GAME MECHANICS

Game mechanics are defined in this game as the hidden rules and concepts that progress the player through the game. Mechanics should serve a purpose in the context of the game and should either work to maintain the integrity of the game or to entice the player to continue playing (ex: rewards/bonuses).

The game will have the following mechanics:

**Story Related Mechanics**

**Arcs: Story Arcs**

An arc in the context of this game is a story within the larger story. Arcs are vital to this game as throughout the arc the player will be presented with choices and decisions that will progress the story of the game as well as their character. Each arc should have only a single entry point, at which the arc begins. However, each arc could have multiple endings, some of which might even lead directly to other arcs. Each arc will have at least one ending. Depending on the current state of the system, certain arcs should be available and unavailable (for example there might be arcs that only occur closer to the end of the game or the beginning of the game, or for certain personality dynamics).

**Arcs: Random Events**

A random event is similar to the arc in that it is a story within the larger story. However, unlike an arc, a random event has a single entry point and a single exit point. The purpose of the arc is to enhance the immersion of the game and also to advance the protagonist’s personality dynamic. Each random event will be filled with many choices and decisions which will, in turn, help to develop the protagonist’s personality dynamic.

Random events will occur when the player moves between points in the city or if a player decides to hang out at one of the many locations in the city. There will be sets of random events based on what the state of the system is and the location of the protagonist. The largest set of random events should be miscellaneous ones that are called when the player moves throughout the city.

**Passive Interaction: Conversations/Decisions**

Conversations are somewhat similar to arcs except that they rarely have decisions associated with them. In a conversation, the player talks to a character and chooses dialogue options.

**Tethering**

For beings such as Eleanor Densen who exist in the Network and not in real life, to be tethered is to retain humanity. One of the primary goals of an Agent is to ensure that his charge is tethered.

By remaining tethered, Eleanor can offer sage advice because she is aware of what it is like to be a human and what a human’s concerns would be. When she is untethered, she is cold and efficient, which makes her a terrible conversationalist but a powerful asset during an action scene (any action scene options/moves that involve Eleanor become more powerful).

Untethering Eleanor can be accomplished during conversations and decisions. She is impacted by the player’s choices and if the player is generally compassionate and understanding, she will remain tethered. If the player is cold and distant, she will move towards an untethered state.

Note: tethering is a spectrum, where 100% is to be completely tethered and to be at 0% is to be untethered. Being somewhere in between is okay and in some ways, more useful.

**Game Related Mechanics**

**Menu**

There should be idle points in the game, such as between arcs. During these idle points, a player should be provided a menu from which they might:

-browse a codex

-look at the protagonist’s current personality dynamic

-look at the protagonist’s stats or buffs/debuffs

-look at and equip/unequip items that they own

-look at the city map. This menu should also allow the player to have a conversation with the current members in the party (will look into this once the intro mission is done).

**City Map**

The city that is the setting of the game will have a map. This map will be constructed out of a basic template and will have many “location” objects on it. These location objects are how the player would interact with the map to select a destination for example. As the game progresses and the player effects changes in the system via their choices, certain locations should disappear (for example, if the player decided to get rid of one of the gangs, their base of operations should no longer exist).

**User Interface**

When an arc is being played, the game needs to have some sort of interface to display choices to the user and the text of the conversation/story. Choices should be highlighted/change appearance when the user hovers their mouse over them or if they use the arrow keys to show their current selection. To select one of the choices they should be able to click on an option or press enter on the currently selected option.

**Items**

The game will have some items that would enhance the player’s stats or enable new moves/options during action scenes. These items could also have restrictions by stat or by progression in the story (ie some items are not available until later in the game).

**Active Interaction: Action Scenes**

An action scene uses the element of choice but instead of the player making a decision or dialogue choice, the player will choose actions. At the start of the scene, a graphic (on the bottom or top of screen) will indicate a percentage (0%). The player must choose the appropriate options or actions to bring this percentage to 100%, at which point they win the action scene. Alternatively, if the player makes improper choices or the player’s opponent(s) make better choices, the percentage will eventually approach -100% at which point the player loses the action scene.

The action that occurs in an action scene can be subdivided into two categories: combat and chase. Combat action scenes have a win condition of defeating an opponent. Chase action scenes have a win condition of fleeing from an opponent. Some of the choices or options available to a player may differ based on whether the player is currently in a combat action scene or a chase action scene.

The setting of an action scene may impact the outcome of the scene in anumber of ways. The setting is defined by the environment that the action scene is taking place in. This is determined by the story. The setting of an action scene is defined by the following:

-darkness (light intensity)

-visibility (fog/smoke can lower this)

-openness (a field vs a small room)

-weather (cloudy? Rainy? Sunny?)

-sound dampening (determines if outstanders/bystanders can hear)

-publicity/observers (if they can hear, see above)

-obstacles (random stuff in the area)

-random danger (falling debris, moving machines like in a factory)

-familiarity (how familiar the protagonists are with the area)

-temperature (how hot/cold)

The setting may offer new options during the action scene. For example, if the scene takes place at nighttime in a city square, an option to “enter the crowds of people to lose your aggressor” might be a viable option. The setting may also impact the effectiveness of certain moves or options. For example, if the setting indicates a cold environment, a jetpack item would not be as effective. One final point on setting is that it effects all actors in the action scene, not just the protagonist; the opponent(s) of the protagonist will also experience the benefits or consequences of a particular setting.

In addition to the setting there are other factors that may impact the action scene. The protagonist’s condition, similar to the setting, is also made up of a variety of factors. Also similar to setting, condition is initially determined by the story though it may be modified by the player through the use of items or choices in the action scene. The protagonist’s opponents will also have conditions of their own that may be very similar to the protagonist’s or wildly different from the protagonist’s. The condition of an actor in the action scene is defined by the following:

-fatigue (how tired or awake)

-agressiveness (modifies combat oriented choices positively and chase oriented choices negatively)

-drugged

-hatred (directed towards the actor’s opponent)

-desperation (can randomize results of a choice, makes things unpredictable)