

# Persona: Beyond the Veil

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## **1. Acknowledgements**

This system is adapted from the following pre-existing system, which was in itself inspired by the Fate Core system:

[http://web.mit.edu/turzaak/Public/tabletop/Persona/Persona\\_4e.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/turzaak/Public/tabletop/Persona/Persona_4e.pdf)

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## **2. Setting**

The Persona setting is an approximately present day, present time urban fantasy. The world is always under the threat of beings known as Shadows. Most of the time, Shadows exist separate from the real world. Alas, there are times where they bleed into the real world through mysterious means.

There are many thoughts as to what Shadows are. Some say they are manifestations of the dark desires of humanity, summoned up from the Sea of Unconsciousness to become nightmares given form. Others say they are otherworldly demonic invaders. The only line of defense against the Shadows rests in the hands of certain young adults who can manifest the power of Persona. A Persona is the manifestation of an individual's will and some inner truth about themselves that they present to the world. Often, Personae are archetypes based on mythology and tied to the Major Arcana of the tarot. These Personae, this strong sense of self, protect the user against the power of the Shadows and allow the user to fight against them.

But because the Persona comes from within and are masks people use to interact with the world, the strength of a Persona is dependent on the strength of the sense of self and the bonds a person forms with others. By strengthening oneself, one can stand stronger against the tide of Shadows that threaten to consume the world.

Instances where these young adults would enter the shadow world can and have been called many things, but as far as this module is concerned, this event will be called **Delving**.

## **3. Numbers, Rounding, and Dice**

### **3.1 Rounding**

Rounding is always, always up. This will be a question, so it's answer is right here in the beginning.

### **3.2 Die Sizes**

The die sizes, in order, are 0, 1, 1d2, 1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12, and 1d20.

## **4. Character Creation**

### **4.1 Aspects**

Aspects are descriptors that define parts of the game, be they characters, a particular place, an object, etc. If it's important to the story or world, it's probably going to have at least one aspect. Aspects can be single words or phrases. How Aspects work in game is described later, in **Section 7** (cleverly titled *Aspects*). If you're familiar with the FATE system, you've seen Aspects before. Every character starts with 4 Aspect Tokens. Aspect Tokens may be used to interact with Aspects (Section 7) or to tap a card in the Arcana Spread (Section 11.2). Aspect Tokens refresh every game session.

A character begins with 5 aspects: as many Arcana as you have Personae at character creation, and the rest free.

- **Arcana:** Exactly What It Says On The Tin. It must be one of the Major Arcana in the Tarot deck.

- **Free:** Anything you want.

Additionally, a character may always use his or her equipped Persona's Conviction as an Aspect.

## 4.2 Abilities

There are six abilities: Strength (STR), Vitality (VIT), Agility (AGL), Technique (TEC), Magic (MAG), and Luck (LUK). There is one additional derived value, Hit Points (HP). These abilities belong to your character, though the Persona you have equipped may modify them. At level 1, distribute 18 points among your abilities, with none lower than 1 or higher than 4. Hit Points are equal to  $15 + 5 \cdot \text{level} + 5 \cdot \text{VIT}$ . There is no maximum value for abilities.

- **HP** is the amount of damage you can take before falling unconscious. It is a derived value and cannot be increased directly. Temporary changes to VIT such as combat buffs and equipped Persona bonuses *do* change max HP, but do not change current HP unless specified. If your max HP falls below your current HP, your current HP is immediately clipped.

- **Strength (STR)** increases the damage dealt by basic attacks and physical special attacks. Strength is the basis for damage of both melee and ranged weapons.

- **Vitality (VIT)** increases your maximum hit points, works with armor to increase your resistance to damage, and helps you resist fatigue.

- **Agility (AGL)** increases your chance of dodging attacks and increases the distance you can move. It also improves your initiative.

- **Technique (TEC)** increases your chance of dealing damage with all attacks. It may also improve the targeting capabilities and range of certain spells.

- **Magic (MAG)** increases the damage dealt by magical special attacks.

- **Luck (LUK)** increases your resistance to bad status effects, your chance to land a critical hit, and provides Luck Charges equal to your LUK at the start of each session. By spending one of these charges, you can add LUKd6 to any roll. Persona skills may give you additional uses for LUK charges.

### 4.3 Skills

Secondary abilities don't apply directly to combat; rather, they quantify your Personal aptitude and social skills. They affect the benefits of extracurricular activities, your scores on tests, and various other factors that influence personal growth rather than combat performance. Consult the GM for activities and how they influence and are influenced by secondary abilities. The six secondary abilities are Knowledge (KN), Discipline (DI), Empathy (EM), Charm (CH), Expression (EX), and Courage (CO).

At character creation, you may distribute 15 points among your social skills. 5 is the maximum starting skill value. You may have no more than two 0s, no more than one 5, and nothing higher than 5.

There may be plot- or character-based restrictions on these stats that will be explained by your GM. For the typical high school-age campaign, these values are indicative of immaturity; values of 3-6 are typical for adults. Values above 18 are high-superhuman. Values of 25 are absolutely legendary.

- **Knowledge (KN)** is your accumulated learning. It helps you perform on tests and in school in general. The insight provided by a broad base of knowledge is useful in a variety of situations, and it facilitates the growth of many other secondary characteristics.

- *At Knowledge 6*, you've absorbed a wealth of mythology, and once per Delving can learn one elemental weakness of an enemy.
- *At Knowledge 12*, you are able to easily read into your foe's attacks, and once per Delving can choose to automatically succeed on a dodge roll.
- *At Knowledge 18*, you gain some tactical insight into battle, and gain an intrinsic +1 to STR, MAG, or TEC.
- *At Knowledge 24*, you can see right through your enemy's defenses, and once per Delving can choose to spend a minor action to gain the effect of Mind Charge or Power Charge.

You gain an aspect chosen from among *Badass Bookworm*, *The Chessmaster*, *Insufferable Genius*, *Impossible Genius*, *The Smart Guy*, and *I Can See Forever*.

• **Discipline (DI)** is your focus and dedication, your ability to commit to a task. It helps in tasks that require focus, such as studying, and can earn a lot of respect from one's peers.

- *At Discipline 6*, your willpower gives you greater combat longevity, and you gain +10 max HP and +1 fatigue limit.
- *At Discipline 12*, you can go beyond your physical limits, and you gain +15 max HP and +1 fatigue limit.
- *At Discipline 17*, your force of will allows you to shrug off significant damage, granting +1 VIT.
- *At Discipline 24*, you become almost impossible to stop: once per Delving, upon dying for any reason you may stand up with 50% of your max HP restored. This has the timing of an interrupt, but doesn't consume your interrupt for the round.

You gain an aspect chosen from among *Determinator*, *The Stoic*, *Tranquil Fury*, *Made of Indestructium*, *I'm Okay*, and *You Call That a Wound*.

• **Empathy (EM)** is your ability to understand the emotional state of another. It helps in working out a wide variety of social problems, and is critical in tasks that require training or commanding others.

- *At Empathy 5*, your ability to establish a strong connection with others allows you to support them when they're troubled: once per Delving, you may spend a minor action to remove all Mind effects from an ally who can hear you.
- *At Empathy 10*, the support you extend to others works in both directions: once per Delving, you may automatically negate a Mind effect.
- *At Empathy 16*, you are a convincing leader, and once per Delving you may spend a move action to remove all Mind effects from all allies within earshot.
- *At Empathy 19*, your healing effects that target adjacent allies heal 25% more.
- *At Empathy 24*, thrice per Delving when you cast a healing spell on an ally you also receive a healing effect at half of that strength.

You gain an aspect chosen from among *The Heart*, *I Feel Your Pain*, *The Conscience*, *The White Mage*, *Spider Sense*, *Your Tears Are Delicious*, *Armor-Piercing Question*, *Fluent In Unspoken*, and *I Know You Better Than You Know Yourself*.

• **Charm (CH)** is your charisma, personal magnetism, and style: that which draws others to you. It helps in a variety of social situations, especially when dealing with strangers, during negotiation, and when trying to call in (or beg for) a favor.

- *At Charm 5*, once per Delving you may cast Pulinpa.
- *At Charm 8*, once per Delving you can cast Dekaja.
- *At Charm 12*, once per Delving you may cast Marin Karin. You may use half your Charm in place of TEC if it's higher.
- *At Charm 18*, once per Delving you may force an enemy's single-target (area) power to target (be centered on) you.
- *At Charm 24*, once per day you may reroll an Empathy or Expression check at +3.

You gain an aspect chosen from among *The Face*, *The Charmer*, *The Casanova*, *Magnetic Hero*, *Plucky Comic Relief*, *Prince Charming*, *Bishounen*, *Bishoujou*, *Even the Girls Want Her*, *Even the Guys Want Him*, and *Sharp-Dressed Man*.

• **Expression (EX)** is your ability to communicate, whether in speech, writing, or art. It helps in school with presentations and papers, and is especially useful for musicians. In other situations, it will let you make a persuasive argument or, when backed up by Charm, take a leadership role. It is also useful in coordinating allies.

- *At Expression 8*, once per Delving as a move action you may designate a target. Until the end of the encounter, allies who attack that target treat their LUK as 1 higher for the purpose of determining critical hits.
- *At Expression 12*, you can help your allies stay aware of the battlefield. Once per Delving as a minor action you may give all allies +1 dodge die category until the end of your next turn.
- *At Expression 16*, you can deliver a badass one-liner. Once per Delving as a move action you may attempt to incite Rage on all units within range 12. For enemies, the chance is 25%, plus 5% for each 2 Expression. Allies can choose whether or not to get Rage.
- *At Expression 20*, you are adept at coordinating your allies. Once per Delving as a standard action you may designate a target. For the next 2 rounds, that target cannot inflict critical hits and attacks on that target cannot miss.
- *At Expression 24*, your tactical capability is superhuman. Once per Delving you may spend a standard action and a move action to give each ally a move action.

You gain an aspect chosen from among *Filibuster*, *But I Digress*, *Monologuing*, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, *Rousing Speech*, *Talking is a Free Action*, *Verbal Judo*, and *The Artist*.

• **Courage (CO)** is your ability to ignore fear. In school, it's helpful for performances and presentations, though usually secondary to Expression.

- *At Courage 9*, you're always the first to charge into battle and take a +6 initiative bonus.
- *At Courage 16*, you realize that fortune really does favor the bold. You get +1 LUK.
- *At Courage 20*, you don't let simple things like hit points get in the way of victory. You gain Fortify Elements 2 and Fortify Physical 2.
- *At Courage 24*, you learn the power of recklessness. As a minor action, you can reduce your armor value and Fortify effects to zero until the start of your next turn. Until the start of your next turn, you add your Fortify Physical and armor value to physical damage inflicted and your Fortify value to corresponding elemental damage inflicted.

You gain an aspect chosen from among *Lawful Stupid*, *Chaotic Stupid*, *Suicidal Overconfidence*, *Heroic Resolve*, *Nerves of Steel*, and *The Eternal Churchill*.

## 4.4 Using Skills

Skills are used in challenges given by the GM to deal with certain situations. These could range from passing a test in school to talking down a suicidal friend to unlocking a puzzle to charging straight ahead into certain danger.

A challenge will have a target number, designated by the GM. This represents the skill level necessary to complete the task at the bare minimum level. The more your skill rating exceeds this number, the greater the success, and similarly for failure. Of course, sometimes your ordinary skill won't be high enough to complete a task. Sometimes you'll have to solve a problem in a hurry. Sometimes, a mere success might not be enough! In that case, you can take a **risk**, adding both the possibility of great success and the possibility of spectacular failure. You may risk a die of any size from d2 to d20. Roll it once, adding the result to your skill level, and again, subtracting it from that total.

If you risk little or nothing against a reasonable task, you'll generally get a safe result - a mild success or failure. Against a challenge that's clearly beyond your abilities, you may have to risk more just for a chance of success. On the other hand, if a task is beneath you, you might choose to risk more for the chance of a truly spectacular success. You should note that if a target is more difficult than your skill level, increasing risk always increases your chances of success... but the failures could be dire.



If you're nervous, or in a rush, it's hard to perform consistently; in that case, you must risk at least a d4. Particularly difficult circumstances might cause your GM to impose a higher minimum risk.

**Example 1:** Dan is in the student center and is trying to convince someone to donate money for a fundraiser. Dan has 4 CH, and he has a good rapport going, so he decides not to risk anything. The GM had set the target number at 4 exactly, so Dan gets a couple of bucks.

**Example 2:** Dan's feeling encouraged by his previous success and goes to a sympathetic local business to try to drum up some bigger support. The GM has secretly set the target number at 3. Dan feels like he could easily talk them out of a few bucks, but he knows a profitable company could afford to give more, so he decides to aim high and risks a d6. He rolls a 5 and a 3 for a net +2 on his check, bringing the total to 6. He beats the target number by 3, gives a particularly impassioned speech, and scores a sponsorship for the fundraiser.

**Example 3:** Evan is stuck presenting his project first in his history class. He was out fighting shadows the night before and didn't have time to finish his presentation, so he has to wing it with a target number of 4. Unfortunately, he's also a terrible public speaker, and is a little bit nervous - the GM decides he has to risk at least a d4 with his EX of 2. He rolls a 1, then a 4, bringing his skill result down to -1. He fumbles his way through something so bad it's not even wrong, and winds up with a detention.

## 5. Persona Creation

### 5.1 Types & Convictions

A Persona has Types and Convictions instead of aspects. The quantities vary depending on if the character chooses to start with one or two Personae. A Persona starts with 2 Types and 1 Conviction each if a player starts with two Personae. Otherwise, a Persona starts with 4 Types and 1 Conviction.

- **Type:** What category of spell the Persona can learn. The categories are Physical, Fire, Ice, Wind, Lightning, Psychic, Nuke, Light, Dark, Healing, Buff, Debuff/Status, and Intel.

- **Conviction:** A powerful driving force that caused a Persona to come into being. It's related to a Persona's mythos. It must demand action. These are often also the reason the character was drawn to the particular Persona of that Arcana.

A character can only have one Persona active at any time, but the active Persona's Conviction can be used as one of the character's Aspects.

**Example:** Carol is a high school student. She has the Personae CHARIOT: Ares and DEVIL: Faust. Her player decided her Character Aspects are *Chariot*, *Devil*, *Hot-Blooded*, *Give*

*Her an Inch and She'll Take a Mile, and Can't Touch This.* Her player now looks at the Aspects Ares and Faust have. Ares has the Types Physical and Buff, with the Conviction: *Spoiling for a Fight*. Faust has the Types Dark and Status, with the Conviction *Power at Any Price*. Carol currently has Faust active, so her player knows that Faust's Conviction is active and *Power at Any Price* can be invoked or compelled, while *Spoiling for a Fight* cannot.

## 5.2 Strength & Weakness

Each Persona has a set of damage type strengths and weaknesses.

There is one **Physical Type**.

There are four **Elemental Types**: Fire, Ice, Wind, and Lightning.

There are four **Special Types**: Psychic, Nuke, Light, and Darkness.

There is one **Non-Type**: Almighty.

Each Persona will be strong or weak to some number of damage types. There are five possible interactions:

- **Absorb** allows you to recover HP equal to the damage dealt by the attack. Absorbing a Dark spell doubles your current HP. Absorbing a status effect simply causes it to have no effect.
- **Reflect** repels the effect of the spell back at the attacker. If it was a multi-target effect, the caster suffers the effect multiple times.
- **Null** causes the ability to inflict no damage at all, or have no chance of taking effect.
- **Resist** causes the ability to do half damage or have half the chance of taking effect.
- **Weak** causes the ability to do double damage or have double the chance of taking effect.

If you are Null, Reflect, or Absorb for a type, and you get hit by a spell of that type, you are also immune to any secondary effects of that spell

## 5.3 Spells

Each Persona has a Refresh value, indicating how many spells can be held ready for use at one time. Each Persona also knows some number of spells. Growth Points awarded after battle increase a Persona's capabilities; every 10 Growth Points is sufficient to raise a Persona a level. At each level, a Persona receives points that can be spent on buying additional spells. More on this in section 6.3.

A Persona may know at most 12 spells, including learned passive effects; if an additional spell is learned, an old power must be forgotten. When a power is forgotten, half of the AP cost of that spell is refunded (track half-points; don't round).

**Example:** Bob's Persona JUSTICE: Angel has 12 powers and is able to learn Diarama. His player decides to forget Dia in order to put it on Angel's power list. Forgetting Dia returns half an AP to Angel, which isn't enough to buy a new spell, so Bob simply saves it.

## 5.4 Building the Persona

This section is optional for GMs. A GM is free to design their campaign's Personae as they wish; these are merely suggestions.

A Persona should start with a number of Resistances and Weaknesses. In general, you should choose one strength and one weakness or two strengths and two weaknesses. You should seek GM approval for any other distribution.

When you build a Persona, you start with 6 AP to spend on abilities. If you started with two Personae, each starts with 3 AP. Abilities are divided into four Tiers, as seen in the Spell Compendium at the end of these rules (Section 10). Each ability costs a number of points equal to its tier, except for tier IV spells, which have a special scaling cost starting at 5 AP.

**Example:** The GM is designing the Persona STRENGTH: Atlas as one of a high school student's two Personae. At 1st level, he has 3 points to spend, so gives Atlas three Tier I abilities. At level 2, he spends the 1 AP gained to give Atlas another Tier I. At level 3, he thinks it's about time Atlas started learning cooler powers, so he saves the 1 AP gained; he also chooses +1 Refresh as his three-level bonus (see 6.1). At level 4, Atlas gains 2 more AP for a total of 3 unspent, allowing Atlas to learn a Tier III ability. Later, the GM decides to start designing the Persona TEMPERANCE: Suzaku. Suzaku is the Persona for a college student character, who assigns the starting 6AP to only one Persona. The GM decides he's starting Suzaku off with 2 Tier II spells (that cost 2AP apiece) and 2 Tier I spells.

## 6. Leveling

### 6.1 Character Leveling

When a character gains a level, determine your new max HP and do as many of the following things as you qualify for.

- At *every* level, add a point to a skill.
- If your level is *odd*, add a point to a skill.
- If your level is *even*, take a Feat.
- If your level is a *multiple of three*, add a point to an ability. Remember to set your max HP to  $15 + 5 \cdot \text{level} + 5 \cdot \text{VIT}$ !

**For example,** at level 2 you get a skill point and a feat. At level 5, you get two skill points. At level 6, you get a skill point, a feat, and an ability point.

## 6.2 Feats

Feats are special abilities that can affect how you interact with the world personally and with your Persona. Some feats may have additional requirements.

- **Revelations**

Prereq: Lv 6

Additional Requirements: can only be taken once per six character levels

Each rank in this ability grants you the use of a new Persona. You also gain the relevant Arcana aspect.

- **One in Spirit**

Prereq: --

Additional Requirements: --

Once per battle per rank you have in this ability, you may take the Persona change action as a minor action.

- **Open Mind**

Prereq: --

Additional Requirements: --

Each rank of this feat increases the Refresh value of all of your Personae by 1

- **Perseverance**

Prereq: Lv 10

Additional Requirements: can be taken only once + once per 4 character levels above 10

Each time you take this feat, choose a Persona you control, and a type against which that Persona is weak. The Persona is no longer weak to that type.

- **Made of Iron**

Prereq: Lv 10

Additional Requirements: can be taken only once + once per 3 character levels above 10

Each time you take this feat, choose a Persona you control, and a type against which that Persona has no interaction. The Persona gains resistance to that type.

- **Iron Will**

Prereq: Lv 10

Additional Requirements: can be taken only once + once per 3 character levels above 10

Each time you take this feat, choose a Persona you control, and a type against which that Persona is resistant to. The Persona's resistance against that type increases to null.

- **Unshakable**

Prereq: Lv 10

Additional Requirements: can be taken only once + once per 3 character levels above 10

Each time you take this feat, choose a Persona you control, and a type against which that Persona is null or reflect. For -1 Refresh, the Persona's resistance against that type increases by one: null becomes reflect, reflect becomes absorb.

- **Thine Own Self**

Prereq: Lv 4

Additional Requirements: can be taken only once per 4 character levels

You may rename a Conviction on one of your Personae.

- **Self-Reflection**

Prereq: --

Additional Requirements: --

You may rename one of your character's Free Aspects.

- **Intrinsic**

Prereq: Lv 15

Additional Requirements: can be taken only once per 15 character levels

You may add another Free Aspect to your character.

- **Token**

Prereq: --

Additional Requirements: can be taken only once + once per 3 character levels

Each rank in this feat adds +1 Aspect Token.

- **Skilled**

Prereq: --

Additional Requirements: --

Each time you take this feat, add 1 to a skill of your choice.

- **Miles to Go**

Prereq: --

Additional Requirements: --

Each time you take this feat, add 1 to your Fatigue limit.

## 6.3 Persona Leveling

When a Persona levels, the Persona gains 1 AP plus 1 AP per 3 levels. AP are used in constructing your Spell Deck (see Section ?? for how the Spell Deck is used). You don't have to

spend AP as soon as you get them; you can save them for more powerful spells. Each time a Persona levels, you may spend points from its AP pool to buy one spell, which may be an additional copy of a spell you already know.

Tier I, II, and III spells simply cost points equal to their tier, and you may buy multiple copies of a spell without penalty. Tier IV spells are significantly more powerful, and it's difficult to learn more than one on a given Persona: Tier IV spells cost 5 AP, plus one for each tier IV spell that Persona already knows.

Additionally, every third level, you may choose one of the following:

- +1 refresh. You may take this as many times as you like.
- +1 to any stat while this Persona is equipped. You may take this as many times as you like, but your bonuses must be as broad as they are deep: the total bonus to one stat can't exceed the number of stats that have bonuses. (+1 STR is OK, +2 STR is not. +1 STR +1 VIT is OK, and +2 STR +2 VIT is also ok.)
- +2 to any social skill for your character. You may take this as many times as you like.
- Copy any spell you know that is Tier III or lower. You may take this as many times as you like.

## **7. Aspects**

### **7.1 What are Aspects?**

As mentioned previously, aspects are keywords and phrases that describe the important parts of a character, environment, or item. Mechanically, they are toggles that can be activated by the players and GM to alter the direction of the story.

### **7.2 Aspect Types**

Exactly what it says on the tin. These describe the current scene. Unlike Personal aspects, there's no default number of aspects a scene might have. The only aspect it must have is a time aspect.

A scene is defined by the time block it consumes. Each day has seven scenes: Morning, Lunch, Afternoon, After School, Evening, Late Night, Delving. Other than the time designator for a scene, there are four broad categories for scene and setting:

- Environment: Lighting, atmosphere, weather, etc. These are aspects that represent the ability of those in the scene to perceive things. Dark and Stormy is an example of an environmental aspect.
- Mood: Aspects that describe the attitudes of a crowd in the scene. An exciting Pep Rally could be an example.
- Hazard: Exactly what it says on the tin. These are conditions that are likely to cause damage and harm to the people in the scene. On Fire! is a good example. So are Deadly Neurotoxin and Mashy Spike Plate.
- Scenery: Catch-all for other features of the scene, such as Stack of Crates and History Classroom.

- **Objects:** Plot-important objects have aspects. The sword that slew the Jabberwock would have the aspect Vorpall Blade and/or Goes Snicker-Snack. Refrain from giving every object in the game aspects, because it'll just bog things down.
- **People:** NPCs often have aspects (planned or impromptu). Using aspects is an easy way to make them useful and distinctive in a story without much trouble. Certain NPCs might also have Arcana aspects. These NPCs could offer ways of increasing Social Links (see Section 9.1 for more details).

### 7.3 Invoking

When you invoke an aspect, you're attempting to directly affect the narrative in a manner consistent with the aspect for your benefit. To do so, explain what you want the aspect to provide and spend an Aspect Token to make it happen. If the GM doesn't think the desired effect is reasonable from the aspect, they can cancel it (which means no Aspect Token is spent). In general, you can also use an Aspect Token to add +4 to an appropriate skill challenge.

**Example:** The party has reached a dark cave. They are trying to be cautious and don't want to fall into any traps or pitfalls the cave might have. But no one has a light source in their equipment list. Alice's player says Since I have the Aspect '*All Tech Men Carry Batteries*', it stands to reason I have a flashlight on me. The GM agrees that this is logical and allows Alice to spend one of her tokens to invoke that aspect. The party then continues into the cave with a source of illumination.

**Example:** The current scene has the aspect Dark and Stormy Night. The party needs to escape through the quad and avoid getting caught by campus police. Bob's player says It's a '*Dark and Stormy Night*'. I want to take advantage of that and say it's a lot harder for the CPs to see us moving through the wind and rain in the dark. The GM agrees, and Bob spends his token. The party gets away, although they are very wet.

### 7.4 Compelling

When an aspect is compelled, you are forced to obey one of your aspects in such a way that it gets you in trouble. To be a valid compel, things must be worse for your character after the compel. Otherwise, it isn't a compel. Either the players or the GM can compel and aspect. When the compel happens, the GM offers an Aspect Token to the compelled player. That player can follow the compel and take the Aspect Token, or pay one of their Aspect Tokens to refuse the compel. Other players can suggest compels. Self-compels are also valid.

Compels can escalate to a degree. If a player refuses a compel, the GM can offer two Aspect Tokens; it then costs two Aspect Tokens to refuse. If they still refuse, the GM can escalate a third time, but three times is the limit.

**Example:** Carol has been pretty stressed trying to balance coursework and saving the world. Her advisor is an NPC with the aspect *Perfectionist*. Carol's player points out "You know, Carol's advisor is probably going to get annoyed that her work's been slipping. He is a

'Perfectionist', after all.” The GM considers it, and then allows the compel, handing Carol's player a token. Carol then gets a dressing-down by her advisor for sloppy work.

**Example:** The party's on a deadline and is chasing after a target. Dan is trying to get some intel out of a cute barista in the local coffee shop. Dan has the Aspect: *Sucker for a Pretty Face*. The GM decides to make things harder for the party. The GM says “Dan, that barista is really cute. You are a 'Sucker for a Pretty Face'...” and holds up an Aspect Token. Dan's player agrees and takes the token. Dan gets distracted by the cute barista and loses his lead on the target.

## 8. Social Links

### 8.1 What are Social Links?

Social Links are a mechanical way of indicating relationships between characters that the players form. Social Links (or S.Links) can be between players and each other, or players and NPCs. There are different rules for each type. Starting, maintaining, and leveling S.Links are useful, as they grant various bonuses to the player character and even to the party.

When a player progresses along an S.Link, they rank up as they spend time with the character who holds that S.Link. Each S.Link track has a counter. When the counter reaches a certain threshold, depending on the S.Link, the S.Link ranks up. The counter totals for each rank for each S.Link are public.

There are three ways to gain points that tick up the counter:

- Tag 2 skills for an interaction: 1 count
- Tag an Aspect for an interaction: 5 counts
- GM discretion for interactions (taking a full time unit or during a scene, etc)

### 8.2 With NPCs

Each NPC that it is possible to create a social link with has one of the Major Arcana assigned to them. The GM might not tell you what that Arcana is before the link is created.

For most NPCs, the S.Link track is from 0-50 and the ranks are evenly distributed along it. Some special NPCs might have higher count levels and may take more than 50 points to max out.

At Rank 5, add a copy of the Arcana associated with the S.Link to the Arcana Spread.

At Rank 10, you gain an ability, either a feat or a Spell to add to the Spell Deck that is not dependent on Persona.

### 8.3 With PCs



S.Links between party members are a bit more complicated than with NPCs. They also have greater rewards.

PC S.Links are asynchronous. They do not have to progress at the same rate.

The S.Link track is from 0-100. The ranks are differently distributed along the track depending on the character, as not all people relate to people in the same way.

When maxed at Rank 10, the character gains an Aspect related to one of the S.Link's Aspects.

Until Rank 10, the rewards per Rank are left up to the GM. These could range from more plot and side quests to small bonuses or minor abilities

**Example:** Alice and Bob have formed a S.Link. They are hanging out in the student-run computer club on their campus. Alice talks about how she first got into programming and tags her Aspect Raised by Mathematicians. Bob doesn't have a relevant Aspect that really goes well with the setting, so he tags Knowledge and Empathy to keep up with the conversation. Alice takes 5 counts on Bob's S.Link; Bob takes 1 point for Alice's.

Alice is a lot more reticent than Bob, who is fairly outgoing. When they compare tracks, Bob's S.Link is spaced out evenly at 10 counts per rank up (10 for Rank 1, 20 for Rank 2, etc); Alice, on the other hand, takes a bit longer to get comfortable with people, so her S.Link's track is front-loaded with 30 for Rank 1, and then non-evenly distributed up to 100..

## 9. Combat

### 9.1 Spell Deck

Each player has a spell deck. The spell deck contains the abilities the active Persona knows. Each copy of a spell a Persona knows gives you a spell card that allows it to be used up to once in a combat. You can cast a spell as long as copies of it exist in your hand. After a spell is cast, put it in a discard pile for that Persona.

At the beginning of an encounter, the player may draw up to their current Persona's Refresh value from their spell deck. To refill your hand, you must switch Persona or, if you have no active Persona, take the refresh action (see below). When you swap active Persona, return your hand to the active Persona's deck. Draw a new hand from the new Persona's spell deck up to its Refresh value.

You can always choose to do a basic melee or ranged attack for free.

### 9.2 Fatigue

Fatigue is every Persona-user's enemy; battle after battle in the Delving simply wears you down. You can use fatigue to ready spells you've already cast for another use, but eventually it will take a toll on your body. Your basic fatigue limit is equal to your STR plus your VIT, plus any modifiers you have from feats or special abilities. By

spending Fatigue equal to a spell's tier, you can, as a minor action, put that spell into your hand from your deck or discard pile.

At the end of your turn, update your fatigue penalty level. For every two points of fatigue above your limit, you take a -1 penalty to VIT and AGL. You cannot spend fatigue that would bring your VIT below 0. If you spend Fatigue that brings your VIT to 0, you pass out for the fight. At the end of the fight, recover Fatigue until one more fatigue would bring your VIT to 0.

Fatigue is restored by rest. The minimum amount of sleep required per night also restores 2 Fatigue. To recover faster, naps are required. See the social addendum for nap rules for your campaign.

**Example:** Dan is a physical-skill based fighter. His VIT is 5 and his STR is 4, so his fatigue limit is 9. He cast Fatal End (Tier II spell) last round and wants to cast it again. He spends 2 Fatigue to pull Fatal End from his discard pile as a minor action, bringing his Fatigue count to 2. He casts it again as his standard.

**Example:** Alice is an ice-element based fighter. Her VIT is 2 and her STR is 2, so her fatigue limit is 4. She's already had to pull a few spells out of her discard pile, so her current Fatigue count is 6. She pulls Bufula (Tier II) out of her discard pile for another 2 Fatigue and casts it. She then assesses the -1 penalty to all her stats, taking her VIT down to 0. Alice promptly passes out until the end of combat.

## 9.3 Combat Order

At the beginning of combat, each participant rolls d20+AGL. The total values set the initiative order. Ties are determined by AGL. Each player draws from their active Persona's spell deck up to that Persona's Refresh value.

Your action consists of three phases, Move, Minor, and Standard, in any order.

- Move. You may move your character up to his or her AGL score.
- Minor. You may take a minor action, if you have any available to you.
- Standard. You may take a standard action.

Additionally, you may take any number of free actions. A free action can be taken at any point during your turn and does not cost any of move, minor, or standard. Finally, some spells may be cast as Interrupt action, which can be performed at any time, even when it's not your turn. If you use an interrupt action, you can't use another until you've taken another turn. If there are any turn-triggered abilities, such as poison damage or attempting to break a Mind effect, they are assessed at the end of your turn.

## 9.4 Movement & Targeting

A character may move a number of spaces up to AGL+3. Diagonals are counted using the five-ten rule: the first diagonal movement counts as one space, the second two, the third one, the fourth two, and so on. Spaces containing friendly characters can be

moved through without penalty. Spaces containing enemy characters cannot be moved through, unless you have an ability that states otherwise.

Targets may be specified as requiring Line of Effect (LOE) or Line of Sight (LOS). LOE is a strict subset of LOS: LOS requires that you be able to see the target, while LOE requires that you be able to trace a line from yourself to the target without being interrupted. An enemy behind a window can be targeted by LOS spells, but not LOE spells.

A spell that does not require LOS or LOE can be targeted at an enemy you cannot see so long as you have some way of verifying the target's location. An ally capable of seeing the target and reporting to you will suffice, as will many kinds of intel spells.

## 9.5 Actions

During your turn, you may choose to do any of the following as a standard action:

**Make a Melee Attack:** If you're within the range specified by your melee weapon, typically range 1, you may make a melee attack with that weapon. Before damage is rolled, the targeted enemy is entitled to a dodge. If you hit, roll damage dice specified by your weapon.

**Make a Ranged Attack:** If you're within the range specified by your ranged weapon, you may make a ranged attack with that weapon. Before damage is rolled, the targeted enemy is entitled to a dodge. If you hit, roll damage dice specified by your weapon.

**Use a Spell or Ability:** activate the spell or ability from a card in your hand. Follow the rules of the spell or ability, allowing each targeted enemy to dodge against your TEC if specified.

**Change Persona:** Return your hand to the current Persona's spell deck. Select a new Persona under your command and draw cards equal to the new Persona's refresh value. Though this is a standard action, once per battle you may do this as a minor action (more if you have ranks in One In Spirit).

**Focus:** If you only have one Persona, you may spend a standard action to draw from your spell deck until you're holding cards equal to your Persona's refresh value.

**Item/Equipment:** You may use a consumable item according to its rules. Alternatively, you may switch out any number of pieces of your equipment with equipment from the party inventory.

## 9.6 Attacks and Dodging

All basic attacks and most spells entitle the targets to a dodge. Hits and dodges are based on dice rolls and stats.

**Attacker:** 1d6+TEC

**Defender:** 1d6+AGL

If the defender's number is equal or greater to the attacker's number, the attack misses. If the attack hits, roll the damage indicated by the spell or attack. Some spells specify that they use a die other than a d6 as the attacker's hit die, and evasion abilities may give the defender a larger hit die.

**Example:** Carol decides to cast Agi at a Jotun. Carol has TEC 4; the Jotun has AGL 2. Carol rolls 1d6+4 and gets 8. The Jotun rolls 1d6+2 and gets 5. The attack hits.

**Zero Hit Points.** If you should be knocked to precisely zero HP, you are not completely unconscious. You cannot move and may only take minor actions, but remain a valid target for spells and attacks and can be healed by both revival effects and effects that only restore hit points.

**Critical Hits.** Critical hits are based on your LUK score. If an attack hits, compare the defender's unmodified die roll to the attacker's LUK score. If the defender rolls under the attacker's LUK, the hit is critical. Each spell type has a specified interaction with critical hits. These are listed in the Spell Compendium.

**Dodge.** Dodge abilities help the defender avoid particular attacks. If you have a Dodge ability and are hit with an attack of that element, you may roll a larger hit die. The shift in die size will be specified by the defending effect.

## 9.7 Bad Status

Whenever a spell or attack attempts to inflict bad status on you, make a LUK save: roll LUKd12. If you roll at least one 12, you may ignore the bad status. You still suffer any other effects of the spell or attack. Bad status effects can be grouped into three categories, based on the element of the spells that inflict them: Mind effects, which attack the psyche; Nerve effects, which attack the body; and Miscellaneous effects, which are non-elemental. The abilities Null Mind and Null Nerve prevent their respective categories of bad status, while the ability Null Status prevents all negative status effects listed below. There is a simple way to remember the chance of recovering from a bad status: it's almost always 1/3; shock and prone always recover.

### Mind Effects

- **Charm** puts a character under the control of the GM, or causes an enemy to target its allies. At the end of the character's turn, there is a 33% chance of recovery.

- **Panic** prevents a character from summoning his or her Persona or prevents an enemy from using special abilities. At the end of the character's turn, there is a 33% chance of recovery.

- **Fear** decreases dodge die category by 1. At the end of the character's turn, there is a 33% chance of recovery. If you fail the save, return a spell from your hand to the deck.

- **Rage** increases physical damage dealt and all damage taken by 50%, and decreases accuracy die category by 1. At the end of the character's turn, there is a 33% chance of recovery. You may forgo the save.

#### **Nerve Effects**

- **Stun** reduces dodge die category by 1 and reduces your turn to one Standard action. At the end of the character's turn, there is a 33% chance of recovery.

- **Shock** causes all incoming attacks to automatically succeed and reduces damage reduction by half. Roll dodge at -1 die category to see if you suffer a critical hit. At the end of his or her turn, the character recovers.

- **Slow** reduces movement by half and accuracy by 1 die category. 33% chance of recovery.

#### **Miscellaneous Effects**

- **Poison** inflicts 20% of max HP damage per round. 33% chance of recovery.

- **Prone** is inflicted by Knockdown spells. It reduces your dodge die category by 3. At the end of the character's turn, the character recovers. An adjacent character can spend a standard action to help a character up from prone.

## **9.8 End of Combat**

Experience Points (XP) are awarded to the characters.

Growth Points (GP) are awarded for Personae. The players may decide the distribution of these GP between their Personae. The Persona does not need to have been used in that combat to receive GP.

Characters involved in the combat recover full HP.

**Example:** The combat has ended. The GM awards XP and 6 GP to the players. Bob has the Personae JUSTICE: Angel and MAGICIAN: Icarus. Although Bob used both in the combat, he decides to split the GP unevenly so that Angel receives 4 GP and Icarus 2 GP.

## **9.9 Sense**

Gathering intelligence about your enemies is a critical part of Persona. A Persona with the Intel Type can spend an AP on the Sense ability, allowing them to discover information about the enemy.

Sense is a Hold ability, meaning its spell card must be in your hand to be used. Unlike most Hold cards, however, it has an active ability. As long as Sense is in your hand, you can spend a move action to designate an enemy as your Sense target. You don't

have to be able to see the enemy. Afterwards, you may spend a minor action to put a counter on your Sense card. When the number of Sense counters matches the target's Sense difficulty, you discover the target's elemental interactions. Whenever you designate a new Sense target, all counters are removed from your Sense card.

Most enemies low-level characters will encounter have a Sense difficulty of 2. That means there are two common patterns of Sensing:

**Example 1.** Spend a move action to designate a target, a minor action to put a counter on Sense, and a minor action on your next turn to put a second counter on Sense. In this way, you can sense a basic enemy every 2 turns without greatly compromising your actions. Or,

**Example 2.** Spend a move action to designate a target, a minor action to put a counter on Sense, and a standard action as a minor action to put a second counter on Sense. In this way, you can expend your whole turn to sense an enemy in a single turn.

Of course, you're free to spend actions any way you see fit. Bosses may have a higher Sense difficulty or limit how many times per round you may spend an action Sensing them; your GM will advise.

Multiple characters with Intel Personae may collaborate on Sensing. If you have the Sense ability, you can spend a minor action to put a counter on any ally's Sense card.

## 10. Equipment

### 10.1 Weapon and Armor

- Weapon range contains no implicit information. If a weapon has range 5, it may attack only enemies exactly 5 spaces away. Range 1-5 may attack anywhere in between. Physical special abilities are treated as spells, which can attack anywhere within their range, not as weapons!
- Weapon damage typically scales with STR. This damage is physical unless the weapon species otherwise. For example, a  $2d6+6 \cdot \text{STR}$  weapon on a character with STR 3 deals  $2d6+18$  damage.
- Armor damage reduction typically scales with VIT. This only applies to physical damage unless the armor species otherwise. For example, a  $5+3 \cdot \text{VIT}$  armor on a character with VIT 3 reduces all incoming damage by 14 ( $5 + 9$ ).

### 10.2 Weapon Properties

- **Critical (X)** A weapon with this property indicates an X extra damage if the enemy's natural dodge die roll is below the attacker's LUK. If Critical augments a magic attack, such as via Spell Transfer Critical, Critical does damage based on MAG. The damage is of whatever type the effect would normally inflict.

- **Farshot (X)** A ranged weapon with this property can be used outside its normal operating range, at a cost of -1 TEC for each X spaces beyond the limit of its normal range.
- **Piercing (X)** A weapon with this property ignores the first X points of damage reduction provided by enemy armor or Fortify effects, though elemental resistance applies normally. Piercing 0 indicates that the weapon ignores all armor and Fortify effects.
- **Transfer (Property)** A weapon with the Transfer keyword gives the benefit of the specified property not only to attacks made with the weapon, but to physical spells cast while wielding the weapon. For example, a weapon with Transfer Critical and Critical 1d6 does bonus damage if the enemy fails to dodge a physical spell cast by the user. If no property is specified, all of the weapon's keywords are transferred.
- **Spell Transfer (Property)** A weapon with the incredible Spell Transfer keyword gives the benefit of the specified property to all spells cast by the user, both physical and magical. For example, a weapon with Spell Transfer Farshot and Farshot 2 allows the user to cast Agi at increased range with a TEC penalty. The property is not applied when it would not be sensible: Rakunda can never deal critical damage, and Evil Smile is never piercing. If no property is specified, all of the weapon's keywords are transferred.

### 10.3 Armor Properties

- **Death Ward (X)** Armor with this property suppresses death effects from Dark spells. Instead of dying instantly, the user instead takes a fraction of his or her max HP in damage: Death Ward 2 indicates half your max HP, Death Ward 3 indicates 1/3 of your max HP, and so on. Death Ward 1 indicates that the user is dropped to 1 HP by death effects; if the user was already at 1 HP, he or she dies. Death Ward 0 works similarly, going to 0 HP instead. Having Death Ward does not cause you to take fatigue for dying due to Hama and Mudo effects, even if it is death from damage.
- **Dodge (Element) (X)** Armor with this property increases your ability to avoid attacks of the specified type by increasing the size of your dodge die. For example, if you have Dodge Fire 1 and are hit by Agi, you roll 1d8 to dodge. If an attack does mixed-type damage, this ability does not apply.
- **Fortify (Element) (X)** Armor with this property provides an additional X damage resistance against the specified element or elements, applied after elemental interactions such as weakness.
- **Fortify Criticals (X)** Armor with this property increases the difficulty of rolling a crit against you. Treat your natural die roll as X higher when an enemy is determining if it scores a critical hit on you. For example, if when dodging you roll a 2 and have Fortify Critical 1, the enemy checks if 3 is lower than its Luck to determine a critical hit.
- **Move (X)** Armor with this property lets you move an additional X spaces during your move action.

- **Transfer and Spell Transfer** Armor may have the Transfer and Spell Transfer abilities in conjunction with weapon properties. This functions just as if the property were on a weapon. This ability is quite rare.

## 11. Arcana

### 11.1 Social Links

Social Links are bonds between NPCs and PCs in the game. Each Social Link is linked to one of the Major Arcana.

Spending time with the person with the link in-game increases the link's strength. Social Links, once created, are measured in Ranks 1-10. There may be mechanical benefits for higher ranks in a Social Link. These benefits are campaign-dependent and up to your GM. Some examples might be survivability in combat and additional Aspects.

### 11.2 Arcana Spread

At the beginning of each Delving, the Major Arcana the party has the Aspects for are laid in a spread. For the cost of one Aspect Token, any one of these may be tapped by any player for the effects of the card. Once the card is tapped, it may not be tapped again until the next Delving.

The cards in the Arcana Spread do not give the same effects as tagging or compelling an Arcana Aspect. Treat this as another use for Aspect Tokens.

Each Major Arcana has a Combat and Non-Combat effect.

The cards Judgement and The World are special-cases. These cards are left as campaign-specific effects that the GM can design to best suit their campaign or use in true Persona fashion.

### 11.3 Arcana Effects

- **The Fool (0)** represents new beginnings and infinite possibilities.

*Combat:* All allies may draw up to two cards from their spell decks, but may not exceed their refresh value.

*Non-Combat:* +1d4-1 to the next skill check for each player

- **The Magician (I)** represents action and initiative paired with immaturity.

*Combat:* Shuffle all allies location in the initiative order.

*Non-Combat:* Party may substitute Courage for Discipline in any check until the end of the scene

- **The Priestess (II)** represents contemplation and inner knowledge.

*Combat:* Allow each party member to swap Personae as an interrupt immediately.

*Non-Combat:* +2 to any Empathy check until the end of the scene



- **The Empress (III)** represents motherhood and the life it brings forth.

*Combat:* Casts Mediarahan (Fully restores all HP to the party).

*Non-Combat:* Party may substitute Empathy for Discipline in any check until the end of the scene

- **The Emperor (IV)** represents fatherhood, leadership, and decision-making skills.

*Combat:* Each ally holding a Sense card may designate a Sense target. Each ally holding a Sense card adds two counters to that card.

*Non-Combat:* Party may substitute Expression for Knowledge in any check until the end of the scene

- **The Hierophant (V)** represents formality, knowledge, and religion.

*Combat:* Allow each party member to move a spell from a discard pile to their hand (if that Persona is active) or deck (if inactive).

*Non-Combat:* +2 to any Knowledge check until the end of the scene

- **The Lovers (VI)** represents choice and consciousness.

*Combat:* All allies may return the last spell they cast to their hand

*Non-Combat:* Party may substitute Charm for Courage in any check until the end of the scene

- **The Chariot (VII)** represents victory for the individual, though often only a momentary victory.

*Combat:* All allies gain the effects of Counter Strike for 3 rounds

*Non-Combat:* +2 to any Courage check until the end of the scene

- **Justice (VIII)** represents the knowledge of right and wrong.

*Combat:* Casts Matarukaja (+1 STR, +1 MAG/all/3 rounds)

*Non-Combat:* Party may substitute Discipline for Empathy in any check until the end of the scene

- **The Hermit (IX)** represents the individual's search for answers by looking within.

*Combat:* Resist Nerve and Resist Mind for all allies until the end of the encounter.

*Non-Combat:* Party may substitute Knowledge for Charm in any check until the end of the scene

- **Fortune (X)** represents fate and the opportunities that come with it.

*Combat:* +1 Luck Charge until the end of the encounter

*Non-Combat:* Reroll any failed skill challenges until the end of the scene; must take second value.

- **Strength (XI)** represents both passion and self-control, that is, power with reason.

*Combat:* Marakukaja (Fortify Phys+Elements 4/all/3 rounds).

*Non-Combat:* +2 to any Discipline check until the end of the scene

- **The Hanged Man (XII)** represents the individual's inability to take action.

*Combat:* All players may draw one extra card from their spell deck. This applies even if it would take them over their Refresh value.

*Non-Combat:* Each party member gains +1 temporary Aspect Token until end of the scene

- **Death (XIII)** represents spiritual death and transition.

*Combat:* Dispel all buff and debuff from all allies and enemies.

*Non-Combat:* Restore one more point of Fatigue in any rest taken until the end of the scene.

- **Temperance (XIV)** represents the balancing of opposites, and the growth one achieves by opening one's mind to the world.

*Combat:* Null Mind for all allies until the end of the encounter.

*Non-Combat:* Party may substitute Empathy for Courage in any check until the end of the scene

- **The Devil (XV)** represents temptation.

*Combat:* Casts Debilitate (-2 STR, -2 AGL, -2 TEC, -2 MAG, Fortify Phys+Elements -5/1 enemy/2 rounds)

*Non-Combat:* +2 to any Charm check until the end of the scene

- **The Tower (XVI)** represents painful realization, a blow to one's ego, the collapse of one's worldview.

*Combat:* Ha Makarakarn (reflect magic once/all allies within range 6).

*Non-Combat:* -2 to all skill checks for everyone (not just allies) until the end of the scene

- **The Star (XVII)** represents calm and a glimmer of hope.

*Combat:* Null Nerve for all allies until the end of the encounter

*Non-Combat:* +2 to any Expression check until the end of the scene.

- **The Moon (XVIII)** represents illusion, tension, anxiety, and apprehension.

*Combat:* Casts Evil Smile

*Non-Combat:* Party may substitute Expression for Courage in any check until the end of the scene

- **The Sun (XIX)** represents the bright future and true achievement, the triumph of the conscious mind over the subconscious.

*Combat:* Remove bad status from the entire party.

*Non-Combat:* +1 to any skill check until end of the scene

- **Judgment (XX)** represents the end of one's journey, reflection on the path one has traveled. The Combat and Non-Combat abilities of this card are campaign-specific.

- **The World (XXI)** represents the individual's full awareness of the world and himself. The Combat and Non-Combat abilities of this card are campaign-specific.