	Intelligence + Kung Fu, or Intelligence + Getting Medieval, or Brains Score	None	Adds Success Levels to next action; see p. 51
Flamethrower	Dexterity + Gun Fu -2, or Combat Score -2	6 points, all fire; then 3 points per Turn until target out	Flammable items ignite; see p. 58-61
Flamethrower (Makeshift)	Dexterity + Gun Fu -2, or Combat Score -2	3 points, all fire; then 3 points per Turn until target out	Item may explode, flammable items ignite; see p. 58-61
Grapple	Dexterity + Kung Fu + 2, or Combat Score + 2	None	Impairment varies; see p. 51
Groin Shot	Combat Maneuver - 3	Varies by attack	Tough on boys; see p.51
Gunshot	Dexterity + Gun Fu, or Combat Score	Varies by weapon	Ranged attack modifiers apply, see p. 58-61
Head Butt	Dexterity + Kung Fu - 2, or Combat Score - 2	(2 x Strength) Bash	If target grappled, she cannot defend; if attack misses, attacker takes damage, see p. 51
Jump Kick	Dexterity + Kung Fu - 3, or Combat Score - 3	3 x (Strength + 1) Bash;	Acrobatics + Dexterity roll first; add Success Levels to damage, see p. 51
Kick	Dexterity + Kung Fu - 1,	2 x (Strength + 1) Bash	Done with style and grace, of

Name	Roll Basics	Damage	Notes
	Combat Score -1		course, see p. 52
Knockout	Dexterity + Kung Fu - 2, or Dexterity + Getting Medieval -2, or Combat Score -2	Half damage of attack	Lights out; see p. 52
Lasso	Dexterity + Getting Medieval -4, or Dexterity + Wild Card (Lasso), or Combat Score -4	2 x Strength Bash	Rope 'em cowgirl, damage applies only if victim's neck is roped; see p. 58-61
Melee Weapon	Dexterity + Getting Medieval, or Combat Score	Varies by weapon	Good ol' fashioned hack, slash, crush and maim, see p. 58-61
Parry	Dexterity + Kung Fu, or Dexterity + Getting Medieval, or Combat Score	None	Defense action, -2 against ranged attacks; see p. 52
Punch	Dexterity + Kung Fu, or Combat Score	2 x Strength Bash	Basic knuckle sandwich; see p. 52
Rocket Launcher	Dexterity + Gun Fu -2, or Combat Score -2	100 points at ground zero, 35 points in 2 yard radius, 10 points within 5 yards	All Fire damage; see p. 58-61
Slam-Tackle	Strength + Sports, or Muscle Score	2 x Strength Bash	Football or other roughhousing tackle; see p. 52
Spin Kick	Dexterity + Kung Fu -2, or Combat Score - 2	2 x (Strength + 2) Bash;	Kick for the cool folks; see p. 52
Stake	Dexterity + Getting Medieval,	2 x Strength Slash/stab	see p. 52
Sweep Kick	Dexterity + Kung Fu -1, or Combat Score -1	Strength Bash	Knocks target down (see p. 134); see p. 52
Takedown	Strength + Kung Fu, or Muscle Score	Strength Bash	Knocks target down (see p. 134); see p. 52
Through the Heart	Combat Maneuver -3	Varies by weapon	see p. 52
Throw Weapon	Dexterity + Getting Medieval -1, or Combat Score -1	Varies by weapon	Range 2 yards plus 2 yards/Strength; see p. 58-61
Toss	Strength doubled -4, or Muscle Score -4	Strength Bash	Must Grapple first, minimum Strength 4; see p. 52
Whip	Dexterity + Getting Medieval -2, or Dexterity + Wild Card (Whip), or Combat Score -1	None	Handy for a lot of things, Willpower doubled roll to resist pain, see p. 58-61
Wrestling Hold	Strength + Kung Fu -2, or Muscle Score -2	None	Must Grapple first, defender is at -1 per Success Level; see p. 52

Base Damage Table

Attack	Base Damage	Notes
Assault Rifle	16	Bullet; can fire bursts; use rifle ranges
Axe	5 x Strength	Slash/stab; can use two hands; see p. 58-61

Attack	Base Damage	Notes
Baseball Bat	4 x Strength	Bash; use this for any heavy club; can use two hands
Baton	3 x Strength	Bash
Big Ass Pistol	18	Bullet; use pistol ranges
Big Ass Sword	5 x (Strength + 1)	Slash/stab; uses two hands
Big Knife	3 x Strength	Slash/stab
Big Pistol	15	Bullet; use pistol ranges
Blunderbuss	25 (regular), 15 (wooden)	Slash/stab; use rifle ranges
Bow	4 x Strength	Slash/stab; maximum damage 20; use pistol ranges
Break Neck	4 x Strength	Bash; must Grapple
Buffalo Rifle	22	Bullet; use rifle ranges
Chainsaw	6 x (Strength + 1)	Slash/stab; max damage 60
Choke/Strangle	1 x (Strength – 1)	Victim cannot breathe
Crossbow	16	Slash/stab; use pistol ranges
Dynamite	20/25 at ground zero, 12/15 within 3 yards, 5/6 within 5 yards, additional sticks add 5 to ground zero damage and 2 to other damages	Bash/fire; use throw ranges; could scatter
Energy Disruptor	15	Bash; use rifle ranges; triple damage to living beings; armor piercing
Flamethrower	6, then 3 per turn until out	Fire; use pistol ranges
Flamethrower (Makeshift)	3, then 3 per turn until out	Fire; three yard range
Flare Gun	9	Fire; use pistol ranges; possible blinding and ignition
Grenade	30 at ground zero, 20 within 3 yards, 8 within 5 yards.	Bash/fire; use throw ranges; could scatter
Head Butt	2 x Strength	Bash
Holdout Gun	12	Bullet; use pistol ranges; concealable
Hunting Rifle	20	Bullet; use rifle ranges
Jump Kick	3 x (Strength + 1)	Bash; add Success Levels of Dexterity + Acrobatics roll to damage
Kick	2 x (Strength + 1)	Bash
Knife	2 x Strength	Slash/stab
Lasso	2 x Strength	Bash; only causes damage to victim's throat; triple damage to living beings
Musket	17	Bullet; use pistol ranges; takes (12 - Success Levels) Turns to reload
Pigsticker	2 x (Strength – 1)	Slash/stab

Attack	Base Damage	Notes
Pistol	12	Bullet; use pistol ranges
Pistol Crossbow	10	Slash/stab; use pistol ranges
Popgun	9	Bullet; use pistol ranges
Punch	2 x Strength	Bash
Quarterstaff	3 x (Strength + 1)	Bash; uses two hands
Rippers		
Rocket Launcher		
Shotgun	20	Bullet; use pistol ranges
Slam-Tackle	2 x Strength	Bash; knocks target down
Smartgun	15	Bullet; use pistol ranges; armor piercing; self aiming gun
Sniper Rifle	30	Bullet; use rifle ranges x 2; good with scopes
Spear	3 x (Strength + 1)	Slash/stab; uses two hands
Spin Kick	2 x (Strength + 2)	Bash
Stake	2 x Strength	Slash/stab
Submachine Gun	9	Bullet; can fire bursts; use pistol ranges
Sweep Kick	1 x Strength	Bash; knocks target down
Sword	4 x Strength	Slash/stab
Takedown	1 x Strength	Bash; knocks target down
Taser Rifle	5	Knockout effect; use pistol ranges
Tompson Submachine gun	12	Bullet; use pistol ranges
Thrown Axe	4 x Strength	Slash/stab
Thrown Knife/Stake	2 x (Strength -1)	Slash/stab
Thrown Pigsticker	1 x (Strength -1)	Slash/stab
Thrown Spear	3 x Strength	Slash/stab
Toss	1 x Strength	Bash; knocks target down
Tranquilizer Gun	1	Puts target to sleep; use rifle ranges
Whip	2 x Strength	Bash; may cause loss of actions
Winchester Rifle	18	Bullet; use rifle ranges

Base Modifiers Table

EASY:	+5
MODERATE:	+3 to +4
AVERAGE:	+1 to +2
CHALLENGING:	No modifier
DIFFICULT:	-1 to -2

EASY:	+5
VERY DIFFICULT:	-3 to -5
HEROIC:	-6 to -9
SHAAH, RIGHT:	-10 or worse

Armor Table

Armor Type	Armor Value	Notes
Leather or Tweed Jacket	2	Typical biker's jacket with lots of zippers or a Watcher's scholarly jacket
Leather Armor	3	Breastplate, helmet and arm and leg protectors
Chain Mail	8(4)	Second value is used against Bullet attacks
Dermal Armor (Chainmail)	8(4)	Second value is used against Bullet attacks
Dermal Armor (Kevlar)	10(5)	Second value is used against Slash/stab attacks
Plate Armor	12(6)	Second value is used against Bullet attacks
Bulletproof Vest	10(5)	Second value is used against Slash/stab attacks
Combat Armor	12	Worn by combat soldiers and SWAT teams

Combat Roll Modifiers

FULL DEFENSE:	+3 to all defense actions; no attack actions
FULL OFFENSE:	+2 to all attack actions; no defense actions
KNOCKED DOWN:	-4 to all actions; no attack actions for one Turn
MULTIPLE ACTIONS:	-2 per action, cumulative; extra actions limited by Dexterity
MULTIPLE OPPONENTS:	+1 per additional person; maximum +4
SHORT RANGE:	no modifier
MEDIUM RANGE:	-1
LONG RANGE:	-3

Appendix II

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE

Chapter Four: Magic, Light and Dark provides basic information on ritual specifics for each Ciniverse spell. Some may want to bring further depth to in-game rituals. This section contains a handy list of practices, references, incantations, and items to choose from when devising spells. As a general rule, assume that you need one item, incantation, or the like for each power level of the spell.

The shopping list is divided into various sections. Try not to pick too many ingredients from any one list. Most spells require a variety of incantations, materials, and general hokum to get the job done.

Points of the Compass

It is common Wiccan practice to "call the corners" when beginning a spell casting. Compass points may find a place in your Series' spellcraft. Each point has a particular element and season attached to it. We've also listed the associated Tarot suite and Ciniverse character type (we made up that last part) as ritual element

suggestions.

Direction	Season	Element	Tarot Suit	Ciniverse
North	Winter	Earth	Pentacles/Coins	Vampires
South	Summer	Fire	Wands	Demons
East	Spring	Air	Swords	Magicians/Witches
West	Autumn	Water	Cups	Humans

Spells seem to involve frequent invoking of deities, demigods and spirits like Thespia and Osiris. We've collected a relatively short list of divinities and their areas of expertise. This is by no means exhaustive.

Angels

Gabriel Love, tolerance, gratitude
Jophiel Illumination, wisdom, perception
Micheal War (he cast out Lucifer)
Raphael Healing, truth
Uriel Death, peace, ministration
Zadial Refinement, invocation, transformation

Devils

Lucifer Morningstar Lord of the Devils, Satan, Asmodius, Baalzebub
Astaroth Time, keeper of secrets
Bael Invisibility (first lieutenant of Satan)
Belial Gifts that require sacrifice in return (twin of Lucifer)
Cimejas Language, the finder of lost things
Dantallon Secrets, love, knows and changes human thoughts
Glasya-Labolas Slaughter, turns friends into enemies
Malphas Construction, building
Murmur Philosophy, can ask secrets from the dead
Seere Travel, theft, keeper of hidden treasures
Vepar Storms, death by infection

Egyptian Gods

Anubis Lands of the dead
Bast Cats
Geb Earth
Hathor Women, fertility, childbirth
Isis Magic (mother of the gods)
Nephthys Dead (mother of Anubis)
Osiris Death, rebirth (son of Ra)
Qetesh Love, beauty
Ra Sun
Set Chaos
Thoth Knowledge

Roman and Greek Gods		
Greek Name	Roman Name	Domain
Zeus	Jupiter	Sky, heavens (king of gods)
Poseidon	Neptune	Sea
Hades	Pluto	Underworld
Hera	Juno	Marriage (queen of gods)

Greek Name	Roman Name	Domain
Hestia	Vesta	Hearth, home
Ares	Mars	War, Madness
Athena	Minerva	Education, science, virginity
Apollo	Sol/Pheobus	Sun
Artemis	Diana	Hunt, moon
Aphrodite	Venus	Love, beauty
Hermes	Mercury	Commerce, speed, travel
Hephaestus	Vulcan	Creation, forge, fire
Eros	Cupid	Love
Persephone	Proserpina	Spring (unwilling bride of Pluto)
Dionysos	Bacchus	Wine, revelry
Demeter	Ceres	Earth, harvest
Pan	Inuus/Faunus	Trickery (son of Hermes)
Kastor & Polydeukes	Castor & Pollux	Heavenly Twins
Aeolus		King of winds
Boreas		North wind
Zephir		West wind
Notus		South wind
Eurus		East wind
Iris		Rainbow
Aether		Light
Hygeia		Health
Hebe		Youth
Hecate	Trivia	Dark, magic
Eris	Discordia	Discord, strife (daughter of Ares)
Nike	Victory	Victory
Erinyes	Furies	Deliverers of Justice
Eos	Aurora	Dawn
Hespera		Dusk
Hypnos		Sleep
Nemesis		Revenge
Mors		Death
Morpheus		Morpheus

The Muses

Clio History

Urania Astronomy

Melpomene Tragedy

Thalia Comedy

Terspichore Dance

Calliope Epic poetry
Erato Love poetry
Polyhymnia Songs of the gods
Euterpe Lyric poetry
Fama Fame, rumor
Asclepius Healing, medicine

The Graces

Aglaia Splendor
Euphrosyne Mirth
Thalia Good cheer

The Fates

Clotho Spun the threads of fate
Lachesis Measured the threads of fate
Atropos Cut the threads of fate

Celtic Gods

Arawn Underworld
Arianrhod Moon, reincarnation
Balor Death (Fomorian king)
Bile Light, healing
Bran Poetry, underworld (a hero god)
Brigid Healing, fertility, the hearth, poetry, smithing, medicine
Cerridwen Mother, moon, grain
Cernunnos Fertility, life, animals, the underworld, reincarnation
Cyhiraeth Streams (spectre haunting wood land streams)
Dagda Earth, treaties, life, death
Danu Rivers, wells, prosperity, plenty, magic, wisdom (mother of gods)
Epona Horses
Gwydion Warriors, magicians
Lugh Sun, harvest
Manannan mac Lir Sea, fertility
Math-Mathonwy Sorcery
Morrigan Battles, war, death, strife, fertility
Nuada Healing, the sun, childbirth, youth, beauty, ocean, dogs, poetry, writing, sorcery, magic, weapons
Ogma Eloquence, learning
Ogmios Poetry, language, eloquence
Rhiannon Fertility, underworld
Sucellus Forests, agriculture (ferries dead to the underworld)
Taranis Thunder, master of the sky
Teutates War, fertility, wealth

Voodoo Loa

Agwe Water, sea
Ayida-Wedo Wisdom (serpent consort of Damballah)
Damballah Wisdom, love, luck (serpent consort of Ayida-Wedo)
Erzulie Love, those rejected by love
Legba Paths, crossroads (appears as an old man)
Oggun War, strength
Shango Fire, violent, extreme

Candles

Things just don't look properly magical unless you are surrounded by candles. Consider specific colors of candle when looking for ingredients.

White Protection, peace, purity, truth
Red Sexual love, passion, energy, health, courage, fire
Pink Emotional love, friendships
Orange Strength, authority, attraction
Yellow Divination, clairvoyance, mental acuity
Yellow-Green Sickness, cowardice, jealousy
Green Healing, prosperity, fertility
Light Blue Healing, meditation, tranquility, air
Dark Blue Impulsiveness, changeability, shapeshifting, water
Purple Power, healing
Brown Physical objects, animals, home, hearth, earth
Black Absorption of negative energy or evil, loss, confusion, discord
Silver/Gray Cancellation, stalemate, neutrality

Dates

Specific dates seem to be essential for any major magic working. The following list of the pagan festivals may be useful. A date is supplied, but the real time depends of moon phases and seasonal shift rather than the calendar. The festivals are listed here in the order they occur in the year, but remember they are part of a cyclic pattern with no real beginning or end.

Imbolc (Feb 2nd) Fire festival to herald the coming of summer
Ostara (March 21st) Spring equinox, time of planning and planting
Beltane (April 30th) Fertility festival celebrating physical and emotional love
Midsummer (June 21st) Summer solstice, high point for magic and harvesting
Lughnasadh (August 1st) First harvest, time to finally reap what was sown
Mabon (Sept 21st) Autumn equinox, time of leavetaking, summer's bounty fades
Samhain (Oct 31st) All Hallows Eve, Halloween, time of the dead, when spirit and physical mingle
Yule (Dec 21st) Winter solstice, sun is reborn, shortest day, winter fades

Signs, Symbols, and Language

Whether spoken or written, word and symbols have power. They allow you to focus your mind and power in a definite direction.

Each element has a symbol, and so do most demons. Some are as simple as a triangle while others resemble circuit diagrams. The most common symbol is of course the circle. Any large-scale spell in the Ciniverse seems to require sitting in a magic circle to cast. Circles are usually used for warding, and therefore protect the caster from any harmful magic they may call up. Just for the record, there are two ways of moving inside a magical circle, Deosil (clockwise) and Widdershins (counterclockwise). That will impress the Wicca wanna-bes.

Another symbol worth mentioning is the pentacle. This is a five-pointed star inside a circle. It represents the four elements and the spirit, and is a powerful symbol of protection. This is why you see dark sorcerers standing in pentacles to do their magic. If you are playing with terrible forces of darkness, you need all the protection you can get.

There are three languages of choice for magic. Latin is the most obvious, but a close second is Hebrew. Interestingly all Hebrew letters have an associated number, which allow you to add up the value of words.

Seeking meaning in the relations between words and their numbers is a whole branch of occult lore called Numerology. The last language worth looking at is Enochian—developed by an Elizabethan sorcerer called John Dee. It is made up of lines connected together with circles in odd patterns.

Herbs and Oddments

Herbs

Cinnamon Business, divination, healing
Cyclamen Protection
Frankincense Peace, purification
Hemlock Death, dark magic
Jasmine Love, money
Mandrake Fertility

Mugwort Divination
Nutmeg Divination
Patchouli Divination, money
Rosemary Divination, healing, love, mental power, protection, purification, youth
Rue Mental power, purification
Sage Healing, money

Items

Arrow News
Basket Gifts
Bees Industry, community
Bell Celebration (marriage), death (funerals)
Broom Purification (sweeping out)
Cauldron Transformation
Clock Time
Crown Success, power
Egg Fertility
Eyes Perception, evaluation
Hair Thought, wisdom
Key Enlightenment (unlock the mysteries)
Mirror Divination, protection (reflects power)
Salt Purification, protection, warding
Sword Direction, conflict

Crystals

Amber Aids memory and past regression
Amethyst Aids enlightenment and mental clarity, dispells illusion, helps meditation, intuition, healing, and inspiration
Carnelian Aids healing
Clear Quartz Dispels negativity, excels at moving and manipulating raw energy
Hematite Aids prosperity and general mental well being, inspires optimism, courage, personal magnetism
Malachite Aids prosperity
Rose Quartz Aids forgiveness and love
Smoky Quartz Releases negativity, enlightens darkness, boosts dreams and channeling
Sodolite Aids clarity, communication, and insight
Turquoise The master healing stone