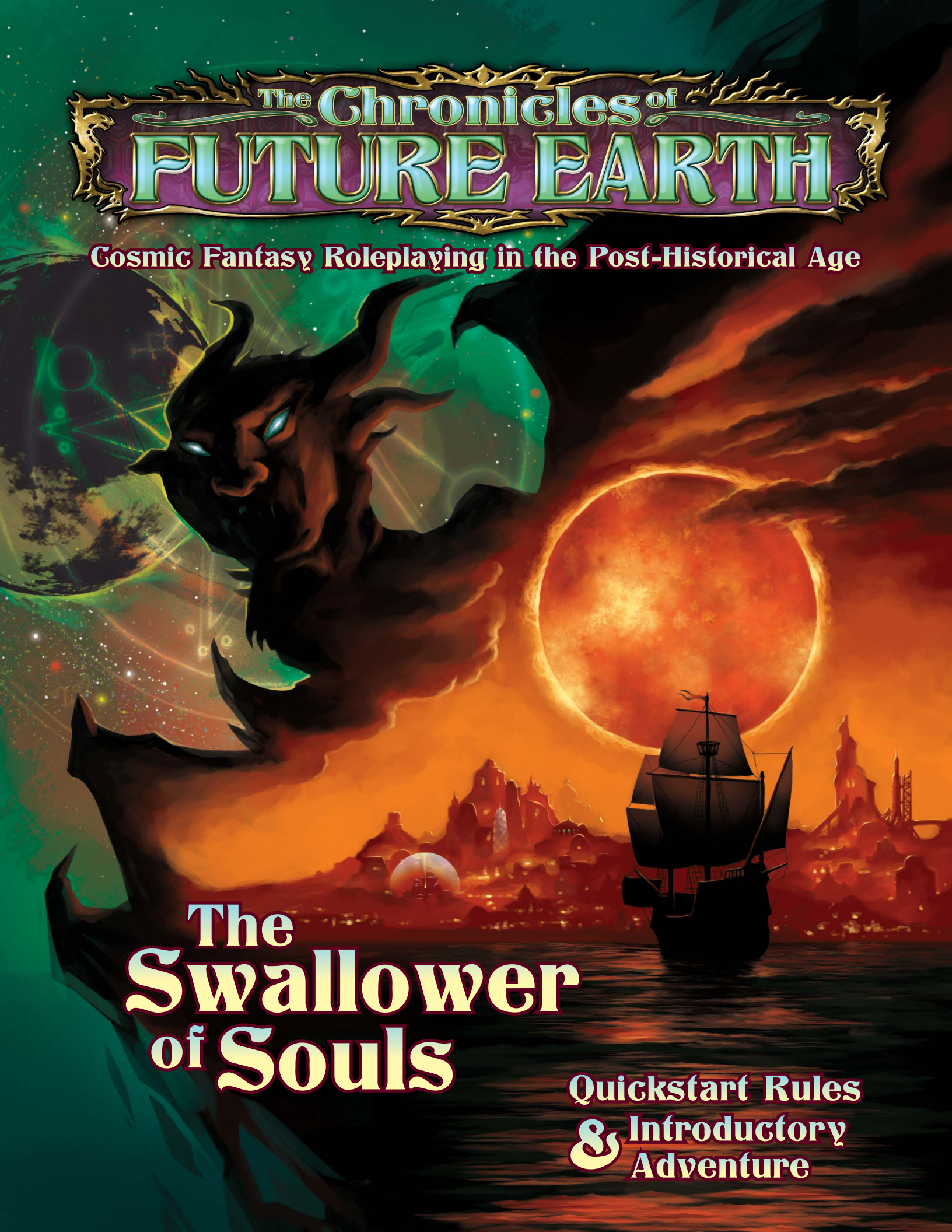
The Chronicles of FUTURE EARTH

Cosmic Fantasy Roleplaying in the Post-Historical Age



The Swallower of Souls

Quickstart Rules & Introductory Adventure

Credits

The Chronicles of Future Earth: The Swallower of Souls written and developed by Sarah Newton

Cover Art by Jason Juta

Layout and Graphic Design by Jason Juta

Interior Art by Jason Juta and Eric Williams

Cartography by Jason Juta, Sarah Newton

Edited by Sarah Newton

Art Direction by Jason Juta

Proofing by Sarah Newton, Keith R Potempa, Robert Wyatt

Playtesting by Jerry D. Grayson, Renee Grayson, Brian Isikoff, Chris McWilliam, David Moore, Erin Moore, Sarah Newton, Keith R Potempa & Friends

Produced by Chris McWilliam and Sarah Newton

Enquiries: info@mindjammerpress.com

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DEDICATION—To Bruce Pennington, for those endless skies and pastel cities, those dreams of the farthest future.

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Quickstart Rules

What Are The Chronicles of Future Earth?

The Chronicles of Future Earth is a far future cosmic fantasy roleplaying game. It's set in our own Earth's farthest future, tens of thousands of years after the collapse of a hyper-advanced civilisation, a world which has reverted to the worship of powerful and mysterious gods, where magic is real, non-humans live alongside humans, and where mediaeval cultures now rule amid the ruins of a once star-spanning technology.

The game centres on the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara, the greatest of the Springtide Civilisations and the oldest empire on Earth. It's situated in what's today the western half of North Africa and the Iberian peninsula—but the Earth is in the grip of an Ice Age, and the coastlines and climate have changed. The Autocracy is temperate for the most part, cold and windswept in its farthest north, subtropical in its south.

Sakara is fifteen thousand years old, ruled by a godlike "Venerable Autocrator" who incarnates forever in a line of "Avatars", ruling unseen from a vast crystal citadel in the capital of Kados. The Autocracy is decadent and slumberous, lost in the observation of traditions so old that everyone has forgotten why they're there. So much history has passed that no one even bothers recording it any more; they believe nothing new can happen, in this world of superstition, ignorance, and decay.

It's a world waiting to be swept away. Ancient evils are on the move again, lethal dangers which have slept for millennia. A few months ago something awoke beneath the city of Korudav, precipitating a huge explosion called the "Firecloud", which killed thousands and brought the city to its knees. Since then Chaos Beasts have roamed the northern marches, killing and infecting and turning rich farmland into hellish waste.

In the capital, political intrigues and ancient rivalries rage, vying for petty human advantage before cosmic events threatening to destroy the world.

A call has gone out for heroes, to stand and fight against the dying of the light. The world must change. Maybe you are the heroes who will do it.

Welcome to ***The Chronicles of Future Earth***.

The Wounded World

At the beginning of time, the Gods of the Great Compact helped humankind fight the **Helemoriad**, *a cosmic war against the Great Hegemonist and the Reaver Gods. The struggle never really ended; only by carefully following the commandments of the Gods has the world endured. Everyone is terrified to change—but maybe the old answers aren't enough any more…*

Humans, Jeniri, and Esteri

The Earth is inhabited by different intelligent species. The Cousins of Man, also known as *jeniri*, are humanoid and closely related to humans. They often live within human societies, and include the Virikki and P'Tek. The *esteri*, also called the Not-Men of Earth, are inhuman, even monstrous and hostile. They often live on the edges of human society, or in separate enclaves. The friendlier ones include the Hsun Spider Folk and the Tung Mai Mantis Men.

Pillars, Houses, and Bloodlines

The Venerable Autocracy is obsessed with status. That said, what you're capable of often outweighs the class you were born in. Your **Pillar** is the status you receive from your occupation, and is used as a **skill** (see page 7) to influence people and order them around. There are five Pillars: the Peasant, the Legionnaire, the Guilder, the Priest, and the Lord.

What's A Roleplaying Game?

This "Quickstart" introduces ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** *roleplaying game. It's a simplified version of the full rules in* ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** *core book. Because they're compact, they assume you already know what a roleplaying game is, and how it's played. If you don't, check out the excellent* **learntabletoprpgs.com**, *and the many discussions and tutorials online.*

What Is Fate Core?

The ***Fate Core System*** *is a fantastic set of roleplaying game rules published by the excellent people at Evil Hat Productions, LLC. Those rules are available in book form and online at www.evilhat.com and FateSRD.com.*

The Chronicles of Future Earth*, like our transhuman space opera RPG* ***Mindjammer—the Roleplaying Game****, uses the Fate Core System, heavily modified for "cosmic fantasy" roleplaying. You'll notice many differences between the basic Fate Core rules and those used in* ***The Chronicles of Future Earth****. The main differences are:*

- **The Chronicles Dice:** *Cosmic fantasy gaming is action-packed and danger-filled. For that reason,* ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** *uses* **Chronicles Dice***: roll one six-sided die, called your Hero Die, and subtract a second, called your Doom Die, to give a result between -5 and +5. In some cases, you may roll more than one Hero or Doom Die.*
- **Doom:** *Your character's "Doom"—your destiny, fate, what the gods and the universe have in store for you—is a key theme in* ***The Chronicles of Future Earth****. It's an aspect, and is used in lots of ways.*
- **Criticals and Fumbles:** *Chronicles Dice have cool new results, including critical successes and failures, which cause amazing events in play.*
- **The Bonus Cap:** *There's a maximum bonus you can add to your skill roll, equal to your skill level +1. You may be awesome, but fate is fickle, and there's only so much you can do to stay her hand!*
- **Builds:** *Builds are the way you structure and develop your character, suites of skills, stunts, aspects, and other abilities which you can choose from in play. Occupations are builds, as are kindreds and homelands, temples and legions, and even demons and avatars.*
- **Communities:** *Building on the* ***Mindjammer*** *Organisations rules, communities are central to* ***The Chronicles of Future Earth****. They include things like temples, legions, guilds, schools of sorcery, and more.*

On top of that, the world's cultures have many social classes, from outcasts and exiles right up to (the slightly inhuman) nobles. Your **social class** is what's known as a **scale**. It works like your physical size (also a scale): for every point of social class you are **above** a target you're interacting with, you roll +1 Doom Die (page 7) on your skill roll (see page 7), but you may increase any shifts of success (page 9) by adding +1 Hero Die. For every point of social class you are **below** a target you're interacting with, you roll +1 Hero Die (page 7) on your skill roll, but you must decrease any shifts of success by subtracting +1 Doom Die. See page 7 for more on dice rolls and skill rolls.

Cosmic Fantasy

"Cosmic fantasy" is the name we've chosen for the type of fantasy you'll play in ***The Chronicles of Future Earth***. It's dangerous, it can start gritty and bloody, but can sweep you to epic levels of play. It involves heroism, doomed expeditions, and great deeds. Your opponents will be monsters and demons, the arenas of your struggle may be ancient cities of decaying incomprehensible technology, ruins filled with deadly traps, blasted wastelands, and the bizarre environments of alien worlds and dimensions.

A Note on Sex and Gender

The Venerable Autocracy of Sakara has lots of social hang-ups and ways in which people are prejudiced against one another, but they have nothing to do with sex and gender. Naturally occurring contraceptive plants and sorcerous cantrips affecting fertility have meant that women have controlled their bodies for longer than recorded history, so the pressures which led to women's oppression in our own histories have not applied. Additionally, Judeo-Christian morality died out many tens of millennia ago, and the Autocracy has an often bewildering array of gender roles and sexual identities, none of which have any bearing on a person's status or occupation. In a world inhabited by aliens and evolutionarily divergent hominids, where gods, sorcery, and demons are real, and where Chaos gnaws at the fibres of existence, sex and gender are not significant preoccupations.

For ease of reading and comprehension, we refer to players as "he" and the Chronicler (the game master) as "she" in these rules. We hope that works for you.

How to Play The Chronicles of Future Earth

In this section, we'll try to showcase how the **Chronicles Fate** rules differ from standard Fate Core. The core mechanic is straightforward: you roll dice, add modifiers, and compare the total to a target number to see whether you succeed or fail. The main difference between Fate and other RPGs lies in its use of descriptive phrases called **aspects**. Here's a quick overview.

How to Roll the Dice

Roll two six-sided dice: one is called the Hero Die (we recommend a fiery orange-gold colour) and one is called the Doom Die (we recommend a mysterious purple hue…). Subtract the Doom Die from the Hero Die, giving a result between -5 and +5. We call this **rolling the Chronicles dice**. Sometimes you may roll more than one Hero or Doom Die—see page 44 for an example.

When you roll the Chronicles dice, you add a modifier equal to your score in a **skill**. Usually this is between +1 and +5. Skills include Stealth for creeping around and hiding, Athletics or jumping and climbing, and so on. If you don't have a score in a skill, you usually roll as if you

What Do Skills Do?

- **Athletics:** *Used for jumping, climbing, and dodging out of the way in melee and ranged combat.*
- **Burglary:** *Used for stealing things, breaking and entering, and casing the joint beforehand.*
- **Contacts:** *Used for finding people you know (or who know people you know) and getting information and favours from them.*
- **Craft:** *Used to make and repair things.*
- **Deceive:** *Used to con people or lead them astray.*
- **Empathy:** *Used to work out what someone is feeling.*
- **Investigate:** *Used to search a place and try and find something, including looking things up in ancient books and scrolls.*
- **Lore:** *Used to find out whether you know a fact. It's general knowledge, but you can also specialise.*
- **Melee Combat:** *Used to fight people using melee weapons. You use the same skill for attacking and defending.*
- **Notice:** *Used to spot something on the fly—an ambush, a chance remark, a random detail. It's your alertness and general power of observation.*
- **Physique:** *How physically tough, strong, and enduring you are.*
- **Pillar:** *How prestigious your occupation is in society, used for influencing and taking precedence. High status occupations have a lot more clout. There are five Pillars: Peasant, Legionnaire, Guilder, Priest, and Lord.*
- **Provoke:** *The "jerk" skill—how to force someone to make a kneejerk reaction. It's usually pretty offensive—you're trying to frighten someone, or intimidate or browbeat them.*
- **Ranged Combat:** *Used to shoot missile weapons at targets, including other people. You can't usually use this to defend yourself.*
- **Rapport:** *How to be charming and persuade people to like you and go along with what you say.*
- **Resources:** *How rich you are, or what access to wealth you have by virtue of your occupation, status, or family. You can use this skill to buy things; treasure can give you a one-time bonus on this skill, or you can spend it directly.*
- **Ride:** *Used to ride horses or other riding animals such as chelothers, cambriothers, elenisors, and more!*
- **Sailing:** *How to go from A to B in a ship or boat, whether a small rowing boat or huge merchantman.*
- **Security:** *A skill used by* ***communities*** *(like temples or legions) to defend themselves.*
- **Stealth:** *Used to hide from people or sneak around.*
- **Survival:** *Used to live off the land, take shelter, and generally stay in a hostile environment. You can specialise.*
- **Unarmed Combat:** *How to fight others using only your natural weapons. Animals and monsters tend to have really good natural weapons.*
- **Willpower:** *Used to mentally resist dangers and threats, including magic, other people trying to intimidate you, or terrifying situations or creatures.*

had a score of +0, meaning you still have a decent chance of success. However, if your Chronicler decides the skill is important to your roll (you're trying to ride a rampaging chelother…) or indispensable (you're trying to cast a spell), then she may say you have a -3 **unskilled penalty**, or disallow the roll entirely.

Skill rolls govern everything in the game, from fighting to casting spells, hiding and sneaking to persuading or spotting hidden things. There's a list of core skills in the adjacent box, with suggested uses in examples below and on the **Pregenerated Character Sheets** on page 24.

The Bonus Cap

There are other bonuses you can add to your skill roll. In particular, bonuses from **aspects** (page 9) are an important part of the game. However, you may never add bonuses to your roll greater than the value of the skill score you're using, plus one. If you have an Athletics skill score of +1, then the highest total bonuses you may add to an Athletics skill roll is +2, for a total addition of +3 (+1 skill, +2 bonuses).

When you roll Chronicles dice and add your bonuses, the final number you get is called the **result**.

Combining Skills

Sometimes you have to perform two skills at exactly the same time; a good example is attacking someone from horseback. Your ability to ride is essential to a successful attack. In such cases, roll the dice once only, and lower your primary skill by 1 point. Check if both skills succeed, and adjudicate accordingly.

Difficulties

To see whether or not you succeed at a skill roll, compare your result to a target number called a **difficulty**. There are static and rolled difficulties: sometimes you may roll against a predetermined number (perhaps predetermined by the Chronicler)—a **static difficulty**—and sometimes you may roll against the result of another dice roll—a **rolled difficulty**. To succeed at your roll, you must get a result, including all bonuses, **greater than** the difficulty.

Ties

If you roll exactly equal to the difficulty, you either succeed in the task your attempting, but at a minor cost to yourself, or you succeed but with a lesser version of what you wanted to achieve.

The Ladder

The Chronicles of Future Earth uses a **ladder** of results to measure values. These may be dice roll results, difficulties you're rolling against, or skill scores for things you're good at.

Ladder results have titles to help you picture their magnitude. A -3 score is "Abysmal"; if you get a result of -3 on a dice roll, it's nothing to be happy about—it's an Abysmal result. If you have a skill score of +3, that's a "Good" score—you can be happy about having a skill at that level. If you roll a +3 dice result, that's a Good result. If you're making a roll against a +3 difficulty, that's a Good difficulty, something harder than average to achieve.

A default static difficulty is Average (+1) for a simple task where failure is meaningful, or Fair (+2) if you're facing a significant risk, opposition, or peril. Static difficulties can of course go higher!

Table 1: The Ladder

Title	Score
Disastrous	-5
Appalling	-4
Abysmal	-3
Terrible	-2
Poor	-1
Mediocre	+0
Average	+1
Fair	+2
Good	+3
Great	+4
Superb	+5
Fantastic	+6
Epic	+7
Legendary	+8
Cosmic	+9

There are also results below -5 and above +9. You can give these titles to fit your game!

Interpreting the Results

If the result of your roll is greater than the difficulty, then you've succeeded at what you're trying to do. Every point in excess of the difficulty means you succeed to a greater degree. Each of these excess points is called a **shift**, and sometimes unlocks additional effects. If you beat the difficulty by, say, 2 points (you roll +3 against an Average (+1) difficulty, for example), then you've generated 2 shifts. If you beat the difficulty by 3 points or more, then you've achieved a **special success**, also called a **success with style**. Special successes can have special effects.

Criticals and Fumbles

A natural dice roll result of 6 on any Hero Die and 1 on all of your Doom Dice (normally you just roll one of each) is called a **critical success**. Critical successes always succeed with at least 1 shift, and ignore any **stress reduction** (page 16) used by your opponent, such as armour in combat. They may also have other effects.

A natural dice roll result of 1 on all your Hero Dice and 6 on any Doom Die is a **critical failure**, often called a **fumble**. You may not **invoke an aspect** (page 9) to re-roll the dice on a fumble result. A fumble is automatic failure, with a maximum of 0 shifts; it also means something bad or embarrassing happens to you, usually represented by a situation aspect (page 10), for which the first invoke is free!

Costly Successes

Sometimes, a failed dice roll may mean you succeed at a task, but at a terrible cost. ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** *core book has more information on when you can bring this special rule into play.*

Stunts

Stunts are a way to bend or break the rules mentioned above. Your character usually has a handful of stunts—usually no more than five to begin with—which are key to identifying what makes them unique. You'll find examples of stunts in the stat blocks in this Quickstart, and of course lots more in the core book, together with rules for how to make your own.

Aspects

Aspects make the Fate Core System sing. An aspect is a short descriptive phrase which says something important, usually about a character, but sometimes about a location, situation, or even your campaign. We always clearly identify aspects by putting them in italics. Examples include *Convenient Code of Honour*, *The World Is Too Old To Change*, and *None Shall Pass!*

Every player's character (or "PC") in ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** has six aspects, named Doom, Essence, Shadow, Blood, Origin, and Companion. You'll see examples on the pregenerated character sheets on page 24. You'll also see two **Game Aspects** which all the PCs share. Non-player characters ("NPCs"), including monsters, may have some or all of these aspects, or may have others.

All aspects work the same way. They are used for **invokes** and **compels**.

When an aspect looks like it's saying something appropriate to your current situation, you can **invoke** it to benefit from it in play. Sometimes you may have to pay a **fate point** (page 11) to invoke an aspect, sometimes you can do it for free, or by making a dice roll (see page 7). When you invoke an aspect, you get one of four benefits:

Invoking an Aspect for a Bonus

You can get a +2 bonus on your current dice roll result (but see "Critical Aspects" below).

For example, if you were Raised in the Slums of Korudav, *you can invoke that aspect for a +2 bonus on your Burglary roll to pick someone's pockets.*

Invoking an Aspect for a Re-Roll

After you've just rolled a dismal -3 result on your Notice roll to spot an ambush, you can invoke your *I've Got a Bad Feeling About This* aspect to re-roll the dice.

Invoking an Aspect for an Effect

You can explain how an aspect causes someone a problem, or even performs an action in its own right. An aspect used like this either makes its own dice roll with a Fair (+2) bonus, or provides an obstacle equal to a Fair (+2) difficulty which other characters must overcome, or adds +2 to an existing difficulty. Often it's the Chronicler

Invoking and Compelling Your Doom

There's one exception to the rules for invoking and compelling aspects: your ***Doom*** *aspect, which describes the profound and mighty destiny which the universe has in store for you. Whenever your Doom is in play, it's a big deal.*

When you invoke your Doom, you don't add +2, nor do you need to pay a fate point. Instead, you incur a ***consequence*** *(page 13), and get a huge +4 bonus on your roll. The consequences you incur are usually mental in nature, representing your inner anguish and turmoil, but they may be physical. They must remain on your character sheet for at least the whole of the next* ***scene*** *(page 52), even if* ***treated*** *(page 15). The invoke must of course be in keeping with your Doom—you'll often invoke your Doom at moments of great desperation!*

The Chronicler can propose a ***compel*** *(see below) of your Doom; in this case, you gain a +4 bonus for a single use in the current or next scene, and you incur a compel of great magnitude related to your Doom. In this case, you don't incur a consequence: the nature of the compel itself is enough.*

who'll invoke an aspect this way, but not always—you can do it to make your opponent's life more difficult, too.

For example, you can invoke an aspect to knock down Fallen Crates and Barrels *which form a Fair (+2)* ***obstacle*** *(page 11) to anyone trying to pursue you.*

Invoking an Aspect to Make a Declaration

You can explain how the aspect has caused a minor change in reality, or revealed a feature of reality you hadn't previously been aware of.

For example, invoking Armed to the Teeth *can let you declare you have a dagger stuck down your boot that you've never mentioned before…*

Compelling an Aspect

When an aspect looks like it might cause you a whole heap of trouble, you can decide that your character gets into that trouble just as you might expect. This is called **compelling an aspect**.

For example, if your character has a *Bull in a China Shop* aspect, and you're trying to sneak through the Hall of Crystal Mirrors without the guards spotting you, then you can compel that aspect to say that you go crashing into the mirrors, and the guards hear you and immediately launch into the pursuit, sounding the alarm!

It might seem counterintuitive to agree to get your character into trouble like this, but it's part of the Fate Core System and what's known as the **fate point economy**. It has the following benefits:

Perfect Invokes

Sometimes, an aspect is ***exactly*** *right for your situation. Maybe you're* The Finest Lutist in Old Hespin, *and you're in a Hespin alehouse in front of an expectant audience, and you have your favourite lute in your hand.*

At such a time, you can make a ***perfect invoke*** *of that aspect. Spend a fate point, but don't roll the dice: instead, you gain an automatic result equal to your skill score +3.*

Situation Aspects

It's not only characters that have aspects—places and objects can have them, too. In fact, an entire scene may have an aspect, like So This Is a Tense Stand-Off… *Aspects like this are called* ***situation aspects****, because they apply to the situation you're in. Situation aspects are temporary—they last just as long as it makes sense for them to do so, and usually no longer than the current* ***scene*** *(page 52).*

Here's the cool thing about situation aspects. ***You can create them.*** *That's right! Using a special type of action called a* ***manoeuvre*** *(also called a* ***create advantage roll****), you can make a skill roll which creates an aspect if successful. You get to name the aspect yourself (your Chronicler has to agree), and if you succeed you get the first invoke of that aspect for free—you don't have to pay a fate point. You can even let someone else invoke an aspect (even for free!) that you've created, "giving" them the invoke, as long as you can describe how that works.*

Aspects as Obstacles

Some aspects are ***obstacles****, and automatically make certain of your actions (or someone else's actions) harder by +2, or provide a +2 difficulty which you must overcome. No fate point needs to be spent for this +2 modifier to apply; your Chronicler has final say.*

Characters who want to specifically invoke an obstacle must still either pay a fate point or make an appropriate manoeuvre to do so (page 12). For example, those Crates and Boxes *may not provide an obstacle to your pursuers unless you spend a fate point or make a manoeuvre to pull them over.*

- You, as a player, get to influence the direction your game play has just taken, with your character right in the spotlight. Maybe you've some cool ideas for what to do next?
- Whenever you compel your character, you receive a fate point, earning back those points you've previously spent and enabling you to make more invokes.

Critical Aspects

If you're making a manoeuvre (a create advantage roll—see page 12) to create an aspect, and you roll a critical success (page 9), then the aspect is a ***critical aspect.*** *A critical aspect is a kind of "super-aspect", much more powerful than normal. You give it a suitably super-sounding name, and whenever you invoke it, you get a massive +4 bonus instead of +2. Likewise, removing a critical aspect is a Great (+4) difficulty manoeuvre rather than Fair (+2).*

For example, if you're trying to terrify an opponent by making a Provoke manoeuvre against their Willpower, and you roll a critical success, you get a critical aspect—something like Terrified Out of Their Wits. *You can invoke that aspect for a +4 bonus, and remember that the first invoke is free! If someone tries to calm them down (perhaps using Empathy, or some "Remove Fear"-type healing magic), then their attempt faces a Great (+4) difficulty.*

The Chronicler might sometimes see moments when your aspect might lead to a fun, exciting, or even amusing compel, and hold up a fate point to see if you want to accept it. You never **have to** accept a compel, but don't automatically say no—after all, you **want** your character to have action-packed adventures, and you want those fate points! Play to your character's weaknesses as well as your strengths!

Fate Points

Fate points are one of the key "currencies" of ***The Chronicles of Future Earth***. You, as a player, have a certain number, as shown on your character sheet, which you can spend during play. Once you've spent all of them, they're gone, but you get them all back again the next time you play. Your **Refresh** indicates your maximum number of fate points, and your **Fate Points** section indicates your current fate points remaining.

You use fate points for the following purposes:

- To invoke an aspect (for whatever reason);
- To improvise a stunt, which lets you make a single use of a stunt you don't have.

Note that you can regain fate points during play by **compelling an aspect** (see page 10). This can even let you accumulate more fate points than your Refresh; you get to keep these into your next session of play.

The Chronicler has her own pool of fate points which she can spend on NPC actions and invokes of PC aspects. That pool contains one fate point per PC in the scene; the pool regenerates at the start of every scene.

Actions

Whenever you make a skill roll, you're actually performing an **action**. There are several types of action.

Attack Actions

You can use some skills to try and harm an opponent. Obvious candidates are Melee Combat, Ranged Combat, and Unarmed Combat, but you can also use Provoke, perhaps Physique or Willpower, and even certain power skills (see "Magic" on page 17).

Usually when you attack someone, they roll to defend—see page 12. If you succeed, you inflict a number of points of **stress** (page 13) on your opponent equal to

your shifts. If you roll a tie, you've achieved a marginal hit; you don't inflict stress, but get a +2 bonus (called a **boost**) on your next attack action **or** your next action (your choice). On a special success, you gain a one-use +2 boost, or push your opponent back 1 **zone** (page 15), as well as doing your normal damage. See below for more on **conflicts** and inflicting stress.

Defend Actions

Defend actions are the flipside of attack actions. You take them to defend yourself, or sometimes another person. You can usually make defend actions against anyone attacking you, unless you're physically prevented (maybe you're tied up or unconscious). The more defend actions you take in a single **exchange** (a round of conflict), the harder they become. See page 13 for more.

If you tie on a defend action, your opponent doesn't inflict stress on you, but you grant them a +1 boost on their next attack action or next action. You may also make a full defence in an exchange, taking no other actions, in return for a +2 bonus on your roll.

Manoeuvres

Manoeuvres are also called **create advantage** actions. Make your dice roll, and if you succeed you create a **situation aspect** (page 10). If you roll a tie, the aspect lasts for only one free invoke then is gone. When a dice roll looks like it's going to lead to you getting an advantage you can use in a subsequent dice roll, it may be a manoeuvre.

For example, when researching the history of Kados in an Unthar temple, you make an Investigate manoeuvre, creating a Sheaves of Notes About the Fifth Cycliad *situation aspect. Later on, when the high priestess quizzes you about the infamous Siege of Kados Bastion, you can invoke that aspect on your Lore roll to dazzle her with your knowledge!*

Don't get too crazy with the aspects you create using manoeuvres. If you want to, you can jot every single aspect down, creating a huge list. In the case of *Sheaves of Notes About the Fifth Cycliad*, that might be useful—you could even write it on your character sheet as an item of (probably temporary) equipment, and invoke it when you need. But if you've just toppled those *Fallen Crates and Barrels* behind you to throw off the pursuing guards, then you might not need to write that aspect down (unless you're planning to stage a whole scene there)—just factor in the Fair (+2) obstacle the guards have to overcome to keep chasing you, and move on.

Overcome Actions

Overcome actions are kind of the "default action". If you're not attacking someone or defending yourself, or trying to create an aspect, then you're probably rolling to **overcome** a difficulty. Maybe you're trying to pick a lock, sneak past a guard, or outrun a pursuer. In these cases, make a skill roll against a difficulty; if you roll above the difficulty, you succeed at what you were trying to do. On a tie, you still succeed, but at a minor cost to yourself.

Contests

Most actions get resolved in a single dice roll. Sometimes, though, things take longer. A **contest** is when you're struggling over a period of time against one or more opponents or obstacles, sometimes gaining ground, sometimes losing it, in pursuit of your goal. Contests can take a couple of minutes, or they can take hours or even days.

In a contest, every participant makes one skill roll per **exchange** (by default half a minute—see below). The participant with the highest result wins one **victory point**. If you roll a special or critical success, and no one else does, you gain **two** victory points.

The first participant to accumulate three victory points wins the contest. Contests are a great mechanic for deciding the results of running races, chases, singing or archery competitions, debates, and similar events.

Conflicts

Conflicts happen when two or more people engage in a sustained attempt to harm one another using attack and defend actions. Each **exchange** (see below), each participant may make a single attack action against a target, and may make defend actions against attacks against them. The objective of a conflict is to inflict **stress** (page 13) and **consequences** (page 13) on the other party until they're defeated—what's known as **taken out** (page 14).

Conflicts occur in **exchanges** (often called combat rounds in other games) of somewhere around half a minute. In an exchange, all participants get to take a single attack, overcome, or create advantage action, and as many defend actions as they require (but see "Multiple Defences" below).

Characters in conflicts act in **initiative order**, determined by their scores in key skills. If you're making a

physical attack or other physical action, your initiative is determined by your Notice skill, or by your Athletics in the event of a tie; if you're taking a magical action (using a **power skill**—see page 19), your initiative is determined by your corresponding power skill score, or by your Willpower skill in the event of a tie; and if you're making a mental action (for example, using Provoke to cause mental stress damage), then your initiative is determined by Empathy, or Rapport or Deceive in the event of a tie.

Actions which are tied even after a tie-breaker are assumed to occur simultaneously.

Table 2: Initiative Determination		
Type of Action	Initiative Determined By…	Tie-breaker
Physical	Notice	Athletics
Magical	Power skill	Willpower
Mental	Empathy	Rapport / Deceive

Multiple Defences

During an exchange, you can make one defend action without penalty for every applicable attack skill you can bring to bear. Any additional defend action you take incurs a cumulative -2 penalty.

Attacking Multiple Targets

Some creatures have more than one attack skill of the same type. The Beast of Morbias on page 44, for example, has 4 Unarmed Combat skills. This means the creature may attack multiple targets with a single attack action.

Only one attack roll is made (it's a rule of Fate Core that any character may only make one action roll per exchange). The creature uses its highest score in the attack skill, and adds a +1 teamwork bonus (page 16) for each additional instance of that attack skill. The result may then be divided among multiple targets up to the maximum allowed, with a minimum of +1 allocated to each target. Each target is considered to have sustained an attack equal to the result allocated to it, and must defend against that attack.

For example, if you have a single Good (+3) Melee Combat skill, then you can make one Melee Combat defend action against an attacker per exchange, without penalty. If a second attacker attacks you, you roll your defend action against that second attack with a -2 penalty (so an effective skill level of only Average (+1)).

Ganging up on people in conflicts is extremely effective. As many as four people can attack a single Medium (+0)-sized human or human-like character. This number is doubled for every point of difference in size. So, a Large (+1) target can be attacked by up to 8 characters.

Stress

In a conflict you're constantly on your toes, defending yourself with your physical or mental agility, trying to avoid taking a body blow which will cause you injury. This initial type of damage is called **taking stress**. It's what happens before you really get hurt.

A character has four **stress tracks**: physical, mental, social, and wealth. In this Quickstart, we focus on physical and mental stress, although you can probably extrapolate how social and wealth stress work.

Each stress track has two stress boxes: one which can absorb 1 point of stress, and one which can absorb 2 points of stress. Sometimes you may also have 3-point and even 4-point stress boxes. Whenever you're hit by an attack action which inflicts one or more points of stress on you, you must mark off **only one** stress box, which must be equal to or higher than the stress inflicted. If you incur more stress points than your highest stress box can take, then you're **taken out**—defeated in combat. This could even mean your character is dead!

Consequences are how you avoid getting taken out. Instead of marking off a stress box, you may incur a consequence—like a physical or mental wound. In fact, you can incur more than one consequence at a time, absorbing multiple points of stress. A consequence is a special type of aspect, and can be invoked and compelled; often, your opponent will invoke your consequences against you, taking advantage of your wounds to gain bonuses and advantages (and of course the first invoke on a newly created consequence / aspect is free!). Each consequence you incur reduces the stress you take by a certain amount. There are three types of consequence:

- a **mild consequence**, which represents things like *Battered and Bruised*, *Over-exertion*, *Winded and Gasping*, *Unable to Think Straight*, or perhaps

Minor Flesh Wounds. Taking a mild consequence reduces the stress you must mark off by up to 2 points.

- A **moderate consequence**, which represents a more enduring injury, perhaps a *Bad Slash With a Blade*, a *Sprained Ankle*, *Concussion*, *Temporary Amnesia* or *Mental Turmoil*. A moderate consequence reduces the stress you must mark off by up to 4 points.
- A **severe consequence** is nasty. This is a *Broken Limb*, or perhaps one that's *Slashed So Badly You're Losing a Lot of Blood*; or it's a significant mental trauma that's going to leave you *Stunned and Shaking* and *Not Sure Who or Where You Are*. A severe consequence reduces the stress you must mark off by up to 6 points.

So how do you decide exactly what a consequence represents? Well, that's a matter for discussion between player and Chronicler; usually, the person who inflicts the consequence gets to suggest the consequence, and then the player and Chronicler discuss whether that's reasonable. The Chronicler always has final say! (However, see "Conceding a Conflict" below.)

Note that, while you have separate physical and mental stress tracks, you only have 3 **general consequences**, which represent both mental and physical injuries. This means that if you've taken a mild consequence as a result of a mental attack (say, an intimidation attack using Provoke), you can't then take a mild consequence from a physical attack, say with a sword; you must instead use your moderate or severe consequence to reduce the stress you take, even if you're just absorbing 1 point of stress. You can always use a consequence to mark off fewer stress points than the consequence's maximum.

Taken Out

If you've marked off all three of your consequences and you must still take a number of stress points higher than your highest stress box, then you're **taken out**. Taken out is bad. It means you've been totally defeated, and it's probably time to create a new character.

The exact meaning of "taken out" depends on the conflict you were in when you incurred the result. If you're in a vicious melee where your monstrous opponent is simply and obviously trying to kill you, then a taken out result means your character is killed. If you're taken out by a sustained intimidation attack caused by Provoke, then your character is so overwhelmed as to suffer mental breakdown or even insanity, and is no longer able to cope with much at all—and especially not with the stressful life of an adventurer!

Surviving a Taken Out Result

It'll usually be obvious when a character is taken out in a lethal conflict. If you're having trouble imagining how a character could survive a defeat, then they probably haven't.

On the other hand, if a character is taken out in such a way that you imagine a foe would then have to dispatch them in a coup de grace, then you have a decision to make. If the foe is a murderous psychopath, then fair enough—character death it is. But, for example, in this adventure, the Void Cultists would actually prefer to take characters prisoner and feed them to the Swallower of Souls (see page 56). If there's a possibility of doing that, then we recommend it. If the PCs can't get themselves out of that, then at least it makes for a suitably dramatic and grisly end!

Conceding a Conflict

There's another way of surviving a potential taken out result: **conceding a conflict**. This is the equivalent of running away. You have to choose to concede a conflict **before** the dice hit the table; you can't wait until the dice say you're taken out, then choose to concede. But, if the situation looks dire, you've taken your three consequences and have just one stress box left, then conceding might be your best choice!

Burning Stress to Improve Rolls

Whenever you make a skill roll, you can draw upon your inner reserves of energy to achieve greater results. You do this by "burning stress"; you may mark of one of your stress boxes, and get a bonus equal to that stress box's value. For a physical skill, you burn a physical stress box; for a mental skill (including power skills), you burn a mental stress box, and so on.

Stress can be burned in other ways, too. In particular, sorcerers may burn stress to affect multiple targets and increase the range of their spells. This is described in ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** *core book.*

Conceding a conflict means this: the conflict ends, immediately, and your opponent wins. They accomplish what they set out to do, with one proviso: you, individually, get to avoid the worst parts of your fate. You survive the conflict, and retain your freedom, living to fight another day.

Discuss what conceding actually looks like with your Chronicler. In a battle, maybe you've been knocked out and left for dead on the battlefield; you regain consciousness some time later, surrounded by the dead! Or maybe you fled the Autarchal Court in shame, before the Hierophant could finish you off in her scathing debate. You can't tarnish your opponent's victory by conceding, but you can mitigate your loss. In a group conflict (like a melee), conceding can mean disengaging from combat and fleeing, giving the field to your opponent.

And one other thing: if you choose to concede, you gain a fate point, plus one additional fate point for any consequence you incurred in the same conflict.

How To Heal and Recover

Because there are different types of stress track, healing and recovery can mean different things. For physical stress and consequences resulting from physical attacks, recovery may mean first aid, bandaging, bed-rest, and even healing magic. For mental stress and resulting consequences, it may mean counselling, talking to a priest, quiet contemplation, rest and recuperation, and again magical healing.

In all cases, any stress boxes you've marked off in a conflict are cleared up before the next scene begins. Stress is minor temporary damage; you might have some aches and pains and some ostentatious bandages, but otherwise you heal from stress fully and quickly. Remove the check from any stress box and carry on.

Consequences aren't so simple. First, a consequence needs **treating**. Anyone can treat a mild consequence with a Lore roll against a Fair (+2) difficulty; the First Aid stunt can give you a bonus to that. Moderate and Severe consequences can only be treated with the Healer stunt, and are Great (+4) and Fantastic (+6) difficulty respectively.

Once a consequence has been treated, you may reword it to reflect that fact: a *Broken Leg* may become a *Splinted Leg*. After that, you must wait a certain amount of time before you can remove the consequence (meaning it's been healed). A treated mild consequence can be removed at the end of the next scene; a treated moderate consequence can be removed at this point in the next session; and a treated severe consequence can be removed at this point in the next adventure.

Magical Healing

Magic, miracles, and even strange ancient technologies and inhuman ***zoans*** *(page 17) may all aid healing. Usually their effect is to permit easy treatment of a consequence, and usually to help it heal much more quickly. Some can even remove the after-effects of critical wounds. See page 28 for an example; much more information is provided in* ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** *core book.*

Note that consequences caused by critical hits represent **permanent damage**, however great or small that may be. The consequence may be healed, but when it is removed, it becomes a new **Shadow Aspect** on the character's character sheet, representing scars, limps, impaired vision, busted ears, and other long-term results of injury. Some wounds never wholly go away.

Zones and Ranges

The Chronicles of Future Earth measures distances in terms of **zones**. Zones vary in size depending on the scale of your action and the context. The following distances are typical for melee and ranged combat at human scales.

Table 3: Melee and Ranged Combat Ranges

Range	Name	Comments
R-1	Hand-to-Hand	0-1 metres. Grapples, knife fights, animal attacks, etc.
R0	Close Range	1-2 metres. Normal melee range.
R1	Short Range	3-10 metres. Extreme Reach melee weapons may make melee attacks at this range.
R2	Medium Range	10-50 metres.
R3	Long Range	51-100 metres.
R4	Extreme Range	101-500 metres.

There are greater ranges than those shown above, as discussed in ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** core book.

If you're in a conflict, you can always move 1 zone as well as taking your normal action. If you want to move more than 1 zone, you must use your action for that exchange to move up to a number of zones equal to your Athletics skill. You only have to roll for such a movement if there's some force opposing you, such as difficult terrain, another character, or an **obstacle** (page 11).

Most of your actions, including most melee attacks, are made at range 0 (R0), within physical reach of an opponent. To attack at range 1 (R1) or greater requires some kind of Ranged Combat attack (for example, using a thrown weapon or bow). For every zone of range above R1, the difficulty of your skill roll increases by +2, up to its maximum allowed range. Maximum ranges for ranged combat weapons are shown on the pregenerated character sheets on page 24.

Some attacks are only possible at Hand-to-Hand (HTH) range, called "range -1" (R-1). If both sides are making HTH attacks, then this is automatic. Otherwise, a would-be HTH attack or manoeuvre to close range against a R0 target faces a +2 obstacle; if successful, the attacker closes to R-1 range. The R0 target then faces a +2 obstacle to their attacks, and so on.

Magic may also operate at range. See page 19.

Teamwork

You may also work together with your comrades to achieve tasks. This is called **teamwork**.

Working Together Using the Same Skill

When more than one person works together with the same skill, make a single skill roll using the highest applicable skill score used by the team. Then, add a +1 bonus to the result for every person in the team taking an action to help with the same skill.

Helping Someone By Using a Different Skill

Sometimes you may want to shout encouragement to an ally in a fight, or distract someone's opponent just when they attack. In such cases, the person helping should make an appropriate **manoeuvre** action (page 12). On a success, they create a corresponding aspect (which you only need to word if it makes sense to), and pass the free invoke of that aspect to the person they're helping.

That's a slightly long-winded way of saying "make a manoeuvre, and give the person you're helping a +2 bonus on their roll", except of course that the invoke **also** gives the person you're helping the option of re-rolling the dice if they make a bad roll.

Equipment

You can buy equipment with **treasure**, find it on adventures, or acquire it via a Resources roll. Prices are in Templars (also called Tharia, abbreviated "T"). The price in T is also the difficulty of the Resources roll to acquire (you can apply the T-value of any treasure you have as a one-time bonus). Round up prices to the nearest T for Resources roll difficulties.

Equipment lets you accomplish tasks appropriately. It also acts as an aspect; some weapons and armour have other additional aspects. You can also use equipment in manoeuvres (page 12).

For example, you need a Lockpick Set *to pick locks. If you're pressed for time, you can pay a fate point to invoke that item of equipment for a bonus or reroll on a Burglary skill roll to pick a lock. If you have plenty of time, you can try a separate Burglary roll using the* Lockpick Set *to make a Burglary manoeuvre, which would create an advantage you could then invoke for free on your subsequent Burglary roll to pick the lock.*

Stress Increases and Reductions

Equipment can have other effects. Weapons can increase the physical stress you inflict on a successful attack ac-

Alagin

The Earth is old, and most of its accessible metal reserves have long since been mined out. Perishable metals like iron and steel are rare and expensive.

Happily there's a replacement. The esteri Hsun Spider Folk are experts in the arts of "Growing" and "Shaping", including the production of a kind of natural fibre glass known as ***alagin****, and the forming of it into useful tools, including weapons and armour.*

Alagin isn't as hard or durable as iron and steel, but is malleable into fanciful shapes. Common, lightweight, and repairable by ***Hsun tinkers*** *(there's usually one in every community), unless otherwise stated, all equipment you'd normally think of as being made of iron or steel is actually made of alagin.*

There is another source of metal: the mysterious world of Ladabran, accessible only via planing machine beneath the Autocrator's Palace in Glorious Kados. It's still furiously expensive but, if you can afford it, you can have yourself a priceless Ladabran steel blade, or even—riches of riches!—a suit of steel plate armour!

tion, called a **stress increase**. Armour can reduce the physical stress you suffer when someone attacks you, called a **stress reduction**. Stress increases and reductions are not affected by the bonus cap (page 8).

Zoans

Alagin isn't the only thing made by the Hsun Spider Folk. They also grow and shape **zoans**, artificial creatures which replace missing limbs, eyes, ears, even providing special abilities. Many warriors who lose limbs in battle find themselves equipped with fully functional zoic limbs. Some say they're better than the originals!

Magic

Philosophers say magic is a science made possible by the Gods. It permits the manipulation of reality in accordance with "mystical principles" like time, communication, or change by fire. Some magic is improvised, some linked with the worship of gods, some abstract and scholarly. Magic is powerful, mysterious, and perilous to wield.

Coinage

There's a range of coinage in the Autocracy, made from rare metals. The silver ***dinar*** *is a fingernail-sized coin, a day's pay for a labourer. 10 copper* ***minims*** *make up a dinar; a minim buys a bottle of wine or a loaf of bread. 10 silver dinars make up a silver* ***shield****, a larger coin that buys a nice dagger. 10 silver shields make up a* ***templar*** *(also called a* **tharius***, plural* **tharia***), a small gold coin that's the standard unit of treasure in these rules. 1 templar (abbreviated 1T) gives you a +1 bonus on a Resources roll.*

1 templar = 10 shields = 100 dinars = 1000 minims.

Most people use little coinage. Resources are shared by the community, based on ancient privileges and traditions. For rare travellers, coinage is one fragile way of coping with the dislocation from your support network.

Cantrips

Some people are born with a natural ability to use magic. Others devote themselves to the Gods, who govern (or are governed by…) the mystical principles. Such people have **power skills** (each representing a mystical principle), which they use to cast **cantrips**—magical manoeuvres which can be invoked to enhance the functions of a normal, non-magical skill.

For example, a character with the Wisdom power skill could cast a cantrip to provide an advantage for use when healing someone using the Lore skill.

If you have a power skill on your character sheet, you can always use it in this way.

Power Stunts and Divine Magic

Characters deeply committed to the gods and mystical principles use magic in more obvious, direct ways. **Power stunts** are associated with power skills or the temples of the gods, and are how you use power skills for actions other than cantrip manoeuvres. You'll find examples on the pre-generated character sheets (page 24). Characters without certain power stunts sometimes spend a fate point to improvise them for a single use (page 11). By default, divine magic (including cantrips) affects targets in the same zone (range 0). You may may affect targets a number of zones away equal to your power skill score, but at a +2 difficulty per additional zone of range.

The Gods of the Great Compact

Twenty divine entities helped humankind survive the dark apocalypse of the Helemoriad. They're still worshipped today. These are their names in the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara—other realms and kindreds use other names, and sometimes combine or divide gods into a different number!

Full descriptions of the Gods, their temples, and the demons, magics, and miracles they provide, as well as the Elemental Cults, the Great Hegemonist, and the Reavers, are given in ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** *core book.*

Table 4: The Gods of the Great Compact

Deity	Mystical Principle of…	Comments	Deity	Mystical Principle of…	Comments
Ankadar	Law	*Bringer of Order From Chaos, Venerable Autocrator, Great Springtide.*	**Madiz**	Destruction	*Lord of the Iron Legions, God of Vengeance, the Temple Laid Low.*
Babisiya	Darkness	*Crone, Night Hag, the Maid of Darkness.*	**Minisia**	Narcissism	*The Empty Smile, Goddess of Winter, Ice Queen.*
Belom	Death	*Lord of Death, Decay, and Corruption; Destroyer of the Undead.*	**Nimur**	Cyclicality	*Moon Goddess, Mistress of the Ebb and Flow, Mother Ocean.*
Belorias	Turmoil	*Lord of Storm, Turmoil, and the Winds.*	**Payorian**	Passion	*God of Love and the Vine, Bard and Archer.*
Dafur	Change by Fire	*Lord of Flame and the Fire Beneath the Earth; God of Earthquakes, Volcanoes, and the Forge.*	**Pline**	Void	*The God of Empty Spaces.*
Emeldias	Growth	*She Who Springs Forth From the Earth, Goddess of Growth, Light, and the Spring.*	**Qal**	Unification of Opposites	*The Two-Faced God, the Light That Is Darkness.*
Entos	Animality	*The Horned God.*	**Regos**	Command	*Lord of War and Rule, the Conqueror.*
Eshtikar	Fate	*Horse and Rider, God of Fate.*	**Staros**	Eternity	*God of the Ages, the Everlasting.*
Khosht	Realisation of the Will	*The Great Architect, Builder of Cities.*	**Unthar**	Time	*Chronicler and Timekeeper.*
Konfu	Wisdom	*God of Healing, Master of Zofi, Listener to the Silent Song.*	**Vareltias**	Communication	*God of Trade, Traveller and Mediator.*

Sorcery

Sorcery is a different form of magic, relying on codified uses of the mystical principles known as **spells**. While divine magic is improvised and based on prayers for immediate effects, a spell taps directly into a principle to produce the same effect each time. See page 29 for examples; ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** core book provides many more, as well as rules for creating your own.

By default, sorcery affects targets in the same zone as the caster (range 0). For every additional zone, the caster must burn 1 point of mental stress (page 14) and incur a +2 difficulty increase. Sorcery also affects 1 target, plus 1 additional target per 1 point of mental stress burned; see "Attacking Multiple Targets" on page 13.

Demons and Avatars

Priests may summon and bind **demons**—servitors of the gods—and incarnate their god's power by becoming an **avatar**. Full rules are provided in ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** core book.

Examples of demons in this Quickstart include:

- The **serapai** war demon bound in Dostinor Karja's broadsword (page 24).
- The **sacranim** time demon bound in Chenda Higira's sand clock (page 25).

The Time Ladder

Time is measured in the increments shown on the time ladder. Sometimes you can do things more quickly or slowly, calculated by moving up or down the time ladder. For example, if you perform an action that normally takes an exchange ("half a minute"), you could use your Time power skill to do it one step more quickly on the time ladder, meaning you could do it in "several seconds".

Table 5: Part of the Time Ladder	
A Second	Half an Hour
A Few Seconds	An Hour
Several Seconds	Several Hours
Half a Minute	Half a Day
Several Minutes	A Day

Chenda Higira is a priestess of Unthar, God of Time, and has an **avatar** representing her spiritual self and devotion to her god. She can use her avatar's abilities in a limited way (such as for a teamwork bonus) by brandishing her holy symbol, but can also **incarnate** her avatar, becoming suffused with divine power. This isn't easy: it's a Legendary (+8) difficulty roll of her Good (+3)

What Do the Power Skills Do?

There's one power skill for every mystical principle of existence, and there are at least twenty of these—one for every God of the Great Compact (there are others, too, belonging to the Hegemonist, the Reaver Gods, and other dark and destructive powers). The following list presents the power skills used in this Quickstart.

- **Command:** *Used in cantrip manoeuvres to help you command subordinates, impress or cow others, wrest control over magic or magical beings, understand the tactical situation, or come across as the natural leader in a situation.*
- **Communication:** *Helps you decipher a language or read an inscription, whisper words in someone's mind, or even evaluate an item.*
- **Entropy:** *Helps you persuade people to be idle or passive, lose energy, or helps you douse fires, pull down structures, or destroy things.*
- **Eternity:** *Helps you stop things going rotten, even stop things moving or changing.*
- **Narcissism:** *Helps you resist doing what someone wants you to, or impose your will on others, or even be self-sufficient in any way. It can even help you feign certain behaviours that you think will let you get your way.*
- **Passion:** *Helps you become inspired, or express yourself to inspire others, embolden them, and help you or others resist negative emotions and depression.*
- **Time:** *Helps you move quickly, or perform actions more quickly, or slow other people down; helps you remember things you've seen or read somewhere.*
- **Void:** *Helps you demoralise people, avoid becoming overcome by strong emotion, do without food and drink and even sleep for a time, stand very still and not be noticed.*
- **Wisdom:** *Helps you see and understand people and things clearly, understand the wounds, diseases, and ailments someone is suffering, and plan how to treat them better using your Lore skill.*

Time skill, so she's going to want to invoke some aspects (at least *Towering Time Priestess*) and maybe make some ritual manoeuvres first. If she succeeds, she suffers a consequence **immediately after** the incarnation has ended (usually at the end of the scene).

While incarnating her god, Chenda emanates timelessness and atemporality; people stop breathing, flowers wither. She gains an extra Hero Die (page 7) on her rolls, and can fully use any of her avatar's abilities. Powerful priests may have other powers, depending on the god they worship, including divine miracles; ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** core book provides much more detail.

Psionics and Mysticism

Some characters, like the *jeniri* Cousins of Man and the *esteri* Not-Men of Earth, have mysterious powers of mysticism and psionics. You can find examples on the pregenerated character sheets for Chaibayaan Elenequ, the Virikki Psionicist (page 26), and Jri-Banbak, the Tiridat Master (page 27). Most psionic powers require you to touch your target; each range above R-1 costs you 1 physical stress and a +2 increase in difficulty.

Artefacts

The Earth is unimaginably old, and the Springtide Civilisations are littered with ruins hiding the treasures of the Ancients. Mystics and inhumans create strange devices which bestow mysterious powers. These **artefacts** can be acquired during play. Sometimes, you can even create your own, or repair those found in forgotten vaults…

The **pereprae** are the Devices of the Ancients, of unfathomable function. The most well known are the **flamelances** of the Autocracy's legions and the **manatines** of the undercities and palaces which power them. The Autarch of Korudav had a famed **flyer** that was recently—and famously—stolen!

The Swallower of Souls, also known as the Void Device, is one such pereprae. See page 56.

The Hsun Spider Folk create **hsuntach,** strange artefacts which are half-artwork, half-living thing. The most famous of these are the **zoans**—artificial limbs and replacement organs which form part of the Autocracy's healing arts. Gatti Goldeneye, the pregenerated character on page 28, has a pair of **zoic eyes** which give her special powers.

Other artefacts include the **mindstones** of the Paladoi (see page 26), the **creates** of the seagoing Ing Shu, and the **chaotic items** of the Reaver Gods.

Extras

In ***The Chronicles of Future Earth***, the term **extras** refers to entries on your character sheet representing entities that have a broader independent existence. An extra tracks your relationship with:

- communities like temples, sorcerous schools, legions, fighting academies, warrior societies;
- creatures like henchmen, bound demons, avatars, and familiars;
- exotic items which give you access to skills, stunts, and other abilities.

The point of extras is that they're not "finished products". Because an extra describes your **relationship** with an entity, it follows that the entity may have other abilities you don't yet have access to. Maybe you're not a full member of a temple; maybe you don't understand your magical staff properly; maybe you haven't yet sacrificed enough power to your bound demon.

The abilities of your extras may change over time, using the **advancement points** you gain while adventuring, in the same way your own personal abilities (skills, stunts, aspects) may change (see below).

The Opposition

In this Quickstart you'll find statistics blocks for adversaries (and sometimes allies) the PCs meet on their adventures. These NPCs are created using rules similar to those for PCs.

Minor NPCs appear in groups of multiple individuals, but only have a single stat block. When you attack a Minor NPC, you're actually attacking the entire group, and any stress you inflict can take out more than one individual in a single attack! For Average (+1) NPCs, for example, you take out one group member for **every point of stress** you inflict. If you inflict 3 points of stress, you take out 3 members of that group.

Other NPCs, such as **supporting NPCs** and **major NPCs,** represent individuals. They have stress tracks, and may sustain one or more consequences (usually two). If they can sustain 1 consequence, it's a mild one; 2 consequences, it's one mild and one moderate; 3 consequences, it's one of each.

Sometimes, NPCs aren't even living things; a volcano or a cunning trap may have a stat block. Such an NPC is referred to as a **hazard**, and may have special rules.

Experience and Advancement

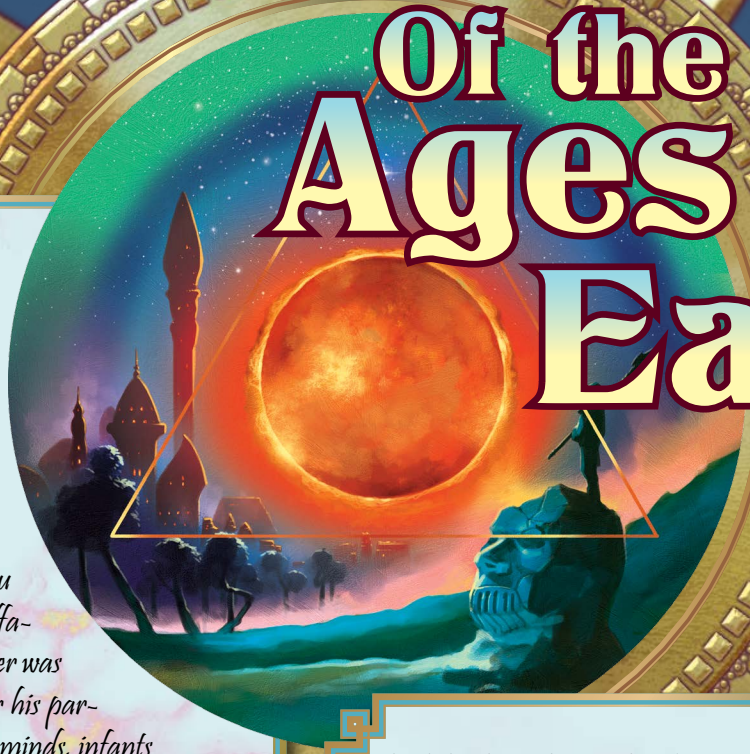
Advancing your character is an important part of ***The Chronicles of Future Earth***. You may begin play as a lowly apprentice, footsoldier, thief, or scribe; but, over time, you may join a temple, advance in your legion, accomplish great deeds and complete splendid quests, and rise to heights of undreamed-of power. You do so by accumulating **advancement points** and spending them on improving your own abilities and your relationships with your extras. Full rules are provided in the core book.

Pregenerated Characters

Pages 24-29 provide six pregenerated characters, showcasing the sort of things characters can do. Choose four or five or these to play the adventure *The Swallower of Souls* (page 30). You can play all six, but your Chronicler may want to modify the adventure slightly.

Note that skills and stunts marked with an asterisk (*) are power skills and power stunts, or are a Pillar skill.

Of the Ages of the Earth



"Look around you at the heavy red sun and the ruins of the past. Can you hear the whispered tales of the Beloved Dead? Their stories of the wars with the Mantis Men, those crumbling bones silent in the necropolises of the cities you walk every day? Your grandfather's grandfather's grandfather was not even a child back then, nor his parents a thought in their parents' minds, infants playing in the sand of five hundred years ago.

Think back further to the glories of Amadorad, when the Empire's youngest child entered its ranks. People like you and I, removed across the gulf of a thousand years.

Before that came the years when Kados was born again in stone. Those timeworn steps you climbed to this tower were once new and bright, two thousand years hence, after an age of ruin!

A millennium before, and there are forests where there are no forests now, lakes where there are no lakes, towns where there are no towns. Yet the cities endure, and the people within, and though their clothes and words differ, they are our forefathers and Sakari like we. It is the celebration of the new cycliad, when Korudav's walls shone and Amadorad was only a dream.

That new cycliad was the fifth of the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara, oldest of the Springtide Civilisations. Fifteen thousand years! An unimaginable span of time – so many lives to weigh on our minds as we dream. The dead outnumber the living!

There is one who has witnessed it all. One who lives still, who has always lived. Our beloved God-Emperor, Ankadar, Venerable Autocrator, Lord of All. Love him and fear him, for he judges the quick and the dead!

Those days are like myth, as unchanging as mountains, but real people lived through them like you and I. But what went before? What lies in the darkness before the start of Spring?

You must prepare yourself. I wonder if your mind can comprehend what you are about to see?

Before Sakara comes great darkness. Generations pass in the savagery of the Time of Snows which follows the Doom of Nayarak. But – see! – a distant light. We are through – like emerging from a cave into the light of day – and Empire is with us again, Glorious Tlan with its pageantry and its thousand Wizard-Kings, ruling the world in opulence beyond compare.

Centuries heap upon centuries, with their heroes and dreams, disasters and laughter. Gone and forgotten in the abyss of time.

Yet those ruins around you, the names you choose for your children, the songs they sing? Listen! Can you not hear the voices of Tlan? The Deeds of Gebrahil, first of the Wizard Kings, and the ill-destined Tolemiks and the Doom of Nayarak which was their curse? All these are the legacies of Tlan, Jewel of the World, and its downfall. Doubt not the truth!

We are distant from our present day. People strange with time strut and pose in fantastic garb, speaking incomprehensible words. Shining towers pierce the sky where today there is only frosted rubble and endless snow. If the Tlanik Scrolls are true, then Gebrahil's Empire endured twice ten thousand years. . .

Fragments are all that remain of what went before. Fragments that speak of war and conquest, empire beyond compare. Who can help but be enchanted by names like Umbris, Pal-Goyar, the Empires of the Sea Lords and the Middle Sea? Who does not shudder with dread while poring over the scriptures of the Torture Empire and the desecrations of the Sky Raiders? Who does not ponder what were the Glories of Az Ein?

We tread paths close to myth and the beginning of the world. The glass is dark, yet figures still move like our own. But now we come to darkness. Like the gutterings of a dying candle, the Lords of the Commonality flash briefly before us, and all is fire and shadow. It is the time of the Helemoriad, the Armageddon of the Gods which forged the world anew. A hundred generations, a thousand, fought and died in the void. What went before was Paradise, unknowable and unknown. The Veil is before us. History begets legend, the child of myth. We can say no more."

—Pilogiarch Jennisa Vlathu of the House of the Umbran Coil,
Venerated High Priestess of the Temple of Unthar at Korudav, 2991CV

Dostinor Karja, the Korudav Legionnaire

Dostinor hails from the Legion of Lord Regos, Indomitable. Born in the north of Korudav province, he arrived in Kados fleeing the Devastation of Korudav. He bears a Demon Sword—a serapai war demon—gifted him by the Temple of Regos. An initiate of Regos as well as a legionnaire, he is warrior rather than priest. In Kados, many view Regos as part of the "Bright Trinity" with Unthar and Staros, but, as a Hivernian, Dostinor has little time for temple politics.

Kindred: Human
Homeland: Hivernium
Occupation: Legionnaire
Social Class: Middle (+1)
House: The Centodimacts of Sapedra
Age: 25 (***Birth Date:*** 2966)
Consequences: 3 personal + 3 social

Physical Stress	1	2	3
Mental Stress	1	2	3
Status Stress	1	2	3
Wealth Stress	1	2	3

Skills

Great (+4): Melee Combat
Good (+3): Command*, Notice
Fair (+2): Legionnaire**, Physique, Willpower
Average (+1) : Contacts, Provoke, Resources, Survival

Extras

★ ***COMMUNITY: The Legion of Lord Regos, Indomitable:*** Average (+1) Provoke, Rapport, Resources.
★ ***Bound Serapai War Demon in Alagin Broadsword:*** Average (+1) Command*, Melee Combat, Provoke; Stunts: Mindlink* (Use Command to communicate with your forces in battle), See Battle* (Use Command instead of Investigate / Notice to see what's going on across the battlefield).

Personal

BUILDS: Initiate of Regos; Legionnaire of Lord Regos, Indomitable.
LANGUAGES: Low Sakaraic.
TREASURE: 10 silver shields.
ADVANCEMENT POINTS: 0.

Equipment

WEAPON: Alagin Broadsword with Bound Serapai War Demon, SI +3.
ARMOUR: Plate Cuirass, Greaves & Vambraces, Open Helm; SR -3; *Difficult to Sprint*, +1 Doom Die on Athletics; absorbs 1 mild, 1 moderate, and 1 severe consequence before falling apart.

Aspects

Fate Points: *5* ***Refresh:*** *5*
Doom: The War That Will End the Cycliad Has Begun!
Essence: Initiate of the Lord of War
Shadow: Rivals of the Flame Lord
Blood: Hivernium Must be Protected!
Origin: When the Shakh Came We Stood Fast
Companion: One Day I Will Return Chaibayaan the Virikki to His Home
Game Aspects: The World is Too Old to Change!
United by the Devastation of Korudav

Stunts

✦ ***Battlefield Healing*:*** Use Command to remove physical stress and mild consequences during battle.
✦ ***Indomitable Defence Fighting Style:*** As long as you don't retreat, spend 2 shifts on a successful attack to create an Indomitable Defence aspect for your next defend action. On a special success, you get the aspect automatically.
✦ ***Killing Stroke:*** 1/scene, pay 1 fate point to increase a physical consequence you inflict by 1 step.
✦ ***Riposte:*** On a special success Melee Combat defend action, immediately inflict 2-shifts of damage on your opponent (armour protects).
✦ ***Sense Danger:*** Notice skill ignores all obstacles or impeding conditions when someone/thing intends to harm you.

Improvises (for a fate point):
✦ ***Chelother*:*** Use Command on chelothers.
✦ ***Oath*:*** Creates an oath between two parties (each may roll Willpower to resist) which lasts until broken, at which point it becomes an immediate consequence which may only be removed by a priest of Regos.
✦ ***Warlord*:*** Use Command in community actions on armies.

Dostinor's Abilities

Dostinor's reputation opens doors with his Fair (+2) Legionnaire skill, and with the Average (+1) Provoke and Rapport he gets from his Legion extra. He can get the legion headquarters in Kados to provide him with resources. He uses his Command power skill to order people around, creating advantages for them to invoke. The bound war demon in his broadsword provides teamwork bonuses from its skills, gives him access to its stunts, and mentally communicates with him to give him get a bird's eye view of a battle.

**A power skill or stunt (page 17). **A Pillar skill (page 7).*

Chenda Higira, Chronicler-Priestess of Unthar

Chenda is a **pariger**—one of the Autocracy's gentry caste—and is taller than most normal humans. She's also a Tallanid, one of the hereditary rulers of the Sakari Heartlands, and is convinced she's in charge wherever she goes. She's a priestess of Unthar, Lord of Time; in the Heartlands, that would mean Dostinor would serve her, as his god and hers are part of the "Bright Trinity" with Staros, Lord of Eternity. However, Dostinor is from Hivernium and doesn't hold truck with Heartlander politicking, which means he ignores most of Chenda's orders, to her frustration.

Kindred: Human Pariger
Homeland: Heartlander Tallanid
Occupation: Priestess of Unthar
Social Class: Noble (+3)
House: The Chroniclers of Kanafas
Age: 32 (***Birth Date:*** 2959)
Consequences: 3 personal + 3 social

Physical Stress	1	2		
Mental Stress	1	2	3	
Status Stress	1	2	3	4
Wealth Stress	1	2		

Skills

Great (+4): Priestess**
Good (+3): Lore, Time*
Fair (+2): Investigate, Notice, Rapport
Average (+1) : Contacts, Empathy, Melee Combat, Willpower

Extras

★ ***Avatar of Unthar:*** *Echoes From the Halls of Time;* Stunt: Glimpse Past Events* (see back in time one exchange, plus steps equal to shifts on the time ladder, double on a special success, quadruple on a critical).
★ ***Summoned Sacranim Time Demon (14AP):*** Bound in Sand-Clock; Average (+1) Time*; Stunt: Aging Field* (uses Time to inflict physical stress on target touched, or every target in zone 0. Affects the caster too, although time demons don't age).
★ ***COMMUNITY: The Temple of Unthar:*** As aspect; Average (+1) Resources.

Personal

BUILDS: Avatar of Unthar; Priestess of Unthar; Sacranim Demon of Time; Temple of Unthar.
LANGUAGES: Low Sakaraic.
TREASURE: 0.
ADVANCEMENT POINTS: 0.

Aspects

Fate Points: *5* ***Refresh:*** *5*
Doom: Seeker of Purpose at the End of Time
Essence: Towering Time Priestess
Shadow: Stuck Up and Status Conscious
Blood: Intrigues of the Bright Trinity
Origin: Natural Rulers of the Autocracy
Companion: Dostinor Should be Loyal to the Trinity!
Game Aspects: The World is Too Old to Change!
United by the Devastation of Korudav

Stunts

✦ ***First Aid:*** Treat minor consequences with Lore.
✦ ***Healer:*** Treat moderate and severe consequences with Lore.
✦ ***Rituals:*** +1 magic bonus per step on time ladder spent preparing a power use, each costing 1 physical stress.
✦ ***Specialist Lore (History)*** +2 Lore bonus relating to history.
✦ ***Wings of Unthar*:*** The target may make two action rolls on their next turn, or three on a special success.
Improvises (for a fate point):
✦ ***Temporal Tarry:*** The target misses their next action, or next 2 actions on a special success.

Equipment

WEAPON: Dagger, SI +1; Aspect: *Ladabran Steel;* worth 5 templars.
Sand Clock Holy Symbol: Contains the sacranim bound time demon.

Chenda's Abilities

Chenda can speed up or slow down time for a target, which resists using Athletics or Willpower (or it's an Average (+1) difficulty). This creates a situation aspect or, for Wings of Unthar and Temporal Tarry, causes the target to lose their action roll, or even roll twice!

Chenda may also take an action to **release her sacranim time demon** bound within her Sand-Clock holy symbol. Chenda's player may then use the demon to make an action roll instead of Chenda. It has 2 physical and mental stress boxes and can take 1 mild and 1 moderate consequence. It also takes one exchange to rebind it into the Sand-Clock. The demon currently costs 14AP to summon; as she earns more AP, Chenda could buy new abilities for it. Equally, she could use those 14AP for another extra.

**A power skill or stunt (page 17). **A Pillar skill (page 7).*

Chaibayaan Elenequ, the Virikki Psionicist

Chaibayaan is a Virikki, one of "the People of the Mind", a *jeniri* species of the Cousins of Man. The Virikki are cerebral, with a great aesthetic sense, making them fantastic scholars and philosophers, as well as leaders of trade expeditions. They have natural psionic powers and, while not religious, are often associated with the Communication powers of the Temple of Vareltias, Lord of Trade.

Chaibayaan has come to Kados after the Devastation of Korudav. Forced to flee his home in Korudav Province, he was saved from the Chaos Beasts by Dostinor. Since then he's been his ward, and has sworn himself to Dostinor's service. He rides an *ornither*, a beautiful four-legged horse-like bird, called Shimmerflank.

Kindred: Virikki
Homeland: Hivernian
Occupation: Psionicist
Social Class: Upper (+2)
House: The Reflectors of Lenekar
Age: 40 ***(Birth Date:*** 2951)
Consequences: 3 personal + 3 social

Physical Stress	1	2		
Mental Stress	1	2	3	4
Status Stress	1	2	3	4
Wealth Stress	1	2		

Skills

Great (+4): Willpower
Good (+3): High Guilder**, Lore
Fair (+2): Investigate, Notice, Rapport
Average (+1) : Contacts, Empathy, Melee Combat, Ride

Extras

★ ***Mindstone of Communication:*** Average (+1) Communication*; Stunt: Reflector* (+2 Communication bonus with other Reflectors).
★ ***"Shimmerflank" Ornither Mount:*** Average (+1) Notice; Fair (+2) Athletics; Stunt: Sprinter (Move 2 zones for free in an exchange, instead of 1.).
★ ***COMMUNITY: Guild of Reflectors:*** Average (+1) Provoke, Resources; Stunt: Witch Hunt (Use Community Provoke skill against characters).

Personal

BUILDS: The Reflectors Guild; Virikki; Mindstone of Communication; Shimmerflank.
LANGUAGES: Low Sakaraic, High Sakaraic, Eletas Tradetongue.
TREASURE: 5T.
ADVANCEMENT POINTS: 0.

Equipment

WEAPON: Singlestick, SI +0.
ARMOUR: Doublet & Hood, SR +0.
The Book of Hivernium: Book of Hivernian Lore.

Aspects

Fate Points: *5* ***Refresh:*** *5*
Doom: The Doom of Our Time Is Upon Us!
Essence: Refugee Scholar Psionicist
Shadow: Cold and Analytical Observer
Blood: Worship of the Gods Is For the Unsophisticated
Origin: The Tower of Elenequ Has Fallen to Chaos!
Companion: I Fear Dostinor Is an Honourable Man
Game Aspects: The World is Too Old to Change!
United by the Devastation of Korudav

Stunts

✦ ***Adapted to Cold Arid Climes:*** +2 bonus to cope in extreme cold and aridity.
✦ ***Linguist:*** +1 language per level of Lore.
✦ ***Specialist Lore (Hivernium):*** +2 Lore bonus for questions relating to Hivernium.
✦ ***PSIONICS: Awareness - Voyance:*** Use Investigate / Notice for remote viewing.
✦ ***PSIONICS: Telepathy – Mind Blast:*** Use Willpower to do mental stress damage.

Improvises (for a fate point):
✦ ***PSIONICS: Awareness - Audience:*** Use Investigate / Notice for remote hearing.
✦ ***PSIONICS: Telepathy - Parlance:*** Use Provoke / Rapport for remote speaking.
✦ ***PSIONICS: Telepathy – Probe:*** Use Willpower to read thoughts.

Chaibayaan's Abilities

Chaibayaan can burn mental stress to improve his psionics rolls (page 14). He can use Voyance to investigate locations he can either see or which he has visited, and use Willpower to make mental stress attacks. If necessary, for a fate point, he can use Willpower to read minds and hear and speak at a distance. His skittish ornither helps him spot danger and flee from it.

**A power skill or stunt (page 17). **A Pillar skill (page 7).*

Jri-Banbak the Tiridat Master

Jri-Banbak is one of the Tung Mai **Mantis Men**, one of the *esteri* Not-Men of Earth. Normally savage and violent, some strong-willed Tung Mai practise the mystical martial art of **Tiridat**—the "Six Fold Way"—which lets them control their wild instincts and become calm, disciplined fighting machines. There is—or at least was until recently—an entire legion of them in the city of Korudav, sworn to serve the Autarch. Jri-Banbak escaped from the Devastation of Korudav with his human apprentice, Krul. He's currently rootless, looking for other members of his legion.

Kindred: Tung Mai Mantis Man
Homeland: Hivernium
Occupation: Tiridat Master
Social Class: Unclutched (+0)
House: The Claw Dance Collective
Age: 65 (adult)
Birth Date: 2926
Consequences: 3 personal + 3 social

Physical Stress	1	2	3	4
Mental Stress	1	2		
Status Stress	1	2	3	
Wealth Stress	1	2		

Skills

Great (+4): Athletics
Good (+3): Notice, Physique
Fair (+2): Legionnaire**, Melee Combat, Provoke
Average (+1) : Claw Attack, Craft, Ranged Combat, Teeth Attack

Extras

★ ***Krul the Apprentice:***
Human Physical 3, Mental 2, 1 mild + 1 moderate consequence; Average (+1) Notice, Physique; Fair (+2) Athletics, Stealth; Stunt: Acrobatic Combat (Use Athletics to attack HTH).
★ ***COMMUNITY: Legion of Hahaggassh Bloodied of Charn:*** Average (+1) Contacts, Resources, Fair (+2) Security; Stunts: The Ties That Bind (+2 bonus to Contacts manoeuvres).

Personal

BUILDS: Tung Mai Mantis Man, Tiridat, Legion of Hahaggassh Bloodied of Charn.
LANGUAGES: Low Sakaraic.
TREASURE: 4T.
ADVANCEMENT POINTS: 0.

Jri-Banbak's Abilities

Jri-Banbak is a Tiridat martial artist, fighting with whirling claws and bite attacks, supported by his human apprentice, Krul, who gives him a teamwork bonus for initiative and when he's using Acrobatic Combat. He needs to close to HTH range to use his Acrobatic Combat (page 16), and his *Reach Weapon* faces an **obstacle** (page 11) when used at HTH range, or acts as an obstacle to attackers trying to close to HTH range. His battle harness is studded with blades and throwing stars, and his skin is like lobster shell. He can make multiple attacks with his natural weapons or his halberd, although the skill he uses differs. His Life Sense makes him difficult to creep up on, and he can even ignore wounds!

**A power skill or stunt (page 17). **A Pillar skill (page 7).*

Aspects

Fate Points: *5* ***Refresh:*** *5*
Doom: Battle the Chaos That Threatens the Web!
Essence: Tiridat Master Fighting His Instincts
Shadow: The Urge For Chaos and Blood!
Blood: Live According to the Web of the World
Origin: The Legion Gave Me Life and Purpose
Companion: Dostinor Karja May Be the Anchor I Seek
Game Aspects: The World is Too Old to Change!
United by the Devastation of Korudav

Stunts

✦ ***Chitinous Skin:*** SR -1.
✦ ***TIRIDAT: Acrobatic Combat:*** Use Athletics instead of Unarmed Cbt at HTH range.
✦ ***TIRIDAT: Arrowcut:*** When defending vs missiles in Acrobatic Combat, gain teamwork from your Melee and Unarmed Cbt skills.
✦ ***TIRIDAT: The Six-Fold Way:*** Include all combat skills in your attack roll via teamwork.
✦ ***TIRIDAT: Whirling Defence:*** Ignore multiple defence penalties (HTH or not).
Improvises (for a fate point):
✦ ***BODY MASTERY: Life Sense:*** +2 Notice bonus to identify living things in a 10-metre radius.
✦ ***BODY MASTERY: Withstand Wounds and Pain:*** Make a Physique roll (vs the consequence difficulty) to ignore an invoke of a general consequence. Doesn't require an action.

Equipment

WEAPON: Two-blade Halberd, SI +4; *Reach Weapon, Looks Lethal.*
WEAPON: Throwing Stars, SI +1; Range 1; *Obsidian Blades.*
ARMOUR: Chitinous Skin, SR -1.
Battle Harness: As aspect.

Gatti Goldeneye, the Light-Fingered Bard

Gatti Vit-Banta is a Yurazi from the coastlands east of southern Kados, quite different from the Hivernians of the North. She grew up in the lawless underworld of Kados, but brought with her the joi-de-vivre of Payorian's Harpers—the bards and entertainers of the Autocracy. She isn't a full-blown Harper—she dropped out of the temple before she was ordained a priest—but is still a believer in the Way of Song and Arrow. She's always been good at telling spellbinding stories, and making people relax, open up, and laugh. At least, until recently…

Her most significant physical feature is her zoic eyes. She lost her own eyes recently to an attack by an Eye-Biter "demon" in the Artifex Deeps, and was rescued by the sorceress Heysoke Ravawi, who helped her get zoic replacements from the Hsun of Genurgis Isle. She's back here with Heysoke looking for answers—and revenge.

Kindred: Human
Homeland: Yurazi
Occupation: "Entertainer"
Social Class: Lower (+0)
House: The Singers of Kayalaf
Age: 22 ***(Birth Date:*** 2969)
Consequences: 3 personal + 3 social

Physical Stress	1	2		
Mental Stress	1	2		
Status Stress	1	2	3	4
Wealth Stress	1	2		

Skills

Great (+4): Rapport
Good (+3): Guilder**, Lore
Fair (+2): Investigate, Melee Combat, Passion*
Average (+1): Burglary, Contacts, Empathy, Notice

Extras

★ ***Zoic Eyes:*** +2 Investigation and Notice for visual perception; infrared vision and magnification.
★ ***COMMUNITY: The House of the Singers of Kayalaf:*** As aspect; Average (+1) Contacts, Investigate, Lore, Resources.

Personal

BUILDS: Initiate of Payorian; House of the Singers of Kayalaf.
LANGUAGES: Low Sakaraic.
TREASURE: -.
ADVANCEMENT POINTS: 0.

Equipment

WEAPON: Short Sword, SI +1.
WEAPON: Short Bow, SI +2, Range 2.
ARMOUR: Leather Armour, SR -1; *Unprotected Head.*
Lute: High quality, +1 bonus to performances.

Aspects

Fate Points: *5* ***Refresh:*** *5*
Doom: I See the World Through Alien Eyes
Essence: Spellbinding Storyteller
Shadow: Tears and Anger Behind the Smile
Blood: My Code of Honour Is My Own
Origin: Yellow Zoic Eyes
Companion: My Life Belongs to Heysoke Ravawi!
Game Aspects: The World is Too Old to Change!
United by the Devastation of Korudav

Stunts

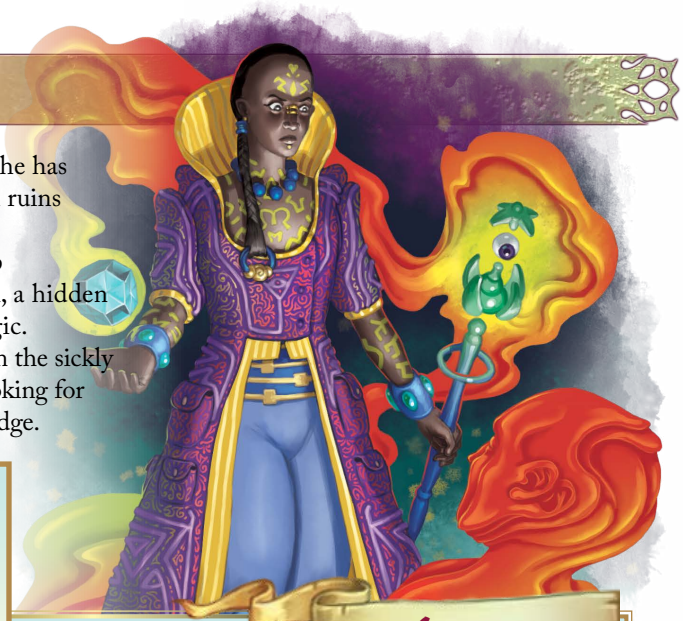
✦ ***Appraise:*** +2 Lore bonus to determine the value of an item.
✦ ***Inspire Specific Emotion*:*** Make a Passion manoeuvre to create or remove a specific emotion in a target.
✦ ***Performer:*** Use Rapport to affect everyone in your zone, plus 1 zone per skill level above 1.
✦ ***Specialist Lore (History)*** +2 Lore bonus relating to history.
✦ ***Specialist Lore (Venerable Autocracy):*** +2 Lore bonus relating to the Venerable Autocracy.
Improvises (for a fate point):
✦ ***Arrow Song*:*** Use Passion instead of Ranged Combat to attack with a bow. On a special success, you may split your result between 2 targets; on a critical, you may split it among 3.
✦ ***Embolden*:*** +2 to Passion rolls to embolden people.

Gatti's Abilities

Although Gatti occasionally undertakes illicit activities—a spot of petty thievery, fencing, and con tricks—mostly she's about winning over audiences, charming and persuading people, and shooting them with her bow if all else fails. Her zoic eyes make her stand out, but give her some cool powers.

**A power skill or stunt (page 17). **A Pillar skill (page 7).*

Heysoke Ravawi, the Laigasi Sorcerer



Heysoke is from the subtropical lands of Laigas in the southern Autocracy. She has travelled extensively, even to the jungles of Dark Aiforia, exploring forbidden ruins corrupted by the power of Demos.

Heysoke studies perilous ancient sorceries, convinced she can keep everything under control. Secretly, she's one of the Seekers Beyond the Veil, a hidden school of sorcerers obsessed with demons, other worlds, and forbidden magic.

On a recent expedition into the Artifex Deeps, she rescued Gatti from the sickly embrace of the Eye-Biter demon which devoured her eyes. Now she's back, looking for the source of the demon, hoping to find magical writings to add to her knowledge.

Kindred: Human ***Homeland:*** Laigasi
Occupation: Sorcerer
Social Class: Mandarin (+3)
House: Verdigris Jungledeep
Age: 33 ***(Birth Date:*** 2958)
Consequences: 3 personal + 3 social

Physical Stress	1	2		
Mental Stress	1	2	3	
Status Stress	1	2	3	4
Wealth Stress	1	2	3	

Skills

Great (+4): Void*
Good (+3): Guilder**, Lore
Fair (+2): Entropy*, Eternity*, Survival
Average (+1) : Melee Combat, Provoke, Resources, Willpower

Extras

★ ***Magical Staff:*** Phys 3, Ment 3; Average (+1) Physique, Fair (+2) Willpower.
★ ***Wingblack, Bat Familiar:*** *The Chittering Flight of Wingblack;* Average (+1) Notice, Stealth; Fair (+2) Void*.
★ ***Spellbook:*** *The Grimoire of Araknis Demosi.*
★ ***COMMUNITY – Sorcerous College of the Seekers Beyond the Veil:*** Average (+1) Contacts.

Personal

BUILDS: Grimoire of Araknis Demosi; Magical Staff; Seekers Beyond the Veil; Wingblack.
LANGUAGES: Low Sakaraic; learning High Sakaraic, Nayaraki, Tlanik.
TREASURE: 5T.
ADVANCEMENT POINTS: 0.

Equipment

WEAPON: Quarterstaff, SI +1, *Magical Staff.*
ARMOUR: None.

Aspects

Fate Points: *5* ***Refresh:*** *5*
Doom: We Must Look Into the Void To Know the Void!
Essence: Sorceress With Wild Flashing Eyes
Shadow: Obsessed With the Dark Magic of Demos
Blood: A Bastion Against Evil in the East
Origin: Scarred Forever in the Haunted Ruins of Aiforia
Companion: Rescued Gatti From the Eye-Biter Demon
Game Aspects: The World is Too Old to Change!
United by the Devastation of Korudav

Stunts

✦ ***SPELL EFFECT***
STUNTS: Control, Create, Deny, Destroy, Detect.
Improvises (for a fate point):
✦ ***Linguist:*** Lore roll to read / speak three languages studied (see below).

Spells

✶ ***Banish Beyond the Veil:*** Damage otherworldly entities. Entropy, Attack, Deny. Armour does not protect.
✶ ***Chamber of Purple Shadows:*** Create a dimensional hidey-hole. Void, Create Advantage, Create.
✶ ***Deny Gravity:*** Lets you levitate. Void, Create Advantage, Deny.
✶ ***Dominate Undead:*** Use Eternity to command undead. Eternity, Create Advantage, Control.
✶ ***Eyebite:*** Annihilates flesh just by looking. Void, Attack, Destroy. Armour protects.
✶ ***Increase Entropy:*** Takes all the heat out of a target. Entropy, Attack, Destroy. Armour protects once only.
✶ ***Preserve Corpse:*** Stops a corpse from deteriorating any further. Eternity, Create Advantage, Deny.
✶ ***Tourmaline Sight:*** Lets you use Void to see invisible things. Void, Create Advantage, Detect.

Heysoke's Abilities

Heysoke can cast any of her 8 sorcery spells without spending fate points. She can cast one spell per exchange, requiring a roll of her corresponding power skill (mentioned in the spell description) for the action indicated (Attack or Create Advantage), for the spell effect described. If she has time, she can invoke her *Grimoire of Araknis Demosi* for her spellcasting efforts. In principle, her spellbook may contain more spells than she knows. She may burn the stress points in her magical staff for magical bonuses (page 14), and get teamwork bonuses (page 16) for her Physique and Willpower when she's holding it. She can communicate mentally with her familiar, and gets a teamwork bonus from its skills (including its Void skill).
**A power skill or stunt (page 17). **A Pillar skill (page 7).*

The Swallower of Souls

An Introductory Adventure for The Chronicles of Future Earth.

Introduction to the Adventure

People have been going missing in a lower-class waterfront district of Glorious Kados, the ancient capital of the Venerable Autocracy, known as **the Artifex Wharves**, in the shadow of the breathtaking Bridge of Ethereal Bells, one of the major landmarks of the Eternal City.

The PCs have been drawn into these events—we've provided six pregenerated characters so you can get playing right away. We recommend you use 4 or 5 of these, and have the remaining 1 or 2 characters be among those who have gone missing. Perhaps one of the PCs has been attacked themselves (see Gatti and Heysoke on page 28), or perhaps they have an acquaintance who has gone missing (see the rest of the pregenerated characters on page 24)?

Doing this gives you future replacement characters if there are any casualties during play. If you have six players, you can of course use all six pregenerated characters. In that case, assume that one of the missing persons, Jamiss Tau-Warden of the White Blades (page 53), is a comrade of Dostinor Karja.

What's Really Going On

The people who've gone missing have been kidnapped by a group known as **the Void Cult**, who are planning to use them as "food" (or fuel) for a "Void Device" they're shortly to take delivery of. The device is an ancient artefact which bestows great power on its user, as long as it's fed…

A **Black Galley** from the city of Typhon is bringing the Void Device. The sailors of the Black Galley aren't cultists, but they're dastardly types. The Black Galleys regularly visit Kados, their tight-lipped yet grinning mariners taking on supplies and conducting secretive trades, then sailing to parts unknown. There are always nefarious goings-on in the Undercities, but there's something especially unwholesome about the Galleymen.

How To Start

If you like kicking off scenarios with a bang, maybe Heysoke and Gatti are prowling along Lower Hespin Circuit in the dead of the night, while everyone else is holed up in Zangazi's tavern, looking for clues to the disappearance of their comrade. See the map and descriptions on page 37 for more on these places.

What is the Void Cult?

The worshippers of the Void say that life is pointless. Human existence, and even the whole universe, is a temporary aberration, a chance event which emerged from the Void and which the Void will reclaim soon enough. While the worshippers of Pline, one of the Gods of the Great Compact, see this as a reason to spend life in passive contemplation and self-abnegation, the cultists of the Void instead exult in the prospect of annihilation, and work actively to hasten its coming.

Some Void cultists are murderous and destructive fanatics. Most, however, are selfish, or even sociopathic, using the Void Cult's network and easy access to power for their own gain in this life, uncaring of the fact that their actions are causing suffering and will bring about the end of the world. After all, they'll be dead by then, so why should they care?

The Void Cult, naturally enough, is outlawed throughout the Venerable Autocracy, and feared by right-thinking folk for the insidious way it rots communities from within. That doesn't stop it from being everywhere, the gateway to the damnation of the Great Hegemonist. Some say it's more powerful these days than ever.

Then, outside, there's a cry of alarm: Heysoke and Gatti have stumbled upon the Galleymen handing over the Void Device to the Cultists, and have been attacked! What does everyone do?

You can of course come up with other ways to kick off the adventure, depending on your players. Check out **Scene One: The Abductions on the Waterfront** (page 52) for more.

The Goal of the Adventure

It's good to have goals in an adventure: it lets you know when you've succeeded (or failed!). The area covered by this adventure is vast, and the scenario itself is potentially open-ended. For that reason, it's good to identify some attainments for the PCs which may reasonably constitute the end of the adventure.

- Some of the PCs are trying to find their missing comrade(s). Finding them would constitute a victory.
- Heysoke is looking for sorcerous knowledge and the mystery of the "Eye-Biter" demon (probably a flay—see page 50). Encountering one or more flay would answer that question.
- Gatti is looking for revenge on whoever took her eyes. Maybe it was Keleshtra, the Witch of Hespin (page 50)? If so, defeating her might give Gatti some closure.
- Everyone (not just the PCs) is trying to find out who's been kidnapping people and stop them. Getting to the bottom of local Void Cult activity and putting a stop to their activities in the Artifex Deeps would see the PCs hailed as local heroes!

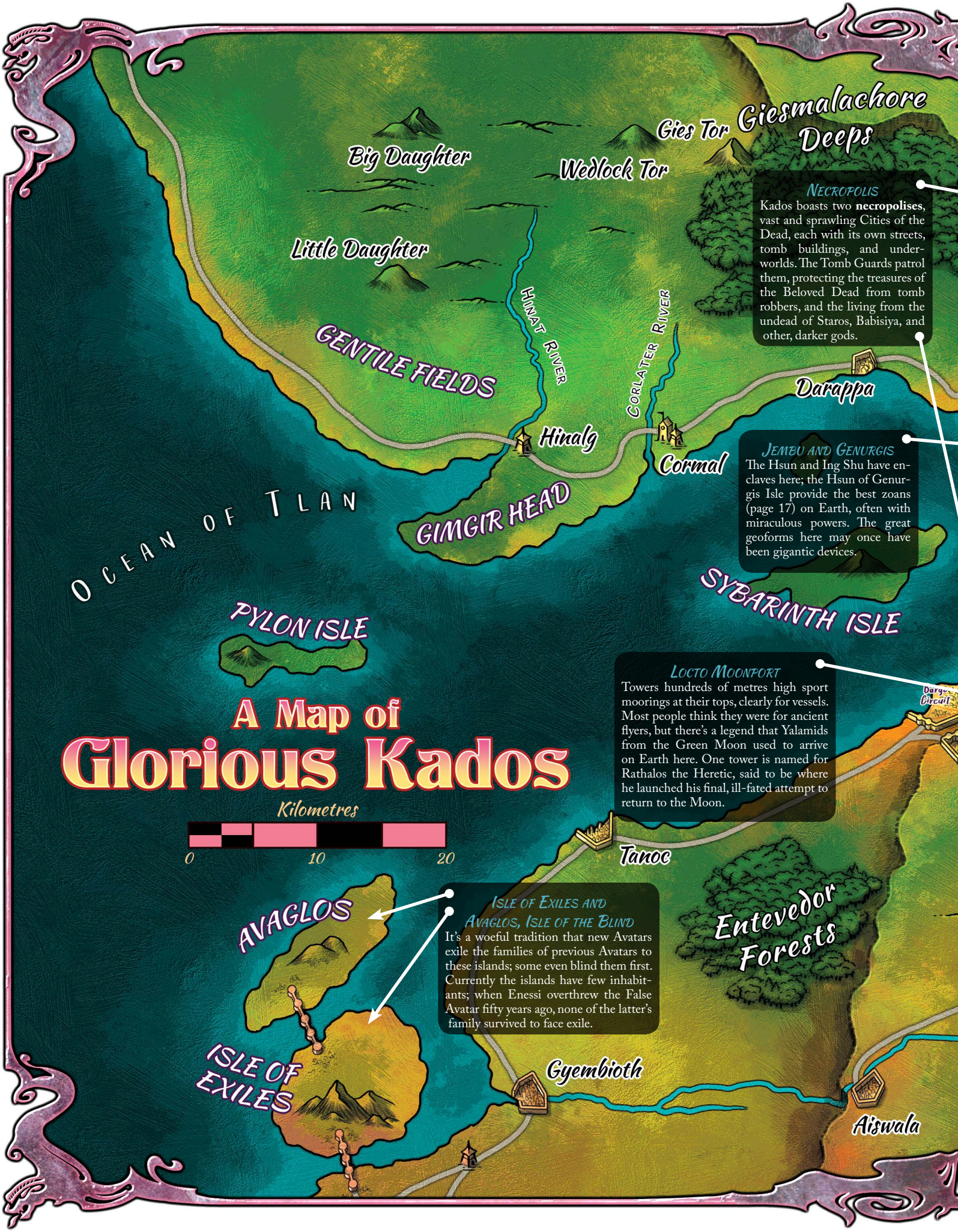
In addition to all of the above, there are deeper mysteries to uncover. In particular, the PCs may find a link between the Void Temple and the mysterious source of the Void Device in the far north of the Autocracy. You can play *The Swallower of Souls* as the lead-in to the first major adventure module in ***The Chronicles of Future Earth***, *Wormhollow Vale*.

The Structure of this Adventure

Read on for an overview of the fabulous city of Kados (page 34), capital of the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara, oldest city in the world and heart of the Springtide Civilisations, and the arena for this adventure. We focus on one of Kados's waterfront areas, the **Artifex Wharves** (page 34), and the colourful characters who live there—including in the warrens beneath its streets. Finally (page

So Where's Everyone Staying?

The pregenerated characters on page 24 don't exist in a vacuum; they've each come to Kados for their own reasons. Some may be staying with friends; others may have their own tenements, others may be staying in legion headquarters or temple accommodations. Let each player describe their circumstances; there's even an inn, Zangazi's (page 39), in the Artifex Wharves which provides rooms at reasonable cost for visitors. Perhaps everyone's staying there?


A Map of
Glorious Kados
Kilometres
0
10
20
Giesmalachore Deeps
Gies Tor
Wedlock Tor
Big Daughter
Little Daughter
GENTILE FIELDS
HINAT RIVER
CORLATER RIVER
Hinalg
Cormal
Darappa
GIMGIR HEAD
OCEAN OF TLAN
SYBARINTH ISLE
PYLON ISLE
Tanoc
Entevedor Forests
AVAGLOS
ISLE OF EXILES
Gyembioth
Aiswala
Necropolis
Kados boasts two **necropolises**, vast and sprawling Cities of the Dead, each with its own streets, tomb buildings, and underworlds. The Tomb Guards patrol them, protecting the treasures of the Beloved Dead from tomb robbers, and the living from the undead of Staros, Babisiya, and other, darker gods.
Jembu and Genurgis
The Hsun and Ing Shu have enclaves here; the Hsun of Genurgis Isle provide the best zoans (page 17) on Earth, often with miraculous powers. The great geoforms here may once have been gigantic devices.
Locto Moonport
Towers hundreds of metres high sport moorings at their tops, clearly for vessels. Most people think they were for ancient flyers, but there's a legend that Yalamids from the Green Moon used to arrive on Earth here. One tower is named for Rathalos the Heretic, said to be where he launched his final, ill-fated attempt to return to the Moon.
Isle of Exiles and Avaglos, Isle of the Blind
It's a woeful tradition that new Avatars exile the families of previous Avatars to these islands; some even blind them first. Currently the islands have few inhabitants; when Enessi overthrew the False Avatar fifty years ago, none of the latter's family survived to face exile.

Old Hespin

Known for its beautiful Moss Districts, where buildings of indestructible aeternium are covered with gardens and groves thousands of years old. The citadel's walls are a hundred metres tall, with modern crenellations punctuated with dragonels and gravity cannon, all said to be operational, maintained by the Temple of Khosht and manned by the Autocracy's legions.

Siege of Kados Bastion

This bastion held out against the Chaos Beasts that besieged Kados at the start of the Third Cycliad. The ensuing Chaos Wars freed Hivernium and led to the founding of Korudav and Elikan Provinces.

Jibara and the Refraction Heights

The Jibaran Heliograph connects with the Virikki Mirror Network. People say it receives signals from Yala, the Green Moon, and sends signals back—although no one knows who to.

Chenta

The spot where Kayalaf the Warrior Sage led his people to safety from Far Yurasha during the Time of Snows. It's a thriving precinct, proud of its Yurazi traditions.

Ethereal Strait

Marks where the Ocean of Tlan meets the Simirion (or Middle) Sea. Five kilometres wide at its narrowest, it's curdled by 20 metre tides and a truly impressive tidal bore. The strait is only passable during slack water four times a day.

Origen

The citadel of Origen is at least as old as Old Hespin, with the same aeternium towers, some a kilometre tall. The Crystal Citadel at Origen's heart, with its bizarre optical effects, is the Palace of the Venerable Autocrator, from where the Avatar, Enessi XXI, rules the Empire. The Rust Gardens are also worth a visit, where Khosht's Reclaimers and Unthar's Chroniclers bicker for precedence.

Bantoor Gate

Carved in the shape of a gaping bantoor's head, there are no more of the Autocracy's six-legged reptilian beasts of burden here than anywhere else in the Eternal City. It's a major arrival point for overland traffic from Orun and the East Yurazi coasts.

Kesh Mountains

The Kesh jeniri call this mountain range their home, an Imperial province with its capital at High Yasif. The origin of winged reptilian elenisors, of which the hollow-boned Kesh field an aerial cavalry legion for the Autocrator.

52), we provide a number of suggested scenes, first to introduce the events of this adventure to your player-characters, then to provide supporting material for you to Chronicle your PCs' further exporations.

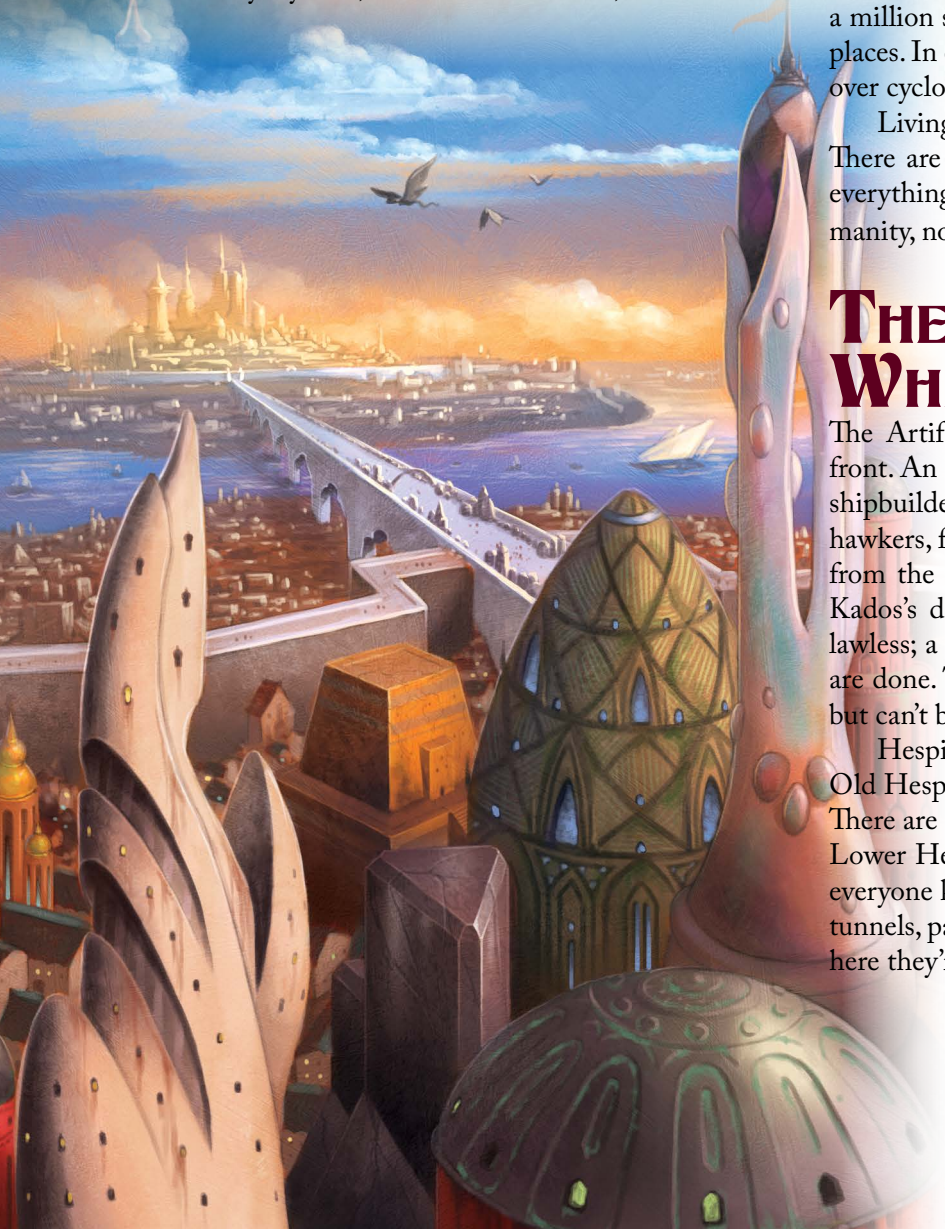
A Note on Stat Blocks

Not every NPC is a combat encounter, so we only provide information tailored to their likely role in the adventure. Sometimes this is only an aspect. You can expand on this as you like.

The stat blocks contain short rules descriptions as appropriate, just enough to use in play. You'll find a lot more in ***The Chronicles of Future Earth*** *core book.*

Glorious Kados—The Eternal City

Kados is the greatest city in the world, the vast and timeless capital of the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara, oldest of the Springtide Civilisations. It's been here since before time began: first in its twin citadels of Old Hespin and Crystal Origen, and then in the "Battle Walls" which enclosed the city precincts north and south of the Ethereal Strait during and after the Time of Snows. The city as it exists today has been here for fifteen thousand years; rebuilt every Cycliad, it's now well overdue, an ancient and crumbling metropolis stretching kilometre after kilometre, with ruins, rubble-strewn pasture, and even stony croplands within its walls. It's a city centred on unfathomable structures of the Ancients in its citadels, whose function and purpose, even construction and materials, are no longer fully understood. There are glowing stones in Old Hespin which light the streets at night which not even the Artificers of Khosht can explain. A city of over a million souls, yet which feels empty and abandoned in places. In others, humans, jeniri, and esteri teem like ants over cyclopean structures.



Living in the city, it's hard to feel anyone is in charge. There are constables, legions, temples and factions, but everything jostles chaotically. In this massive hive of humanity, no one seems really in control.

The Artifex Wharves

The Artifex Wharves are part of Kados's long waterfront. An area of tenement buildings, warehouses, quays, shipbuilders, taverns, suppliers, merchants, streetmarkets, hawkers, food vendors, and more, its rises up the hillside from the Ethereal Strait. In comparison with many of Kados's districts, it's densely populated, but also fairly lawless; a raucous, busy place, where all manner of deals are done. The White Blade constables try to keep order, but can't be everywhere.

Hespin Circuit runs the whole outer perimeter of Old Hespin, once the outside extent of the Eternal City. There are streets and alleys in the Artifex Wharves, both Lower Hespin Circuit and the more prestigious Upper; everyone knows that behind and beneath the hill stretch tunnels, part of the fabled and deadly Undercity. Around here they're called the **Artifex Deeps**.

City Encounters

If your PCs explore Kados, roll Chronicles dice on the following table once every 6 hours for an encounter (or simply pick one you like). You can treat the results as Fair (+2) obstacles to overcome, perhaps with a contest, or even conflicts, depending on how your PCs approach them.

Table 6: City Encounters

Dice Roll	Encounter	Comments
-5	Demonic Affairs	A demon abroad on temple business*. Are you friend or foe?
-4	Cultists and Templars	Priests and holy warriors abroad on temple business*. Do they have business with you?
-3	Holy Day!	There's always a temple holy day somewhere*. Do you know the correct answers and observances?
-2	Jeniri Faux Pas, Esteri Misunderstanding	You're faced with a weird jeniri or esteri custom (page 5). Do you know how to behave?
-1	Social Superiors	Now you're in trouble! Someone from a higher Pillar (page 5) than you demands obeisance. Can you do the right thing?
+0	Children and Other Nuisances	They can throw rocks and steal things, but you can't do the same back. Or can you?
+1	Guards Looking For a Bribe	Are you going to pay up, or try and stand up to them? And is anyone looking?
+2	Doxies and Gigolos	Hey handsome! Hey beautiful! Let me take the cares of the world off your shoulders…
+3	Thieves and Scoundrels	Hey mister! Hey missus! Let me carry that heavy bag for you. I wouldn't want anything to happen to it. Now what's that over there?
+4	Gangs and Factions	You've clearly strayed into a turf war. Are you taking sides or getting the hell out of Dodge?
+5	Random Riot	It's confusing these days. Is it the end of the world? Someone seems very upset—but is there anything to be upset about?

**Pick a temple from Table 4: Gods of the Great Compact (page 18).*

At night, Lower and Upper Hespin Circuit are (poorly) lit by softly glowing glass orbs hanging about 3 metres up. They're maintained by the P'Tek Maggot Man (a slimy wormlike humanoid) called Fetid Masma (page 38), and have a damp, mouldy smell. They contain luminescent fungi.

City Rumours

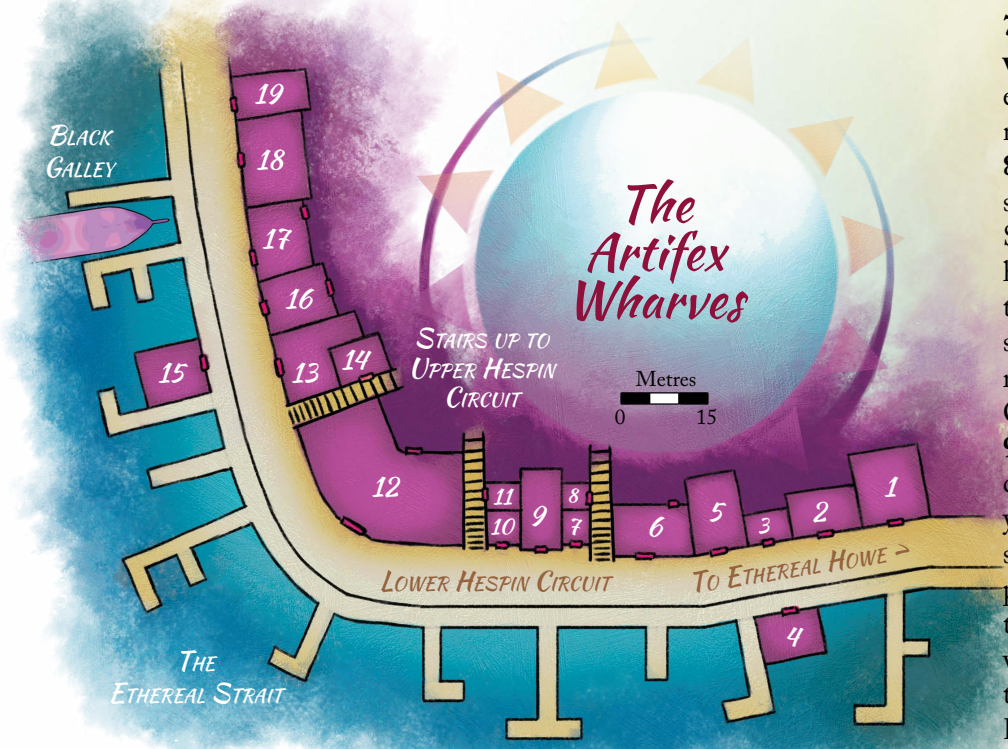
At some point your PCs will grill someone for information. Whether it's persuasion with Rapport, conning with Deceive, threatening with Provoke, bribing with Resources, hanging out with Contacts, or any one of a number of ingenious ways to hear what's on the grapevine, use the following table for random tidbits and maybe even scenario hooks!

Table 7: City Rumours

Dice Roll	Rumour
-5	There was an Earth Demon in the Emeldias Temple courtyard this morning. It opened its mouth to speak, but vomited a pile of golden bones. No one has been allowed in or out since.
-4	Someone said an elenisor rider arrived in the Cloudrider Quarter saying the Seeress of High Yasif had a vision of war in the East. But which East, and when?
-3	Apparently the Che Kwa Stone Men have been seen in the Amadorad Protectorate. Something must have forced them down from the Kadram Mountains!
-2	A new planing machine has been discovered in the Artifex Deeps. Who knows what will be coming through?
-1	The Avatar has vanished! No one has seen him for months—is the Autocracy without a ruler?
+0	People have been going missing by the Artifex Wharves—it's a bad business. People are even saying it's the ghost of the Witch of Hespin, risen from the ashes and come to take revenge!
+1	The Firecloud caused by the Devastation of Korudav is coming this way. Save yourselves!
+2	Someone said the Devastation of Korudav was caused by a fight between a priest of Khosht and Unthar. Nothing would surprise me in these lawless times.
+3	Lights have been seen at the bottom of the Ethereal Strait. Are the Atalaq shark people going to attack again, or is this something else?
+4	There was a wilderman of Ellib in Zangazi's last night, trying to drum up support for the heir of the False Avatar. The Lord of Storm is rising!
+5	There was a weird green flare off the side of Yala the Moon last night, and now people are saying a strange steaming flyer has crashed in the Alban Grove!

A Note on the Locations

For reasons of space and practicality, we only provide stats for inhabitants of the Artifex Wharves if we think they're likely to play a role in one of the adventure's conflicts. That doesn't mean you can't create your own; the descriptions below often suggest aspects and peak skills (usually between Good (+3) and Superb (+5)), and even stunts and equipment. Extrapolate these on the fly if your adventure needs them.



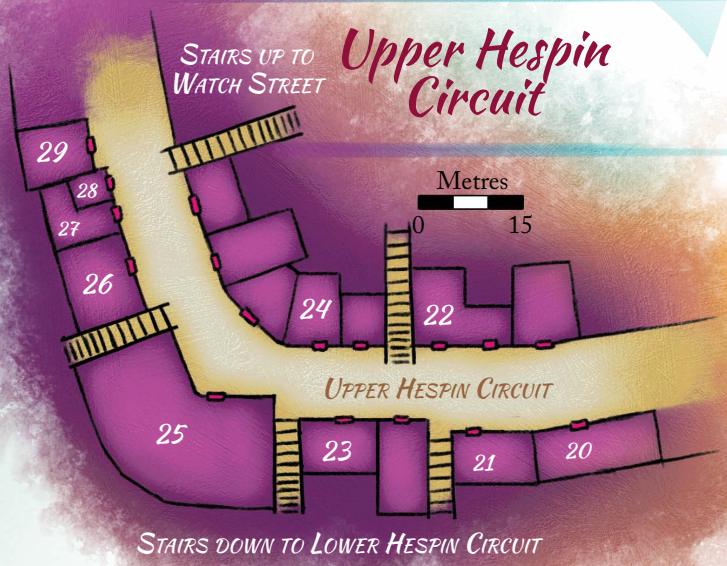
1. **Hantalash Fighting School:** Hantalash the Swordmistress is a well-spoken expert in swordplay, and there's even a "Hantalash style." Some say she was born in the Crystal Citadel. She's a Yurazi, and treats Hivernians like hicks.
2. **Charwoe's Grill:** Charwoe will cook any meat you bring her just how you like it, as long as you like it **extremely** well done. It's safe enough, and she provides some excellent, if spicy, relishes.
3. **Hardtack & Oil:** General supplies run by Gata Five-Blows, a good place for outfitting expeditions.
4. **Shayaveep the Tinker:** A Hsun tinker (page 17) and his speaker, Genda, who interprets his shrieks and whistles into Low Sakaraic. He repairs alagin and knows some shaping. He claims he was blackballed by the Spider Folk on Genurgis Isle, otherwise he'd be a Guild Syndic by now.
5. **Neverask's Pawn Shop:** A discreet fence and haggler-without-compare, Neverask gives 20% of the value of objects you bring him, or 25% if you succeed in haggling (Superb (+5) Rapport), up to 5 templars (5T) in value. Any more than that, he needs a week to sell it all. He can shift large items, too, but that also takes a week. His bodyguard, Benk, is always with him.
6. **Linklighters Undercity Guides:** With an access to the Artifex Deeps, Linklighters provides linkboys and linkgirls to light your way at night, and in the Deeps.
7. **Lagalat's Expeditious Underwriters:** Lagalat underwrites shipping expeditions and other similar business. He's a Virikki, and so's his staff.
8. **Jigizli the Stitcher:** Rumour says Jigizli comes from the Undercity. She takes pleasure in her work, and has a fondness for scabs—she collects them, and will offer money for a good specimen. On a Fair (+2) Empathy roll, you can figure out she's a Void Cult sympathiser.
9. **Ludus Pandoricon:** The Pandoricon is an ancient artifact that lets you gamble your gifts, memories, and soul. The shop has been in the same place on Lower Hespin Circuit for thousands of years; there are those who say it caused the Siege of Kados to "quell a greater evil". The family of Karngrador the Curator are its hereditary caretakers; it's a Good (+3) roll of Resources, etc, to be permitted to "play".

Gambling With the Ludus Pandoricon

The Pandoricon is an ancient ***mentalith mechanism****—a form of pereprae (page 20). You concentrate on something—one of your skills, stunts, or aspects, then grip the device with both hands. You then suffer a Superb (+5) mental stress attack, which you must resist with Willpower. If you successfully resist, you gain* The Pandoricon Gift, *a situation aspect which you can invoke for an improvement on the skill, stunt, or aspect you were thinking of. It lasts for the rest of the session; on a special success or better, it lasts for the rest of the adventure.*

*If you fail to resist the Pandoricon's attack, you automatically suffer a mental consequence representing bizarre knowledge—*The Ludus Gift*—which you never had before, and which interferes with your skill use (an obstacle to overcome whenever you try to use that skill). Nevertheless, the Ludus Gift knowledge may be bizarrely useful. Usually, the Ludus Gift only disappears gradually, after a period of meditation and reflection, perhaps in the company of Konfu's healers.*

10. **Bodsolders Venturer Bodyguards:** Everyone needs bodyguards, and Bodsolders provides them for any purpose, including visiting the Artifex Deeps. The danger bonus is hefty.
11. **Shanga the Emasculator:** Shanga is a gladiator rumoured to be from Far Chinis, a popular if feared pit fighter and a regular at the Kados Oloriads.
12. **Zangazi's:** The best and oldest tavern, inn, and brothel in the Artifex Wharves, properly known as the House of the Brewers of Zangazian. See page 39.
13. **Gubria's Slophouse:** Jokers say Gubria gets her groceries from Fetid Masma's; whatever the case, she also a worshipper of Babisiya, Mother of Darkness (page 18), which gives her something to talk about with the Maggot Man.
14. **Kamadel's Prismatic Supplies:** Kamadel is ancient, cantankerous, and mercurial. He's said to be able to transform anyone into a wharf rat, or to be a powerful illusionist—or both!
15. **Sea Serpent Chandlery:** Hendoler Stump the Seadog Chandler sells some **big** harpoons. He never talks about his missing leg, though his zoic replacement sometimes mutters in an unknown tongue.
16. **Anklarast's Chain Emporium:** Anklarast makes and sells chains and runs the black market slaving operations in the Artifex Deeps—there's a secret entrance from his premises. A Fair (+2) Empathy or Investigation roll reveals he has dealings with the Void Cult (he supplies them with slaves); failing the roll means he sends 2 groups of 3 Void Cultists (page 51) after you to capture "new stock".
17. **Fetid Masma's Night Soil and Fungi:** Fetid Masma's provides access to the Stool Pit mushroom farms in the Lower Deeps, which provide the street lighting (and that peculiar smell) for the Artifex Wharves, as well as a doorway into the Artifex Deeps. Masma is a P'Tek Maggot Man, far from home, roundly abused by the locals for being "one of the enemy". People whisper he's in league with the Galleymen (page 43), but a Great (+4) Empathy roll tells you he isn't.
18. **Ironbound Casery and Storage House:** Jimp has a zoic leg from the Hsun shapers on Genurgis Isle. It isn't as good as Hendoler's (see 15), and he limps bitterly.
19. **Forban's Ferroviary:** Forban is a Magigi red giant from Hagya, one of the *jeniri* Cousins of Man and three metres tall. He's tight-lipped about his past, although he says he can repair **anything**. People whisper he collects artefacts—but where would he keep them?



20. **Corioli's Weaponsmiths:** Corioli provides high quality alagin blades (SI +1) to connoisseurs, and charges the earth. He works closely with Shayaveep the Hsun Shaper (see 4).
21. **Harndais Plaidants:** Harndais is an Ankadar Litigator, rumoured (a Good (+3) Contacts roll) to be fleeing a **long** line of angry clients—perhaps across several worlds! He's twitchy and nervous.
22. **Monstrous Wanderings Cartographers:** Ercatis the Orientated claims to have visited "the known world". He has maps to everywhere—including places you've just made up!
23. **Chantru the Bard:** Respected and full of tales of adventuring, Chantru is a wily worshipper of Payorian the Harper. He knows how to get to the Void Temple in the Artifex Deeps (page 49), but he won't tell you just like that. Either pay him, or overcome his Good (+3) Willpower. Maybe he'll help a fellow Harper?
24. **House of Veiled Deference:** Courtesan couture, run by Callesta Ever-Young. "How does she do it?" She knows **everyone**, and has all kinds of visitors. Her housemaster keeps a palanquin and six slaves always ready to go. Local rumour (Good (+3) Lore or Contacts) says she worships Minisia the Cold (page 18). Make a Fair (+2) Deceive roll in conversation to throw her off your scent, or receive a visit

from Brother Benveg and his Dependers (page 48) that night.

25. Upstairs at Zangazi's: There's a guard on the door, but you can get access to the Parlour, Bar, and Deep Delights from here.

26. Panfanna Silk Merchant: Panfanna is a female Virikki, famed for her elaborate headwear. She has contacts with all the main Virikki trader houses, but needs to be impressed by your social sophistication (a Great (+4) roll of your Pillar skill) before she'll introduce you.

27. Desiccated Tenung Emporium: Darvelas the Physicker, Alchemist to the Heridot of Vatargia. No one knows where Vatargia is, nor what a Heridot could be. Nevertheless, you can make Resources rolls to get Darvelas to treat your wounds (physical consequences). Mild consequences are Fair (+2) difficulty, moderate are Great (+4), and severe are Fantastic (+6).

28. Hollen's Pollen Seedworks: Hollen the Herbalist sells *Healing Herbs* for a Fair (+2) Resources roll, which can help you on any healing rolls you make.

29. Chantashunt's Eternal Returns: Philosopher and guide, Chantashunt wears an immensely tall hat and robes made of Möbius strips. He's a sorcerer specialising in temporal and dimensional magics (which may be of interest to Heysoke—see page 29).

Zangazi's – The House of the Brewers of Zangazian

A courtesan called Zangazi (or "the Zangazi") has run this well-known hostelry for as long as anyone can remember. She's tall, strangely beautiful, with grey skin and orange eyes, like the people of the City of Skulls. She wears veils and gauzy clothing of green, purple, and orange, with lots of jewellery engraved with uncanny sigils. She gives off a strongly magical aura, and claims to worship "the Seductress".

No one's quite sure if Zangazi has been the same person all these years, or if her name is hereditary, or even some kind of title. Some say she's from a different world, arrived via planing machine; she talks about historical events as though she saw them herself, and even claims to remember when the Artifex Deeps were aboveground.

i. **The Tavern:** There are two bars—the left-hand one is more for talking, the right-hand one for music, debauchery, and dancing. The bartenders are employed for their charms, business savvy, and unarmed combat skills. Many notables of the Artifex Wharves frequent Zangazi's, especially in the evenings: if you don't find them at home, they'll often be here.

ii. **Nightside Bar:** Don't step in here unless you can look after yourself, and only then if someone else will vouch for you. It's part of the Artifex Deeps, and the watering hole for murderous ne'er-do-wells. Be careful who you talk to, and don't spill anyone's drink! If you can't get sponsored for the Nightside Bar, maybe you can arrange a meeting in one of the alcoves of the Speakeasy. People like Chantashunt (page 39) or Neverask (page 37) can act as go-betweens—or even Callesta Ever-Young (page 24), if you can afford it.

iii. **The Speakeasy:** A place for talking discreetly. A couple of bouncers by the door ensure everyone speaks in hushed tones. For a price, you can hire one of the "alcoves" (see iv).

iv. **Alcoves:** Private rooms which link the Speakeasy and Nightside Bar, where people from the Wharves can meet those from the Deeps. They're a no man's land.

v. **Kitchen:** A couple of slaves do the dishes, and Echolly the Maestro of Mistwall prepares exotic-sounding dishes and old favourites.

vi. **Office:** Zangazi often "rests" in here when not holding forth.

vii. **Deep Delights:** Nitence and Coldowass are the Master and Mistress of Delight, and have eight "Delicates" of various genders on call day and night.

So What Are You Drinking?

Drinks

Try our finest Hivernian Ales and Ciders: *a half or quarter minim per glass, ask for specials at the bar!* ~ ***Heartlander Wine:*** *only 1 minim a bottle.* ~ ***Keshite Frostwine:*** *special import, 2 minims.* ~ ***Aiforian Fire-amber:*** *half a minim per shot, 5 minims per bottle, if you're tough enough!* ~ ***Jeniri Havas:*** *we have a huge range! Ask at the bar—prices 5 minims per bottle and up.* ~ ***Amadoradi Vidaka:*** *It's the water of life, guaranteed to keep the cold out. 5 minims for the blend, 10 minims for the single malts.*

Something Special

Yurazi Pyranta Weed: *1 minim for a full pouch, or a pipe for a quarter.* ~ ***Ing Shu Chow Gum:*** *subject to availability, 1 dinar per chow. You won't eat for a week!* ~ ***Paladoi Brilliants:*** *assortment of mindstone shards, ground fine for inhaling. It's a full tharius, but it'll keep you going all night long!*

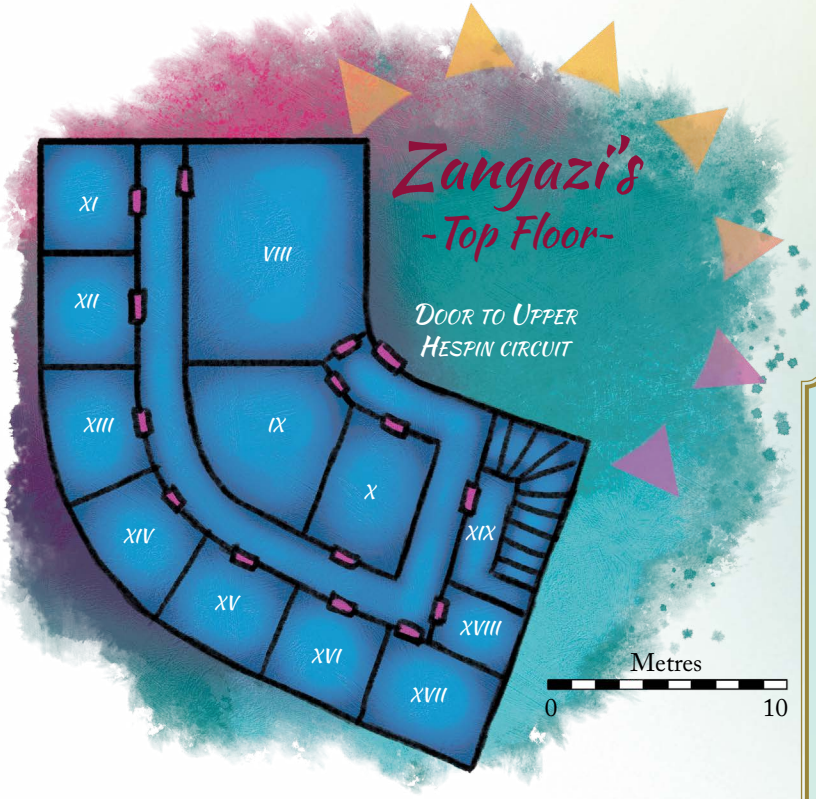
Two Nightside Encounters

Formaris the Powderer

For a single golden tharius, Formaris will provide you with an unforgettable narcotic experience. Make a Fair (+2) Physique roll for a Wildly Entertaining *situation aspect, or incur a* Wildly Terrifying *mental consequence.*

Raniera the Haunted

Raniera is always twitching, and claims to be surrounded by ghosts. She has an uncanny ability to know what you're thinking, and claims to be able to take you "where you need to go". Is it all just chicanery, or does she indeed have the Sight?



viii. Parlour: The dignified, refined, sophisticated, or just wealthy are received here. Partake of food, drink, and conversation in good company, or meet requested Delicates for "assignations."

ix. Zangazi's Room: The door is locked, a trap on the door is Great (+4) to find, and Superb (+5) Burglary to deactivate. Picking the lock is a Great (+4) Burglary roll. Trying to open the door without deactivating the trap gets you stuck by the poisoned needle; it does 2 physical stress damage, and, if the stress isn't blocked in some way, injects a paralysing venom: make a Superb (+5) Physique roll or incur a *Paralysed* consequence. Even on a successful Physique roll, you end up with a *Dead Arm and Numb Lips* consequence. The room is filled with Zangazi's treasures: artworks, scrolls, tapestries, statuettes of often incomprehensible origin, chests of coins (20T worth of cash), sumptuous clothing. Peepholes in the walls and floor are a Good (+3) Investigate roll to find. There's also a bound Earth Demon in the form of a squat four-armed bronze statue which will noisily attack anyone entering without Zangazi.

x. Zangazi's Private Parlour: This chamber contains a table and comfortable chairs. It's used by Zangazi for interviews with "special guests".

- **xi through xiii:** Used for more "boisterous" assignations.
- **xiv and xix:** Usually empty, well-hidden peepholes allow surveillance of adjoining chambers. These rooms may be pressed into service if the inn gets busy (such as during festivals).
- **xv to xviii:** Used for general guests; there are single, double, and multiple occupancy rooms.

Rathamon Urthai the Earth Demon

Supporting NPC ***Size:*** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress 1 2 3

Aspects

Squat Four-Armed Living Bronze Statue; Packs a Mountain-sized Punch; Single-Minded Earth Demon; Every Move Is a Shrieking Grate of Metal; Attacks From Left, Right, and Centre; Limbs Bifurcate to Envelop Target Limbs.

Skills

Great (+4) Growth*, Physique; Good (+3) Provoke, Unarmed Combat; Fair (+2) Notice, Unarmed Combat; Average (+1) Unarmed Combat, Willpower.

Stunts

✦ ***Earth Power:*** Use Growth to make Unarmed Combat attacks.
✦ ***Envelop:*** On any round the Urthai causes a consequence, the target is enveloped in its body and automatically suffers a Great (+4) attack vs Mediocre (+0) per exchange; armour protects on the first exchange.
✦ ***Tough As Nails:*** 1/session, pay a fate point to reduce moderate physical consequence to mild, or erase a mild.

Equipment

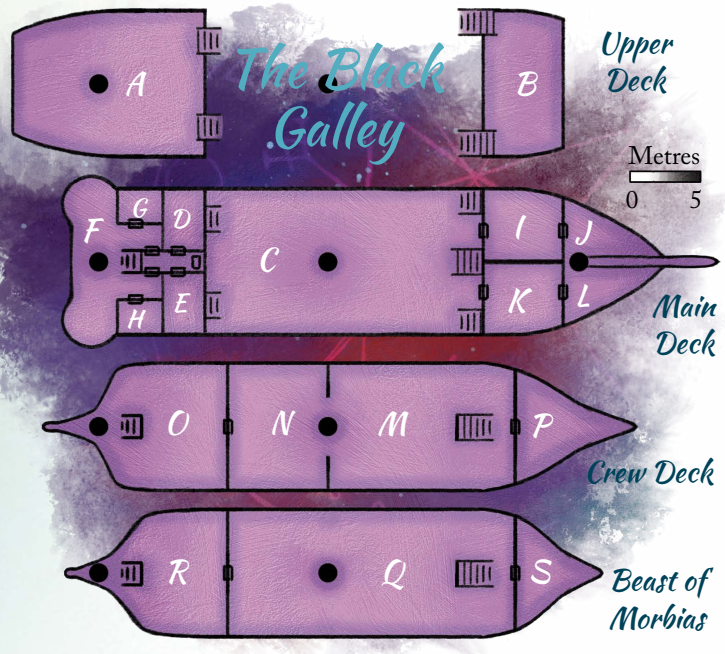
WEAPON: Metal Fists, SI +3.
ARMOUR: Metal Skin , SR -3, 3 additional consequences.

Tactics

Makes multiple attacks (page 13) against up to 4 targets, with a skill score of Epic (+7). A limb which envelops a target may not be used for multiple attacks.

The Black Galley

The Black Galley is a large merchantman of pitch black wood, with ominous grey sails marked with the hammer-and-furnace sigil of the city of Typhon. It's obviously guarded by one of the forbidding Galleymen (below), who walks up and down its deck. For details of sneaking aboard the ship, and its defences, see page 53.



a. **Aftcastle:** Location of the mizzen mast and rudder.
b. **Forecastle:** Location of the foremast.
c. **Main Deck:** Two sets of enormous oars and a huge seat by the main mast. There are empty rowlocks which look like they could hold normal-sized oars.
d. **Cabin:** Occupied by 1 galleyman.
e. **Cabin:** Occupied by 1 galleyman.
f. **Captain's Cabin:** The Captain of the Black Galley is a huge and savage galleyman. A large table holds sea charts; a Fair (+2) Investigate uncovers land maps of Hivernium. Roll Good (+3) Lore to decipher annotations of a route to "Wormhollow Vale" in the Kadram Mountains, and a mark on the map there labelled "Chantu".
g. **Treasure Chamber:** Lots of coins—silver and copper worth in excess of 50T—as well as trade wares, including unfathomable ritualistic implements of unsettling design. There's a white stone statue of a very tall, thin human—maybe an unknown species of jeniri? If the Galleymen still have the Void Device (see page 53), then it will be stored here.
h. **Ablutions:** None of the galleymen are what you'd call "well-groomed", and this chamber boasts some very nasty ticks and lice, and a chute for disposing of waste directly into the sea. It stinks.
i. **Cabin:** Several galleymen have pallets here.
j. **Store:** All kinds of ship stores, including normal-sized oars and benches.
k. **Cabin:** Again, several galleymen have pallets here.
l. **Store:** All kinds of ship stores.
m. **Cargo Hold:** Crates here contain items of glass, wood, and stone, and even a number of alagin weapons with edges of reclaimed metal (+1 SI and a 5x cost).
n. **Carousing:** Whatever unspeakable things the galleymen do to relax, they do them here. Foul and unwholesome, icky with bones and bits of slaves' bodies.
o. **Galley and Stores:** Just don't assume any of the meat in here is edible. It's a noisome hole, with a noisome galleyman cook, whose slobbering caresses he bestows upon his beloved cauldron are distressing to say the least. Mind that cleaver!
p. **Sleeping:** The run-of-the-mill galleymen crew sleep here, in pestilential hammocks.
q. **Beast of Morbias:** The galleymen do very little rowing—that's why they have the Beast of Morbias. It lives here, and crawls out on deck when summoned. See below for more.
r. **More Sleeping:** As p. Any captives taken by the Galleymen (see page 53) will be held here.
s. **Still More Sleeping:** As p.

The Men of the Black Galleys

The Men of the Black Galleys are said to be evil jeniri, with inhuman blood running through their veins. They are rubbery-looking, tall and pale, with purple beards, fixed grins, strangely sharp teeth, and long tongues. Their faces are wider than they are long, strangely misshapen beneath their turbans. There's something strange about their legs, which seem to bend too far the wrong way.

In combat the Men of the Black Galleys wield cruel, crystal daggers, hollow and filled with poison, or alagin morningstars with poison-filled balls crusted with jagged crystal spikes. In extremis, they've even been known to bite their foes with their wide, sharp-toothed maws.

Man of the Black Galleys

Supporting NPC **Size:** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress 1 2

Aspects
Whirling Weapons of Poison and Pain; Sinister Slaughterers; Sharp-Toothed Leer; Unsettling Articulations; Galleyman Crew Cooperation.

Skills
Great (+4) Melee Combat, Provoke; Good (+3) Athletics, Physique; Fair (+2) Notice, Stealth; Average (+1) Deceive, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts
✦ ***Armour of Fear:*** Use Provoke to defend vs Melee and Unarmed Combat until damaged.
✦ ***Heavy Hitter:*** Reduce shifts by 1 on a Melee Combat special success for an additional situation aspect with free invoke.
✦ ***Terrorise:*** Requires Armour of Fear. On a successful Provoke attack, also create a Fair (+2) obstacle to target's attacks against you or attempts to enter your zone.

Equipment
WEAPON: Morningstar, SI +3 +poison[1], *Entangling, Reach Weapon*.
WEAPON: Dagger, SI +0 +poison[1], *HTH Weapon*.
ARMOUR: Rubbery skin and black leather studded armour, SR -2.
[1] ***Purple Lotus Poison:*** Eats your flesh every exchange. Make a Fair (+2) Physique roll or suffer 1 point of physical stress and an *Agonising Poison* obstacle at the end of each subsequent exchange. Once you succeed, the poison loses its effectiveness, although the obstacle remains for the rest of the scene.

Tactics
Will begin by using Terrorise to hamper attacks, and then use Provoke to place a *Daunted*-type situation aspect on the most frightened looking character before moving in to attack.

Galleymen Minions

Group of 3 Good (+3) Minor NPCs
Size: Medium (+0)

Stress 1 2 1 2 1 2

Aspects
Crew of Creeping Menace; Sudden Rush Attack.

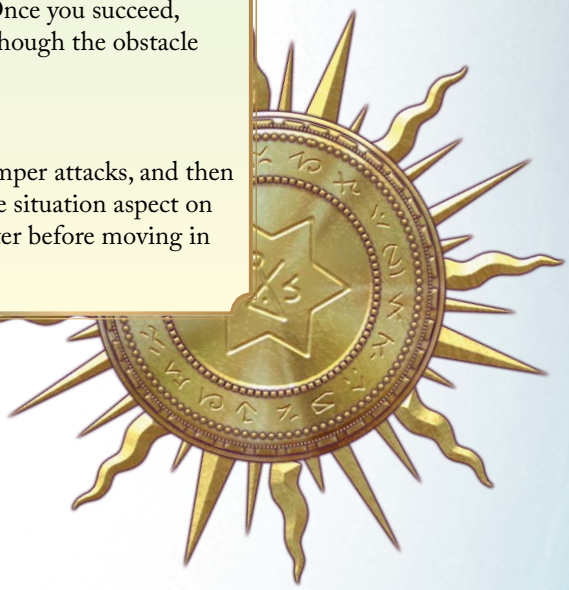
Skills
Good (+3) Melee Combat; Fair (+2) Provoke; Average (+1) Notice (+2 teamwork).

Equipment
Cutting Cutlasses, SI +2.

Tactics
Will usually try to creep out their opponents with a Provoke manoeuvre, and then invoke that to rush into Melee Combat making use of their teamwork bonus.

The Beast of Morbias

Deep in the hold of the Black Galley lives a bizarre beast. Not all of the *jeniri* Cousins of Man are sentient beings, and the Beasts of Morbias are one such example. They are huge, bestial, loping humanoids of terrific strength, with four long arms (two pairs), dragging knuckles, and heavy heads, somewhere between a hairless gorilla and a hunchback, although much larger: Beasts of Morbias would be some 4 metres tall if they stood upright, although their hunched, knuckle-walking posture leaves them at 2-3 metres.



The Beast of Morbias

Supporting NPC **Size:** Large (+1)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress 1 2

Aspects

Rower of the Black Galley; Weakened in Earth's Gravity; Expert Loader and Unloader; Bestial Humanoid; Hates Everything But Fears the Galleymen.

Skills

Great (+4) Physique, Unarmed Combat; Good (+3) Athletics, Provoke; Fair (+2) Notice, Unarmed Combat; Average (+1) Unarmed Combat, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts

✦ ***Grab and Squeeze:*** If a character is hit by an Unarmed Combat attack, he must roll to resist the Beast's Physique each subsequent exchange or take the difference in physical stress damage. Armour will protect.
✦ ***Root to the Spot:*** For a fate point, make a zone effect Provoke attack. Anyone failing to resist with Willpower incurs a *Rooted to the Spot* situation aspect and may not move until it's removed. On a special success, it's a Great (+4) difficulty to remove. Characters who are *Rooted to the Spot* defend against physical attacks with a Mediocre (+0) skill roll. They may make attacks, but *Rooted to the Spot* is an obstacle (page 11).
✦ ***Slam:*** Requires Grab and Squeeze. Any character already Grabbed will be slammed to the ground. Roll Chronicles dice to check for a critical, but otherwise this is an automatic success, doing 4 stress + 1 Hero Die of damage. Armour protects (unless a critical). The character is then *Knocked to the Ground*, but is free of the grab.

Tactics

Because of its Large (+1) size, the Beast of Morbias rolls 1 additional Doom Die when physically attacking Medium (+0) sized targets. If it hits, it rolls 1 additional Hero Die and adds it to stress done. When you attack the Beast, you roll 1 additional Hero Die on your attack roll, but must subtract 1 Doom Die from any stress you inflict.

Because of its 4 arms and 4 Unarmed Combat skills, the Beast of Morbias may attack up to 4 targets, rolling Epic (+7). See page 13 for more.

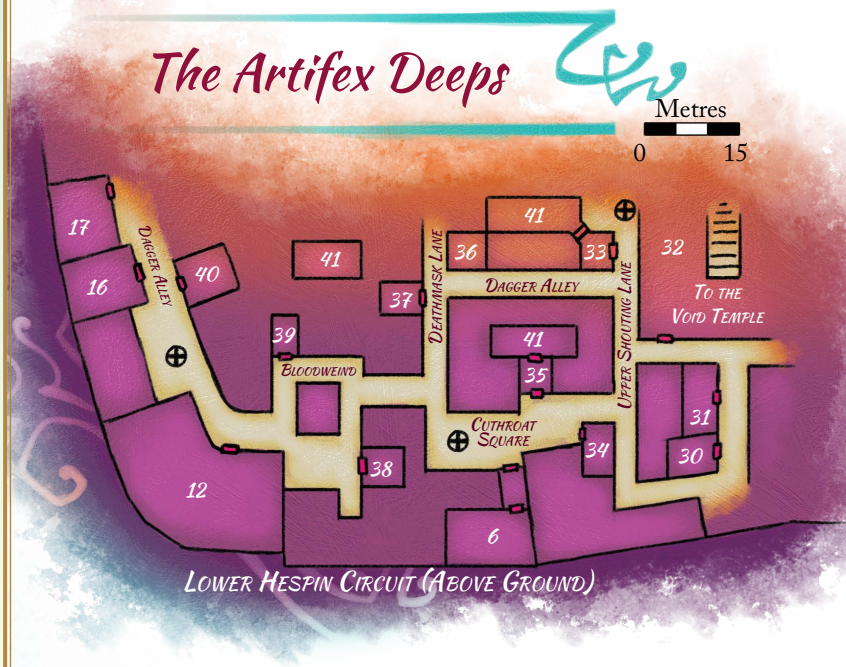
The Beast usually tries to use Root to the Spot against all targets in a zone. It will then grab and slam any targets immobilised.

The Artifex Deeps

The ground beneath the Eternal City is riddled with tunnels—the legendary **Undercity**. The Undercity beneath the Artifex Wharves is called the "Artifex Deeps". Its inhabitants are beyond the law: criminals, smugglers, thieves, outlaw jeniri and esteri, cultists of chaos and darkness, covens of witches. There are many levels; the map below shows the "Upper Deeps".

Undercities date back millennia, even tens of millennia, to mythical times. Upper levels are more recent; the endless rebuilding of cities means that old buildings are buried beneath new constructions.

The Upper Deeps are several thousand years old. They're dark and musty, yet people scuttle here and there, furtive lanterns in the gloom. There are unknown and forgotten architectural styles, and, where the tops of skyscrapers poke above the surface, there are **manatines**—curiously carven columns, unimaginably old, which legend says once conveyed uncanny energies to power ancient devices. Most are cold and dead; finding a living manatine would be a treasure, and would probably end up with the area being appropriated by one of the legions, palaces, or temples.



30. **Witchbite Corpse Disposals:** A funereal-looking soul with grey skin and orange eyes, Witchbite claims to worship Belom, God of the Dead. A Fair (+2) Contacts roll hears the rumour that he's really a worshipper of Babisiya, or even Staros, the Bright God, and provides corpses for re-animation as temple guardians. Most people give him a wide berth.
31. **Skinstripper's Leatherwork and Supplies:** Kssh't'tk Skinstripper is a Tung Mai Mantis Man, who remains *Only Just Calm And Collected* as long as he's working on his elaborately tooled leather goods, including harnesses and cuirasses. He has no training in the arts of Tiridat, and is likely to go into a berserk rage if provoked. Does haggling count as provoking? There's only one way to find out…
32. **Void Temple House:** This derelict-looking dwelling is the entrance to the Void Temple (page 49). Two groups of 3 Fair (+2) Void Cultists (page 51) block access and raise the alarm if attacked.
33. **The Deeper Inn:** Threshold of the Middle Deeps, this establishment of exceeding antiquity is run by Mama Deep. No one knows her ancestry, although there are rumours. She's huge, seven feet tall, massively fat yet strong, with greenish skin, a shock of blackish green hair, grey fangs, and lambent yellow eyes. Some say she has P'Tek blood; others whisper there's more than a little of the Dedaloi Eater. Whatever the truth, she has a raw cunning, a love of coin, trade, and numbers, and an astonishing ability to hold her drink. The Deeper Inn may be as old as Zangazi's, but it's much more unsavoury, a safe-house for gangsters, murderers, and bandits, held together by Mama Deep's own propensity for swinging the huge maul that stands behind the bar.
34. **Ringal's Cutpurse Supplies:** Ringal supplies the Void Temple, and it's a Fair (+2) Provoke to wring its location out of him. Otherwise he fobs you off with a lie and leaves to alert the Void Cultists immediately after you depart. On a Good (+3) Stealth roll, you can follow him right to the temple.
35. **Gedge's Assassin Hire:** Gedge seems to live alone, and isn't obviously armed. A Good (+3) Deceive or Provoke roll gets him to tell you where the Void Temple is; but in any case you'll be attacked shortly after you leave by one of Gedge's assassins.

Gedge's Assassin

Supporting NPC ***Size:*** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3
Mental Stress 1 2

Aspects

You'll Never See It Coming; No Identifying Marks; Like a Shadow; Lethal Accuracy; I Prefer to Work Alone.

Skills

Great (+4) Ranged Combat, Stealth; Good (+3) Athletics, Melee Combat; Fair (+2) Notice, Physique; Average (+1) Deceive, Unarmed Combat.

Stunts

✦ ***Ambush:*** Use Stealth to make physical attacks as long as your target is unaware of your presence; their defence is considered to be Mediocre (+0).
✦ ***Called Shot:*** Pay 1 fate point and declare a situation aspect to inflict on a target on a successful Ranged Combat attack, as well as damage.
✦ ***Killing Stroke:*** 1/scene, pay 1 fate point to increase a physical consequence you inflict by 1 step.
✦ ***Slippery Target:*** In darkness / shadow, use Stealth to defend vs Ranged Combat attacks at least one zone away.
✦ ***Vanish:*** Once per scene, spend 1 fate point to vanish while in plain sight.

Equipment

WEAPON: Shortsword, SI +1 +poison[1].
WEAPON: Thrown Knife, SI +0 +poison[1], Range 1.
WEAPON: Light Crossbow, SI +3 +poison[1], Range 2.
ARMOUR: Leather Armour and Hood, SR -1.
[1]***: Hsunkra Venom:*** Make a Fair (+2) Physique roll to avoid an immediate *Agonising Pain* consequence; even if you succeed, you incur a *Distracted by Pain* situation aspect.

Tactics

Prefers to attack from a distance, from the shadows; she'll avoid melee combat. She'll use her Called Shot to strike the target in the throat or heart (depending on armour), and likewise use Killing Stroke to increase the severity of any consequence, including those caused by the Hsunkra Venom.

Boss Drag

Supporting NPC ***Size:*** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress 1 2 3 4

Aspects

The Dragfather; Gang Leader of the Outer Deeps; Me and Mama Deep Go Way Back; Show Some Respect If You Want to Keep Your Tongue; Necklace of Tongues.

Skills

Superb (+5) Provoke, Unarmed Combat; Great (+4) Contacts, Willpower; Good (+3) Physique, Resources; Fair (+2) Deceive, Melee Combat; Average (+1) Burglary, Notice.

Stunts

✦ ***Armour of Fear:*** Use Provoke to defend vs Melee and Unarmed Combat until damaged.
✦ ***Ear to the Ground:*** Use Contacts for initiative in places where you have an operating contacts network..
✦ ***Killing Stroke:*** 1/scene, pay 1 fate point to increase a physical consequence you inflict by 1 step.
✦ ***Mind Games:*** Use Deceive to make mental attack actions.
✦ ***Money Talks:*** Use Resources instead of Rapport when trying to influence people.

Equipment

WEAPONS: Mace, SI +2.
ARMOUR: Lamellar Cuirass and Coif, SR -2.
TREASURE: Nothing on self, but his holdings amount to a hundred golden tharia or more.

Extras

★ ***Necklace of Tongues:*** +2 Provoke bonus when instilling fear and obedience.
★ ***The Outer Deeps Gangs:*** Good (+3) Provoke, Resources; Fair (+2) Burglary, Security; Average (+1) Manoeuvre, Stealth.

Lieutenant Jord

Supporting NPC ***Size:*** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress 1 2

Aspects

Boss Drag's Favourite Enforcer; Blood Relative at the Heart of the Mob; Knows Everyone; Your Unfriendly Neighbourhood Psychopath; Doomed to Die Like a Dog.

Skills

Great (+4) Melee Combat, Provoke; Good (+3) Contacts, Physique; Fair (+2) Burglary, Unarmed Combat; Average (+1) Notice, Stealth.

Stunts

✦ ***Always a Way Out:*** +2 manoeuvre bonus to escape from a location.
✦ ***Cleave:*** Any spare shifts after taking out an opponent constitute an attack on a second target.
✦ ***Rumourmonger:*** +2 manoeuvre bonus when planting vicious rumours.
✦ ***Torturer:*** +2 Provoke attacks if you have appropriate equipment.
✦ ***Tough As Nails:*** 1/session, pay a fate point to reduce moderate physical consequence to mild, or erase a mild.

Equipment

WEAPONS: Bastard Sword, SI +5.
ARMOUR: Scale Hauberk and Open Helmet, SR -3.

Boss Drag's Draggers

Group of 5 Average (+1) Minor NPCs
Size: Medium (+0)

Stress ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Aspects

Boss Drag's Finest; Falling Over Themselves to Suck Up to Lieutenant Jord.

Skills

Average (+1) Melee Combat (+2 teamwork).

Equipment

Scimitars and Battle Axes, SI +2; Leather Armour SR -1.

36. **Club, Stab, or Die Fraternity:** Kutstav Drag (aka "Boss Drag" or "the Dragfather") is the leader of the gangs of the Outer Deeps. Dagger Alley is **his.** He rules through fear, loyalty, and a strange form of charisma. His "close family" are his lieutenants; beneath them come the gang "captains", then the rank and file "draggers". Boss Drag often visits Mama Deep, and of course knows where the Void Temple is, but it's a Superb (+5) Resources roll for him to tell you (each 1T spent gets you a +1 bonus). And, if you're not sufficiently menacing (make a Great (+4) Provoke roll), he'll get Lieutenant Jord and his Draggers to rob you blind anyway—leaving you outside on Lower Hespin Circuit, naked and bereft…
37. **Gormilius the Dissector:** If you're taken out in the Artifex Deeps, you might find yourself here, at Gormilius's pleasure.
38. **Knife and Needle Pleasure House:** Slicewell the Inker performs sorcerous tattoos and alterations. "I'm an artist, milady. You have to suffer for art...". Get yourself a tattoo for 1 minor consequence: Slicewell has a tendency to gossip. He'll tell you that Ringal (see 34) supplies the Void Temple, although he doesn't know where it is himself…
39. **Porfiry Heldanth, Private Investigator:** Porfiry is completely white with red eyes and fangs, although he doesn't seem to be an albino—he may be some unknown form of *jeniri*, though he's not saying. He wears dark glasses outdoors, and usually covers up in a cloak and hat. He's an excellent private investigator, and will reveal all kinds of juicy bits of info, for a price. He's unlikely to blab about the Void Temple, unless it's **really** advantageous to him—he can't afford the heat. Porfiry may be a renegade Depender—see below.
40. **Inconspicuous Consumption Enlightened Interdependence Brotherhood:** Also known as the Brothers of Interdependence, or just The Dependers, this is a cabal of the servile supporters of Benveg the Imperious, a **hemophage** and Vampire Lord of Minisia, Goddess of Winter. If you stray in here, you're going to have to make some convincing arguments or end up joining Benveg's "stock".

Brother Benveg

Supporting NPC **Size:** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress 1 2 3

Aspects

Ageless and Undying Hemophage; Cold Self-Obsessed Intellect; Blood Hunger; The Smiling Mask With Nothing Behind.

Skills

Great (+4) Narcissism*, Provoke; Good (+3) Deceive, Physique; Fair (+2) Melee Combat, Willpower; Average (+1) Athletics, Notice

Stunts

✦ ***Blood Healing*:*** Use Narcissism instead of Melee Combat at HTH range to drink a victim's blood, transforming damage done to them into healing done to you. The target must be unresisting.
✦ ***Hand of Minisia*:*** Cause frost damage on touch, using Narcissism to inflict physical stress damage.
✦ ***Imitate Emotion*:*** Use Narcissism instead of Rapport to emote convincingly.
✦ ***Mirror Self*:*** Creates a *Mirror Image* of yourself. It's illusory—a trick of the light—but very distracting. It's ***not*** in the mind.
✦ ***Regenerate*:*** Regenerate 1 physical stress box per exchange, starting with the lowest. Other consequences heal one step more rapidly.
✦ ***Steal Skill*:*** Use Narcissism to steal another's skill, resisted by Willpower. Gain the skill as a situation aspect, with the owner losing access. Lasts 1 scene, or 1 session on a special success, or permanently on a critical!

Equipment

WEAPONS: Rapier, SI +2; *Fast and Flashy.*
ARMOUR: Lamellar Cuirass, SR-2; *Unprotected Head.*
EQUIPMENT: Silver Mask (worth 2T).
TREASURE: 15 shields.

Hemophage Flaw

Lose physical stress box per day you don't consume human blood.

The Dependers

Group of 5 Average (+1) Minor NPCs
Size: Medium (+0)

Stress

Aspects

Followers of Brother Benveg; Feed On Me, My Master!

Skills

Average (+1) Melee Combat, Provoke (+2 teamwork)

Equipment

Blades & Cudgels, SI +1; Leather Armour, SR-1.
Treasure: 1D6 dinars each.

41. Old Courtyards: These "courtyards" are underground, with ceilings of jumbled stones and compact rubble. They were once outdoor spaces between buildings, and still fulfil a similar function; they're often filled with refuse, or mouldering linen hung up to "dry". Anyone damaging the ceiling here is likely to cause a Legendary (+8) collapse, doing physical stress damage to everyone in the zone.

The Rest of the Deeps

The Kados undercity goes on forever…including downwards. Below the Artifex Deeps are the Middle Deeps, linking to the city's cloaca (drainage sewers), and the extremely perilous Lower Deeps or "the Deeper", mostly collapsed and filled with inaccessible places rich with unplundered treasures, nightmare denizens, and treacherous traps.

The Void Temple

The Void Temple is part of the Middle Deeps, a group of chambers occupied by the Void Cultists. Some live elsewhere in the Deeps or the Wharves above, some spend their days here. Their presence is a loosely-guarded secret, and their guards watch out for intruders from the Middle and Lower Deeps as well as from the Artifex Deeps above.

For possible action here, see **Scene Five: The Attack on the Void Temple** on page 57.

i. **Common Chamber:** Day-to-day cult business is conducted here, among tables and benches. There's always at least one guard at the bottom of the stairs.

ii. **Dormitory Chamber:** Several bunks in grim living quarters. In the northeastern corner, a still-functioning **manatine** (page 20) runs from ground to ceiling.

iii. **The Witching Chamber:** Keleshtra the Void Priestess, the Witch of Hespin, lives here. Supposed dead in a fire in the Wharves a year ago, she hasn't shown herself since. Scrolls and papers mostly in Low Sakaraic are sickening prayers and sermons to the Glory of Annihilation, but a thorough search turns up unctuous correspondence with "A Devotee Beneath the Wall of Gimmerling Guard". A Great (+4) Lore roll (going to the library of a temple, sorcerous school, or other private sage would help…) reveals this may refer to Gimmergar Fortress at the head of Wormhollow Vale, in the Kadram Mountains in the Autocracy's farthest north, on the borders with the endless wastes. Using the papers, a Good (+3) Contacts roll identifies Void Cult supporters and sympathisers in the local community, including Jigizli the Stitcher (page 37) and Anklarast the Slaver (page 38). The Void Cult's treasury is here: 70 silver dinars and about 250 copper minims in a small (and locked) wooden chest.

iv. **The Unholy of Unholies:** This chamber is divided into two zones. The first is at the back, where the bas-relief statue of a distorted, humanoid figure with a distended gaping maw in the shape of a near-perfect circle decorates the wall (think of Edvard Munch's "The Scream"—a Fair (+2) Lore roll can identify this as a representation of Lord Vile, the Eternal Hunger—see overleaf). Before it is a low altar. If the Void Cult doesn't yet have the Void Device, this altar will be bare, and Lord Vile's maw will be a featureless patch of wall. Otherwise, the Void Device will be on the altar, the zone will be affected by its zone of cold (page 56), and the circular maw will be a patch of black nothingness—the body of a flay (void elemental) under Keleshtra's command. The chamber's second zone is the half closest to the entrance, where cultists assemble; it's out of range of the Void Device's cold aura (though not of any ranged attacks from the altar, including those of flay and the device itself).

v. **Slave Pen:** Half a dozen captives, plus any PCs or their acquaintances who have gone missing (page 30). Four captives are slaves from Anklarast; one is a passer-by kidnapped off the street; the sixth is Jamiss Tau-Warden of the White Blades (page 53). They're alternately afraid, panicked, and frustrated. PCs who've been taken out (page 14) during this adventure without being killed may also regain consciousness here, ready to be fed to the Swallower of Souls…

Lord Vile, The Eternal Hunger

"Prince of the Elemental Void", Lord Vile is depicted as a twisted, screaming man, or a mindless, ravening flay (void elemental). He is no god, offers no philosophy, no powers in exchange for worship; but is regarded as the progenitor of all the flay, glorified by the Void Cult for his powers of annihilation.

Stats for the Void Cult

You can use these stats throughout the adventure where appropriate. See Suggested Scenes (page 52) for ideas.

Flay, Void Elemental

Supporting NPC **Size:** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3 4

Aspects

Black Flapping Patch of Nothingness; Distorted Reflection of Another Dimension; Smothering Attack; Incomprehensible Movement; Mindless.

Skills

Great (+4) Void*; Good (+3) Athletics, Physique; Fair (+2) Provoke, Stealth; Average (+1) Deceive, Notice.

Stunts

✦ ***Annihilating Touch:*** Use Void instead of Unarmed Combat to attack, eating away flesh and causing ***permanent*** consequences—but damage affects the flay, too!
✦ ***Eat Weapons and Armour:*** Physical weapons and armour lose -1 SI / SR every time they touch a flay, including defending with Melee Combat (not Athletics); an item with SI/SR below 0 is destroyed. Unarmed Combat attacks suffer stress equal to that inflicted, with permanent consequences (see Annihilating Touch).
✦ ***Fusion:*** Two Medium (+0)-sized flay may fuse to form one Large (+1)-sized flay, which gains +1 Hero Die on stress damage done, but incurs +1 Doom Die on attack rolls against Medium (+0) targets. Attacks on a Large (+1) Flay receive +1 Hero Die, but any stress damage inflicted is reduced by 1 Doom Die.

Keleshtra the Void Priestess, the Witch of Hespin

Supporting NPC **Size:** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2
Mental Stress 1 2 3 4

Aspects

They Left Me For Dead—Now They'll Know My Vengeance! Hideous Burns; Eat or Be Eaten; Unholy Bride of Lord Vile; Swathed in Noxious Robes; To Hell With Tomorrow!

Skills

Great (+4) Provoke, Void*; Good (+3) Notice, Willpower; Fair (+2) Deceive, Lore; Average (+1) Athletics, Resources.

Stunts

✦ ***Armour of Fear:*** Use Provoke to defend vs Melee and Unarmed Combat until damaged.
✦ ***Breath of Annihilation:*** Requires Withering Touch. Use Void instead of Ranged Combat to do physical stress damage. Armour protects, but is destroyed in the process.
✦ ***Command Flay:*** Use Void to command a Void Elemental.
✦ ***Fortress of the Will:*** +2 Willpower bonus to defend vs Provoke and Willpower damage / control attacks.
✦ ***Sap Will*:*** Use Void to inflict mental stress damage, causing the victim to lose the will to resist, becoming passive and lethargic.
✦ ***Withering Touch*:*** Use Void instead of Unarmed Combat to cause physical stress damage at touch. Armour protects only to block; if any damage at all gets through, damage is done as if the target was wearing no armour.

Extras

★ ***The Void Device:*** Keleshtra can attack with a Fantastic (+6) Void skill to drain life (physical stress) at a distance, and summon flay by feeding a character or slave into the device (see page 56).

Equipment

WEAPONS: Black Staff, SI +1.
ARMOUR: Voluminous Robes, SR -1.

Tactics

Keleshtra stays in the background, using the Void Device (page 56) and getting everyone else to do her dirty work. If someone approaches Keleshtra to attack her, she may use Sap Will to render them impassive and them feed them into the Void Device.

Zineworn the Holy Void Warrior

Supporting NPC ***Size:*** Medium (+0)
Consequences: 1 mild + 1 moderate
Physical Stress 1 2 3 4
Mental Stress 1 2

Aspects

Set It On Fire And Watch It All Burn; The Ecstasy of Slaughter; I Am the Angel of Annihilation; None Of This Is Real; Death and Destruction For My Lord Vile!

Skills

Great (+4) Melee Combat, Provoke; Good (+3) Notice, Physique; Fair (+2) Survival, Void*; Average (+1) Contacts, Deceive.

Stunts

✦ ***Armour of Fear:*** Use Provoke to defend vs Melee and Unarmed Combat until damaged.
✦ ***Cleave:*** Any spare shifts after taking out an opponent constitute an attack on a second target.
✦ ***Riposte:*** On a special success Melee Combat defend action, immediately inflict 2 stress damage on your opponent (armour protects).
✦ ***Terrorise:*** Requires Armour of Fear. On a successful Provoke attack action, create a Fair (+2) obstacle to any attacks against you or attempts to enter your zone.
✦ ***Undercity Environment:*** +2 Survival bonus in the undercity environment.

Extras

★ ***Elemental Armour (Bound Flay):*** Stunt: Eat Weapons (physical weapons lose -1 SI every time they touch the elemental armour; a weapon with SI below 0 is destroyed. Unarmed Combat attacks suffer stress equal to that inflicted, with permanent consequences (see Annihilating Touch))

Equipment

WEAPONS: Great Sword, SI +6, *Reach Weapon, Two-Handed, Slow and Heavy.*
ARMOUR: Chain Hauberk, SR -3, 1 mild consequence; *Heavy and Noisy.*

Tactics

He takes an exchange before combat to cast a *Withering Blade* advantage on his great sword using Void. The first invoke is free. He'll also take advantage of his expert knowledge of the undercity environment to perform Survival manoeuvres to give his side advantages in combat.

Void Cultists

Group of 3 Fair (+2) Minor NPCs
Size: Medium (+0)
Stress 1 1 1

Aspects

The Faces of People Who Pull the Wings Off Flies; Heedless of Tomorrow; We Like Orders!

Skills

Fair (+2) Melee Combat; Average (+1) Notice, Provoke (+2 teamwork).

Equipment

Shortswords and Axes, SI +1; Bits of Partial Armour, SR -1.

Suggested Scenes

This section contains five suggested scenes and an epilogue for playing *The Swallower of Souls*. Your players may have other ideas! Suggested situation aspects are marked in *italics*.

Scene One: The Abductions on the Waterfront

Situation Aspects: *Black as Pitch; Swirling Mists; Creaks and Groans of Wood and Rigging.*

The adventure begins with a violent attempt by the Galleymen of the Black Galley (page 43) to abduct some locals from the waterfront of the Artifex Wharves in the dead of night. The PCs either happen upon this *in media res*, or investigate after the fact. See page 30 for more on how to involve the PCs.

What's a Scene?

*A **scene** is a core concept of adventure building in* **The Chronicles of Future Earth**. *It's neither a strict unit of time, nor a fixed physical location, but it's nevertheless an important element in the game. You regain lost stress after the end of a scene, many magical effects and situation aspects last for a scene, and so on.*

Instinctively, you'll know what a scene is from watching movies and reading novels, stories, and comic books. A scene is usually a part of your story in which the characters are:

- *Exploring a location;*
- *Trying to resolve a single, specific issue;*
- *Trying to do the above in a discrete amount of time.*

Sometimes a scene may be broadly defined—"We spend the evening talking to patrons in Zangazi's bar". Sometimes it's tightly defined—"You're in the Unholy of Unholies of the Void Temple and the Witch of Hespin attacks—what do you do?"

In this section, we've identified five suggested scenes for the adventure. Your game may well vary! You can join scenes together, or separate them out into more than one. Use this section as a guideline rather than a constraint.

In Media Res

The abduction attempt takes place just north of Zangazi's Inn (page 39), on the Lower Hespin Circuit waterfront in the dead of night. The PCs are either in the street or in Zangazi's, or hear the commotion in the distance. They're either attacked directly, potential victims of abduction themselves, or choose to get involved.

In this conflict, several Men of the Black Galleys (page 43) are attacking either the PCs, or a number of locals, with a view to abducting them for delivery to the Void Cultists in Scene Two (below). If the PCs are taken out or concede, they'll be taken captive and delivered to the Cultists for sacrifice in Scene Five!

The Opposition

If the PCs get involved in the abduction attempt, figure the encounter starts at Medium Range, about 15 metres apart (2 zones distance). There are two Men of the Black Galleys, plus one group of three Good (+3) Galleymen Minions for every PC above two (so, four PCs means two Men of the Black Galleys and two groups of minions).

If the Galleymen are outclassed, they will scatter and eventually regroup at the Black Galley. It's a Fair (+2) Lore or Contacts roll to identify the Galleymen, or a Fair (+2) Survival roll to track them back to the ship.

After the Fact

The PCs may decide to do nothing about the abduction attempt, or you may decide they only hear about it afterwards, and arrive at the Artifex Wharves to investigate. In either case, the abduction attempt ends with two more locals missing and a lot of frightened people.

Checking out the scene and interviewing witnesses will prove difficult; people are scared. It's a Great (+4) Investigate roll to get a description of the Men of the Black Galleys (see page 43), and then either a Fair (+2) Lore or Contacts roll, or a Fair (+2) roll of Provoke or Rapport (do you intimidate the witness, or persuade?) to link the description to the Black Galley currently at dock (see page 43). If the PCs fail all these rolls, they'll have to start a more general investigation—see Scene Three.

Where Do We Go From Here?

After the events of this scene, the PCs can:

- Track the Galleymen back to **Scene Two: The Stake Out at the Black Galley** (see below)

What If the PCs Kill Everyone?

Although the fight on the Black Galley is tough enough for the cultists to escape with the Void Device, enterprising PCs (and players!) may be lucky and wipe out the opposition, ending up with the Void Device in their possession. This changes the adventure dynamic, but that's fine—this kind of thing happens a lot in Fate! Here's how it goes.

- *The PCs may experiment with the Void Device: see page 56. This will probably go horribly wrong, and could unleashing of one or more flay or even destroy the Artifex Wharves!*
- *The Void Cultists will try and get the Void Device back. One group of 3 cultists will attack the PCs on the first night; two on the second; and then Keleshtra and Zineworn and at least two groups of cultists on the third, possibly with Benveg and the Dependers in tow.*
- *If the PCs track the Void Cultists to the Void Temple before the cultists can retrieve the Void Device, the encounter will be substantially easier. Well done to the PCs for developing a good strategy!*
- *The question of what to do with the Void Device is an open one. At the least, it should open doors to some influential people in the Autocracy's chaotic and byzantine hierarchy—perhaps including patrons for missions against the cult elsewhere (see the upcoming* ***Wormhollow Vale*** *adventure for ideas).*

- Start asking around the neighbourhood for information. See **Scene Three: Investigation in the Artifex Wharves** (page 54).

Scene Two: The Stake-Out at the Black Galley

Situation Aspects: *Atmosphere of Creeping Menace; Unwholesome Stench; Shadows Out the Corner of Your Eye.*

It's likely the PCs will end up at the Black Galley, looking for leads following the abductions or attacks. There are a couple of dozen galleymen here; perhaps six groups of 3 minor NPCs (page 21) and half a dozen Men of the Black Galleys supporting NPCs (page 43), including the captain.

Confronting the Galleymen

The PCs may go up against the Galleymen in broad daylight, perhaps using their status to accuse the Galleymen openly, or at least demanding to inspect their ship.

This rapidly descends into a shouting match—a mental confict where the Galleymen attempt to frighten off the PCs using their Provoke skills. The PCs in turn may attack back with their own Provoke, and may make manoeuvres with their Pillar skills (page 7) or get teamwork bonuses from legion or temple extras to represent the force of law or authority on their side. If they resort to physical force, the Galleymen defend themselves. Note that if they haven't already circumvented the White Blades (the waterfront constables—see below), then this may be a good time to compel the *Public Disturbance*-type aspect they've doubtless created to have them appear!

Winning the intimidation conflict forces the Galleymen to back down in *spectacular* fashion—they utterly go to pieces, howling with fear or rage, tearing at their hair, gnashing their teeth, even dashing off madly into the night or throwing themselves into the sea. The PCs have free rein to inspect the Black Galley and find whatever is hidden there...

The Opposition

Figure the opposition in this case to be two Men of the Black Galleys and two groups of three Good (+3) Galleymen minions (see page 43).

The White Blades

Group of 3 Good (+3) Minor NPCs
Size: Medium (+0)
Stress ☐1☐2☐ ☐1☐2☐ ☐1☐2☐

Aspects

I Don't Think They Killed Themselves, Sir; We Can Do This the Easy Way or the Hard Way; More Competent Than They Look

Skills

Good (+3) Melee Combat; Fair (+2) Notice, Provoke; Average (+1) Contacts, Investigate, Willpower (+2 teamwork).

Equipment

Halberd, SI +4, *Reach Weapon, Two-Handed;* Plate Cuirass and Open Helmet, SR -3, *Difficult to Sprint*.

Sneaking Aboard the Ship

The PCs may instead sneak aboard the Black Galley to find out more about the Galleymen.

Sneaking up to the Black Galley is a Fair (+2) Stealth roll by night, Great (+4) by day. For a fate point, a PC can improvise the "Follow My Lead" stunt, which allows their Stealth roll to include one additional person per point of Stealth skill. On a failure, the PCs will encounter a local patrol of the White Blades, the city constables (named for their lacquered alagin blades). These aren't opponents to fight (not ideally, anyway), but rather to persuade, talk round, or perhaps even bribe or threaten, pulling rank, using your Pillar skill, and so on.

Run the White Blades as a contest; if the PCs win, the constables leave them alone. If the White Blades win, then the PCs are shamed (give them a social consequence!) and must back down from the galley (for now, at least).

One of the White Blades' comrades-in-arms, Jamiss Tau-Warden, is among those missing from the Wharves. One of the PCs may know this (Fair (+2) Lore or Contacts), or it may come up in conversation. This fact may even be a **declaration** (page 10) made by one of the players for a fate point.

The PCs can carry on stealthing around once they're on board the ship. Every zone entered (every new room or area) requires a new roll. On a failure, a Galleyman sentry spots them, and they must silence him before he can act and raise the alarm. Once the alarm is raised, another exchange will pass, and then one Man of the Black Galleys and 1 group of 3 Galleymen minions will arrive every other exchange (exchange 3, 5, 6, etc), ready to pursue the PCs (a contest of Athletics).

If the PCs enter the zone with the Beast of Morbias (page 44), it raises the alarm at the end of the first exchange. At this point, everyone should probably flee...

The Stake-Out

Perhaps the most sensible (not necessarily the most likely...) tactic is for the PCs to set a watch over the comings and goings at the Black Galley. At some point in the next day or two, there's going to be a meeting in the dead of night, when the Galleymen rendezvous with cultists from the Void Temple (page 49) to hand over a mysterious crate containing an artefact called the Void Device (page 56). They'll hand over any captives they've abducted at the same time.

The stake-out is a contest of the PCs' Stealth vs the Fair (+2) Notice of the Galleymen sentries. They'll need to accumulate 3 victory points to successfully remain hidden for the duration; if the Galleymen win the contest, they'll spot the PCs and attack, and the rendezvous won't happen (see **Scene Three: Investigation in the Artifex Wharves**, instead).

Eventually, in the dead of night, the Void Cultists arrive. The Galleymen appear on deck bearing a mysterious crate supported on two poles, which they hand over to two Void Cultists. Even in the darkness, a Fair (+2) Notice roll sees the crate is blackened; close up, it emanates an aura of cold. If Heysoke is in the party (see page 29), then let her make a Void manoeuvre to give a +2 bonus to familiar's Average (+1) Notice skill, to determine that the crate is emitting a powerful aura of the terrifying Void—there is something highly dangerous inside, and something no self-respecting hero would see in enemy hands!

It's up to the PCs what they do—they may interrupt the proceedings violently, or let the deal go ahead and try and follow the Void Cultists.

The Stake-Out Opposition

The PCs are facing the following 12 individuals:

- 3 Men of the Black Galleys (see page 43 for stats).
- Two groups of 3 Void Cultists (see page 51 for stats) who fight.
- One group of 3 Void Cultists who carry away the Void Device, and who only fight if reached and attacked (their goal is to escape the PCs with the device).

It requires 2 individuals to carry the crate. The opposition will form an **obstacle** (page 11) with a difficulty equal to the number of defenders (so +10 to begin with!) to keep the PCs from the escaping Void Device. A character who does not attack in an exchange may try to overcome the obstacle and get to the Void Device crate bearers. The Void Cultists always attack someone trying to push through the obstacle.

The Cultists and Galleymen try to fend off the PCs while a group of Cultists escape into the Artifex Deeps with the crate. This takes 3 exchanges; on the 4th exchange, figure that the third group of cultists has gone, taking the crate with them. While the Galleymen will flee before dying, the remaining Cultists will defend the Void Device with their lives.

The Void Device is described in **Scene Five: The Attack on the Void Temple** (page 57).

If the PCs don't get involved, the scene ends with the crate and any captives delivered to the Void Cultists, who disappear into the Artifex Deeps (page 44) to the Void Temple (page 49). If they realise they're being followed, they quickly recruit help once in the Deeps: see **Scene Four: Penetrating the Undercity** (page 57).

Things to Find in the Galley

- On a Fair (+2) Investigation roll, the PCs find signs that at least one of the missing people was on the ship at some point.
- Annotations on the sea charts and land maps in the Captain's Cabin (area f) lead to Wormhollow Vale (page 42).

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Track the Void Cultists to **Scene Four: Penetrating the Undercity** (page 57) or even directly to **Scene Five: The Attack on the Void Temple** (page 57).
- Maybe see Jigizli the Void Cult contact: see **Scene 3: Investigation in the Artifex Wharves**.
- Maybe check out Zangazi's (page 39) if the trail goes cold.

Scene Three: Investigation in the Artifex Wharves

Situation Aspects: *Everyone's Afraid of Something; Nobody Talks About the Witch; You're Not From Around Here.*

Depending on how much momentum the PCs have in their investigation, it's likely they'll want to investigate the aboveground Artifex Wharves—even if it's only to check out Zangazi's and get into the Artifex Deeps.

Finding a Lead

The personalities in the Artifex Wharves have lots to say about recent events, and many have links to the Void Cult. Depending on the direction the PCs take, people can be encountered at their workplace, after hours in Zangazi's, or even on the street. The PCs should gradually find out information such as:

- There's a group of ne'er-do-wells operating in the neighbourhood, worse than the usual gangsters.
- Some people say they're part of an evil cult, dedicated to the Reavers or the Great Hegemonist.

The Void Device—The Swallower of Souls

The PCs probably encounter the Swallower of Souls here, although they may have come into contact with it in **Scene One: The Abductions on the Waterfront** *(page 52). It's a* ***Helemor mechanism,*** *tens of thousands of years old, a terrifying and lethal combination of technology and sorcery. It's so dangerous to even touch that it's transported in a blackened wooden crate.*

The Void Device is a silver apparatus, an open framework of struts and supports of square and tubular cross-section (60cm x 45cm x 45cm), with a 25cm-diameter globe of the blackest night at its centre. The globe emits a black "steam" which seems to bend light and distort reality. The apparatus emanates the most terrible cold.

Powers of the Void Device

- **Drain Life At a Distance:** *The device uses its Superb (+5) Void skill to sap energy from a single target up to 1 zone away, doing physical stress damage, resisted by Physique or an appropriate stunt, zoan, or power skill. Armour offers no protection.*
- **Aura of Cold:** *At the end of every exchange, any living thing in the same zone suffers a Superb (+5) Void cold attack, resisted with Void, Physique, or Athletics (the latter means you leap out of range). Armour protects against cold damage. When the crate is closed, the attack isn't effective (although you can still feel the cold).*
- **Swallow Soul:** *Anyone touching the black globe at the heart of the device must resist Superb (+5) Void with their own Void skill or be immediately taken out. If they survive, they gain a Void skill at Average (+1) and a* **Void aspect** *(something like* Touched By the Frozen Song of the Cosmic Void*). If they're taken out, their shrieking body is swallowed by a black flapping shape which then detaches itself from the device as a Medium (+0)-sized flay—a Void Elemental!*

Cultists may take the Void Device as an extra.

What To Do With the Void Device

A Superb (+5) Lore roll links the Void Device with the recent Devastation of Korudav and the ancient Bright Death of Larum (perhaps invoking the United by the Devastation of Korudav *game aspect). In other words, it's not something the PCs should be fiddling with!*

The PCs can destroy the device. All they have to do is destroy the framework containing the sphere of black energy at its heart. The moment the sphere rolls from its mount and touches the ground, it sets off an implosion which sucks in all matter in a 500-metre radius, destroying the Artifex Wharves and leaving a deep crater which rapidly fills up with water from the Ethereal Strait (Kados has a new lagoon!).

Assuming the PCs don't do that, the Temple of Khosht would be very interested to take a look at the Void Device. After all, it's a pereprae, a device of the ancients, and worthy of research! At the same time, if the Temple of Unthar got wind of it, they'd recommend it being nailed back up in its crate and locked away in the Viridian Temple archives in a permanent Chronoabdication field. Some things just can't be handled.

Both temples would provide the PCs with a Community aspect if they donated the Void Device. Then, of course, there are the legions. And the Crystal Citadel would surely be interested in having such a powerful artefact. You can trust the Avatar—assuming you can find him!

- Some say they're followers of the old Witch of Hespin, killed in a blaze in tunnels beneath the city—the Artifex Deeps—a year ago.
- Eventually the PCs should realise that all paths lead to the Artifex Deeps.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- The PCs will have realised they need to go into the Artifex Deeps. See **Scene Four: Penetrating the Undercity**.

Scene Four: Penetrating the Undercity

Situation Aspects: *There's a Whole City Underground; Distant Cries and Leaping Shadows; Doors and Alleys Everywhere.*

"Scene Four" is probably more than one scene: it's part city adventure and part classic dungeon crawl, the exploration of the Kados's lawless undercity and its desperate inhabitants. Let the players search the tunnels and chew on the scenery until they find a lead or the Void Cultists attack!

The Artifex Deeps are a weird "community", ancient, vicious, deadly—but not without a certain morbidly cynical humour. Life here is cheap, but not without fire.

Finding a Lead

By this point the PCs probably know they're hunting a band of cultists hidden beneath the Artifex Wharves. The community in the Deeps may surprise them! Eventually, they may realise that they're looking for a temple. They may wonder what was in that strange cold crate. They may also wonder who's leading the cultists—and if the Witch of Hespin did in fact die last year.

Sending in the Ninjas

Various conflict encounters are possible in the Artifex Deeps, each a scene in its own right. The PCs may encounter Brother Benveg and his Dependers, Boss Drag and his minions, and of course the Void Cultists.

Where Do We Go From Here?

- At some point the PCs should either happen upon, be led to, or figure out the location of, the Void Temple (page 49). It's even possible to get taken out (page 14) and wake up a prisoner there!

Scene Five: The Attack on the Void Temple

Situation Aspects: *Murderous Cultists, Cornered Rats; Disconcerting Howls; Returned From the Dead?*

This may be more than one scene, or a single climactic conflict to end the adventure. The PCs discover the Void Temple and battle against the cultists and the nefarious Witch of Hespin. If they haven't already, they discover the Void Device, the "Swallower of Souls", a weirdly living semi-sorcerous mechanism that uses the souls of living intelligent beings as power.

The Void Temple defenders are:

- Keleshtra, the Witch of Hespin (page 50), attacking using the device's Drain Life power, or feeding slaves to the Device and summoning flay (page 50);
- Zineworn, the Holy Warrior of the Void (page 51);
- 1 group of 3 Fair (+2) cultists for each PC;
- one flay per exchange that Keleshtra is able to feed a soul into the Void Device (see below).

Assuming a party of 5 PCs, this means seventeen or more defenders: Keleshtra, Zineworn, 5 groups of 3 cultists, and a variable number of flay. Zineworn and the cultists will be an obstacle to anyone trying to push through to Keleshtra, with a difficulty equal to their total number.

Who Is the Boss Fight Actually With?

The opposition the PCs face depends on how stealthy they've been. Sensible attackers don't announce their arrival. If warned, the Void Cultists muster every single defender to meet the PCs, with all of the available slaves (page 49) herded into the Unholy of Unholies to feed the Void Device and pump out flay. If the PCs are smart, stealthy, and lucky, they'll sneak in, bumping off sentries and avoiding an all-out battle until as late as possible.

Play the encounter by ear, and ensure the PCs' choices and actions have consequences. If the party is stupid and ill-prepared, this encounter can kill in horrible ways. If they're smart, let them end up facing Keleshtra and the Void Device, a handful of cultists, and one or two flay.

It's the final climactic scene. It's okay if everyone dies horribly. Have fun!

Epilogue: Rewards and Advancements, and Next Steps

The events of *The Swallower of Souls* are at an end. Did your players succeed? Did they survive?

Normally in a game of ***The Chronicles of Future Earth***, at this point you'd hand out **advancement points**, which your players can use to improve their character's abilities. Sometimes you'll do this after every session of

play; characters can improve their skills, add new ones, learn new magics and abilities, and even unlock new powers for their magical items, artefacts, and bound demons. In time, they'll rise to become movers and shakers of the Springtide Civilisations. What will they do with that power? The world cries out for Heroes—will they answer the call?

This introductory adventure has dropped a few hints along the way of adventures to come. You can design your own right now, using the information provided in this Quickstart; there are maps, rules, and ideas which you can explore further. Also, we're providing a continuation of events begun here in our first adventure for ***The Chronicles of Future Earth***, *Wormhollow Vale*, a massive campaign on the Autocracy's wild northern frontier. You can play it standalone, or you can take your characters from *The Swallower of Souls*, as they find the rot they have uncovered goes deep within…

Check Out "The Chronicles of Future Earth" Core Book!

We hope you've enjoyed reading and playing this Quickstart, and the taste it's given you of ***The Chronicles of Future Earth—Cosmic Fantasy Roleplaying in the Post-Historical Age***. We hope you'll support our Kickstarter for the game line, live now at **www.kickstarter.com/projects/328469751/The-Chronicles-of-Future-Earth-Roleplaying-Game**, where we're proposing a complete full-colour hardback roleplaying game, featuring:

- Complete game rules based on the Fate Core System, tailored for cosmic fantasy roleplaying;
- Kindreds and homelands for human, jeniri, and esteri characters in the lands of the Springtide Civilisations;
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- Rules and descriptions for the mystical arts of Tiridat and Hsuntach, the Paladoi Mindstones, and the mysterious artefacts of the Ancients;
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- A bestiary of creatures found in the Earth of the Post-Historical Age;
- Rules and suggestions for playing in the "Post-Historical Age" of Earth's far future, including how to bring its themes and tropes to life at your table;
- And much, much more!

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- Chronicles Dice and Tokens;
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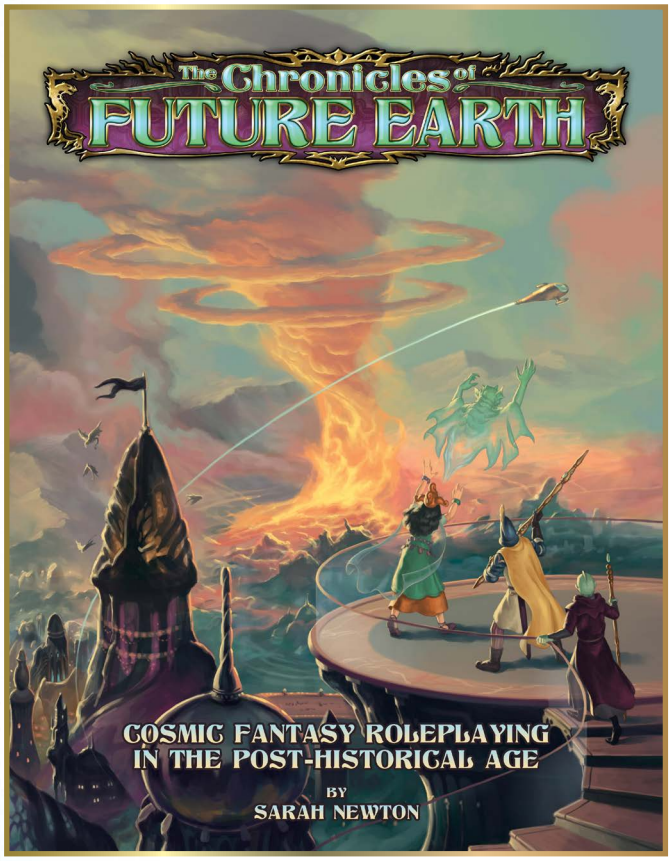

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