

design goals

- make a game that I want to play
 - versatile and scalable to most settings / situations (but especially my own worldbuilding project)
 - will require frontloading the character assembly process
 - but then the crunch for actual gameplay should be relatively low
 - focus on different types of conflict resolution or presenting actions with interesting choices resulting in memorable storytelling / narrative experiences
 - modular subsystems
 - modular character assembly sections
 - even the entire 'tasks' system may be modular (playtest this first!)
 - free and open source! anyone can contribute
- avoid making direct references to other ttrpg games and / or buzzwords
 - or at least the proprietary ones
 - linking to other creative commons resources is probably fine
- play-test often, every two weeks if possible
 - and get the first public release out within a month or two
 - 05/06/21 update: this goal has so-far failed, public interest in the game is currently *low*
- stream parts of the creation process at least once per week
 - (and make the VODs creative commons too)
 - update: streaming is unlikely to happen because it makes me too anxious, but I will try to keep making update videos / devlogs
- core mechanics, in one sentence each:
 - narrative / descriptive focus
 - two resolution mechanics:
 - {standard d20 + bonus + choose highest d6 of advantages} > target = binary success
 - {D6 dice pool} count successes and spend them on consequences = variable resolution
 - lifepath character generation, implicitly tells story of characters life and setting
 - six abilities, each with two stats that separately determine skill and talent
 - *optional*: up to three sub-abilities (ie. capabilities) that can be theme / setting / tone specific and which can be interchanged and re-derived at any time
 - point-buy score and attribute distribution during character creation (determined by lifepaths)
 - qualitative character aspects (ie. attributes) which are not easily comparable to one another
 - quantitative advancement system (ie. jobs) which level up with use, counting failed tasks as exp
 - tag-based gear and items system, again focusing on qualitative aspects over quantitative stats
 - players can wager metacurrencies during play for bonuses, and earn them back via good roleplaying
 - potential for future development of subsystems

game structure stuff / core philosophies:

- section titles are shorthands for the rules themselves
 - general game terms are first introduced in **bold**, but aren't capitalized
 - specific game terms are Capitalized

- FC and Peer are also capitalized
 - some terms are also shortened, with most vowels removed and using a `$spcl$ fnt` to make them easier to pick out
 - this font is also used for mathematical expressions and calculations
 - (though this LaTeX font doesn't display on some markdown printouts)
 - a **monospace font** is used for changable game figures, indicating when to roll dice and what modifiers to add
 - small case **d** is used for Checks (roll-above) and rolling on random tables
 - upper case **D** is used for Tasks (pool-based successes) and only refers to D6s
 - use American spellings and use natural (or even casual) language
 - *this document* is written in an outlining style
 - where sub-bullets add additional thoughts to the main bullet
 - and sub-sub-bullets add more clarity
 - and so on...
- speak to the reader: always use second person pronoun, 'you'
 - let context determine whether 'you' means the FC, a player, or their character
- **campaign** structure terms:
 - campaigns (1-3 major arcs = 30-100 sessions)
 - major arcs (1-3 minor arcs = 10-30 sessions)
 - minor arcs (1-3 chapters = 3-9 sessions)
 - chapters (1-3 sessions)
- **session** structure terms:
 - normal session segments
 - preamble
 - (game)play
 - meta(game)
 - debriefing
 - downtime sessions
 - used to pass in-game time quickly (weeks, months, years)
 - spend lots to have brief role-play scenes and earn `exp` in a related skill
 - solo sessions
 - development sessions
 - "session 0"
 - character assembly / development
 - allows for re-jigging your character, changing some `$caps$` or advancing to a new tier
 - worldbuilding
 - anyone can ask for any kind of session in advance, but the assumed default is a normal session
- **scene** structure terms:
 - scene types
 - encounters
 - interludes
 - vignettes
 - rounds start with the FC's turn and then always progress clockwise
 - (or left-to-right / top-to-bottom if playing online)

- once a round passes where no one has anything else to add (or skips their turn) then the scene ends
- any player (including the FC) can also use [script change tools](#) to pause, speedup, slowdown, or even *rewind* play
 - other consent tools will also be provided, such as a checklist of content warnings
- two types of **roll**:
 - **checks** (simple verbs / actions)
 - straight-forward, quick and dirty, binary outcomes
 - target number based success criteria, roll with $1d20 + X + h(Yd6)$
 - **target** = absolute difficulty (0-5) $\times 5$ + relative difficulty factors, up to +4 (ie. target spreads are 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, or 25-29)
 - **result** = $1d20$ die roll + appropriate ability score $+X$ (chosen by the FC) + the highest roll $+h()$ of $Yd6$, where Y is the sum of any appropriate (ie. Peer reviewed) bonus factors from your attributes, spent lots, or aid.
 - no autopass for Bronze, 20s for Silver, and 19-20s for Gold and Platinum
 - but also Platinum can't autofail on a 1.
 - check success = get result equal to or higher than target
 - margin of success or failure does not matter
 - there is no inherent notion of a 'critical'
 - you will not automatically fail on a natural 1
 - **tasks** (complex verbs / skills)
 - complicated, slow but clean, potential for marginal outcomes
 - pool based success criterions, roll with $(X+Y)D6 > W$
 - primary threshold = 1 + up to 4 relative difficulty factors (ie. threshold spread = 1-5)
 - pool size = job level X + up to 2 aiding dice Y
 - (aiding dice are rolled by the allies themselves, because their Caliber counts separately)
 - total successes = pass target per die depends on ability caliber (chosen by the FC):
 - Bronze = 5s and 6s only, Silver = 4-6, Gold = 3-6, Platinum = 2-6
 - KISS individual dice to reroll them: using kismet, insight, stunts, or specialties.
 - use ego to double-count all 6s rolled (ie. each 6 counts as a pass twice)
 - task success = spend successes on primary threshold
 - spend other successes on secondary or tertiary consequences
 - secondary things prevent the FC from invoking their opposite against you
 - tertiary things modify an already bought primary or secondary consequence, or a failure consequence
 - but grant addition rewards such as exp, lots, or items
 - this means players only need a handful of D6's and a d20 to play — which most ttrpg people *already have*
 - so the proprietary elements / barriers to entry are kept relatively low
 - theoretically you could even drop the d20 and use $3d6$
 - but you'd get a more bell-shaped spread
 - and I don't want to cause confusion as to the distinction between checks and tasks
 - it's easier to do addition than it is to subtract
 - bonuses should always add to your dice or roll

- penalties should always add to the difficulty
 - only *exceptional* attributes or subsystems, should break these heuristics
- similarly, division is hard, so no all numbers used should be integers
 - if a calculation results in a fractional amount then *always round down*
- a target is what you aim for, don't shoot blind
 - always tell the players what the target / difficulty is before rolling
- always set stakes, and be clear about failure conditions
 - set narrative stakes
 - failing better (not always failing forward)
 - players can offer potential failure solutions
 - and can narrate both their successes and their failings, if they want to
- "Say 'yes' or roll the dice" ~ Vincent Baker
 - avoid re-rolling without changing the stakes
- your **FC** refers to the Facilitator ('referee' and 'game manager' are also acceptable)
 - the FC is not necessarily in a position of power over the other players
 - it should even be possible to play without a FC, but this will not be covered
- your **Peers** refers to all the other players at the table except you
 - the Peer is a relative term, each player's Peer is different
 - and the FC's Peers are all the other players
 - *all* players are expected to adjudicate the game rules, not just the FC
 - rules can be changed, broken, or removed by *any* player (including the FC) at any time
 - but only with permission from that player's Peer
 - if something is said to require 'Peer review' then it offers a a moment to open the discussion up to the whole table
- let players direct/frame scenes!
 - and reward them with Ego
- the FC never rolls (or at least never performs tasks)
 - players roll to attack to strike their enemies, and roll to dodge to avoid them
- the FC has principles too
 - similar to the player characters, the FC may write 'meta-goals', 'meta-habits', and 'meta-creeds'
 - these are tools to help them structure the game and keep a level head
- all mechanics are abstract representations of reality
- common sense vs. suspension of disbelief
 - there's probably a discussion here, but let's ignore that for now
- rulings not rules
- everything is relative
 - time, distances, difficulties
- no half measures, no sitting in the middle of the road
 - when categorising things, there is no 'medium' option, all indexes are from 1 to 4 (or 0 to 5), and we try to use natural language that explains them without needing to look anything up. eg:
 - playable sizes are 1 Small, 2 Modest, 3 Ample, 4 Large
 - adult ages are 1 Young, 2 Mature, 3 Seasoned, 4 Old
 - distances are close, near, far, and remote
- (nearly) everything is modular
 - core game engine [venus] will be CC BY 4.0 (free cultural work)
 - everything else [evening_star] will be CC0 (public domain)

- this means anyone who wants to make content for the game can do so, and sell it if they want
- but they must reference the venus engine in some way, and probably use it's branding, to bring a bit of unity to all the projects and to improve discoverability
- though both will be **All Rights Reserved** until the first major release
 - just while I make sure I get the game I want to play before anyone else run off with it and does their own thing

minimum viable product / first play-test version

- pre-made characters for the players, consisting of
 - name, circumstances, lifepath choices
 - age, abilities, attributes, jobs
 - VINPCs and essential items
 - no capabilities (at least not for the first playtest)
- checks *only*, no tasks? (not sure about this)
- a roleplay heavy scenario
 - potentially even PvP oriented
 - current plan is to play a bunch of bronze age pirates (cf. sea peoples) undergoing a mutiny on their trireme
 - this means players can't really escape from the situation anywhere, they have to deal with the problem at hand
 - not sure whether to write it so that players vy for the captaincy, or whether it's framed so that they put their support behind different npcs?

character assembly

0. concept

- think about what kind of character you want to make given the setting and the tone of the game that your FC wants to run
 - in some cases, your FC may wish to run several development sessions where you collaboratively world-build with the other players before you even begin to think about what sort of characters you'll each play
 - this can be done purely improvisationally, or with the guidance of a proprietary worldbuilding game
 - in other cases, your FC will be using a preestablished or well-recognised setting
 - either one that they've made up themselves or run games in before; a setting that you all know and love from popular culture; or a game set in a part of Earth's real or alternative world history, or a shared imagined future
- a good character concept is a single sentence or picture that sums up your idea for them
 - the concept might initially be very out-of-focus or loaded with stereotypes, references, and tropes

- but that's okay because you don't need to write it down anywhere, you just spitball your ideas at first and see how your Peers react to them
- plus the rest of the character assembly process will determine how your character differs from those touchstones — and perhaps how they are still the same — until they are slowly brought forth into enough mental clarity that you feel comfortable and confident to portray them in game

1. circumstances

names

- your character's name, alias, or title (and optionally, their pronouns)
 - you can come back to this later if you can't think of a character name right at the beginning of assembly
 - or you may even decide to change your name during play, either because of some in-game revelation, or because you simply don't think their current one suits them any more
- and your own name, as a player, so the FC can tell who's who

tier

- tier sets the approximate 'power level' for play, it determines a few major character aspects according to the table below
- all players should make characters of the same tier, unless they have their Peer's permission
- tier can only change during development sessions, and must be unanimously voted on by all players

TIER:	PUBLIC (lowest)	HEROIC (low)	MYTHIC (high)	DEIFIC (highest)
Nº free Caliber Increases:	1	3	6	10
Additional Lifepaths:	0	1	2	4
Minimum Job Level:	1	2	3	4

- The public tier represents fairly historically accurate characters acting in an assumedly normal world. It represents people like you and I, most likely, and nearly everyone else who has lived and died on Earth.
- Heroic tier is for playing out believable tales about people who quest for glory or struggle to leave their mark on the annals of history, culture, or legend — gifted-rogues, warrior-poets, adventurer-prophets, philosopher-engineers, sorcerer-monarchs, and the like — whose efforts may not have been really possible without either a story-teller's embellishments or a true touch of magic. You may also want to refer to this as the 'cinematic' tier, if your setting is more modern.
- The mythic tier is the place of spirits, demigods, superheroes, and exalted mortals; where paranormal events occur regularly and legendary deeds may be performed with few questions asked — though not without consequence.
- Characters in the deific tier may not necessarily be literal deities, but perhaps their personas are large enough or their powers are great enough to be revered as divine or immortal by specific religious groups, or perhaps they are shards of an even greater being given mortal form.

background

- list aspects of your character's life circumstances that you think are improbable or impossible to ever change after character assembly
 - e.g. ancestry, people, roots, culture, hues, tones, values, patterns, etc.
- or use the space to declare which parts of your character's inward identity or personality you have pre-determined and aren't interested in ever changing
- your setting or your FC may provide you with options to take here which may or may not have specific mechanical effects.
 - For example, some settings may want to differentiate between different playable species or cultures by giving out free 'innate' attributes and/or jobs
 - The core engine makes no assumptions here though, and leaves this open for others to decide

size

- most typically determined by species, ethnicity, diet, and age; it represents an approximate combination of your height, length, and weight
 - for example, most adult humans on Earth are between 5 and 6 feet (150-180 cm) tall, so this puts them at a modest size; but a human child would be considered small or tiny.
 - Meanwhile, tigers and horses are of ample size, and hippos would be considered large; despite generally being shorter than most humans at the shoulder, they are simply more massive than us once they reach maturity.
- size is indexed from 1 to 4 as follows (with approximate metrics for Earth-like settings)
 1. Small ~ 2-5" (90-150 cm) & less than a quintal
 2. Modest ~ 5-6" (150-180 cm) & 90-250 lbs (40-110 kg)
 3. Ample ~ 6-7" (180-210 cm) & 250-2200 lbs (110-1000 kg)
 4. Large ~ 7-10" (210-300 cm) & more than a tonne
- size usually has very little mechanical effect, but sometimes a difference in size between you and someone else may added as a relative factor — either as a penalty or a bonus — to your actions depending on what you're trying to do
- (there are also some other unplayable sizes, typically reserved for animals and monsters, and which would require FC permission to play as because their size differences compared to everything else can create some unexpected inconveniences)
 - These include: miniscule or tiny, and giant, enormous, colossal, or immense.

foreground

- list aspects of your character's life circumstances that you think could be open to change over time (changable during development sessions, or after certain choices or realizations made in play)
 - e.g. religion, community, class, gender, physique, colors, shapes, body modifications, etc.
- or use the space to highlight parts of your character's outward identity or appearance
 - As with backgrounds, there may option presented here by your setting or your FC which grant free attributes, assets, or jobs, but the core engine makes no assumptions

age

- influences your starting ability score spread, and directly determines how many lifepaths you may take.
 - age is indexed from 1 to 4, for adults:
 1. Young characters get +2 MA $\{sp\}$ \$, +4 PA $\{sp\}$ \$, and 1-2 starting lifepaths

- 2. Mature characters get +2 MA $\{sp\}$ \$, +3 PA $\{sp\}$ \$, and 3-4 starting lifepaths
- 3. Seasoned characters get +2 MA $\{sp\}$ \$, +2 PA $\{sp\}$ \$, and 5-7 starting lifepaths
- 4. Old characters get +2 MA $\{sp\}$ \$, +1 PA $\{sp\}$ \$, and 8-10 starting lifepaths
- (there are also two other *typically unplayable* ages, '0. junior' or '5. senior', usually reserved for NPCs. These require Peer permission to play as since they are quite vulnerable and likely to be difficult to roleplay respectfully):
 - 0. junior characters (children) get +1 MA $\{sp\}$ \$, +2 PA $\{sp\}$ \$, and 0-1 starting lifepaths
 - 5. senior characters (elders) get +1 MA $\{sp\}$ \$, +0 PA $\{sp\}$ \$, and 10+ starting lifepaths

2. lifepaths and \$caps\$

- lifepaths (sometimes shortened as 'LPs') represent roles or vocations that your character has fulfilled or pursued at various points throughout their life
 - be they full occupations, periods of studentship, service, incarceration, or exile, snippets from your upbringing, or other lifepaths
 - they are generic but personalized archetypes; and step by step they implicitly tell the story of both your character's life so far and the settings they've lived in
 - that said, the order that you take lifepaths in does not need to be chronological
 - but you *cannot* take the same lifepath multiple times
 - some lifepaths have prerequisites; such as being a specific age or tier, having certain attributes, being a member of a given social or economic class, or requiring that you walk a different lifepath first
- the number of lifepaths you can take is determined by your age and your tier (starting lifepaths + additional lifepaths)
 - you'll notice that the number of starting LPs from your age is variable, this is because you should try to only take as many lifepaths as you need to fulfill your character concept
 - but this limit can also be raised by the FC if they feel the default limit is too punitive
- lifepaths have a name or a title, which you should write at the top of your character sheet as you take them
- a lifepath adds +1 to your ability score pool (or \$sp\$) by presenting either an 'MA', a 'PA', or a pair of specific abilities 'X/Y', or the word 'Any':
 - MA and PA mean you can add +1 to any mental or physical ability of your choice, respectively
 - a pair of abilities, such as 'App/Res', means you must choose one of those two abilities to add +1 to
 - and 'Any' means that you add +1 to any ability you like
- every lifepath you take grants you +X \$caps\$ (character assembly points), which you spend in steps 5-7 of character assembly
- under each lifepath will be two lists to spend those points on:
 - a numbered list of up to 6 attributes that you can purchase with a 1 \$cap\$ discount in step 5
 - when you take the lifepath, you should also roll a d6 on this list to choose a single attribute that you get *for free*
 - if there are less than 6 attributes on the LP and you roll a number that isn't listed, or you roll the same attribute that you already rolled on a different LP, then simply re-roll or choose which one you want
 - this randomness is injected to make your character a bit more unique and to force you think about what the circumstances may have that lead to you picking up that attribute — be it positive, or negative

- a bulleted list of jobs that you are allowed to start and level up for one \$cap\$ each in step 6
 - any listed jobs that overlap with the lists of other Lifepaths you've taken may be automatically learned and started at your minimum job level
 - that is, if you notice two or more lifepaths offer you the same job, you may start it *for free*
- there is also be a third, comma-separated, list of a few essential assets that you acquire for taking the lifepath. *These are all free.*
 - If there's any other assets you want which aren't listed you must buy them with \$caps\$.
- you can make up new lifepaths, but since the list of all available lifepaths sort of implicitly describes the larger setting that you're playing in, the creation of new lifepaths is left to your FC, or the designers of whatever pre-written setting you're using
 - though you can of course suggest ideas to your FC and see if they can come up with anything on the spot
 - guidelines for FCs and designers to help them make new lifepaths are given in their own chapter / section (not written yet)

3. abilities

- Mental abilities (MA)
 - **Appeal** (\$App\$)
 - mental grace, charisma, social prowess, artistic sentiment, and emotional senses
 - used for: feigning ignorance, making a good first impression, offering ideas or trading goods, and pleading for help
 - **Resolve** (\$Res\$)
 - mental resilience, wisdom, patience, determination, memory retention, and temporal senses
 - used for: counting, finding, mending, and building things, remembering information you should already know, and working long hours
 - **Wits** (\$Wit\$)
 - mental power, intelligence, shrewdness, logical reasoning, instinct, and spatial senses
 - used for: aiming projectiles, problem solving, identifying and inspecting things and making connections, and watching, listening, or reading
- Physical abilities (PA)
 - **Endurance** (\$End\$)
 - physical resilience, constitution, stamina, vigour, and regular movement upkeep (aerobics)
 - used for: long-distance walking or jogging, holding your breath, treading water, wrestling, and eating or drinking strange things
 - **Finesse** (\$Fin\$)
 - physical grace, dexterity, flexibility, style, body coordination, and deliberate movements
 - used for: hitting things with most weapons, balancing and stretching, landing and rolling safely, crawling and sneaking around, and escaping binds
 - **Swiftiness** (\$Swi\$)
 - physical power, strength, reflexes, alacrity, and quick movement speed (anaerobics)
 - used for: dodging or parrying, throwing and catching things, jumping, pushing or pulling things around, and quick sprints

caliber represents your potential to succeed as raw talent and luck, whereas *score* (sometimes abbreviated as 'lvl.') represents your training and growth

- your caliber depend primarily on your tier (see above), as all your abilities start at Bronze caliber and then you may assign 1-10 free caliber increases according to your tier
 - these free caliber increases cannot take more than one ability to Platinum without your FC's permission
- caliber can also increase by buying special attributes with your \$caps\$
 - but they are expensive and are rarely offered in lifepaths
- at the end of each major story arc (ie. about once every 15-30 sessions), your Peers may discuss whether you deserve a caliber increase in recognition of your character's achievements thus far
 - and if you do, then you may choose which ability to allocate it to
- caliber affects the natural success range of your d20 roll for Checks, and determines the pass range for all the D6's in your dicepool for Tasks, as per the following table:

caliber Rating	Bronze \$(Br)\$	Silver \$(Si)\$	Gold \$(Gl)\$	Platinum \$(Pt)\$
Natural Success Range <i>for Checks</i>	NA	20	19-20	19-20*
Natural Success Chance <i>per d20</i>	0%	5%	10%	10%
Pass Range <i>for Tasks</i>	5-6	4-6	3-6	2-6
Pass Chance <i>per D6</i>	33%	50%	67%	83%

* Does not auto-fail on a 1

- scores all start at +0 and may range up to +9, but they will probably sit in the 1-3 range for most characters starting out
 - increase scores by distributing the score pool \$sp\$ generated by your age and lifepath choices (see above)
 - after character assembly, ability scores can only change during development sessions
 - at the end of each minor story arc (ie. about once every 5-10 sessions) and after some discussion, your Peers may vote on which of your abilities should advance by 1, based on what they think you have most commonly been using
 - or when so much time passes that your age increase, then some of your scores may go up or down, which you may allocate yourself
- scores are added to your Checks as a flat bonus, and are used in Tasks to determine your starting dice pool size

4. attributes

- \$Cn:\$ Connections — 3 \$caps\$
 - the people you know, your importance within an organization, a reputation for something that makes you in/famous (and any powers or privleges that you recieve because of that notoriety), your public image, or anything else that might bring you renown, influence, or clout
 - these attributes most commonly grant you access to places or people than you would otherwise struggle to get, with no (or fewer) questions asked
 - they make you important with a given culture or faction, and thus more likely to be listened to or taken seriously in the right settings

- or they might help you strike fear into your enemies if your reputation makes you particularly domineering or dreadful
 - or if you have the 'links' capability then these attributes help determine your starting score
- **\$Ft:\$ Features — 2 \$caps\$**
 - these attributes represent parts of your personal or cognitive make-up, your fashion and style choices, your cultural expressions and idiosyncrasies, or a stereotype you've embraced, or any unusual physical traits or other identifying qualities that you possess
 - they are largely cosmetic, and function best as signposts to guide you back to a neutral point for your character to help you roleplay them
 - especially after an interlude in gameplay, or if you're coming back to the game after a missed session or two
 - you don't need to buy every feature that perfectly describes your character's aesthetic though
 - after all, you can describe them however you like in the circumstances portion of your character sheet
 - these attributes are just meant to include the highlights of your personality, or the most memorable aspects of your appearance if a stranger were to describe you
 - you can also earn Lots during the debrief of each session for portraying your features well, or if they come up through play and drive the scene in an interesting or otherwise unforeseen way (see the Kismet section below)
 - features are just words — usually adjectives, or the adjective form of certain nouns, or a short descriptive sentence if a single word or two can't seem to encapsulate the concept — with dictionary definitions attached to remind you what they mean
 - they can also be interpreted literally, metaphorically, or poetically
 - so making up new ones on the fly is pretty easy
 - but be sure to only use one definition / interpretation when you add it to your sheet, if there are multiple, and then stick to it
 - and yes, if an aesthetic feature is listed in one of your lifepaths then the discount lets you take it for free
- **\$Lm:\$ Limits — 1 \$cap\$**
 - health conditions, injuries and scars (both mental and physical), phobias and obsessions, magical curses, and vices or bad habits; and just about anything else that could hold a person back in life in some way
 - functionally, they work in one of three ways:
 - they can disallow you from giving or receiving aid for certain actions
 - they can count as a relative difficulty factor for specific checks and tasks (which is information that you must try to remember to volunteer when relevant)
 - and in the most severe cases, they can *reduce* an ability caliber by one step for certain rolls
 - the caliber below Bronze is called 'Copper' (Cp)
 - Copper dice *auto-fail on a 1 or a 2* for checks, and *only count successes on a 6* for tasks!
 - some limits may come with a 'silver-lining' effect too though, which can function somewhat like an attribute of another type (ie. a connection, feature, gambit, or speciality)
 - on the surface, making up new limits on the fly may seem simple, since you could look up just about any medical condition you can think of and represent it with one
 - but health is a complicated science, and it can sometimes be difficult to respectfully roleplay a character with a particular condition if you don't know enough about it

- rather, making new limiting features requires some time and research and then a careful consideration of the ways in which what you've learned may hinder a character
 - the trick is not to double-up on effects; only choose the most direct or pertinent thing
 - limits generally only affect one specific aspect of your character sheet at a time
 - and sometimes there's a counter-balance too; an unexpected up-side that helps you out occasionally
 - try not to get too mechanical with it though
 - not everything has a silver lining
 - and yes, if the Limit is listed in a lifepath you've taken, the 1 \$cap\$ *discount* means that you can effectively take the Limit for free
 - however, if you want to take more than three free Limits then you should consult your Peers first, as you may not be able to respectfully represent them all
- \$Gm:\$ Gambits — 4 \$caps\$
 - these are attributes which deliberately bend or break the normal rules of play: maybe via some supernatural potency, gifts or charms bestowed by a greater force, an innate knack for doing something, social or cultural prowess that go beyond mere prestige, or a special trick that you learned over time
 - each gambit is somewhat unique, so you'll have to read their descriptions, but most have explicit conditions under which they can be used
 - usually when you do or say something specific, or when something happens that allows you respond in a certain way
 - most can be used every turn, so long as all the conditions are met
 - others can only be used once per session, but have less specific triggers
 - some can raise your effective level for specific jobs or abilities
 - some can make your dice rolls explode
 - meaning that for every 6 you roll, roll another die and add the result on top of what's already been rolled
 - and any 6s they roll can explode too — potentially *ad infinitum*!
 - some can even temporarily *raise the caliber* of an ability for specific rolls
 - some simply work with no dice rolls needed
 - though there is no caliber higher than platinum.
 - and a scarce few are passively *always active* or grant you special access to a separate subsystem, like a spellcasting mechanic
 - these are always bespoke, and won't be included in the attribute description itself
 - they often have a catchy phrase as their name or title, which helps to encapsulate or summarize them, along with their description and rules explanations
 - making up new gambit features is possible, but requires some careful thought and Peer review, so is harder to do on the fly than with other custom attributes
- \$Sp:\$ Specialties — 2 \$caps\$
 - fields of study, disciplines, subjects of particular interest to you, objects that you've trained to use properly, hobby projects, places or types of people you're overly familiar with, profficiencies and special methods, or just a certain aptitude or working knowledge you've garnered over time
 - specialties are quite diverse and may each be used in up to four ways:

- they guarantee that you know how to safely interact with the creature, object, or place in question
 - includes speaking other languages or understanding local dialects with relative proficiency
- they to allow you to easily point to a specialty while looking for advantages or KISSing (see tasks)
- they let you remember things your character should already know about the topic, using a Resolve check
- or they let you discover or establish new facts about the topic, using a Wits check
- you will find that on every job description there is also a list of 'suggested specialties'
 - these are, as the name suggests, only suggestions
 - but they should give you a better idea of how certain specialties can overlap on multiple jobs
 - the 'Berries' specialty, for example, could be applicable the 'Baker', 'Forager', and 'Herbalist' jobs, or any other tasks that may need to draw on your special knowledge of different kinds of berries and their uses
- disciplines are just words — usually pluralized nouns or proper nouns — with short explanations attached to remind you what they mean
 - so making up new ones on the fly is pretty easy
- if you see a generic noun listed as a specialty in lower-case between square-brackets '[like this]', then you should replace that with a proper noun specific to your character and setting when you take it
 - for example, the specialty '[city]' should become 'London' when you add it to your sheet if your character lived or worked in or around London when they aquired that attribute
 - rather than interpreting that to mean a specialty for *all* cities
 - or the specialty '[language]' should turn into a named language of your choice, such as 'English', 'Malay', or 'Swahili', or whatever setting-appropriate language you like
 - nb. a language specialty can't be applied to every instance in which you speak or use that language, only the times when complex vocabulary is used or when the nature of the language itself is relevant in some way

special attribute

in addition to the free attributes you get from lifepaths, you may take any one attribute of any type *for free* as your 'special' attribute

- all your other attributes are considered 'general' by contrast
- no other other player character may take your special attribute as a general attribute
 - and similarly, you may not take the special attribute of another player character
- if there is a disagreement about who gets to take which attribute as their special, then each of you should make a pitch to your Peers based on your character concept as to *why* the attribute should be uniquely yours and yours alone
 - and then put it to a vote, if you have to
- your special attribute cannot be lost or removed by any means, unless you willingly discard or swap it
- if you can't decide which attribute you want to be your special, then you may wait and see through play, or vote on one later (see below)

- with your FCs permission, your Special could potentially be an Asset instead, like a rare artefact that you've inherited, or a piece of information you've sworn to secrecy, or some other plot device

innate attributes

as mentioned in step 1, some settings or FCs may offer you some free attributes or starting jobs because of your species or culture. Most commonly this would be language specialties (see example above), but can be anything deemed appropriate really, for example, all humans in an assumedly Earth-like setting:

- learn their native language almost without even trying, just by growing up around other native speakers and hearing them talk and trying to talk back
- are generally furless, and thus have to make and wear clothes to keep warm; but can also sweat, which makes them better at running long distances
- are seemingly better at throwing things than any other animal because of their specialized shoulder muscles and joints
- have very dexterous fingers, allowing them to manipulate objects and craft tools more easily than other animals
- and have well-developed social responses, including blushing, laughing, and crying, making macro-emotions easy to read

Some, all, *or none* of the above may be things that you care to represent in humans with innate attributes. But contrast is the key. If there are no non-humanoid playable species in your setting, then it probably isn't worth trying to make differentiations like these. Focus on the differing cultures and subcultures instead.

earning new attributes

during development sessions *between* arcs (about every 10-15 sessions) the FC may call for a round-table discussion of everyone's playstyles and accomplishments, where your Peers may vote for you to gain or lose new attributes:

- they will each suggest a new attribute for you to gain (based on how you've portrayed your character thus far or what you've discovered through play), then move on to the next person at the table
 - once you each have a list of potential attributes you could gain and you've had some time to think, go round the table again, and one-by-one make a pitch to your Peers for each attribute they've suggested as to why you should gain it
 - you may veto any attributes that you *really don't like* at this stage, by simply not pitching them
 - then your Peers should vote 'yes' or 'no' to each attribute they now think you should gain, based on your pitches
 - and the attribute with the most 'yes' votes is then gained, or if there is a tie then you can choose which one you like best between the tying options
- afterwards, go around the table again and make a pitch for any attributes you think you should *drop* entirely or *swap* for something different because you have not been playing them or because you feel they have shifted into something new
 - swapping attributes like this needs unanimous agreement to pass
 - whereas dropping attributes only needs a majority win
- such sessions are also when ability caliber and score increases may be voted on

5. kith & kin

- these are 'very important non-player characters' or VINPCs (pronounced /vin:pi:si/) that you have designated as being crucially interesting to your character or the story
 - they may be your family members, a lifelong friend, a lover or rival, a mentor, an animal companion or loyal steed, a business associate, your guardian or an aide, or whoever else you may think of who's life and objectives could be relevant to your own
- you are limited to a maximum of *three* VINPCs in total, regardless of your tier
 - only the FC may raise this limit, since they are the one that will most-likely have to design and portray them all
 - therefore, you must also discuss each one in detail with your FC
 - if you have no ideas about which characters may be important to you, don't worry
 - you can ask for an NPC you've met ingame to be designated as a VINPC during downtime or development sessions
 - similarly, a character whom you thought would be important may turn out not to be
 - it's ok to downcaliber them back to being normal NPCs
- you can also use your lifepaths and circumstances to guide which sorts of NPCs you are most likely have relationships with
- VINPCs cannot randomly die or be killed by another NPC without it being dramatically appropriate and without the express permission of the player who has taken them as a VINPC
 - but they are otherwise under complete control of the FC and will act like any other person in their world
 - that is, from an in-game perspective, none of these characters are aware in any way that they are special
 - it is a purely *meta* consideration
- you can ask a VINPC for aid, if they're present in a given scene, but they usually won't give it freely
 - since their aid ties them to the consequences of your actions, VINPCs will most-likely try to trade favors with you over time
 - in fact, every VINPC slot has a checkbox that you can use to determine whether they currently owe you a favor or not
 - when this is not filled, you must help them in return for their favor again, or you must otherwise persuade them, before they will want to aid you again
 - this doesn't always have to be a roll
 - the FC may be explicit about what they think would give you their favor again
 - but whenever you do something for them feel free to also ask the FC if this gives them favor again
 - flip a coin, or roll a d6 and count evens or odds, to determine at the start of the game to find out whether you begin with favor with each of your VINPCs
 - whether you do, or do not, tell us why?
 - ie. make up a story, then and there
 - this is just grist for roleplaying
 - but may also help the FC to run these characters right at the start of the game

6. jobs

- jobs don't always have to be a literal professional position, or a trade that you ply, they can simply refer to roles or responsibilities that you are capable of undertaking or fulfilling (and may be closer to 'skill sets', in that sense, but 'jobs' is a more snappy moniker)
 - making up new jobs is possible, usually by taking the verb you want to perform and converting it to it's noun form
 - but sometimes there's a perfectly good noun that already exists that describes the job your thinking of, without needing to fiddle around with suffixes
 - and although every job should come with a short definition for clarity, written in the present tense, the use-case of every job should be fairly self-explanatory
 - still, it's a good idea to try to design new jobs that don't overlap too much with existing ones
 - make sure you have a really clear idea about what each new job would do and what sorts of situations they might be used in
 - and to always run a new job you've invented past your Peers before adding it to your sheet
 - jobs have one or more labels, which help you to organize and search for them by category or sector
- starting a job that's listed on any of your lifepaths costs 1 \$cap\$
 - starting any other job costs 2 \$caps\$
 - and all of the jobs that you see *listed more than once across all the lifepaths you've taken* can be started for free
- when you start a new job, it's starting level is equal your minimum job level (determined by your tier).
- advancing any job level beyond it's starting value costs 1 \$cap\$ per level, regardless of whether it was listed on your lifepaths or not
- the maximum level a job can be advanced to is 8
 - though some attributes can boost your level, and these boosts can bring the *effective level* above an 8
 - but be sure to only apply such attributes once all your \$caps\$ have been spent
- from then on jobs gain \$exp\$ (experience points) as you use them in play (see tasks rules)
 - and the level advances by 1 when you accumulate enough \$exp\$ equal to *twice* the current level
- if your tier raises through play, then your minimum job level will increase also
 - thus all jobs that you had that were still at your previous minimum automatically raise to the new minimum, without needing to accumulate more exp for them

levelling up jobs (failure bookkeeping = \$exp\$)

- twice the level of the job is the number of tasks you must *fail* with that job to level it up
 - ie. you only learn from your mistakes
- levelling the job happens immediately after the last task is failed
 - (or as soon as you notice that the exp bar has been filled sometime thereafter)
- every time you level up a job, the \$exp\$ slate is wiped clean for that job
 - e.g. level 4 job requires 8 failed tasks to become level 5, then it needs 10 new failures
- 10 is the soft level cap for all jobs
 - the only way to advance above 10 in a job is with the aid of a custom-made potent feature, supernatural training, or the used of advanced technologies
- you can also earn bonus exp from tertiary consequences, and from spending excess lots above 10 at the end of a chapter
 - and from spending lots to generate scenes during downtime

- abilities level up by faltering on your creeds and a vote by your Peers (see above)

learning new jobs

when enter a situation where you would need to perform a task but don't have the right job

- add the new job to your sheet at 'level 0'
 - then take the ability designated by the FC for the task and use it's caliber, as per usual, but then take it's *score* aswell instead of the job level to determine how many dice you roll
- mark an additional \$exp\$ for *all* tasks made at level 0 (regardless of success or failure)
- once the exp bar is filled up completely (16 checks total), the newly learned job then levels up to match your minimum job level (1-4, determined by tier)
- you cannot use a level 0 job to offer aid

7. Assets

most assets have tags, which are qualitative properties or descriptive lables that (apart from a few) have no strict mechanical effect, but act more as a way to flag how they should or can be used, or how those uses could be interpreted by your Peers. Certain tags may also make an item more or less attractive to certain buyers.

Examples tags include: #tool, #weapon, #armor, #shield, #great, #magic, #high-tech, #complex, #reputed, #heavy, #bulky, #consumable, #delicate, #disposable, #cursed, #ancient, #cute, #ugly, #fungible, #living, #misc, etc.

assets come in two main types: capital and vendible. (the price listings in \$caps\$ are only for if you wish to buy an asset that isn't listed in a lifepath, since all the assets listed in your lifepaths are free).

- \$CA:\$ Capital Assets — 4 \$caps\$
 - property and real estate, great fortunes or inheritances, stocks and bonds, vehicles and machines, fine art and furniture, rare artefacts and treasures, livestock, or other large quantities of wealth or stores of value that are not easily transferable
 - capital assets typically have a physical use: for example, buildings can be lived in, land can be worked, ships and trains can transport people or things, magical swords can slay monsters, and art can be used as tax write-offs
 - in all of these cases, the usefulness of the item in question should be fairly implicit or else come with a description or explanation
 - in the case of magical items, rare artefacts, and advanced technologies, they may *themselves* have uses that effectively function as Gambits, but as possessions they still *also* count as capital — very useful indeed
 - other things like precious metals, company shares, or stockpiles of scarce resources are more obvious forms of wealth that can put you in a position of power over others, especially in a capitalistic or feudalistic society
 - when appropriate, this grants a bonus factor to checks, or can be used to KISS dice for tasks
 - or if you have the 'wealth' capability then your capital assets help determine your starting level, by effectively using them as collateral to take out loans to secure funding when you need it, without ever having to sell directly

- in a post-scarcity setting, something like 'social credit' may replace traditional capital
- most capital assets are more-or-less unique and non-fungible
 - so you can buy multiple houses, for example, but each house will be different
 - (and one generally can't combine two houses together into a bigger more valuable house)
- \$VA:\$ Vendible Assets — 1 \$caps\$
 - mundane gear, equipment, and kit, tools and weapons, special articles of clothing and outfits, armour and other panoply, supplies and sundry goods, personal effects, or simple cash money
 - vendible assets exist to highlight the most important things you own, the belongings that you hold dearest or rely upon most regularly
 - your character is assumed to have the bare necessities to adequately fulfill their job roles, to fit into their society, and to have generally gotten as far as they have in life
 - so there is no need to specify every single bit of kit, trinket, and possession
 - your items can be lost, traded, or stolen, but equally new assets can be acquired by finding, buying, or stealing them in kind.
 - some items are consumable, disposable, or otherwise *finite* — like medicines and poisons, alchemical reagents, certain tools, special ammunitions, or magical / technological gizmos — they can grant you a temporary bonus effect or power, equivalent to a Gambit, but may also have a Limiting side-effect or two
 - if the item is something that should have an obviously finite number uses, then roll **2d6** when you acquire it and count the total as the amount of times you can use it before it runs out
 - if the item is more like a tool or gadget that could break with use, then roll **1d20** after each use and if you roll a 1 then it's breaks and needs repairing or gets completely destroyed.
 - vendible assets can include just about any object not already covered by capital assets, so making up new ones is fairly simple

The main difference between vendible and capital assets when it comes to trying to sell them is in finding a buyer. Most traders will accept vendible goods, but capital assets require specialist traders or brokers to liquidate into cash.

worth

every asset, both capital and vendible has an evaluation in dice called it's 'worth'

- out of game, each asset's worth is evaluated by a number of dice and their caliber (eg. 1Br, 2Si, 3Gl, 1Pl, 5Cp, etc.)
 - here, the use of caliber is mainly meant to be representative of an order of magnitude of greater value
 - so a 5-Gl asset is equivalent in worth to a 10\$^S_I\$ asset, for example
 - but it also has a mechanical purpose if you use the optional monetary subsystem
- in game, the worth represents the value of asset in whatever currency is appropriate or accepted as legal tender in your setting, if it were to be liquidated into cash
 - or in the case of literal cash, it's the actual purchasing power of that money
- if the asset is #fungible then it's worth can be *multiplied-down* into fewer dice of a higher caliber, or *divided-up* into more dice of a lower caliber, as per the following table:

Denomination	Cp	Br	Si	Gl	Pt
$1Br = 2Cp$	2	1	—	—	—
$1Si = 2Br$	4	2	1	—	—
$1Gl = 2Si$	8	4	2	1	—
$1Pt = 2Gl$	16	8	4	2	1

nb. Copper (Cp) dice only strike a success on a 6.

8. principles — goals, habits, & creeds

write about your character in three paragraphs labeled 'goals', 'habits', and 'creeds':

- **Goals**

- these are things that your character wants to achieve over the course of the next few game sessions (or before the end of the current arc)
- they should be fairly direct and promissory, not wishful, and are best written in first person with the future tense:
 - "I *will* get my revenge..." not, "I would like to get revenge..."
 - "We *must* escape..." rather than, "We should try to escape..."
- try to avoid adding qualifying statements unless they help you to clarify a general motive
- you can use the **SMART** formula, if it helps you:
 - "the best goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, and **A**ctionable, for which you are **R**esponsible, and which are **T**ime-bounded".
- during the debrief at the end of each chapter (1-3 sessions), you should advocate to your Peers for any goals you have completed during that same chapter.
 - For each that you think you have, and your Peers agree too, earn a Lot.
 - Then write new goals for the next chapter, or keep any on that are still relevant
- you can only re-write your current goals mid-way through a chapter with your FCs permission
 - because they have probably planned something for your current goals, and they may have to do extra planning now if you suddenly change your mind

- **Habits**

- these are things that your character always or never does, or things that they do so regularly or as part of a routine that they do them without really thinking about them
- they can effectively function as character 'macro functions', but try not to write them like computer code
 - "If I ever feel I'm in danger, I secure my sidearm and ready it." instead of, "If in danger, then draw weapon."
 - "Whenever we set out on the road, I like to strike up a song and keep spirits high!" not, "While travelling: sing."
- the choice to invoke a habit is always yours and yours alone, they don't execute automatically, and you still have to roleplay out the consequences and roll any dice if they result in a check or a task
 - a habit *can* briefly slide back time though:
 - if something happens, and you realize that one of your habits could have been triggered by it and that it would change the way that you'd behave

- this cannot cross back into previous scenes though, only the current one
 - and only works with Peer approval
- once per session: when invoking a habit presents an unforeseen dilemma, puts you under duress, embarrasses or disturbs someone else, or otherwise creates interesting drama, then you earn Ego back at the end of that scene.
 - If you already have Ego, then take a Lot instead.
- **Creeds**
 - these are things that you think your character believes in absolutely, or oaths they have sworn, doctrines they adhere to, and motivations or morals that are unwavering.
 - they are best written as unqualified statements of fact (even if they're not actually true) without a hint of doubt in the tone, even if that makes them sound righteous or arrogant
 - "Nothing can break my love" not, "My love won't falter unless..."
 - "God will protect me from all evil!" instead of, "I hope my god is real..."
 - part of the FC's duties includes testing and prodding at these convictions over the course of each campaign arc, to see how ironclad they really are, and to see how steadfastly your character defends them.
 - therefore, if there is something that you think character *really does* believe in without question, *and you don't want it to be questioned*, then consider adding it to your background circumstances or writing it as a Feature instead of a Creed.
 - you can always change a Feature or a background into a Creed at a later date, by voting it off and or re-writing your backgrounds, but you can't so easily change a Creed without playing the game
 - similarly though, try to avoid offering any advice to your FC on how your Creeds could be challenged.
 - This is part of the fun of the game, for both of you.
 - Though the relationship should not become antagonistic.
 - at the end of each arc, during that chapter's debrief or during a development session between arcs, your FC must ask you "which of your Creeds have not faltered?"
 - if your response is "none" then read them aloud and let the FC press further and point to times when they think they have
 - it is then up to the FC's Peers table to decide if you really have faltered, or not.
 - if your response is "this one" or "these ones" then read them out loud and then point to the times when you think they faltered
 - it is then up to *your* Peers to decide if they really did falter, or not.
 - if one or more of your Creeds were found to have faltered then you may increase the level of one of your abilities by 1 and then you must write new Creeds before the next session
 - if none of your Creeds were found to have faltered then you earn back your Ego (or a Lot) and may fill your Fidelity meter by one step, under the Kismet section of your character sheet
 - once your Fidelity is full (four steps total), then at any dramatically appropriate time during the next arc you may drain your fidelity to *permanently* increase the Caliber of one of your abilities by one step
 - if you get to the end of the next arc without using your Fidelity then use it during the debrief before you have a chance to earn more.
- you can share your principles with your Peers if you like (and, in fact, this is *encouraged*), but you *must* share them with your FC so they can plan to accommodate the game around your desires as both a player and a character

- your FC can veto any goals, habits, or creeds that you present to them that they think would either be too disruptive or which are too easy to complete, trigger, or uphold (respectively).
- you can write as many of each that you feel is appropriate, but if you start running out of space on the character sheet then that's a good sign you should trim them down a bit
 - the FC may allow you write longer principles on a spare character sheet, but this is their choice
 - alternatively, you can keep a character diary and write spare principles to swap in and out between each chapter
- you can almost think of your habits and creeds as 'proto-attributes' which could get voted on as *real* attributes during a development session if you play them to the hilt enough, freeing up space for new habits and creeds in the future

Kismet (metacurrencies)

'Kismet' is a Turkish word derived from the Arabic 'qisma', meaning one's share in destiny.

• Lots

- you can have up to 10 Lots at a time
 - Lots spent on chacks add **+1d6** to your pool of advantages
 - Lots spent on tasks let you KISS and reroll a die of your choice
 - one Lot can be spent per check to reroll too
 - you can earn a portion of your Lots back in the debrief every session by advocating for your portrayal of your character's aesthetic features and reflecting their choices throughout the session expressed via goals, habits, &/or creeds
 - Lots earned during the debrief that would bring you above the maximum, 10, are converted into \$exp\$ to help you level up any skills of your choice
- you start the game with **1d6** Lots

• Ego

- you either have Ego at any given time, or you don't
 - spending Ego either KISSes all the dice your want or counts all your 6s twice
 - Ego can't be spent on checks
 - earn back Ego from introducing your own scenes
- flip a coin, or roll a die and call even or odds, to see if you'll start the game with Ego or not

• Fidelity

- this is a meter that ranges from 0 to 4
- you earn Fidelity by not faltering your Creeds (see above)
 - it is a reward for establishing and upholding your truth — your version of reality — whatever that may be, and whatever good or ill that it brings others
- once your Fidelity is full, you may spend it (draining it back down to zero) to permanently raise the Caliber of one of your abilities by one step
 - ie. Bronze -> Silver, Silver -> Gold, Gold -> Platinum
 - this is supposed to be done at a 'dramatically appropriate' time, but it can be any time really
- thus, to take one ability all the way from Bronze to Platinum, you'd need to earn a total of 12 Fidelity

- and a total of 68 Fidelity to reach Platinum in all abilities
 - which, assuming you earn 1 Fidelity every 15 sessions, would take approximately 400 sessions to max out
 - you do not start the game with any Fidelity
-

9. Modular Character Aspects [UNFINISHED]

capabilities (optional abilities)

- capabilities function almost identically to abilities, except that:
 - they are *derived* from your current abilities and the answers given during a questionnaire
 - the caliber of a capability is equal to the lowest caliber of two other abilities
 - the level of a capability is equal to the number of questions you answer 'yes' to
 - answer the questions honestly, as they will be subject to Peer review
 - they can only be used to perform checks, not tasks
 - often, failing a capability check takes a certain amount of agency away from your character for a brief time
 - that is, failing a capability check will always result in consequence that you or your Peers choose from a list and then you should react or roleplay appropriately
 - they are also completely optional / modular, and which ones you should use are heavily based on your game's current tone or themes
 - however, sticking to a theme is important so that the game doesn't get diluted, so you may only choose up to 3
 - decide as a group which ones you feel would be necessary or useful for your game
 - different PCs *can* each have different capabilities, but only if it makes sense...
 - that said, it's better to try to be consistent
 - since they are all derived, you can change out capabilities in a development session for new ones if your game theme has shifted
 - and re-derive them again when the theme shifts back
 - you may find you have different or new answers to the questions asked in the derivation process, and that's okay (arguably intentional)

examples

- *Grit*
 - use with themes of violence, war, and combat
 - a measure of your general audacity and your readiness to injure others, your disposition
 - governs instinctual reactions in a fight
 - calculated by: Add Wits and Swiftness, divide by 4, + questionnaire answers
- *Guts*
 - use with themes of violence, combat, mystery, and horror
 - a measure of your physical and mental tolerance for putting yourself in harms way and potentially being injured, your mettle
 - governs how long you can keep up the fight (akin to HP)
 - calculated by: Add Endurance and Resolve, divide by 4, + questionnaire answers
- *Wealth*

- use with themes of capitalism or feudalism, commerce, intrigue, and politics
- represents money management, investments, access to funds, etc. not for games where you want to track every penny
 1. someone else's property; a vagrant; a fugative; an untouchable
 2. living beneath the poverty line; an indentured servant; or just down on your luck
 3. living within your means; free but poor; living a nomadic lifestyle; or caged in comfort
 4. starting to turn a profit; an apprentice; a student; a hustler; or a seasonal-soldier
 5. enough savings for emergencies an special occasions; a guild-member; an itinerant trader; or a mercenary
 6. full records, insurance, and regular savings; a master artisan; a residential merchant; or a professional-soldier
 7. an aristocrat living off inheritance, investments, or exploitation; a superintendent; a guild-master; a knight; or a criminal kingpin
 8. one born into wealth and sworn to fealty; lesser nobility; a viceroy; a chancellor; or robber-baron
 9. a true blue-blood; greater nobility; practically sovereign; a warlord or dictator; or the cheif executive of a merchantile empire
- calculated by: Peer decision based on circumstances, lifepaths, and questionnaire answers
- *Links*
 - use with themes of politics, intrigue, factionalism, and war
 - represents a 'social wealth' of sorts: your current contacts, patrons, factions you are affiliated with, past associates, rivals, or lovers, and any favors still owed or contracts you've entered into with them
 - good for social games set in a single city or county, not great for world-hopping adventures (better to just use 'first-impessions' Appeal checks in that case when meeting new people)
 - calculated by: half your Appeal level + questionnaire answers
- *Vigilance*
 - use with themes of exploration, mystery, survival, horror, and overcoming supernatural events
 - mental resilience to abnormal events and existential dread, your spirit or temperance
 - calculated by: age bracket (1-4) + questionnaire answers
- *Honor*
 - use with themes of feudalism, politics, and chivalry
 - calculated by: questionnaire answers
- *Soul*
 - use with themes of supernatural, magic,
 - calculated by: questionnaire answers

custom capabilities

- all of the above are just suggestions
- if you don't like the names of some of the capabilities above you can, of course, change them for your group or your setting
 - the capabilities section of the character sheet has 3 blank spaces, for this reason, so you can write-in whatever you like
 - just so long as you're consistent
- or if want to make your own to suit your game's specific themes you can do so easily:

- make sure that the capability is something you can only perform checks with, typically as a reaction or something for which there are only a limited number of responses if you fail
 - otherwise it might be better suited to being a custom job with some special requirements or usage conditions
- list of an ability or two to base the caliber of the derived capability on
 - do not make a compound capability derived from another capability
- think of up to 8 'yes-or-no'-questions and use the player's 'yes' answers to generate the level
- test out the capability through play, if you don't like it then you can tweak how it's used during development sessions

NPC capabilities

- npcs generally don't roll dice (or don't perform tasks, at least)
- so the npcs need a few extra capabilities that player characters don't, in order to set the difficulty for opposing rolls:
 - or do they...?

additional / modular gameplay features [UNFINISHED]

ultimately, almost all mechanics can be abstracted into different kinds of conflicts. each kind may have it's own system of resolution

- internal conflict resolutions
 - healing / recovery
 - changing your mind
 - problems that cannot be solved with your character sheet
 - i.e. player skill vs character skill
- character conflict resolutions
 - battles
 - active-initiative battle system?
 - chases
 - debates
 - duels
 - sex, money, and violence
- environmental conflict resolutions
 - animals
 - traps
 - environmental penalties are grouped such that you only apply the highest if multiple are applicable:
 - light / visibility levels
 - terrain stability
 - natural disasters
- supernatural conflict resolutions
 - religions
 - summoning weird things

- technological conflict resolutions
 - vehicles
- societal conflict resolutions
 - politics
 - wars

(mars)

fully optional supplemental material for combat heavy / borderline weapons-fetishistic games where the capabilities of every minute detail are really important

- (i may never actually write this, this is mostly a joke)

Venus Engine: 1st Playtest Rules & Procedures (v0.2)

- The game progresses in *turns*, where the FC usually starts by setting a scene and then passes the turn around the table clockwise (or across the screen if playing online) to let everyone interact and play.
 - When it's your turn, you can act and describe your actions and try to do or say anything you like, this may result in performing a check or a task or using one of your attributes to do something special.
 - But this isn't always necessary; sometimes a turn can pass without any rolls or looking up rules.
- Once everyone has had a turn a *round* is said to have passed, and the FC may either continue the scene with another round or cut to a new scene and start a new round.
 - At the end of a scene, any player can offer to introduce and set the next scene.
 - If they do and the FC allows them, then they start the round and similarly pass the turn clockwise (or screenwise).
 - When you do this, you will be rewarded with a meta-currency called 'Ego' if you do not already have it.
- Sometimes not all the player characters are in the same scene together, and sometimes those scenes aren't happening simultaneously.
 - In these cases, it's up to FC to decide whether to:
 - Resolve each scene at a time; putting the rest of the players on hold and then coming back to them.
 - Keep the regular turn order and cut between scenes frequently.
 - Or play a round in one scene, and then cut to the next and play a round in that one, and so forth.
 - Any player can pause the game at any point for any reason, but the FC ultimately decides the pacing by how they edit all of the scenes together in order to spotlight different moments.

When to Roll Dice?

1. Always first, **work out what your agenda is** each turn and how you would like to work towards it.
2. **Roleplay until you reach a point of tension or indecision**, until you attempt something that could have interesting consequences, or until the FC pauses you to discuss the current intent of your actions.
3. Once your agenda is clear to your Peers, **the FC will decide and tell you which *ability* should be used** and then decide with your input whether the roll should be performed as a basic *check* or a full *task*.

Note: Sometimes, no roll is even necessary to do what you want to do; we do not roll when there is nothing at stake. In this case, the FC may pass your turn to keep a good session pace, or you can pass the turn yourself when you're ready.

Who is the FC?

- FC */ef:si/* is short for 'Facilitator'.
- They are one of the other players, a friend, who takes on a different role from you at the table; they most-likely act as your game's organizer (and probably told you to read these rules as well as when your next session starts).
- They direct and moderate play by controlling the pace of each scene and determining which ability should be used when you roll dice.
- They author the world and any characters that aren't portrayed by you or the other players.
- They interpret your actions and intentions and respond accordingly.
 - And they will officiate over new rulings when you try to do something that hasn't already been accounted for by the existing game rules or previous rulings.
 - Though their word should never be arbitrary nor final.
- And in general, they help to guide you through the experience of play, and makes sure that you have a good time.

Note: 'Referee' or 'Game Manager' are also acceptable terms for the FC.

Who are your Peers?

- Your Peers are everyone else at the table, except you. You friends, basically.
 - It's a relative term: So the FC's Peers are all of their players, including you, and another player's Peers include you, the FC, and everyone else.
 - Even then, a Peer may not even need to be a player; they might just be a friend sitting in on the session and listening.
- Peers are expected to help the FC adjudicate the game rules when it's not their turn in the spotlight:

- This reduces the referential and managerial duties of the FC, so that they can focus on creating and enriching the game for you.

Note: 'Jury' or 'Board' are also acceptable terms for your Peers.

No, I've not played Lady Blackbird, but I've played and run other dice-pool-based systems, and I can say as-I-player-and-a-GM of other games that not knowing the stats affects the meta-game experience, even if it doesn't change much of the in-game experience. Sure, my character doesn't know that their odds of jumping the chasm is 33%, but I'd sure like to know that if it means their life could be on the line.

Checks are Binary, *and use a single d20 and up to four d6's*

1. Your Peers will give you a target to meet or exceed with your roll, based on your actions as you've described them:
 - This number starts with *absolute difficulty* between 5 and 25, evaluated in four increments of 5; as judged by your Peers.
 - ie. Routine = 5, Simple = 10, Tough = 15, Challenging = 20, Absurd = 25.
 - The FC may then add up to four *relative difficulty* factors — such as environmental hazards, your wounds, the aid of anyone working against you, or the attributes of a particular opponent — each increasing the target by +1.
 - If it feels like more than four factors need to be added, then the FC should start over and raise the absolute difficulty.
 - Thus the maximum target possible is 29.
2. Then pick up and roll a **d20** and add your ability score to the result (the positive number next to the ability caliber):
 - You pass the check if the sum meets or exceeds the target number, so *try to roll high!*
 - If your ability caliber is Silver and the die naturally landed on a 20 (a 5% chance), then you automatically pass the check and succeed at your task *regardless of the actual target*.
 - Similarly, if it's Gold or Platinum then you auto-pass on a 19 or 20 (10%).
 - But Bronze dice have no auto-pass conditions.
 - Conversely, if you get a natural 1 (also a 5% chance), then you automatically fail the check *despite what your sum total may have come to*.
 - And only Platinum abilities avoid this auto-fail condition.
3. If you've fallen short of the target, then do not despair, you can make up the difference with up to four of your own relative bonus factors:
 - In the form of environmental benefits, your own relevant attributes, spending Lots, and help from your allies.
 - Check with your Peers that each factor is valid and add to the narrative before rolling them.
 - For each factor, pick up and roll a **d6** and then add only the *highest number rolled* to your sum total to see if you now meet or exceed the target.
 - So if it's clear that even the best possible roll (of +6) wouldn't help you succeed then you must skip this step, unfortunately.
4. If your total still cannot meet the target, then alas, you fail the check.
 - The consequences of failing a check should either be implicit from the nature of your actions, or be clearly stated by the FC before you commit to the roll.

Notes:

- Checks are supposed to resolve basic actions quickly and easily, while also adding to the drama.
- If you or any of your Peers feel you are digging too deeply for bonuses, or that your agenda has shifted, then you or the FC can cancel the check and discuss what to try instead.
- Similarly, if you fail a check and the consequences are unexpected or unclear, you should pause the game and talk about it and perhaps even re-wind and use a task instead of a check if it turns out that more was at stake than you first expected.

Caliber vs. Score

Caliber represents your potential to succeed as raw talent, whereas **score** represents your training and growth.

- Caliber is determined by a combination of your tier and special attributes; and does not typically change very much after character assembly, unless you accomplish incredible feats through play, or are suddenly bestowed with great power.
- Score is determined by your age, archetype choices, and experience; and typically only changes when a lot of time passes in game, when you get very badly wounded, or between story arcs during development sessions.

- So advancement in this game comes predominately from acquiring new attributes — assets, features, and merits — that can be applied to a broader array of checks and tasks, or by making new friends and allies who will lend you their aid or give you access to new places.
 - And by levelling up your jobs by performing tasks and earning **exp**.
-

Tasks are Variable, *and use a pool of D6s*

1. Choose a job that can 'inherit' the ability chosen by the FC for the task, and pick up as many **D6**'s as it's level.
 - If you have no appropriate job for the task, either because none of your currently known jobs inherit the given ability or because none of the ones that do correspond to your current actions, then you'll have to start learning a new one (see below).
2. The starting threshold is always 1, and then your FC will then count up to four *relative difficulty* factors, including:
 - Environmental hazards, a caliber or size difference between you and an opponent, the aid of those working against you, whether or not you're using a suboptimal job to perform the task, or any other contextual disadvantages based on your actions or limitations.
 - The FC should announce and choose only the most pertinent and effective factors, given your agenda.
 - Each factor adds +1 to the threshold.
 - This threshold determines the 'price of success' — that is, the cost of meeting your intentions or completing your primary objective (see step 5).
 - And the FC should make clear at this stage what failure would mean, if it's not already implicit.
3. Up to two allies may hand you one of their dice as aid if they have an appropriate or relevant job:
 - They will get to mark an **exp** for their chosen job, regardless of your success or failure.
 - But, this will tie them to the consequences of your actions; so it's up to you whether to accept them.
 - Their dice will also inherit the caliber of their ability.
 - So this can be a major advantage if someone with a Gold caliber ability aids your measly Bronze dice, for example.
 - Also, for this reason, it's useful if everyone at the table uses different colored dice or else rolls separately.
 - So then you can also see which allies *actually* helped you, and that can be good grist for roleplaying.
4. Now roll the dice and count the 'successes' based on each die's caliber:
 - With Bronze dice, a success is struck for each that lands on a 5 or a 6 (about a 33% chance *per die*).
 - Silver dice get successes on a 4 or more (50%), Gold successes on a 3+ (~67%), and Platinum on 2-6 (~83%).
 - These successes represent both your margin of success for the task and a narrative success within the moment of the scene.
 - If any of the dice disappoint you, you may 'KISS' them — using Kismet, Insights, Stunts, or Specialties — to re-roll them (see below).
 - Each die can only be KISSed once at most, and you can only do one round of KISSing.
 - And you must collaborate with your allies to KISS any aiding dice, rather than just acting alone.
5. Then, you may spend your successes to work out the consequences of your actions:
 - The price of success is the task's threshold — the *primary consequence*, as set by the FC (in step 2) — and costs 1 to 5 successes:
 - If you do not or cannot buy the primary consequence then you fail the task
 - But you at least earn 1 **exp** for the job you performed the task with, as there's always something to be gleaned from your mistakes.
 - All of these *secondary consequences* cost 1 success each, and may be interpreted literally or metaphorically:
 - "I am not abashed or injured..."
 - "My actions were performed with grace or efficiency..."
 - "No one I care for is compromised, disturbed, or jeopardized..."
 - "Nothing else is unintentionally lost or destroyed..."
 - And each of these *tertiary consequences* also cost 1 success each, but they must either appended onto another consequence for them to make sense, or they should be appended to the main failure condition as a silver lining if you did not buy the primary consequence:
 - "...and / but I seek an additional prize..." (a material asset)
 - "...and / but I learned something new or interesting..." (a bonus **exp**)
 - "...and / but my true intentions are now revealed..." (earn a Lot back)
 - "...and / but something unexpected but not unwelcome happens..." (decided by your Peers)
 - The choice of how to spend these successes is entirely yours, though your allies may want to advise you:

- Or they may have even *made a demand* of you before offering their help, so now it's up to you whether you uphold your end of the bargain.
 - Still, even if you are not able afford the price of success you can probably still get *something* out of the task.
6. Finally, once all successes are spent, the FC may subvert a *secondary consequence* that you did not choose and invoke it's opposite against you.
- For example, if you did not buy "I am not abashed or injured..." then the FC may interpret and subvert this and say "Your actions bring shame to your family name..." or "You are harmed because of this..."
 - The FC does not *have* to invoke this last step, and should only do it if it *makes sense* within the context of the scene, but it means that it's almost impossible to complete a task scot free when they do.

Personalized Consequences

As they are bought, you or your FC can interpret the consequences and offer bespoke descriptions fill in the elipses '...' with — or may take suggestions from the other Peers when struggling to think of anything apt — adding to the scene with each success, as you go. These descriptions should always be based on the context of the action and the drama itself, and always at least tangentially relevant to your original agenda.

And certain attributes may offer you special secondary consequences when you perform certain tasks that are more specific or rigidly defined; but these are quite rare, and should be written somewhere on your character sheet to avoid extra lookup time.

Learning on the Job

While performing a task, if you do not seem to have an appropriate job (see above), then your Peers will decide for you which job is appropriate and you must start learning the ropes:

1. Add the job to your sheet at level 0; this indicates that you are still learning the job.
2. Instead of using the level to determine how many dice you roll, use the ability score that the FC chose for your given agenda.
3. Then use the job like any other with the following exceptions:
 - You cannot offer aid with a level 0 job.
 - The FC gets to add the fact that you're learning the ropes as a relative difficulty factor.
 - So the base threshold is effectively 2, but the maximum threshold is still 5.
 - After performing a task — regardless of success or failure — mark an **exp**.
 - This is *in addition* to usual **exp** you'd get from failing to buy the primary consequence, or the bonus **exp** you may buy with successes as a tertiary consequence, so it can take 6-16 tasks in total to learn a new job.
 - *Unless* the job has specific qualifications to be learned: Then you cannot mark *any* **exp** until those conditions get met, which can potentially keep you at level zero indefinitely.
4. Once you have filled the bar with a total of 16 **exp**, then you can finally clean the slate, and the job advances to a level equal to the *lowest* of the two ability scores that it inherits.

Only players can perform Tasks

Because of both the time and emotional investments required of performing tasks, we almost never care about seeing non-player characters performing them. Instead, NPCs can perform checks but even then *this is rare*. Generally the scene should be re-framed so that a player leads the roll and the NPC helps or hinders them. So when fighting, for example: you would perform Finesse checks to hit your enemies, and Swiftess checks to dodge or parry.

KISSing dice

- When performing a task you may 'KISS' any dice that disappoint you using kismet, insight, stunts, and specialties:
 - **Kismet** — Spending your meta-currencies, Lots and Ego:
 - 'Kismet' is a Turkish word derived from the Arabic 'qisma', meaning one's share in destiny.
 - Each Lot can KISS a die with no questions asked and no need to consult your Peers.
 - You have up to 10 Lots, at any given time.
 - You can earn one back during play by spending a success to reveal your true intentions, or during the debrief at the end of each chapter for portraying your character well or accurately playing into your asethetic attributes.
 - If you earn more than 10 Lots in a single session then the excess is converted to **exp** for any jobs of your choice.

- Ego is special and can either be spent to KISS *all* the dice that disappoint you, with no questions asked; or it can be used to make all 6s rolled *get a second success*, including those rolled after being KISSed.
 - Ego is something that you either have or you don't, at any given time.
 - It is earned during play by introducing your own scenes, or during the debrief by upholding your principles.
- **Insight** — Using special knowledge, secrets, or established facts:
 - This may be things that you've discovered through play, or may draw on wisdom that your character should already know anyway.
 - Or it could be new information that you or someone else has pre-established with a Wits or Resolve check before the task.
 - Either way, your Peers must approve that the insight is relevant to your current task and agenda, and each separate insight may KISS a die.
- **Stunts** — Describing your actions with extra flair or roleplaying diligently:
 - When describing or roleplaying a stunt, you may add to the drama of the scene or raise the stakes, but always try to frame it in a way that still leaves the window open for failure.
 - The dice won't decide if what you described really happens, but rather how the world reacts to what you've done.
 - Thus, the stunt doesn't need Peer approval, but you can only KISS a single die per task with it.
 - Though each ally that is aiding you may separately perform a stunt themselves to KISS and reroll their own die.
 - However, the FC may veto a stunt before you roll if it is *too far-fetched* or simply doesn't make sense.
- **Specialties** — Pointing to attributes that would help you:
 - Up to four appropriate attributes — most commonly assets, disciplines, and natural merits — can each KISS a die.
 - But each needs approval by your Peers.
- Each die can only be KISSed once per task, and you should try to do all your KISSing in one go.
 - Once you have chosen which dice to KISS, pick them up and reroll them.
 - Count any new successes using the same criteria as before; based on the ability caliber of your own and any ally's dice.
 - Then spend those successes as described above (in step 5).

Note: The phrase 'dice that disappoint you' is meant to refer to any dice you rolled that did not get a success. But if you are perhaps relying on getting 6s and spending Ego, or you have magic or advanced technology that causes the dice to explode, then even a 5 may 'disappoint you'. However, if you KISS any dice that had already struck a success and then they do not get again on the re-roll, you must keep the worse result. Such is fate.

Tables and Statistics

Bronze % Chance of getting...

Dice	1 Success	2 Successes	3 Successes	4 Successes	5 Successes	6 Successes	7 Successes	8 Successes	Avg. Successes	± <i>Sigma</i>
1D	33.33								0.3	0.47
2D	55.6	11.112							0.7	0.69
3D	70.3	25.93	3.704						1.0	0.82
4D	80.2	40.74	11.112	1.234					1.3	0.94
5D	87	53.9	20.98	4.527	0.411				1.7	1.08
6D	91	64.9	31.96	10.014	1.783	0.137			2.0	1.15
7D	94	73.7	42.94	17.33	4.527	0.686	0.046		2.3	1.25
8D	96	80.5	53.2	25.86	8.794	1.966	0.259	0.015	2.7	1.35

D66 Jobs

To roll a D66: roll 2d6 and take the one that lands closest to your left as the tens digit, and the one that lands to your right as the unitary digit. This gives up to 36 possible outcomes. When you make a new character, before you choose any lifepaths, roll a D66 or choose a job from the following table to start for free:

D66	10 (App)	20 (Res)	30 (Wit)	40 (End)	50 (Fin)	60 (Swi)
1	Advocate	Commander	Alchemist	Farmer	Driver	Brawler
2	Artisan	Diplomat	Cipher	Guard	Legerdemain	Hauler
3	Beggar	Merchant	Engineer	Hunter	Musician	Trailblazer
4	Charmer	Physician	Interpreter	Mariner	Acrobat	Medic
5	Handler	Ritualist	Investigator	Scullion	Smith	Rider
6	Host	Scholar	Strategist	Wright	Warrior	Skirmisher

Does the random job you've recieved reinforce or go against your character concept? If it goes against it, then think about how your character might have come to learn that job in spite of everything. You don't have to advance this job if you don't want to. It's may just be there to inject some flavor.

Acrobat (Fin)

Jumping and twisting in mid-air to flip, roll, or performing other feats of gymnastics. Dancing, balancing, skating, vaulting across pitfalls and dodging traps, and other physical activities involving total body coordination. May also include contortionism and escape artist skills.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Athletics, Crowds, Dancing, Jumping, [martial art], Stealth, Patience, Performance, Traps*

Advocate (App)

Speaking eloquently on behalf of others who otherwise cannot or should not speak, as a lawyer would. Or promoting an idea, development, or way of doing things that has perhaps not been considered yet. Trying to get others to join your cause. May also include acting in front of a crowd, or lying to one.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Composure, Crowds, Empathy, Etiquette, Deception, [ideology], [history], [law], Observation, Persuasion, Rhetoric, Stories, Veracity*

Alchemist (Res)

Transmuting one material to another, either with science or magic (or as an elaborate charade), and typically recording your results as part of a hermetic tradition. Includes knowledge and use of equipment and reagents, and the eternal pursuit of a panacea. May also include soap-making, or munitions experimentation, and inventing new things entirely

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Chemistry, [culture], Design, [ingredient], Literacy, Mathematics, Metallurgy, [school of magic], Secrets, [tool], Trickery, [weapon]*

- **Alternatives:** Depending on your character or the game's setting, you may wish to switch this job with another 'Magic User' type job instead: such as conjurer, enchanter, magi, sorcerer, or wizard, to name a few. Choose whichever job name you feel is appropriate, or you can even use multiple 'Magic User' type jobs with different names if you want to employ additional magic subsystems. - **Alternatively alternatively:** In a modern or magic-less setting you could change this job out for 'Hacker' or 'Physicist' instead, or something equally mysterious and specialized.

Artisan (App)

Plying a specialized artistic trade or handicraft. Producing goods in limited quantities or batches, or offering bespoke services, often using traditional methods. Or decorating existing things in a new and interesting way. May also include making and styling clothes, shoes, and furniture.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *[culture], Design, Fashion, [handicraft], Manufacture, [medium], Sewing, [subject], [style], Trade*

Beggar (App)

Soliciting alms and charity from passers by, using any specialties you may have to busk, or simply by telling your story. Prostrating yourself and pleading for mercy or forgiveness. Asking humbly and earnestly for something from someone, with little or nothing to offer in return. May also include some of the skills required to survive in an unforgiving city.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Bargaining, Composure, Etiquette, Gossip, Observation, Platitudes, Persuasion, Performance, Stories, Streetfly*

Brawler (Swi)

Hand-to-hand fighting, using any natural weapons available to you, such as fists, feet, claws, and teeth, often while unarmored or poorly armored. Includes using any natural weapon surrogates you may have, such as gauntlets, bucklers, brass knuckles, and push-knives or bladed-fans. May also include using improvised and agricultural weapons.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Athletics, Composure, Dancing, [martial art], [weapon]*

Charmer (App)

Seducing or socially disarming someone for any reason, by being flaunty, attractive, deceptive, or using some subtle trick. May also include influencing and outmaneuvering others for personal gain, or to progress a plot or scheme.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Chivalry, Comedy, [culture], Deception, Etiquette, Logistics, Platitudes, Persuasion, Poetry, Trickery*
- **Note:** Player consent must still be obtained before using this job against another player character.

Cipher (Wit)

Keeping your emotions to yourself, controlling your body language, disguising yourself, and generally dodging attention. Speaking in jargon to impress, deflect, or confuse, or to relay a hidden message. Includes

hiding, encrypting, or destroying information. May also include playing games of mixed skill and chance, such as poker.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Composure, Deception, Encryption, Improvisation, Mathematics, Performance, Psychology, Secrets, Security, Stories, Trickery, [tool]*

Commander (App)

Directing subordinates via shouts or signals, especially in a military context. Keeping moral high. Can also be used to conspicuously bring attention to yourself in a social scene. May also include being bold and direct with someone, telling them the truth (even if they don't want to hear it), or shouting at the top of your lungs.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Composure, Crowds, Improvisation, Intimidation, [military], Tactics, Warfare, Veracity*

Diplomat (Res)

Mediating a discussion or calming an argument or disagreement. Dealing with difficult situations in a way that does not offend anyone. Representing the interests of your religion, organization, or country in a foreign land. Includes knowledge of hierarchies and honorifics. May also include brokering political deals and trade contracts.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *[culture], Bargaining, Economics, Etiquette, [history], [ideology], Literacy, Language, [law], [military], Observation, [religion], Rhetoric*

Driver (Fin)

Driving animal-drawn vehicles such as carts, carriages, wagons, and chariots, to transport goods and people. Or, if your setting allows, this may include driving motorized vehicles too, like steam wagons and trains, or modern cars and trucks, or even tanks.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *[animal], Etiquette, Observation, Service, Repair, [road], [vehicle], Streetfly*

Engineer (Res)

Designing, directing, overseeing, operating, and studying all manner of things. Applying science and technology to build much of the public infrastructure upon which most civilizations and industries rely. May also include designing machinery, equipment, and structures.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Architecture, Design, Construction, Electrics, Logistics, Mathematics, Physics, Service, Security, [tool]*

Farmer (End)

Ploughing, sowing, growing, harvesting, collecting, preserving and selling food or other plant material. Includes maintenance of all tools and equipment, and knowledge of how to save viable seed for the next season. May also include harvesting byproducts from livestock, such as milk, wool, eggs, or manure.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Agriculture, [animal], Bushcraft, [foodstuff], Labor, Observation, Patience, [plant], Production, [tool], Trade, [weather]*

Guard (End)

Keeping watch, defending a place from ingress, or a person from harm. Keeping proper form and composure. Includes close-order formation fighting, in phalanxes, lines and drills, or shield walls. And covers equipment maintenance, marching, digging trenches, and building fortifications.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *[armor], Composure, Bushcraft, Labor, [law], Observation, Patience, Service, [shield], Tactics, Warfare, [weapon]*

Handler (App)

Keeping, breeding, rearing, training, and otherwise caring for animals, for yourself or others. May also include protecting and herding livestock across large tracts of land, often with the aid of a dog, horse, or other obedient animal.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Agriculture, [animal], Athletics, Medicine, Observation, Orienteering, Service, Whistling*

Hauler (Swi)

Forcibly pushing, dragging, or lifting heavy objects or cargo. Carrying bulky items on your back or on your head. Pulling a cart or plough by hand. Digging, mining, logging, and other menial labor. May also include hatching a plan to move a particular type of cargo from one place to another most efficiently.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Athletics, Labor, Logistics, Knots, [object], Production, Streetfly, Trade, [tool]*

Host (App)

Welcoming, serving, and entertaining guests at a place of residence or business. Being cordial and polite. Furnishing and facilitating fetes, balls, games, and other functions on a property. Also includes estate management, bar-keeping, and general stewardship.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Composure, Crowds, [culture], Estates, Design, Etiquette, Gossip, Fashion, Improvisation, Observation, Platitudes, Performance, Service*

Hunter (End)

Tracking, trapping, shooting, and lying in wait or fishing for, or otherwise chasing down and catching animals for food or sport, often with the help of other trained animals who share in the reward. May also include foraging for wild food and medicine along the way, and butchering the catch afterwards.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Athletics, Bushcraft, [foodstuff], Observation, Orienteering, Patience, Skinning, Stealth, [terrain], Traps, [weather], [weapon]*

Interpreter (Wit)

Understanding and translating foreign or coded languages and behaviors. Can be used to establish a social connection in other languages, including sign languages and slang, before continuing the scene normally. Includes the study of sociology and linguistics. May also include knowledge of dead or alien languages, but not necessarily how to speak them.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Anthropology, [culture], Empathy, Etiquette, [history], [language], Literacy, Placitudes, Psychology*

Investigator (Wit)

Finding information, both figuratively and literally: by interview or inspection, searching for and recovering evidence, or noticing guilty behavior, etc. But thinking like an inspector can mean thinking like a criminal, so this job may also include activities such as blackmailing or gaslighting, and threatening violence or torture.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Empathy, Gossip, Improvisation, Interrogation, Intimidation, [law], Observation, Persuasion, Psychology, Security, Stealth, [tool], Veracity*
- **Note:** Player consent must still be obtained before using this job against another player character.

Legerdemain (Fin)

Using cunning fingerwork and performing artful feats dexterity to impress and amaze others, or to distract and cheat them. Includes picking locks and pockets, juggling, knife flourishes, cup and ball tricks, puppetry, and other sleight of hand tricks and illusions. May also include mimicry and ventriloquism. May also include disarming traps.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Deception, Disguise, Distraction, Knots, Patience, Security, Stealth, [tool], Traps, Trickery*

Mariner (End)

Working on and fighting in boats, ships, and other vessels. Includes rigging, cleaning, making ship repairs, keeping watch, securing cargo, loading guns, and rowing. Includes climbing rope-ladders and mast nets, and open water swimming. May also include navigation and cartography skills.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Climbing, Composure, Knots, Labor, Observation, [navy], Swimming, Tactics, [tool], [vessel], [weather]*
- **Note:** This job guarantees that you won't get seasick, but it does not necessarily guarantee that you know how to swim. Swimming is best represented with a specialty.

Medic (Swi)

Providing immediate medical assistance to someone: administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation, applying pressure, binding wounds, setting joints, relocating bones, and generally being a first-aid responder in an emergency. May also include firefighting.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Anatomy, Composure, Bushcraft, Labor, Service, Sewing, Surgery, [tool]*

Merchant (Res)

Buying and selling, haggling, and vending goods of all sorts. Attracting customers, sourcing new and interesting merchandise, and doing taxes. Includes identifying and appraising the value of assets and artefacts. May also include auditing, accounting, and handling or distributing bonds and investments for the profit of others.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *[asset], Bargaining, Comedy, Economics, [law], Mathematics, Observation, Persuasion, Repair, Streetfly, Trade, [tool]*

Musician (Fin)

Performing music, with voice or instrument, alone or as part of a band, for the entertainment of yourself or others. Keeping rhythm and tambre. Perhaps even some dancing too. May also include composing new music, poetry, or stories.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Comedy, Crowds, Dancing, Improvisation, [instrument], Performance, Poetry, Singing, Stories, Whistling*

Physician (Res)

Diagnosing and treating health problems or disabilities, via consultation, psychiatry, physiotherapy, medical prescription, surgery, and other forms of care. Though this work rarely takes on a fully curative form. May also include apothecarial and pharmaceutical knowledge too: the making of drugs and poisons.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Anatomy, Chemistry, Children, Empathy, [condition], Medicine, Observation, Patience, Persuasion, Psychology, Service, Surgery, Veracity*
- **Alternative:** Depending on your character or the game's setting, you may wish to switch this job with 'Herbalist' instead: as a maker of natural remedies and poultices.

Rider (Swi)

Riding animals of all sizes, primarily for the purpose of long-distance transport or leisure, or riding into battle. Includes maintenance of all associated equipment and provisions. May also include operating pedal and motor driven single-track vehicles such as velocipedes or bikes.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Athletics, [animal], Chivalry, Observation, [road], Service, Streetfly, [terrain], [vehicle]*
- **Alternative:** Depending on your character or the game's setting, you may wish to switch this job with 'Pilot' instead: for operating an aircraft, shuttle, or mech.

Ritualist (Res)

Invoking the names of gods or spirits and knowing how to appease them. Participating in prayer or meditation. Following the principles of a dogmatic or esoteric tradition. Includes knowledge and correct use of special equipment, calendars, and symbols. Also includes the reading of sacred texts out-loud, and translating ancient languages into modern ones. May also include reading people, auras, and omens, or using tools, to tell fortunes or find treasures.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Composure, Cosmology, Crowds, Divination, Etiquette, [law], [language], Literacy, Mathematics, [religion], [school of magic], Symbolology, [tool]*

Scholar (Res)

Researching a topic, and digging through libraries, and reading or writing books. Applying knowledge, testing theories, and sharing the results to help in deriving the nature of the universe. Engaging in philosophical and ethical debates. May also include interpreting and criticizing policies or laws, in a political setting.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Agriculture, Anthropology, Cosmology, Chemistry, [law], [history], Literacy, Mathematics, Observation, Physics, Rhetoric, [school of magic], [tool]*

Scullion (End)

Cleaning, cooking, and performing other menial tasks, especially in a domestic setting, while also acting pleasant and obedient. May also include waiting on the word of another: bringing them things, writing their thoughts when they dictate, showering them with compliments, and otherwise anticipating their every request.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Composure, Estates, Bushcraft, Etiquette, [foodstuff], Labor, Literacy, Observation, Patience, Platitudes, Service, [tool]*

Skirmisher (Swi)

Open formation fighting, flanking, scouting, prowling, initiating an ambush, and passing quietly through rough terrain, sometimes with the aid of animals. Includes hiding from notice while on the move, and attempting to enter or exit a location without raising suspicion.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *[animal], Athletics, Bushcraft, Improvisation, Observation, [shield], Stealth, Tactics, [terrain], Warfare, [weapon]*

Smith (Fin)

Heating and working metal at a forge and anvil, or in a foundry, to make and repair common goods and equipment, or arms and armor. May also include making and repairing locks and traps and other mechanical objects, siege weaponry, and even certain motorized vehicles.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *[armor], Design, [handicraft], Labor, Manufacture, [material], Metallurgy, Production, Repair, Trade, [tool], [weapon]*

Strategist (Wit)

Planning and directing military maneuvers and operations, making sure supply lines are maintained, and that plans are not revealed to the wrong people. Includes playing competitive strategy and war games. May also include directing the use of siege equipment and war machines.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Bargaining, Economics, Estates, [law], Logistics, Mathematics, Security, Secrets, Tactics, [vehicle], Warfare*

Trailblazer (Swi)

Safely exploring wild or dangerous places (especially mountains, caves, ruins, jungles, and dungeons), delving and prospecting, and general pioneering. Includes rock climbing, river fording, swimming and diving in lagoons, and other mountaineering skills. May also be used to inspect a location for hidden details or tracks.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Athletics, Bushcraft, Climbing, Composure, Diving, Knots, Labor, Observation, Orienteering, Swimming, [terrain], [tool]*

Warrior (Fin)

Fighting with whatever sophisticated weapons are appropriate for your culture (both melee and ranged) using traditional techniques or martial arts, often while heavily armored or mounted. May also include dueling a single opponent with matched weapons, in accordance with some agreed-upon code or law.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *[armor], Chivalry, Intimidation, [law], [martial art], [military], [shield], [weapon]*
- **Note:** Duels are a specialized and often ritualized form of combat, used to resolve mutinies or honor disputes through violence.

Wright (End)

Making and repairing common objects, especially those made of wood and prefabricated parts, such as furniture, shields, wheels and carts, ladders, boats, and scaffolding. Includes general carpentry, masonry, carving, and lathe-work. May also include the construction of larger and more complex things like bridges, buildings, and ships.

- **Suggested Specialties:** *Architecture, Bushcraft, Construction, Design, [handicraft], Labor, Manufacture, [material], Trade, [tool], Repair, [vehicle], [vessel]*

The King is Dead

— An Evening Star Playtest Scenario (v 0.2) —

The Hook

*King Lhwyd has died. His family gather in the great hall to hear his will be known, spoken by his wife and stewardess, **Arian**. It is as many suspected, and as a few feared: all lands, fortunes, guardsmen, and powers are to be inherited **solely** by the king's youngest born — the teenaged prince **Dhyr** — rather than being divided equally...*

*The reason for this sudden change in tradition? Dhyr was **prophesied** by the king's witch, **Melyn**, many years ago "to be born under a full moon with eyes and hair as black as jet: who will befriend the Fair hound **Dormadh**, and will come of age upon the night of his father's natural passing, **and so will inherit all the world of Men.**"*

*So now each lordling must now **choose**: whether **to follow** their father's wishes and swear fealty to their new king Dhyr, **or to revolt** and fight against the tide of destiny and take what is rightfully theirs, **or perhaps to find a third option?***

Setup

- This is a *one-shot* demo scenario about family, feuds, and our role in the path of fate.
- It is not inherently built as a *player vs. player* type game, but ending everything in a duel or starting a civil war are definitely some possible outcomes of the session.
- It is intended to be played with **3-5 players**, who should each take a character sheet from the following list, in this order of importance:
 1. **Gwyn**, *first-born* — Austere. Feels robbed by the unorthodox changes made by their father in this late hour, and wants the will to be rescinded. Thinks Melyn is a fraud.
 2. **Reidh**, *twin of Oren* — Inquisitive. Will follow the prophesy only *if it's true*, but wonders about it's legitimacy and the timing of Melyn's claims. Wants answers. Offers guidance.
 3. **Oren**, *twin of Reidh* — Jealous. Wants total rule instead of Dhyr, and will try anything to prove they are worthy. Willing to fight and draw blood, but isn't as skilled at war as Gwyn.
 4. **Melyn**, *the enchanter* — Apprehensive. Wants their fortune to come true, peacefully.
 5. **Dhyr**, *the prophesied king* — Naive. Doesn't understand what all the fuss is about.
- If you have fewer players, then Melyn and Dhyr should be played as NPCs by the Facilitator (FC), along with **Arian**, the king's wife (the only other witness of the king's death), and **Dormadh**, Dhyr's pet 'wolf' (who may or may not be a fairfolk monster).
- There are no other NPCs in the opening scene. The royal vanguard of each lordling await their orders in the outside. And there are servants in the back rooms.

Potential Content Warnings: Tragedy, Family Violence & Murder, Black Magic, Faeries, Drugs & Alcohol.

Setting the Scene

The main characters are royals in an ancient line that supposedly leads back to **King Edher**. The game is set in the **Glass Hall on the Mound**, in **Dinas Olai** the city of light, in the *semi-mythical bronze-age Kingdom of Prydein*. It is a resplendent mead hall, with many rows of vertical green and blue window panes and a marvelous **central firepit**. Two long feasting tables line the walls, with pews either side, strewn with half-eaten food and spilled drinks. For today was supposed to be a day of celebrations: *Prince Dhyr's coming of age party*. But king Lhwyd had been sick for weeks, and has left the throne empty on this portentous night: only his **fabled iron sword** hangs on the mantel above it, *symbolic of his presence in spirit*.

The scene begins with the FC relaying the king's cryptic final words to Arian. All the players get to hear this speech, *but only Melyn's and Arian are actually there in the moment*:

"And so as my death comes, as I know it now shall... I see that Melyn's premonition was right all along..." and he side-eye's Melyn then coughs violently. "I should have killed that mutt when I first laid eyes on it, but now I have doomed us all to strife... curse those black eyes," he sighs, then slumps. "I bequeath all my worldly possessions and my powers as king of this goodly land to young prince Dhyr. May he live long, and reign in peace... and may heaven and earth be once again united..." Struggling for breath now, he looks at Arian and says, "Tell me, do you look as lovely as the night we met, or am I slipping fast away...? Take care of our children please..."

Afterwards, once Arian has had a moment to grieve, she collects herself as is proper of a queen and enters the glass hall. She interrupts the festivities and bluntly announces the king's death. Then calls for the vanguard and servants to leave and await outside, so that **the will of the late king can only be heard by those of royal decent**. *Curiously, the wizard Melyn is not asked to leave*. With tears in her eyes, **she tells everyone that Dhyr will be king** and bows to him, then sits down turned away and sobs quietly.

Before beginning play, get players to **read their Principles out loud**, and roll *Kismet and Favor*.

Very Important Non-Player Characters

The VINPCs in this scene are listed on the player characters sheets. Each player should roll their Favor with each (a 50:50 chance) before play, and each should then **think up a reason on the spot** as to why each VINPC would or wouldn't aid them. Melyn or Dhyr may also be a VINPC if they are not players.

Arian

Tall and lithe with decorated silver hair and blue eyes, wearing a gray pencil dress and brown fur cloak. The dowager queen **cannot be consoled** initially, and will continue to cry for at least one round and until the conversation gets heated. Afterwards she remains reserved, but **generally supports her late husband's will**, and makes a bigger show of fealty if pushed.

Dormadh

Resembling a handsome wolf at first glance, but rounder. He carries the eerie light of an eclipse his fur, and his bark is the call of lightning. **His eyes are also black as jet**, like Dhyr. Dormadh is a *fea creature*, and truly the best of dogs. He can talk in single words, and supports Dhyr's claim wholeheartedly. He will defend his master with his life, but he can't be slain except by the **touch of iron or flame**. If killed, his body rapidly rots into the sky.

Spoilers: Do not read beyond here, unless you are the game's Facilitator or have played the game before!

Arian as a Player Character?

Arian has a fully written character sheet to help the FC with playing her. But if you have six players who want to play, and one of them has either played this scenario before or is a very experienced roleplayer, you may offer her for them to play. Let that player open the scene and relay the king's final plea in their own words. This can dramatically change the direction of the game, but may be fun!

The Whole Truth

- King Lhwyd was **genuinely dying** in the weeks leading up to Dhyr's birthday.
- Arian believed that all the signs of the prophesy had thus far been true, and **decided to hasten her husband's death** using lead powder from her make-up purse: to ensure the timing fit.
- Not realizing *until tonight* that her intervention **may have now inadvertently ruined the prophesy** (since his death may not be considered a 'natural passing' anymore), she is suddenly **wracked with both grief and guilt**.
- But she wants to pass the prophesy off as having been fulfilled anyway, and simply hopes that Melyn's magic isn't *real enough* to detect the discrepancy.
- **Melyn has no idea** about Arian's involvement and potentially ruined the prophesy, but will *react badly* if they are an NPC and the truth is revealed.
- **She will only admit to her crime if her whole family begins to suspect and turn against her;** and *even then* she will double down and say that lead is natural, and so her poisoning still shouldn't break the rules. (Perhaps pleading with the universe more than with her family?)
- Whether anyone agrees with her at this point is up to them. But one thing that might help prove her case, if not her innocence, would be to **get Dhyr to perform the king's ritual**.

The King's Ritual

All true kings of Prydein must perform the '*Quelling of the Moon God Ritual*' to prove they are worthy to rule over all that the faelight touches. **Improvise with the players what this ritual involves at the table.** If Dhyr is a player, then have them lead a *Ritualist* task: Seeking the **primary consequence** has a base threshold of 1, and has 3 relative difficulty penalties from: starting a new Job, the auspices of the occasion, and Dhyr's phobia of moonlight. Therefore it *requires 4 successes* to appease **Lheiadh**, the moon god.

Failing the ritual may mean the **death of someone**, depending on how bad the failure is and *which secondary consequences are invoked* and which one the FC wants to subvert.

If Dhyr is an NPC, he will fail this ritual but Dormadh will sacrifice himself to save his master from death. (Assuming Dormadh has not already been slain before now).



EVENING STAR

Circumstances

Character Name	Player Name	Tier
Background		Size
Foreground		Age
Lifepaths	Principles	Kismet
		◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇
		◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇
Goals		Lots
		◇
Habits		Ego
		◇ ◇ ◇ ◇
Creeds		Fidelity

Abilities	Capabilities
<i>Appeal</i> +	+
<i>Endurance</i> +	
<i>Resolve</i> +	+
<i>Finesse</i> +	
<i>Wits</i> +	+
<i>Swiftiness</i> +	
Mental Caliber Score	Optional Caliber Score

Special Attribute	General Attributes
An attribute or asset that is uniquely yours	
Kíth & Kín	
◇	
	Connections, Features, Gambits, Limits, and Specialties
◇	
◇	
VINPC Favor Relation / Status	Capital and Vendible Assets

Jobs

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