

MODERN AGE

QUICKSTART

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**STREAMLINED RULES
FOR YOUR FIRST ADVENTURE**

MODERN AGE

QUICKSTART

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WELCOME TO MODERN AGE!

You hold in your hands a gateway to the *Modern AGE* roleplaying game, where you play a character much as you might in a video game, but with pen and paper, and friends to play other roles. This is a quickstart: cut-down rules and an adventure designed to introduce you to the full game's rules and ideas. It includes everything you need to start playing right away, from the streamlined rules and adventure we mentioned, to characters you can pick up and play right away, and a setting to play in (see below). We at Green Ronin hope you'll enjoy giving it a try.

Modern AGE is designed to go along with many settings, from those of the books, films and games you enjoy, to settings you invent yourself. If they take place between the 18th and 21st centuries, you can use the game to run adventures in them.

To make this quickstart work, however, we're going to have to make some decisions for you. First off, you'll be playing in a setting we'll call the *Gates of Vigrith*. This is a world that looks like our own, except that portals exist which lead to Vigrith, a realm of magic and strange creatures. Most people don't know about the portals, or the existence of magic – but you do. You also understand that if enough people know about the portals, and the supernatural, it could have dire consequences. We'll talk about this setting more on p. 13, but remember: this is just *one* of the settings you can use with the game. Green Ronin will introduce others, such as the *World of Lazarus*, a near-future setting, based on Greg Rucka's *Lazarus* comic series, to use alongside *Modern AGE*. Furthermore, to fit many different stories, the game includes modes of play, but this quickstart only uses Cinematic mode, designed to

emulate high-octane action, where heroes are tough. Other modes can be found in the full game.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

There are three parts to this quickstart. The first is a condensed guide to the rules of the *Modern AGE* RPG, including a reference sheet the players can keep handy during play. The second is an adventure called **Burning Bright**. The third is a set of five pre-generated Player Characters.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

To play this quickstart you'll need at least two people, though four to six is best. One will be the Game Master (GM) and the others will be players. You'll also need at least three regular six-sided dice. Ideally, one of the dice should be a different color from the others. You'll also need copies of various portions of this quickstart, but more on that later. Pencils and paper, or an electronic means of recording information at the table, are also necessary.

IF YOU'VE NEVER ROLEPLAYED BEFORE

If you're interested in giving this thing a try but you have no idea what tabletop roleplaying is all about, that's great. Roleplaying is some of the most fun you'll ever have with

ABOUT THE RULES

The condensed rules presented in the *Modern AGE Quickstart* cover all the basics, but you should be aware that many rules included in the full game have been left out. None of the character generation rules are included, for example. Many rules have been simplified or narrowed for use in a single context. Various areas have been significantly streamlined to ease you into the system. If you run **Burning Bright** with the full *Modern AGE* rules, expand what you see in the adventure to work with them.

your friends, but to teach the basics of roleplaying is a bit beyond this quickstart. Grab your computer, fire up your web browser, and search for some basic info. The Wikipedia page “tabletop role-playing game” is a little dry, but as good a starting point as any. Or better yet, track down a friend who’s done this kind of thing before and rope them into showing you how it’s done. The full *Modern AGE* game also introduces roleplaying, and gives advice to Game Masters. Trust us, you’re going to love it.

BEFORE YOU PLAY

Before the group gets together to play, the Game Master should read this whole quickstart, print out one copy of each pre-generated Player Character, and print out enough copies of the reference sheet so each player can have one. Other players can read the rules section of the quickstart if they want to, but shouldn’t read **Burning Bright**. It may also help the players get into the world if you print or copy the page that describes the setting (p. 13) so each player can read that, too.

THE CHARACTER SHEET

All the information that a player needs can be found on their character sheet. We’ll start a tour of the *Modern AGE* character sheet by looking at its backbone, the nine **abilities**.

- **Accuracy** measures aim, precision, and finesse, particularly in using ranged weapons such as guns and thrown weapons.
- **Communication** covers social skills, personal interaction, and the overall art of making friends and influencing people.
- **Constitution** is your character’s overall health, fortitude, and resistance to harm, illness, and fatigue.
- **Dexterity** covers deftness, hand-eye coordination, agility, and reaction time, from doing delicate work to dodging attacks.
- **Fighting** measures your character’s abilities in close combat, with hand-to-hand weapons or unarmed methods.
- **Intelligence** measures a character’s reasoning, memory, problem-solving, overall knowledge, and education.

- **Perception** is the ability to pick up on and notice things using any of the character’s senses.
- **Strength** is sheer muscle-power and the ability to apply it, from lifting heavy things to feats of athletics.
- **Willpower** measures self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.

Abilities are usually scored on a numeric scale from -2 (quite poor) to 4 (truly outstanding), though exceptional characters and creatures may have scores outside this range. Your character’s ability scores provide a useful snapshot description of the areas where your character is outstanding, above average, poor, or just average, and you use ability scores to determine the outcome of most actions in the game. A score of 1 is considered average for player characters and other extraordinary people. 0 is average for everyday individuals: the sort of folks who avoid adventures and weird capers.

Some abilities have one or more words in their box. These are **focuses**, which are areas of expertise that fall under that ability. These focuses are generally self-explanatory. For example, characters with the Persuasion focus are especially good at using their Communication ability to persuade someone. It’s important to note that characters don’t need to have a focus to try something. A focus is just an added benefit for characters with special aptitude or training. For example, characters without Persuasion can still try to persuade people. They simply use their Communication score without an additional bonus.

When abilities and focuses are written out in the rules, or an adventure, the focus follows its ability. You might read “Communication (Persuasion)” or “Perception (Seeing),” for example.

Next, you’ll notice some other numbers on your character sheet.

- **Speed** governs how fast your character can move. The Run and Move actions (see the Actions section) use Speed to determine how far you can go on your turn.
- **Defense** is the target number (TN) that your opponent needs to roll to hit your character in battle. (More on target numbers is coming soon.)
- **Armor Rating** measures your character’s physical protection. The Armor Rating is subtracted from any damage done to your character, including damage from spells, unless the attack somehow bypasses your armor.
- **Toughness**, like Armor Rating, subtracts from the damage of incoming attacks. However, it doesn’t come from equipment, but from your character’s raw endurance and will to survive. Add Toughness and Armor Rating together and subtract the total from an attack’s damage. Anything that bypasses Armor Rating also bypasses Toughness. The sheets for each character already combine both ratings for you.
- **Health** is the amount of damage that your character can take before they start dying.

Relationships are special emotional connections with other characters and sometimes, even with ideas such as Honor or Vengeance. These give your character extra motivation to succeed. You can draw on your Relationship once per game session to gain extra stunt points, which you can use even if you don’t roll doubles.

MODERN AGE

PERSONAL DETAILS

AGE: [] HEIGHT: [] WEIGHT: []

ORIGIN INFORMATION

BACKGROUND: []

SOCIAL CLASS: []

PROFESSION: []

DRIVE: []

ABILITIES

ACCURACY: [] RATING: []

COMMUNICATION: [] RATING: []

CONSTITUTION: [] RATING: []

DEXTERITY: [] RATING: []

PERCEPTION: [] RATING: []

STRENGTH: [] RATING: []

WILLPOWER: [] RATING: []

RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL TIES: []

PREFERRED STUNTS & OTHER NOTES: []

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: []

MOVE RATE

LEVEL: []

MOVE IN YARDS: []

RUN IN YARDS: []

HEALTH

SPEED: [] DEFENSE: [] TOUGHNESS: [] ARMOR: [] PENALTY: [] HEALTH: []

SPEED & DEFENSES

ARMOR TYPE: []

TALENTS & ABILITIES

TALENTS, SPECIALIZATIONS, & EXTRAORDINARY POWERS: []

WEAPON STATISTICS

WEAPON: [] ATTACK ROLL: [] DAMAGE: []

EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT: []

RESOURCES

EXPERIENCE: [] RESOURCES: []

Furthermore, each character has a **background**, a **profession**, and a **drive**. Your character’s background is the lifestyle they grew up with, their profession is how they’ve gotten along in the world, and their drive is a personality factor that motivates them to do unusual – even dangerous – things.

CHARACTER TYPES

Modern AGE doesn’t have the character classes used in many other roleplaying games. As characters develop beyond their backgrounds and professions, they choose unique paths. For efficiency, each sample character has a special set of skills:

- Avery is especially skilled in hand-to-hand combat.
- Dion has military experience as a medic, and knows how to handle firearms.
- River has excellent social skills, and is good at influencing people or getting information from them.
- Trace is a capable investigator, good at finding clues and noticing unusual things.
- Val is an arcanist, which is someone who can use magic (“wizard,” or “mage” are considered a bit

old-fashioned). Val knows magical fields of study, called Arcana: Fire Arcana and Digital Arcana.

You can find their character sheets at the end of this quickstart. Note that each of these characters can have any gender or appearance you like.

Over time, characters can increase in **level**, improving their abilities and gaining other benefits. The pre-generated characters here are level 1 characters. Some of the Non-Player Characters (NPCs) in **Burning Bright** are higher-level, but the specifics are unimportant. Their stat blocks (the game stats they have, which are like Player Characters’ game statistics) accurately reflect their capabilities.

Characters also have **talents** that give them specific benefits which arise through natural aptitude or specialized training. You may note that talents appear to give different benefits to different PCs and NPCs. That’s because talents come in several grades (novice, expert, and master). To keep it simple, the descriptions of the talents in each case have simply been adjusted. The pre-generated characters’ talents are explained on their character sheets and stat blocks. Characters with **powers**, and the **power points** these require, are explained in the **Extraordinary Powers** section on p. 11.

ARMOR

Armor provides an Armor Rating that, along with Toughness, is subtracted from damage inflicted on the character. In this quickstart, just add Armor Rating and Toughness, and subtract the total from damage. Other games using the full *Modern AGE* rules handle Toughness differently. Furthermore, in the full rules, some types of armor treat certain sources of damage differently, depending on whether it's inflicted by

HAND TO HAND WEAPONS		
WEAPON	DAMAGE	MIN. STR.
Focus: Brawling		
Brawling Strike	1d3+2	—
Focus: Short Hafted		
Axe	2d6+2	1
Club	1d6+2	-1
Hammer	1d6+2	0
Focus: Long Hafted		
Sledgehammer	2d6+5	3
Staff	1d6+3	—
Focus: Light Blades		
Dagger	1d6+3	—
Fencing Sword	1d6+5	0
Focus: Heavy Blades		
Long Sword	2d6+2	1
Two-handed Sword	3d6+2	3
Focus: Flexible		
Light Chain	1d6+2	1
Heavy Chain	1d6+5	2

FIREARMS AND OTHER RANGED WEAPONS					
WEAPON	DAMAGE	MIN. STR.	RoF	RANGE	RELOAD
Focus: Pistols					
SA Handgun	2d6+2	0	SA	55 yards	Minor
Focus: Longarms					
Hunting Rifle	2d6+4	1	SS	400 yards	Major
Sniper Rifle	2d6+4	1	SS	600 yards	Minor
Focus: Shotguns					
Combat Shotgun	2d6+4	1	SS	75 yards	Minor
Focus: Assault Rifles					
Automatic Rifle	2d6+5	1	A	550 yards	Major
Focus: SMGs					
SMG	2d6+2	1	A	200 yards	Minor
Focus: Bows					
Compound Bow	1d6+4	1	SS	60 yards	Minor
Crossbow	2d6+3	1	SS	50 yards	Minor
Focus: Thrown					
Throwing Knife	1d6+2	—	SS	15 + Strength yards	Minor

firearms, or less sophisticated weapons such as knives, but the quickstart rules treat all damage as the same. Armor also applies an Armor Penalty to Speed and Defense. Your character might be able to shrug off damage when wearing armor, but will move slowly, and are more likely to get hit.

WEAPONS & WEAPON GROUPS

Weapons are divided into different groups. These groups are focuses. If a character has the correct focus, they earn a +2 bonus to attack rolls. This is already figured into the bonuses listed for both Player Characters and Non-Player Characters. Note that there is no penalty if a character lacks a weapon's weapon group focus.

Each weapon is described by the weapon group it belongs to, the damage it inflicts, and the minimum Strength ability required to wield it. Missile weapons have three additional statistics: Rate of Fire, Range, and Reload.

Rate of Fire (RoF) tells you whether the weapon is single shot (SS), semiautomatic (SA) or automatic (A). Semiautomatic and automatic firearms add the Stunt Die to the damage of a successful attack.

Range is the distance in yards in which a character can fire that weapon with no penalties. Past that distance, the character suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls. Shots farther than 1.5 × the weapon's range aren't possible.

Reload tells whether it requires a major or minor action to reload a firearm or otherwise ready a ranged weapon. (For thrown weapons, the action listed is for pulling out another weapon, not retrieving the original one). In these quickstart rules, you must take one of these actions to reload each round for a single shot weapon, and must take the listed action to reload a semiautomatic or automatic weapon whenever you miss, and the Stunt Die (see the next page) comes up 1 or 2.



TESTS

Modern AGE uses three standard six-sided dice (3d6) for tests. Two of the dice should be one color and the third die a different color. The different-colored die is known as the **Stunt Die**. You'll make tests to find out whether you succeed or fail any time a chancy situation comes up in the game.

SIMPLE TESTS

To make **simple tests**, which are the most common kind, roll 3d6 and add the relevant ability. If you have an appropriate focus for that ability, add +2 more. For example, when attempting to avoid someone who jumps in front of your car, you roll 3d6, add your Dexterity score, and add +2 if you have the Driving focus. A character may only add one ability score and one focus bonus per test. Always remember that you don't need to have a focus to try a test. Appropriate focuses for a given test are listed in parenthesis after the ability the test calls for. For example, "an Intelligence (Medicine) test."

The sum of your die roll, ability, and focus are compared to a **target number** (TN) that represents the difficulty of the test. The harder it is to succeed, the higher the TN. If your sum matches or beats the TN, then you have won the test.

$$3D6 + \text{ABILITY SCORE} + \text{FOCUS BONUS (+2)} \\ \text{VS. TARGET NUMBER}$$

Sometimes the circumstances of a test will make it easier or more difficult than normal, giving a bonus or penalty to the total. Such bonuses are rarely greater than +3, and penalties

rarely worse than -3. In some cases, it's helpful to know not just whether you succeed, but how well you do. The quality of a success is determined by the unmodified result on the roll's Stunt Die—the different-colored one of the three dice.

For example, a character trying to blend in at an elite nightclub must make a Communication (Etiquette) test. Assuming the character succeeds at the test in the first place, a Stunt Die result of 1 may mean that the character commits a faux pas and looks like they were let in as a favor, while a Stunt Die result of 5 or 6 might mean that the character conducts themselves well enough to be admitted to a private table. In most cases, the GM determines the precise effects of the Stunt Die by deciding how it turned out or, in certain cases like combat, allowing points from the Stunt Die to be spent on stunts (see **Combat** and other sections of these rules for stunts).

OPPOSED TESTS

Sometimes you must pit your character's ability against another character's ability. This is called an **opposed test**. In an opposed test, all sides make simple tests simultaneously, but rather than comparing their results to a target number, the character with the highest total wins. If there's a tie, the character with the highest Stunt Die wins. If it's still a tie, the highest ability score wins. The counterparts in an opposed test sometimes use different abilities. For example, a character attempting to sneak past a guard rolls Dexterity (Stealth) against the guard's Perception (Hearing). If one character has an advantage over their opponent that's not already reflected by their ability or focus, those circumstances may provide a bonus or penalty to the roll. Such modifiers are usually no worse than -3 or better than +3.

FOCUS LIST

For your reference, here is the full list of focuses in the *Modern AGE* core rulebook. In these quickstart rules, a character never needs a specific focus to attempt a test.

- **ACCURACY:** Assault Rifles, Bows, Black Powder Weapons, Grenades, Longarms, Pistols, Shotguns, SMGs, Thrown
- **COMMUNICATION:** Animal Handling, Bargaining, Deception, Disguise, Etiquette, Expression, Gambling, Investigation, Leadership, Performance, Persuasion, Seduction
- **CONSTITUTION:** Propelling, Running, Stamina, Swimming, Tolerance
- **DEXTERITY:** Acrobatics, Crafting, Driving, Forgery, Initiative, Sleight of Hand, Piloting, Riding, Sabotage, Stealth
- **FIGHTING:** Brawling, Flexible Weapons, Grappling, Heavy Blades, Light Blades, Long Hafted, Short Hafted
- **INTELLIGENCE:** Anthropology, Art, Astronomy, Biology, Business, Cartography, Chemistry, Computers, Cryptography, Current Affairs, Earth Sciences, Electronics, Engineering, Evaluation, Explosives, History, Homemaking, Law, Medicine, Navigation, Occultism, Physics, Research, Security, Tactics, Theology, Tinkering
- **PERCEPTION:** Empathy, Hearing, Searching, Seeing, Smelling, Tasting, Touching, Tracking
- **STRENGTH:** Climbing, Intimidation, Jumping, Machining, Might, Steering
- **WILLPOWER:** Courage, Faith, Morale, Self-Discipline

ADVANCED TESTS

Sometimes a test is so complicated or time-consuming that it seems inappropriate to settle it with a single test. Examples might include researching esoteric facts in a library, navigating a ship through a storm to a far-off shore, or competing with another public speaker to win a crowd's approval. **Advanced tests** are used in these situations. Advanced tests are basic or opposed tests that require a series of rolls before success can be achieved. Each individual roll is carried out just like a basic or opposed test.

On a sufficient roll—one that meets the TN or exceeds the opponent's result—the result of your Stunt Die is added to a running total. On an insufficient roll, nothing is added. (Or your opponent's running total is increased, for an opposed advanced test.) Success at the advanced test is achieved when the running total meets or exceeds the advanced test's success threshold. Importantly, each roll takes a certain amount of time—a round, a minute, an hour, or any other increment—depending on the test, so an advanced test can be used to determine how long a task takes. Sometimes each roll also consumes some amount of resources. So, usually, an advanced test can only be failed if time or resources run out, or if—in an opposed advanced test—your opponent wins the test first.

COMBAT

Combat in *Modern AGE* is very easy to execute. An order of initiative is determined once, at the beginning of the fight, and then all combatants take turns in that order. Each cycle of all characters taking one turn each is called a **round**. When each round ends, a new round begins, using the same initiative order.

INITIATIVE

At the beginning of combat, each combatant makes an **initiative test** using Dexterity (Initiative). This is a simple test, but rather than being compared to a target number, all combatants' test results are ranked. Combatants will then act in that order, with higher results going before lower results. Ties are broken the same way as in opposed tests. The GM will usually roll separately for each important NPC, but roll for minor NPCs in groups who all act at the same time, to keep things simple.

ACTIONS

On their turns, characters take **actions**. There are two types of actions: **major** and **minor**. On any given one of their turns a character takes one major action and one minor action. If the character wishes, however, they may take two minor actions instead. A character may also decline either or both actions and do nothing.

The most common major and minor actions are listed here. The GM can adjudicate other actions, using these as a guide. Actions even less substantial than the minor actions listed here are "free" actions. Examples might include shouting something simple or looking around. A character can take as many free actions as they wish as long as the GM agrees they have time.

MAJOR ACTIONS

MELEE ATTACK

You attack an enemy within 2 yards in hand-to-hand combat.

RANGED ATTACK

You attack an enemy by firing or throwing a missile weapon.

RUN/CHASE

You travel up to double your Speed in yards. You must already be in a standing position to do this.

If you are running after someone who is also using this action, or they are running after you when you are, you have a chase on your hands. This requires an advanced Constitution (Running) test (TN 13) from each participant). Track accumulated points from the Stunt Die for each roll. The character with the highest Speed adds +1 on top of the Stunt Die result for each successful test.

The first person to hit 10 accumulated points in an urban area, or 15 points in an outdoor or suburban area, may



choose to get away for good. If two people in a chase are within 2 points of each other, they are virtually neck-in-neck. Vehicles and mounts may also be involved in chases, though they use their own ability focuses, and get bonuses against slower participants.

DEFEND

You gain a +2 bonus to your Defense until the beginning of your next turn.

FIRST AID

You provide quick medical assistance to an injured ally. You must be adjacent to your ally and have bandages ready. This is a TN 11 Intelligence (Medicine) test. If you succeed, your ally gets back an amount of Health equal to the Stunt Die + your Intelligence (minimum 1 Health point).

MINOR ACTIONS

READY

You unsheathe a weapon, pull out a tool, or otherwise get ready to use some stowed item on your person. As part of this action, you can also put away something you already had in hand.

MOVE

You travel up to your Speed in yards. If you limit your travel to half your Speed you can also fall prone, stand up, or mount or dismount a horse or vehicle.

AIM

You carefully plan your next strike. If your next action is a melee attack or ranged attack (even on your next turn), you gain a +1 bonus on that attack roll.

ACTIVATE

This action is used with certain powers or items whose descriptions say something like, "Use an activate action to..."

MAKING ATTACKS

When attacking an enemy, you make a simple test. The target number is your target's Defense. On a success, the attacker inflicts damage. On a failure, the attack does nothing. Each pre-generated character and NPC stat block has a pre-calculated attack bonus that includes the appropriate ability score, focus bonus, and any other bonuses that always apply. If you need to figure out other attacks on the fly, use the following rules.

MELEE ATTACK

This is a close-range attack on an adjacent opponent with a weapon such as a fist, knife or sword. Roll Fighting with a TN equal to the opponent's Defense, and a +2 bonus if the character has a focus that covers the weapon being used. Add Strength to damage.

RANGED ATTACK

This is an attack with a firearm or other weapon that's shot or thrown. Roll Dexterity with a TN equal to the opponent's

Defense, and a +2 bonus if the character has a focus that covers the weapon being used. Attacks on enemies farther away than a weapon's Range (but no farther than 1.5 Range) suffer a -2 penalty. Add Perception to damage.

RELOADING

When you attack with a firearm, you're assumed to be getting as many shots off as you can to do maximum damage. Instead of tracking your bullets, the rules assume you reload whenever you can and usually have enough ammunition. However,

sometimes you must pause to reload. If you're using a single shot (SS) weapon, you must reload each round, using the action type noted for the weapon. If you're using a semiautomatic or automatic weapon, you must take the listed action to reload whenever you miss and the Stunt Die comes up 1 or 2.

INFLECTING DAMAGE

Each pre-generated character and NPC stat block lists the damage each of their weapons inflicts. To inflict damage, simply make that roll and subtract the results from the target's Health. If the target has armor, though, subtract their Armor Rating from the damage before reducing Health, unless the damage is "penetrating" damage, in which case armor is not helpful. Remember that semiautomatic and automatic firearms add the result of the Stunt Die to any successful attack.

When a character has Health 0, they are either **dying**, or have been **knocked out** for 2d6 minutes. The attacker chooses whether the character is knocked out or dying, except in the case of hazards like explosives and gas, in which case the GM decides what happens. A dying character can talk, but can't take other actions. A knocked-out character is unconscious, and can't perceive or do anything. Conscious or not, a character at 0 Health can't take any actions. Note that any injury that would drop a character to negative Health just reduces it to 0. In other words, there's no such thing as Health below 0 in the game.

Unless they receive first aid to increase their Health, a dying character perishes in a number of rounds equal to 2 + their Constitution. An unconscious character can be revived with a major action without the need to roll, but if at 0 Health, can't do anything unless given first aid.

The GM may rule that NPCs simply die when their Health reaches 0, rather than bothering to wait the requisite number of turns, or are knocked out for as long as it would be convenient for the story.

STUNTS

Stunts are one of the most exciting aspects of the *Modern AGE* RPG. Here's how it works. Whenever you make a successful attack and also get doubles on the roll, you get stunt points (SP) you can use to perform stunts. "Doubles" just means that two of the dice from your test show the same result. It doesn't matter if one of the dice is the Stunt Die or not. The number of stunt points you get is equal to the number showing on the Stunt Die. You must use your stunt points right away, or they're wasted. You spend stunt points on the Combat Stunt Table. You can choose any combination of stunts as long as

GENERAL COMBAT STUNTS

SP Cost	STUNT
1-3	DUCK AND WEAVE: Gain +1 to Defense per SP spent until the beginning of your next turn.
1+	SKIRMISH: Move yourself or your attack's target 2 yards in any direction for each 1 SP you spend; you can choose Skirmish more than once per turn.
2	DOUBLE-TEAM: Choose one ally to make an immediate attack on your target, who must be within range and sight of the ally. Your ally must have a loaded missile weapon to attack at range.
2	KNOCK PRONE: Knock your enemy prone. Melee attacks against a prone foe gain a +1, but ranged attacks against a prone foe suffer a -1.
2	TAUNT: Roll Communication (Deception) vs. Willpower (Self-Discipline) against any target within 10 yards of you; if you win, they must attack or oppose you in some way on their next turn.
2	VICIOUS BLOW: Inflict an extra 1d6 damage on this attack.
3	BLOCKADE: Move up to 3 yards to position yourself between a foe and something or someone else. Until the beginning of your next turn, that foe must succeed at a minor action Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Might) test vs. your Defense to reach whatever or whoever you're protecting.
3	LIGHTNING ATTACK: Make a second attack against the same target or a different one within range and sight; you must have a loaded missile weapon to attack at range.
3	SHOCK AND AWE: When you succeed at a non-attack physical feat or take an opponent out, anyone who witnesses it rolls Willpower (Courage) or (Morale) vs. your Strength (Intimidation). If you win, they suffer a -1 to the next opposed roll they make against you, or a -1 to their Defense vs. your next attack against them, whichever comes first.
4	SEIZE THE INITIATIVE: Move to the top of the initiative order until someone else seizes the initiative. You may get to take another turn before some others act again.

BATTLE MAPS AND MINIATURES

The *Modern AGE* RPG defaults to descriptive combat where the GM and players keep a mental picture of the adventure's evolving battlefields. If you prefer to use a battle map and miniatures, however, *Modern AGE* can accommodate them easily. Square and hex grids work equally well. The best scale is one where each square or hex is 2 yards across.



you don't spend more stunt points than you have. (You can spend fewer, but any leftover stunt points vanish after you do.) You can only choose each stunt once per attack, though, except for the Skirmish stunt, which can be chosen as many times as you wish. NPCs can perform stunts just like Player Characters can.

RELATIONSHIP STUNTS

In addition to getting stunt points by rolling doubles, once per session you can get as many stunt points as your Relationship rating to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to that Relationship. You choose this after you see if you succeed. You might use these points to help a friend or lover the Relationship lists, or battle an enemy noted in the Relationship. If you *also* roll doubles, you can combine these stunt points with the stunt points you earned on the Stunt Die.

HEALTH AND HEALING

There are three ways to recover lost Health. The first is through the First Aid action, as described. The second is to be the target of a Heal spell. The third is to take a five-minute breather after a combat encounter. At the end of the breather you recover 6 + your Constitution in Health. But you can't take a breather if you have Health 0. Special situations and powers also provide opportunities to heal. The rules for these are explained when those situations come up.

EXPLORATION & SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

During adventures, you'll get involved in scenes other than ones where combat happens. *Modern AGE* calls these occasions **exploration encounters** if they concentrate on finding information, dealing with the environment, and general problem-solving. If a scene is mainly about speaking to and otherwise interacting with people, be it to find things out or get favors, the game calls it a **social encounter**. Mixed exploration and social encounters are possible as well.

In most cases, using the basic rules, and rolling ability tests against target numbers, will get you through these encounters. It is possible to use stunts during these types of encounters as well, by rolling doubles or using a Relationship. Tables in this section list a small number of the Exploration and Social Stunts available in *Modern AGE*.

EXPLORATION ENCOUNTERS

Exploration encounters can feature a variety of events and challenges. These usually don't happen round by round, but over periods of time determined by the GM. The most common events include the following.

EXPLORATION STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER: You reveal that this test was part of your plan all along, granting a bonus equal to SP spent on one ally's next test during the same encounter to accomplish the same goal. You must make this decision before the ally rolls.
2	SPEED DEMON: You complete your test in half the time it would otherwise take.
3	THE UPPER HAND: If your success leads to combat within a moment or two, you receive a +3 on your initiative roll.
4	WITH A FLOURISH: You impress everyone who watches you with your showmanship. Gain a +1 to opposed tests against them for the rest of the encounter.

SOCIAL STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	IMPRESS: Gain a +1 per SP spent to your next social test against the same target as this test, during this encounter.
2	AND ANOTHER THING: Make a second, related test as part of your action, before anyone else has a chance to respond or make any tests of their own.
2	HIDDEN MESSAGE: Your words convey a different message to one person than to everyone else who hears them; the character you choose is the only one who can decipher your true meaning.
3	OBJECTION!: You step in on someone else's behalf. Another character in the scene may use your ability + focus instead of their own next time they oppose a test during this encounter.
4	CLASS CLOWN: Your words lighten the mood, imposing a -2 penalty to all enemies' initiative rolls if a fight breaks out during this encounter.

ATTITUDES

3D6 ROLL (OR PICK)	ATTITUDE	INTERACTION MODIFIER
3 or less	Very Hostile	-3
4-5	Hostile	-2
6-8	Standoffish	-1
9-11	Neutral	+0
12-14	Open	+1
15-17	Friendly	+2
18+	Very Friendly	+3

INTERACTING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

You may be called upon to sneak past guards, walk across a narrow ledge, or pick a lock. If the challenge is another person, an opposed test is called for. Otherwise, a basic test against a TN representing the difficulty of the action is what you'll use to see if you succeed or fail. Use abilities and focuses that fit the task—Dexterity (Sleight of Hand focus) to pick a pocket, for example. The GM has the final word on which tests, abilities and focuses to use. The higher the number on the Stunt Die, the better you did, whether you rolled doubles or not.

INVESTIGATIONS

An investigation is a catch-all term for any action where you're trying to get information. Generally, if you need to find a lead to go forward in the adventure, like a matchbook for the club you need to find, or footprints leading in the right direction, the GM should automatically provide it. You'll usually use

Perception and Intelligence tests, and focuses related to the lead (such as Computers to find information on a laptop), to get more information out of them—but you can always just try to guess. When you succeed, the GM gives you a clue: a fact about what's going on. You can also use investigation tests to find out information that isn't directly related to the adventure, but may help you in other ways. In those situations, you don't automatically find the lead. You must make a test to discover it in the first place.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Social encounters work much like exploration encounters, except the focus is on interacting with other people. Social encounters normally use basic tests when you want to make a general impression on a group, or opposed tests when you're trying to influence someone to do or say something that would inconvenience or embarrass them, or seems somehow counter to their interests. Social actions usually use the Communications ability and its focuses, and in opposed tests, are often resisted by Willpower and its focuses. In situations where you're trying to get results through threats, you may use Strength (Intimidation) to sway an NPC. Social actions intended to discover information can use the same lead and clue format as investigations, at the GM's discretion.

In situations where the NPC's attitude toward the characters matters, GM decides what it is (or rolls on the table below if they don't feel like picking) toward you and applies the listed modifiers to your Communications tests to get them to aid or usefully interact with you.

If an opposed test is necessary, the NPC rolls Willpower, with the focus depending on the situation. Willpower (Faith) would be used in situations where the NPC is being asked to set aside their beliefs, for example, while Willpower (Courage)

POWER STUNTS

SP COST	POWER STUNT
1-3	POWERFUL MANIFESTATION (CORE): Increase the Force of your power by 1 per stunt point spent, to a maximum of 3.
2	SKILLFUL POWER: Reduce the power point cost of the power by 1. This can reduce the cost to 0. If the power requires a fatigue test, reduce its target number by 2.
2	MIGHTY POWER: If the power does damage, one target of your choice takes an extra d6 damage.
3	LASTING POWER: If the power has a duration beyond instantaneous, it remains in effect twice as long with no additional power point cost. Powers that last until the end of the encounter are extended by 1d6 minutes instead.
4	FAST USE: After you resolve this power, you can immediately use another. The second power must require a major action or a minor action's worth of time to use. If you roll doubles on the roll to use the power, you do not get any more stunt points.
4	IMPOSING POWER: The power manifests in a much more dramatic fashion than usual, or perhaps radiates a sinister aura. Until the beginning of your next turn, anyone attempting to make a melee attack against you must make a successful Willpower (Courage) test. The target number (TN) is 10 + your Willpower ability. Those who fail must take a move or defend action instead.

could resist attempts to frighten the NPC. However, if the NPC would be forced to do something self-harming or something they find immoral or disgusting, they automatically win an opposed test to resist the suggestion.

PCs cannot be swayed by social actions, but you can always make tests and use the results as advice to help you decide how your character would act.

EXTRAORDINARY POWERS: MAGIC

Extraordinary powers don't exist in all *Modern AGE* campaigns, but this adventure includes one class of power: **magic**. (Psychic powers are also covered in the *Modern AGE* core rulebook.) Magic spells belong to **arcana**, each of which represents a form of magic. Of the sample PCs, Val is capable of casting spells. This character is known as an *arcanist* for that reason.

Casting spells is straightforward. An arcanist must know a spell (that is, have it listed on their sheet or in their stat block) to use it. They must then spend an action and expend power points to cast it. Each spell's description lists the type of action—major or minor—needed to cast it. Once an arcanist has spent an action and the necessary power points to cast a spell, they must make a **power test** to see what happens. This is an Intelligence test whose target number depends on the spell, and is listed in each case. On a failure, nothing happens. On a success, the effects of the spell are carried out, with one important complication: Sometimes a spell's target(s) are allowed a **resistance test** of some kind to avoid some or all of the spell's effects. Instructions for these resistance tests are part of each spell's description.

Arcanists regain 1d6+ their Willpower in spent power points for each full hour they rest, and all power points after eight hours of sleep.

POWER STUNTS

Characters with extraordinary powers may use them to perform **Power Stunts**. They must succeed and either score doubles (gaining stunt points equal to the roll on the Stunt

Die), use a Relationship (gaining stunt points equal to the Relationship's rating), or harness both (gaining stunt points from both sources, combined), as for other types of stunts. "Force" is the target number to resist a power's effects. In these quickstart rules, Power Stunts are used for magical spells. The table below lists the range of available Power Stunts.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-Player Characters (NPCs) use all the same rules that apply to Player Character heroes, unless otherwise noted. In **Burning Bright**, NPCs are described with stat blocks. Combatants have longer stat blocks than NPCs who aren't likely to be involved in fights. Both types have their abilities and focuses listed. Combatants also have Speed, Health, Defense, Armor Rating, attack statistics, and power descriptions. NPCs also have a Favored Stunts entry, and some have special stunts only they can use. These are suggestions to help the GM keep things moving along briskly, but the GM is free to choose other stunts.

FURTHER ADVENTURES AWAIT!

Hopefully this quickstart will whet your appetite for more *Modern AGE*. If you have questions, or want more, the *Modern AGE Basic Rulebook* is your next stop. It contains everything you need to run adventures for PCs of levels 1–20, including an introductory adventure **A Speculative Venture**, designed to suit many different campaigns. The *Modern AGE* roleplaying game is designed for any game world set between the 18th and 21st centuries (or similar fantasy worlds), but already has one supplement, the *World of Lazarus*, detailing a campaign world you can use immediately. The *World of Lazarus* covers the setting of Greg Rucka's *Lazarus* comic series, where sixteen families struggle for hegemony in a feudal near future, with Lazari—technologically enhanced humans—enforcing their wills.



BURNING BRIGHT

Burning Bright is an introductory adventure for the *Modern AGE Roleplaying Game*. You can expect that it will take about four hours. Only the Game Master should read the adventure, which contains information that will spoil your fun if you intend to play a hero instead.

BACKGROUND

In **Burning Bright**, the subtle balance between the worlds of Earth and Vigrith is at risk when a mysterious magical plague is found in a major city in the U.S., and the Sodality, an organization of mystics who protect many worlds, dispatches the Player Characters (who already know that magic exists, secretly, in our world) to find the source.

However, the Sodality arcanist in charge of the case, Magister Humphrey Bolton, is behind the plague; he infected refugees from the Vigrithian kingdom of Tannebrim, and aims to use the crisis to push his isolationist agenda of restricting travel between worlds.

The characters will discover that the Tannebs are fleeing the dark armies of Lady Silverwrath, receiving no aid from either their neighbors or the Sodality, but being smuggled to Earth by the leader of the mysterious Ferrymen, a group of world-hoppers and infamous interdimensional smugglers.

Deceitful and negligent authorities, difficult truths hidden in otherwise simple problems, lightning-fast conflict, and no clear or right solution...such is the world where *Modern AGE* heroes must live and struggle.

USING THE ADVENTURE

Burning Bright consists of eight encounters, divided in two parts. Each encounter is labeled as a combat encounter, an exploration encounter, or a social encounter. These labels let you know, broadly, what the players are expected to accomplish before moving on. Each encounter is also summarized, to help you get your bearings.

Action encounters offer battle and immediate danger. The heroes are faced with hostile adversaries who they'll probably have to fight. Exploration encounters allow the PCs to interact with the environment and usually involve searching for information or some hidden route forward. Social encounters require the heroes to interact with Non-Player Characters, to learn information or negotiate aid. Sometimes the nature of an encounter can shift due to the Player Characters' actions. That's fine; the three encounter types are loose, rather than definitive.

Most encounters have blocks of shaded text. These can be read aloud to the players, though it's even better if you summarize and embellish it in your own voice.

You may wish to eliminate encounters based on how much time you have to play. You might want to shorten the investigation in the Tanneb camp in order to point the characters directly to Vigrith, or gloss over the fight against the alchemist's mercenaries, so your heroes achieve their goal faster.

The premade Player Characters that come with this adventure each have a reason to be present and things to do, so we

recommend that you run any Player Characters that players don't use as NPCs who act alongside player-controlled heroes. In such cases, your NPCs follow the players' lead, asking the players' characters what to do next.

Finally, this adventure introduces *Modern AGE's* Resources system, teaching it while you play. You can streamline the game further by dropping these rules, and just assigning any equipment you think the characters could acquire.

BE FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIBLE

Burning Bright is built around the ramifications of an ethical choice: will the Player Characters side with their employer's isolationist policy or expose his scheming and side with the refugees?

Furthermore, while the adventure's encounters follow a linear progression often seen in procedural TV series and quest stories, the players may make choices that seem like they should alter the encounters' order or nature. This should be encouraged rather than stifled and in fact, **Burning Bright** offers suggestions and ideas of what can happen if the story takes different routes.

Keep in mind that no matter what decisions the Player Characters make, you'll still be able to move forward and complete the adventure.

GATES OF VIGRITH

Modern AGE is designed for many different settings, but this quickstart uses a mini-setting: *Gates of Vigrith*.

Most people only know the world we know in the twentieth century: a planet, dominated by nation-states, that functions according to the laws of science. Magic and supernatural phenomena are either matters of faith, where their existence is debatable at best, or used by con artists to deceive the gullible. Your characters know a secret, however. This world is one of many. In some of these realms, creatures of legend and fantasy thrive alongside the descendants of people who long ago crossed over from our world, or, like your characters, know how to travel through magical gateways. There are many such "otherworlds," but your characters are familiar with Vigrith, a realm humans and stranger beings have shared for centuries. You know where the most stable gateways are, and sometimes help people from our world go to Vigrith, and vice versa, for any number of reasons, such as to do business or visit loved ones.

Vigrith resembles our Earth in many ways, though the geography is different, and the land's features are larger and more dramatic. Vigrith's sun is slightly brighter than Earth's, and everything seems more vivid, as if one is walking through a fairy tale or epic poem. And indeed, "hidden folk" we might call fairies and monsters such as dragons exist here, though usually far from settled areas. Sometimes these creatures find their way through a gate to Earth, where they can cause all sorts of problems. Various conspiracies limit magical intrusions into the world with a combination of disinformation and raw firepower, and everyone agrees it's better to keep the otherworlds and magic a secret.

Magic is real, but difficult to practice on Earth. Magical power only regenerates at a slight trickle, and its effects tend to erode into ordinary-looking accidents and twists of fate. In Vigrith,

arcanists have greater powers. Many belong to the Sodality: a society of sorcerers who help govern the realm and regulate the practice of magic. They have allies in the Dynasts, individuals descended from gods and heroes, who have some innate supernatural powers of their own. They direct affairs from the capital city of Affaron. The Sodality's factions debate and plot against each other, with some treating Earth as the "heart of Creation," and others disparaging it as a hinterland where wonders have degenerated into myths.

Vigrith's technology is 150 years or more behind our own, because high technology tends to function erratically, unless supported by magic. Carriages ply the roads, though they sometimes pass magically powered motorcycles, and swords are considered more reliable than guns.

Burning Bright will take you from Earth to Vigrith, showcasing it in a modest way, but more adventures are possible in this setting, and GMs should feel free to expand on it. In addition to *Modern AGE*, *Fantasy AGE* and its supplements contain useful material to apply to this magical secret world.

PROLOGUE

As you hand out the character sheets, let the players know that they'll need to choose their characters' genders and appearances. You can also hand out copies of the Equipment table and let them buy any additional gear they'd like. When they reach the middle of the adventure, the heroes will have the opportunity to obtain additional gear better suited to traveling in the high fantasy world of Vigrith; show the players the Vigrith Equipment table at the beginning of **Part 2** when they get to that point.

Rather than keeping track of currency, *Modern AGE* characters have a Resources score that represents their available cash, credit, assets and other sources of wealth. To purchase an item, a player makes a Resources test (3d6 + Resources score) with a TN equal to the item's cost listed as a Resources test difficulty. A character does not need to make a Resources test if the cost of the item is lower than their Resources + 4. Success means the item was purchased, but if the item's Cost is equal to or higher than the purchasing character's Resources + 10, the character's Resources score is reduced by 1.

You decide how much the characters can shop around and can call upon the first scene to begin when you feel like the characters have what they reasonably need.

As the players are preparing, make it known that they've recently been contacted by the Sodality to meet with one of their agents at the Crucible Club for a possible mission. The Earth city where the adventure begins is left vague on purpose, so that you can place it where you feel is best. Each of the pre-generated characters has a reason for seeking or accepting this kind of opportunity. The heroes already know about the true nature of the connected worlds and that magic, and magical creatures, are real, and recognize the Sodality as the guardians and caretakers of magic, or are junior members or associates.

The adventure will begin as the PCs wait in a private room at the Crucible Club. This is a good time for each player to describe their character's appearance and mannerisms to the other players. Allow the PCs to converse in character for as long as it remains interesting to the players. Make sure they at least learn each other's names.



PART I

THE FOREST OF THE NIGHT

The Sodality asks the characters to track down the cause of a magical plague before it spreads to other cities of Earth.

SCENE I

THE CRUCIBLE CLUB

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The protagonists meet Magisters Humphrey Bolton and Clarissa Estevez, who brief them on the burgeoning epidemic and what the Sodality expects from them.

The Crucible Club is one of those hidden gems of the city: humble enough to feel welcoming to everyone but fancy enough to make you feel special. When you arrive just after dusk, a smiling hostess receives you like long-lost friends and leads you to a private room on the second floor. The sounds of the live jazz band below are muffled, but the beat is still clear enough.

After the last person arrives, a man and a woman enter the room. Both appear to be in their mid-forties, but something about their expressions suggests they are older. They are both dressed in smart business suits, wearing pins and cuffs with elaborate sigils.

"Thank you for coming." The woman speaks. "I'm Magister Clarissa Estevez, and this is Magister Humphrey Bolton. We're arcanists from the Sodality. You know what that means, and how the world works. We need your help."

Ask the players to make a **TN 9 PERCEPTION (EMPATHY)** test for their characters; a successful test reveals that Estevez holds a higher rank, something which Bolton is not quite happy with, although he stays quiet as Estevez addresses each character, mentioning the reasons each was called, which can be found on their character sheets. Trace and Val are members of the Sodality and this is just a new assignment for them, but Avery, Dion, and River are "associates," with certain contacts or reputations that made them noteworthy.

After the greetings and introductions, Estevez lets Bolton speak, saying that, while she is responsible for the city, Bolton will oversee the characters during this assignment.

Bolton clears his throat and stands, mussing with his carefully trimmed and whitening beard. He looks at each of you as if trying to find some fault, but he seems satisfied when he finally speaks.

"We have a problem." He says. "We were recently informed of two patients being admitted at the Blake Clinic with signs of a rare disease that could be magical in origin. As you know, the barrier between our world and the rest of the cosmic tree is much more porous than we would like. The Sodality controls and protects most of the known stable portals, but many flickering cracks and gates permit crossing between worlds. I do not need to tell you the dangers of letting a magical, foreign disease spread into Earth."

EQUIPMENT

GEAR	RESOURCES DIFF.
Camera	8
Cell Phone	8
Flashlight	6
Flare Gun	9
Gasmask	11
Laptop / Tablet	11
Mechanic's Toolkit	10
Medic's Kit	10
Mountaineering Gear	14
Signal Jammer	13
Survival Gear	11

VEHICLE	RESOURCES DIFF.
Focus: Propelling	
Bicycle	8
Focus: Driving	
Classic Motorbike	11
Compact Car	10
Sedan	13

Point out to the player behind Dion that an old Army buddy works at the Blake Clinic. Note that River's younger brother has been seeing a doctor there for some weird symptoms. If they ask about this, Bolton simply nods and explains their closeness to the case is part of why they were invited to this meeting.

Bolton proceeds to explain that the tip came from a source unable to follow up on their observation, and Bolton took the matter to Estevez, who allowed him to gather a small team to investigate.

Their assignment is simple: confirm whether the disease is indeed magical (Dion's medical background and Val's magical know-how will be key assets), follow it back to its source, and assess the problem's severity. The characters will be trusted to decide for themselves what to do with their findings, but are advised to report to Bolton with each new lead they uncover.

What the arcanist is not telling anyone is that he already knows the disease is magical. He inflicted it himself, on a group of people from Vigrith who wished to sneak into Earth. His goal is to make a case before the rest of the Sodality about the dangers of allowing free travel between worlds, and strengthen his agenda of imposing a harsher control over extradimensional crossings—with him in charge of who comes and goes, of course. As junior members of the Sodality, Trace and Val can make **TN 13 INTELLIGENCE (CURRENT AFFAIRS)** or **INTELLIGENCE (OCCULTISM)** to be acquainted with Bolton's public opinions; if they succeed, they need a result of 3 or higher on the Stunt Die to also be aware of his agenda, which has been gossiped about among Sodality members.

MAGISTER HUMPHREY BOLTON

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

2	ACCURACY
3	COMMUNICATION (DECEPTION, LEADERSHIP)
0	CONSTITUTION
2	DEXTERITY
-1	FIGHTING
5	INTELLIGENCE (BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, EARTH SCIENCES, OCCULTISM, RESEARCH)
2	PERCEPTION (SEEING)
0	STRENGTH
3	WILLPOWER (FAITH)

SPEED	HEALTH	DEFENSE	ARMOR RATING + TOUGHNESS
12	24	12	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
UNARMED	-1	1D3+2
ARCANE BLAST	+2	1D6+5

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: And Another Thing, Lasting Power, Powerful Manifestation, When a Plan Comes Together

TALENTS: Illusion Arcana (gain 2 novice spells), Maker (can create chemical compounds), Power Arcana (gain 2 novice spells) *Power Points:* 22 *Power Test:* 3d6+5

EQUIPMENT: Magically armored suit, cell phone, tablet with arcane spells (password-protected) or an arcane tome while in Vigrith.

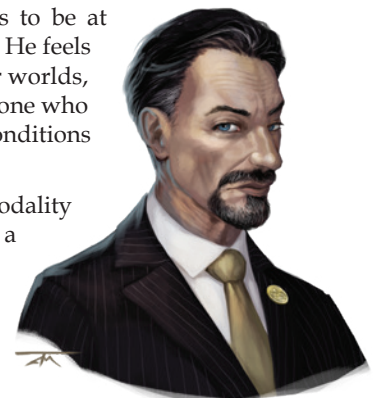
THREAT: MODERATE

Bolton ends the meeting after sharing his cell phone number and the address for the Blake Clinic, as well as the names of the suspected patients: Rick Johnson and Mitch Dougherty. Estevez once more thanks the characters for their help in the matter and wishes them luck.

MAGISTER HUMPHREY BOLTON

An Earth native, Bolton hides his social snobbery from his fellows at the Sodality. He believes Earth to be the prime dimension after which all other worlds were modeled. Thus, Earth deserves to be at the center of all magical affairs. He feels disdain for arcanists from other worlds, believing that a true arcanist is one who can work the Craft in harsh conditions like those found on Earth.

He wormed his way up the Sodality hierarchy until he became a Warden: a position that lets him travel freely, and without supervision, to Vigrith and back. Then he hatched his plan to take control of portal



BOLTON'S SPELLS

DISPLACEMENT

COST: 3 PP MINOR ACTION TN: 11

You create the illusion that you—or another subject you touch when you cast this spell—are about a yard away from your actual position until the encounter ends, gaining +2 Defense against melee attacks and +5 Defense against ranged attacks; area attacks are unaffected if you are a target. Any attacker who misses the displaced subject at least once must succeed at a **TN 13 Perception (Seeing)** test as a free action on the start of their turn to see perceive the subject's true position.

FIGMENT

COST: 2 PP MINOR ACTION TN: 10

You conjure a single simple visual illusion no larger a normal person. A figment can look like anything you can describe but it has no substance and makes no sound. You can make it move as a Minor Action for up to 1 minute, after which you must spend the cost again to maintain the figment. Anyone with a reason to doubt the figment must succeed at a **TN 13 Perception (Seeing)** test to see through it.

ARCANE AWARENESS

COST: 2 PP MINOR ACTION TN: 9

For one minute, you can sense active magic within 10 yards of you and make Perception tests to detect details about it (usually with a TN equal to the effect's Force or equivalent) including arcana, spell type, and affected area or point of origin.

ARCANE BLAST

COST: 1 PP MAJOR ACTION TN: 9

With a successful power test, you can make a ranged attack using Accuracy against a target within 20 yards. A successful attack inflicts 1d6 + Willpower + 2 damage on the target.

travel, and enact his isolationist ideals. He's a talented alchemist and biologist, with some pet theories about the ways magic affects living things.

MAGISTER CLARISSA ESTEVEZ

Although she was born in Vigrith, Estevez is the daughter of two Earth arcanists who taught her the value of balance in all things. Her sense of responsibility and fairness, paired with quick and often unconventional thinking, eventually earned her the position of Prefect: the city's Sodality representative. Bolton is her subordinate, but she usually doesn't directly supervise him, since his work frequently takes him far from the city, and Earth itself. She doesn't quite trust his intentions, but is giving him some freedom to see what he does with it. It was her idea to bring in junior members and associates rather

MAGISTER CLARISSA ESTEVEZ

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 3, COMMUNICATION 4 (EXPRESSION, LEADERSHIP, PERSUASION), CONSTITUTION 2, DEXTERITY 2, FIGHTING 0, INTELLIGENCE 6 (BUSINESS, CURRENT AFFAIRS, DIVINATION ARCANA, EVALUATION, FIRE ARCANA, HEALING ARCANA, OCCULTISM), PERCEPTION 3 (SEEING, EMPATHY), STRENGTH 0, WILLPOWER 4 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

than experienced Sodality members, expecting them (the Player Characters!) to be a wild card that Bolton could not completely control.

Magister Estevez is given less detail than Bolton because she is a non-combatant, and has a supervisory role in the adventure. She knows the Divination Arcana, consisting of spells that allow her to supernaturally detect and predict phenomena, and has learned any other arcana you think would be plausible and useful. If attacked, she escapes as quickly as possible, and reports the assault to the Sodality on Vigrith. The Sodality considers assault upon its officers a crime, and sends a formidable force (a couple of skilled arcanists, soldiers and possibly, a Dynast, who is a sort of demigod) to arrest offenders for trial in Vigrith. This means the adventure has really jumped the rails, and it's up to you, as GM, to improvise events!



SCENE 2

THE HOUSE OF HEALING

EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER

The protagonists visit a free clinic treating people suspected of having a magical illness. A friend of Dion's works there, and provides them with further details, and a lead to the next scene.

It takes you about an hour to reach the Blake Clinic, located near the rowdier part of town. It treats low-income families, absorbing the costs of care and medication. The place is clean, even if the building and equipment are showing their age. There are a few people in the waiting room, sitting with quiet and stoic expressions.

The nurse at the reception desk looks at you with a mix of puzzlement and annoyance, but before she can ask you anything, a doctor turns the corner.

"Dion?" He asks. "Holy crap, it is you!"

Ask Dion's player for any details about their friend, who is an old army buddy and starts with a Friendly attitude. (If Dion is an NPC, you should invent these details.) This is a slow night, so he has time to catch up a little, until any of the characters bring up the issue of Rick Johnson and Mitch Dougherty.

The doctor's expression changes. He leads the characters somewhere less crowded. Once they are alone, he reveals that those two patients are currently in quarantine.

QUESTIONING THE DOCTOR

A **TN 12 COMMUNICATION (PERSUASION)** is required for the doctor to give the characters access to the patients, but Dion has a +2 bonus on the roll. Success means that the doctor leads the group to the isolated room where the patients are kept, but demands they wear a mask and gloves, and do not make physical contact with the patients. Whether the characters convince the doctor or not, he's concerned enough that he spills the following information off the record:

- The two men were arrested by police for harassing passersby downtown. On the way to the precinct, they became feverish, and pustules appeared on their necks and faces, so the police brought them to the clinic, then suddenly left, responding to a call. This happened around 4:00 a.m. today.
- A third man came to the clinic and asked about them, describing them but not using their names, and something they apparently stole from him. This man was dressed oddly, like something out of a fantasy movie, but his clothes had signs of wear. The doctor saw the same pustules on his hands, and he could have sworn they were bioluminescent, but the man ran away when the doctor tried to admit him, and before he could study him.
- The CDC is not responding, so the clinic quarantined the patients. Nobody knows what's wrong with them, so nobody wants to risk moving them to a hospital. The police haven't come back to establish charges, either.
- The patients' records are in the clinic's database, and no, the doctor cannot give them access, but he off-handedly mentions that he normally accesses the records on the computer at the second floor's reception.

If the characters convince the doctor, he reveals the above information as he takes them inside the clinic. He suggests that Dion might look at some samples the doctor took from the pustules, while he leaves them alone to interview the patients. You can also suggest that somebody else could go look at the computer. While none of the characters have the Intelligence (Computers) focus, the *Bypass* spell that Val knows could let them browse the records, just not anything else in the computer.

INVESTIGATING THE PLAGUE

The characters can tackle this investigation as a group advanced test (see page 6) with a success threshold of 10. Characters can work together to contribute to the success threshold. They may make the following tests to do so:

- **TN 10 INTELLIGENCE (MEDICINE)** to analyze the tissue sample and examine the patients
- **TN 8 COMMUNICATION (PERSUASION)** or **COMMUNICATION (DECEPTION)** to interview the patients.
- **TN 9 PERCEPTION (SEARCHING)** and **TN 9 INTELLIGENCE (RESEARCH)** to search through the hospital records,

electronic or otherwise, provided the characters gain access either with the *bypass* spell or can sneak into the clinic's records room. The patients have a Neutral attitude, but this can be modified based on how the characters behave toward them.

Each individual test takes around 5 to 10 minutes. The following information is available during the investigation:

- The plague is a fungal infestation rather than a virus or bacteria. The fungus belongs to no known Earthly strain.
- The fungus grows just beneath the skin, bursting into pustules and boils that capture light and then glow orange in the dark. Symptoms include fever, itching and pain felt throughout the body. The two patients were initially confused as well, but treating the fever seems to have removed that symptom.
- The fungus can only be transmitted by touch; its spores quickly disintegrate after encountering Earth's air. (They need ambient magic to survive outside a host, but research will not uncover that at this time.)
- River will automatically recognize the symptoms in one of the patients as very similar to those ailing their younger brother.
- Rick Johnson and Mitch Dougherty are small-time drug dealers with criminal records for drug possession, petty theft, assault and vandalism.
- The night of their arrest, the dealers were bullying a homeless person they'd never seen before. He was rather docile until they yanked away some sort of whistle he had hanging from his neck, then he turned violent and raked their faces before they started kicking him. They still had the whistle when they were taken in.
- The dealers give directions to where they found the homeless man and remember his hands had a sickly orange glow to them.
- Clinic records state the address where Johnson and Dougherty were found.
- Clinic records or the infected dealers indicate that the whistle must be somewhere in their room (opens the possibility to look for it as part of the advanced test).
- The whistle can be found in a drawer next to the bed. It's long and made of gold, with a beautifully carved wooden handle inlaid with silver filigree, and shaped like a stylized eagle head. It produces no audible sound when blown. Val and Trace have been to Vigrith and can recognize the whistle's Vigrithian craftsmanship on the spot.

Reveal one of the clues above with each successful test, and the rest when the characters meet the advanced test's success threshold. Two items above are key to advancing the story, so you might want to reveal them through Dion's friend or by the infested dealers: the address where the dealers attacked the homeless man, and the whistle he was carrying.

Now the characters can follow the leads this investigation has provided. They may also report their progress to Bolton, who will be pleased to hear they discovered the plague is from Vigrith, although he will feign concern and urge the characters to follow through.



SCENE 3

FURIOUS AVIAN

ACTION ENCOUNTER

The investigation leads the characters to a slum of semi-abandoned warehouses among low-income residential projects. As the protagonists get close, they are assaulted by a creature that should not exist on Earth.

It's late in the night when you reach the address where the drug dealers probably contracted the magical plague. As you walk near a fenced, vacant lot, a screech pierces the air and a large shadow jumps the fence and attacks you!

The characters are attacked by a griffon cub and can make a **TN 9 PERCEPTION (SEEING)** or **PERCEPTION (HEARING)** to notice the monster before it attacks and warn everyone if successful; otherwise the griffon cub gets a free major action after jumping the fence, before everyone rolls initiative and combat starts.

The griffon cub is lost and scared and cannot fly well; it will flee if its Health points are reduced to half or less. If a character blows the whistle they found in the clinic, the griffon cub stops fighting immediately and, while wary, becomes docile. In either case, fleeing or tame, the griffon cub leads PCs to the Tanneb refugee community.

GRIFFON CUB

The young beast has the body of a lion and the head and front legs of an eagle, as well as wings which it is for some

GRIFFON CUB

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)	
-2	ACCURACY
0	COMMUNICATION
2	CONSTITUTION (STAMINA)
3	DEXTERITY
3	FIGHTING (BITE, CLAWS)
0	INTELLIGENCE
3	PERCEPTION (SEEING, HEARING)
3	STRENGTH (INTIMIDATION, MIGHT)
1	WILLPOWER

SPEED	HEALTH	DEFENSE	ARMOR RATING + TOUGHNESS
14	35	13	4

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
BITE	+5	1d6+5
CLAWS	+5	1d3+3

SPECIAL FEATURES

FAVORED STUNTS: Duck and Weave, Lightning Attack, Vicious Blow

FLURRY OF CLAWS: The griffon cub may make a claw attack as a minor action.

THICK HIDE: The griffon cub's tough skin grants it an Armor Rating of 2.

THREAT: MINOR

reason. The griffon cub is the size of a large dog, and is upset by the city's unfamiliar sounds and smells. Its master contracted the fungal plague and wandered into the streets in a confused daze, and it followed, but became lost in the process. Whether fleeing or calmed by the whistle, instinct will take over and the cub will remember how to return its new home.

SCENE 4

EXILED AND QUARANTINED

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The protagonists find the Tanneb community in hiding, and discover that the plague is much worse than they feared. They meet a Dynast, Jannika Reach, who has been bringing the refugees over, and who points the characters to the source of the plague: Vigrith.

If the griffin is docile:

The young griffon leads you through a couple of alleys, sauntering ahead for several yards before stopping to make sure you're following.

If the griffin is fleeing:

The fleeing griffin leads you through a couple of alleys, its path erratic but focused. It shows no signs of aggression as you pursue it.

"That's as far as you go, errand boys." A female voice warns from the darkness, its owner stepping out into the light from the next corner. "I see you found Hopper; his partner will be happy... once he gets his head screwed back on."

The woman introduces herself as Jannika Reach, and she doesn't play around, stating outright that she knows the characters are working for the Sodality, and she's not letting them "near the refugees; they've been through two hells already."

A TENSE FIRST MEETING

Her initial attitude is Hostile; if the characters try to play along or misrepresent themselves, make opposed **COMMUNICATION (DECEPTION)** tests against her **PERCEPTION (EMPATHY)**, with each success improving her attitude by one step, but with each failure, she'll just smirk and say out loud one personal secret from the losing character's background. Honesty is the characters' best option, as Jannika's attitude will improve one step with each truth the characters tell her about their mission, with no test required.

Once Jannika has a Neutral attitude, she reveals she's a Dynast, and she's protecting a camp of people the Sodality should not know about. When she's Friendly, she nods and, while still wary of the characters' motivations, she's convinced they are just doing their jobs, and signals them to follow her. She tells the characters about her loose organization, the Ferrymen, who smuggle goods and people between Earth and the other worlds, in defiance of the Sodality's safekeeping.

The Dynast leads the characters inside a boarded-up warehouse through a side door, and they see who she was protecting.

There are several tents pitched upon the floor and along the walls, and a large van is parked near the warehouse's locked main entrance. The people in the tents and milling around fires lit inside trash cans regard the new arrivals; their clothes look medieval, and some of them even have swords hanging from their belts. A few of them have blue skin and pointed ears, others have inhuman-looking eyes, but the tent Jannika leads the characters to, set up far from the others, has people with glowing orange growths on their skins, lying on cots and groaning in pain.

The griffon cub is there too, sitting near a burly man with his arms wrapped in bandages that are soaked in a mildly luminescent fluid.

Jannika confirms that the plague the characters are tracking down is here, and these people are Vigrith natives. She smuggled them from their kingdom, called Tannebrim, to escape the invading army of the warlock Lady Silverwrath. As Jannika tells it, neither their neighbors, nor the Sodality's "pointy hats" lifted a finger to help.

Characters who succeed at a **TN 9 PERCEPTION (EMPATHY)** test confirm that she's telling the truth, and is righteously angry about it. She reinforces her position by telling them the personal stories of some of the refugees. (Feel free to come up with some stories that will resonate with your players and their characters, underlining how *normal* the refugee's lives used to be before Silverwrath.)

Jannika first noticed the sickness in Vigrith, and she's sure the disease's "patient zero" should still be there, but she doesn't know whether they are in Tannebrim or a refugee camp outside the city of Threshold; she's been rescuing people from both.

Finally, she asks for their help, since despite her power as a Dynast, she can't be in two places at once. She offers the characters a lift to Vigrith in her van, so they can look for the source of the disease. Tannebrim is too dangerous for them, so she can drop them in Threshold, or they can take the stable Sodality portal in the local chapterhouse.

She does warn them, however, that she will know if they betrayed the refugees' location to the Sodality, and this camp will not be here when they return. She gives them 10 minutes alone to make a choice; after that, either they leave Earth with her, or they return to the Sodality to use their portal or to report everything they have discovered so far (or maybe even both). The choice they make will affect how their adventures will continue in the high-magic world of Vigrith.

JANNIKA REACH

A handsome woman in her thirties with a Mediterranean tan and thick black curls sloppily tied behind her head, she is a Dynast, heir to the soul of a hero Earth remembers as Odysseus. She got sick of the Sodality and founded the Ferrymen: a group of like-minded arcanists and travelers who solve mystical problems without the permission of the "proper authorities." Since its inception several decades ago,





The Ferrymen have been smuggling goods, information, and people to and from Earth.

While more than capable of defending herself (and others), Jannika has no time for foolishness if the characters attack her. She will just simply teleport them downtown and begin relocating the refugees. Thus, she is detailed in truncated form as a noncombatant, just as Estevez was earlier in the adventure.

PART 2

FEARFUL SYMMETRY

The protagonists reach Vigrith, starting with the city of Threshold, but the answers they find might give rise to more questions.

Jannika Reach laid out three options for the characters to continue the adventure; each has its advantages and disadvantages.

OPTION A: CATCH A RIDE

Jannika can cross dimensional boundaries in her van, and she literally drives to Threshold in Vigrith. If the characters travel with her, they will arrive with all their equipment, including firearms, although it's likely that Dion will need to stop by their place first, since walking around town with a carbine is not a good idea.

Another advantage is that the Sodality will not know they are in Vigrith, and their continuing investigation in the other world will completely blindside Bolton, which will affect the final encounter against him (see the last scene).

On the down side, the characters stick out. The people of Threshold are used to visitors from Earth and other worlds, and can recognize the clothes. Also, the characters will have no Vigrithian currency with which to make Resources tests to buy local gear.

OPTION B: OFFICIAL CHANNELS

Relying on the Sodality to travel to Vigrith comes with certain perks: the characters can choose appropriate Vigrithian gear, including armor and weapons, at no cost, but they will be asked to leave firearms and electronics behind.

Bolton will resist at first, demanding a full report. Characters can make a **TN 10 COMMUNICATION (EMPATHY)** to note that Bolton is trying to rush the investigation to an early close, or a **TN 8 INTELLIGENCE (HISTORY)** to know such crossings are usually routine. They can ask Magister Estevez directly for authorization, which she grants.

OPTION C: PASS THE BUCK

The characters can simply report everything to Bolton and consider their mission complete. He will thank them and reward them accordingly, and then follow through the rest of his plan, which includes hunting down the refugees with more experienced arcanists. He will be busy, because

EARTH TECHNOLOGY IN VIGRITH

Characters who take modern Earth equipment to Vigrith would be wise not to rely on it as heavily. Every time characters roll a test involving modern equipment (including shooting a firearm), a roll of 1 on the Stunt Die means the item stops working for 1d6 rounds after the test is resolved and regardless of failure or success. If the equipment stops working three times in a row, it malfunctions completely and will not work again until it returns to Earth. Items not requiring a roll to use fail intermittently, each time for longer until they stop working altogether; the more complex the equipment, the sooner it malfunctions.

JANNIKA REACH

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 4 (BOWS, PISTOLS, THROWN),
COMMUNICATION 2 (DECEPTION, LEADERSHIP),
CONSTITUTION 3 (STAMINA, TOLERANCE), DEXTERITY 3
(DRIVING), FIGHTING 4 (HEAVY BLADES, LONG HAFTED),
INTELLIGENCE 6 (EVALUATION, NAVIGATION, OCCULTISM,
TACTICS), PERCEPTION 2 (EMPATHY, TRACKING), STRENGTH 3
(MIGHT, STEERING), WILLPOWER 1 (COURAGE)

SPECIAL FEATURES

DYNAST ABILITIES: Jannika is a Dynast, descended from ancient gods and heroes. In addition to the ability to discover characters' secrets just by talking to them, she has several abilities and items that allow her to perform any exceptional feat the GM deems necessary.

THREAT: N/A

Jannika does relocate the camp before Bolton's people can find it. Remind players about their characters' Drives, Relationships, and Reputations. Avery should be driven to protect others, River has their brother to worry about, Dion is a doctor who helps people in need, while Trace and Val may feel they are leaving things undone.

In any case, Magister Estevez will offer them a second chance to follow through with the investigation and open the portal to Vigrith herself while Bolton is busy searching for the refugees on Earth.

EQUIPPING FOR VIGRITH

Both Trace and Val have visited Vigrith before, so you can tell their players what they may need. Option B above is the easiest to equip for, since the Sodality will provide everything for free, to a reasonable extent. Each character can choose a suit of armor, two weapons, and assorted adventuring gear (backpack, bedroll, flint and steel and other camping utensils, etc.), plus local clothing. Option C is more limited but still viable; Magister Estevez will not give the characters time to shop around the Sodality's stores of Vigrithian equipment, but she will give them local clothes and Vigrithian currency, so the characters can use their Resources to purchase items in Threshold.

Option A becomes more problematic; Trace will know where to find a black-market dealer in Threshold that will buy their equipment. The characters will gain a single group Resources score they can all use to equip themselves: selling a firearm yields a Resources score of 10, or 11 if it includes a box of ammunition; a piece of electronics yields a score of

VIGRITH EQUIPMENT

ARMORS

ARMOR	RESOURCES DIFF.	ARMOR RATING (PENALTY)
Heavy Leather	9	4 (-1)
Mail	15	6 (-3)
Steel Plate	16	8 (-4)

WEAPONS

WEAPON	RESOURCES DIFF.
Axe	7
Club	—
Hammer	7
Staff	8
Dagger	8
Fencing Sword	10
Long Sword	12
Two-handed Sword	14
Compound Bow (includes 20 arrows)	12
Crossbow (includes 20 bolts)	14
Throwing Knife	10

OTHER GEAR

GEAR	RESOURCES DIFF.
Backpack	7
Camping Gear	8
Oil Lamp (w/oil)	4
Lock Picks	8
Rope (20 yards)	3
Tent (small/large)	5/9
Rations (10 days)	5

9 (Vigrithian merchants don't care about the specs), other modern items grant a score of 5 + character's Communication. Merchants will trade clothing sets for their Vigrithian equivalent, not for money. If selling multiple items, take the highest Resources score and increase it by 1 per additional item up to a maximum of 12. Note that this Resources score is only valid in Vigrith; once the characters return to Earth, their original Resources score applies.

Player Characters can purchase Vigrithian gear from the **Vigrith Equipment** table. Information about the weapons available can be found on page 4.

SCENE I

THROUGH THE THRESHOLD

SOCIAL AND EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER

The protagonists find themselves in the port city of Threshold in the world of Vigrith, where Tanneb refugees have been expelled from the city. An acquaintance of Trace's can help them find their target.

This scene can begin in one of two ways, depending on which option the characters took in the previous scene. In either case, describe how familiar everything looks thanks to movies, games and other media always imagining alternate worlds, but also underline just how *alien* many things look in contrast with that familiarity.

THROUGH THE SODALITY'S PORTAL

Characters can enter the portal the Sodality maintains in their chapterhouse, and emerge from a gate in the Port District of the city of Threshold. Read or paraphrase the following:

As the arcane rush of portal travel dies down, your body knows it is not home anymore by the smells. There's a certain humidity in the air, and the wind carries the scents of fresh food, stagnant water, and other things you don't recognize. You stand at the center of a circular plaza, surrounded by a knee-high iron fence with four openings at the end of four walkways leading to where you are. There are guards posted on each entrance, wearing something you might recognize from a Three Musketeers movie. One of them walks toward you with a bored look on his face.

All guards bear the Sodality's emblem on a medallion, worn on top of a dark red tabard with the city's coat of arms. The guard recognizes Trace and now seems overtly annoyed. Play up the friendly rivalry local law enforcement feels towards Earth-born Sodality members while the guard feigns a harsh treatment as he asks routine questions. He does not seem interested in the characters' mission unless they volunteer the information or ask for help, which the guard will provide with fake reluctance.

The guard knows that refugees from Tannebrim had set up camp in the outskirts of the city, but last week the guards received orders to run them off. He's not proud of that, and let a few of them sneak into the city. He suggests that the characters should check the Trade District if they want to know anything about the Tannebs.

BY DYNASTIC POWER

Taking up Jannika Reach's offer is the more exciting option. Her van is bigger on the inside and is furnished with wooden interiors, and creaks like a ship when it moves. She affectionately calls it "Argos", and explains she won it on a bet with another Dynast. She drops the characters just outside the city's walls. Read or paraphrase the following.

The van turns a corner and the whole trip takes on a dream-like quality; you're not sure if it's the entire world that is wobbling or it's just you, and only the blues song playing in the van's stereo helps you hold together, despite the lyrics sung in no language you recognize.

And the next time you blink, the dark streets of the city are replaced by a dirt road surrounded by sunny green hills, with a massive stone wall dominating the right side of the landscape.

"This is your stop, guys." Jannika slows the van to a stop. "The city state of Threshold, jewel of the South. Mind your step!"

Before saying goodbye and driving off, Jannika gives the characters some pointers, including: Ask about the plague's spread in the refugee camp, and acquire local gear as soon as possible, since technology is unreliable on Vigrith. She also mentions that they can return to Earth through the Sodality's portal (located inside the city proper), or she will look for them in a couple of days to give them a ride back.

FINDING THE REFUGEES

Threshold is a cosmopolitan port city, so the characters only turn some heads if they are wearing Earth clothes and overtly calling attention to themselves. Foot traffic is high, and moving around or crossing through the city gates is easy.

Characters with Communication 2 or higher automatically hear about the "refugee purge" that happened the week before: the city's ruling council deemed their presence dangerous to Threshold citizens and ordered the guards to dismantle the camp and see them off.

Looking for more information about the refugees requires a successful **TN 11 COMMUNICATION (INVESTIGATION)** test. Each character can make this test several times, each time in a different part of the city, receiving a different bonus or penalty to the tests.

The information available in all districts refers to the recent raid on the refugee camp, although support or criticism may vary. Individual citizens provided what Earth denizens know as humanitarian aid as the refugees were escorted away from the city walls, along the North Road, and it's possible they settled along the shores of Lake Drous, which is two days' walk or one day's ride from Threshold. Characters acquire additional information depending on the district they visit while investigating. If the Stunt Die result is 3 or higher, they also receive the additional information from an adjacent district.

If characters wish to find some of the Tannebs who stayed in the city, they can make a **TN 8 COMMUNICATION (INVESTIGATION)** or **TN 10 PERCEPTION (SEARCHING)** test to look around the Trade District. The refugees paint a dismal picture of the situation in Tannebrim: Silverwrath's armies burn everything in their path, and their warlocks use the ashes for unspeakable magical rites. Tannebrim's armies are fighting a losing battle, slowly retreating to the western shore. The refugees have not heard much from home in the month that they have been traveling, but do not expect the situation to have improved.

The refugees are very much aware of the plague and count their blessings that they were not infected. They also reveal

THRESHOLD INVESTIGATIONS

DISTRICT	BONUS/ PENALTY	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Council District	-1	The Council's decision to drive off the refugees was influenced by an Earth Sodality official, name unknown.
Sovereign District	-2	The wealthy citizens of Threshold are concerned about the increasing power of Lady Silverwrath.
Port District	+0	Tannebrim is on the brink of extinction; only its western cities remain standing; the rest of the kingdom is overrun and high uninhabitable.
Trade District	+2	As in the Port District, plus rumors about the plague: a lot of people don't think the plague is real, as no cases have arisen in Threshold proper.
East Gate District	+1	Many refugees crossed the city to travel further east towards the Cardillion Dragon Aeries.
North Gate District	+0	The camp was set just outside the North Gate; some refugees snuck inside the city as the rest took off.

that nobody had the plague until setting up the camp outside the city; they were all in good health between Tannebrim and Threshold.

The remains of the refugee camp just outside North Gate don't yield much evidence: abandoned tents and broken crates are most of what can be found there, as the city's own scavengers already scoured the place. However, there are still tracks of dozens of people and beasts of burden heading off the north.

The characters can set out on foot on the North Road, or wait one day to catch a ride with a merchant caravan heading that way.

SCENE 2

A LAKE OF TEARS

SOCIAL AND EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER

The characters reach the new refugee camp and meet the Tannebs' unofficial leader, a retired soldier who knew all was lost and took her family away. She lays out in full the refugees' situation, including the plague they contracted after camping outside Threshold.

The road north is safe and the trip, uneventful, except for occasional signs of the refugees' passage. Abandoned campsites, forgotten toys, and other debris dot the fields that surround the road.

After a day or two of travel, the characters reach Lake Drous, a large body of water that might be confused with an inner sea. They see wisps of smoke rising on the wind from the Tannebs' new camp.

To reach the camp, characters must leave the road as it begins to curve around the lake. Tanneb lookouts see the characters and sound the alarm unless they approach stealthily. If this happens, refugees run from the characters. There's a main camp with ten tents and five caravans around a central clearing, and five tents situated a dozen yards from this main cluster. The tents set away from the main encampment contain refugees struck by the plague; see the next section for details.

The camp contains eighty-three refugees of all ages and genders. They're tired, hungry, and unable to stand and fight. They don't have a formal leader, but a woman in her late fifties obviously commands respect among them, and approaches characters who reveal themselves. She identifies herself as Gania Brackenstaff, headwoman of Brenhold, the Tanneb town most of these refugees hail from.

WHAT THE REFUGEES KNOW

The refugees can offer a lot more information about the plague. Brackenstaff ordered all the sick people to be kept apart. She can take the characters to meet them while answering their questions, and making some of her own.

Gania wants to know who the characters are working for and what they intend to do. If the characters are straightforward with her, she will tell them the following:

- She has no hope left of recovering Tannebrim from Lady Silverwrath. Militarily speaking, it would take a coalition of Vigrith's nations and help from the Sodality to turn the tide, and that's unlikely to ever happen.
- Silverwrath's forces are not interested in simple conquest. She dispels the idea that they're burning everything into a wasteland, but confirms they're not taking prisoners.
- The Sodality sent a Warden and a few minor arcanists to check on the sick refugees outside Threshold, but they said nothing, and never returned. If pressed for details, Brackenstaff describes the Warden in a way that unmistakably identifies Magister Humphrey Bolton.
- Jannika Reach and her Ferrymen have been the only source of news from Tannebrim, and other than a few good people from Threshold, also their only suppliers of food and medicine. Gania regards Jannika ferrying her people to Earth as a necessary evil.
- The quarantine site is surrounded by burning torches, small pyres, and burning braziers, in the hope that the fire and smoke will keep any spore from spreading.

The afflicted refugees look just like the sick drug dealers and the sick refugees under the Ferrymen's care back on Earth.



Gania describes the symptoms with greater detail: a painful malaise (just like the symptoms River's brother is showing), a rash which erupts days later, then luminescent growths, fever, and hallucinations. Eventually, victims fall into a semi-conscious state, where they can take in fluid by reflex but are otherwise incapacitated.

She takes the characters to the first victim, a young Tanneb arcanist who ventured inside Threshold to ask the Sodality to aid his people. He's covered head-to-toe in glowing fungal growths. Gania says that nobody dares treat him anymore.

If the characters are brave enough, they can get close and make a **TN 10 INTELLIGENCE (MEDICINE)** or **INTELLIGENCE (OCCULTISM)** test to recognize that the plague is much more aggressive in Vigrith than it is on Earth, and that the patient, if he's conscious at all, must be in excruciating pain. Treating the poor man will raise all the refugees' attitudes to Friendly towards the characters.

SCENE 3

SAMPLING, INTERRUPTED

ACTION AND SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The refugee camp is attacked by a small band of warriors along with a pack of strange dogs, led by a cackling alchemist named Shaol Rakk, who works for Lady Silverwrath.

The quiet but tense atmosphere is broken by screams coming from the edge of the main camp. Barking and shouting follows, as well as a shrill voice yelling commands. A handful of men are attacking the refugees and dragging some of them back to an iron-bound wagon.

There are six mercenaries attacking, using four wrathdogs to sow panic and herd the refugees for capture so they can be taken to a wagon waiting on the road. A gaudily-robed man sits on the wagon, encouraging the attackers and directing them to the quarantine area.

The various tents provide excellent cover if the characters wish to ambush the attackers, providing a +3 bonus to any **Dexterity (Stealth)** tests. Only three mercenaries attack at a time as the others drag prisoners to the wagon. The wrathdogs are busy keeping refugees cowed, and arrive at the start of the second round of combat.

If the refugees are Friendly, when at least three attackers are taken out (any combination of mercenaries or wrathdogs), they gain some courage, and help the characters by throwing things at the attackers or generally running interference. Ask the players to make **TN 8 COMMUNICATION (LEADERSHIP)** tests as a minor action to rally the refugees, with success granting a bonus to the attack roll of the next Player Character, or to the Defense of the next Player Character who is the target of an attack. This bonus equals the result of the Stunt Die. The refugees can only be rallied twice per round.

When two or fewer mercenaries are left standing, they flee, to the chagrin of their employer, Shaol Rakk. He's the man on the wagon, and can't drive it himself—the horses hate him.

MERCENARY			
ABILITIES (FOCUSES)			
2	ACCURACY (THROWN)		
2	COMMUNICATION (BARGAINING, DECEPTION)		
2	CONSTITUTION		
1	DEXTERITY		
2	FIGHTING (SHORT HAFTED, HEAVY BLADES)		
0	INTELLIGENCE		
2	PERCEPTION		
2	STRENGTH		
0	WILLPOWER		
SPEED	HEALTH	DEFENSE	AR + TOUGHNESS
10	25	10	6
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
AXE	+4	2D6+4	
DAGGER	+2	1D6+5	
DAGGER (THROWN)	+4	1D6+5	
SPECIAL FEATURES			

FAVORED STUNTS: Double-Team, Skirmish

TALENTS: Contacts, Single Weapon Style (Activate action to gain +1 to Defense until end of turn)

EQUIPMENT: Axe, Dagger, Heavy Leather armor,

THREAT: MINOR

Rakk avoids combat, ducking behind the wagon if ranged weapons target him. The mercenaries will readily give him up in exchange for their lives. If Rakk flees, this calls for a chase (see the Run/Chase action in the rules), but his fancy robes hinder him, imposing a -2 penalty to his roll. As GM, you should note that he might be easily captured instead of killed or allowed to flee.

THE MAD ALCHEMIST

When captured after combat, Shaol Rakk identifies himself. He's scared witless and shocked that things didn't go his way, and answers every question the characters have.

He's here under Lady Silverwrath's orders. The warlock's spies notified her about the plague, and she's keenly interested in getting a sample of it. If the characters haven't figured that out, Shaol Rakk states positively that the plague is not Lady Silverwrath's doing. He asks to be freed in exchange for his help with treating the plague. He's already been putting together some theories from spies' reports, and would like to confirm them.

If taken to see the afflicted, Rakk squeals in morbid delight and lunges towards the sick refugees with no apparent concern for his own health. Obsessed with the science behind the disease and oblivious to any allegiance, he freely exchanges notes with Dion or Val. He asks the characters to retrieve books and

WRATHDOG			
ABILITIES (FOCUSES)			
0	ACCURACY		
0	COMMUNICATION		
2	CONSTITUTION (RUNNING, STAMINA)		
2	DEXTERITY		
3	FIGHTING (BITE)		
-1	INTELLIGENCE		
3	PERCEPTION (HEARING, SMELLING)		
3	STRENGTH		
2	WILLPOWER		
SPEED	HEALTH	DEFENSE	AR + TOUGHNESS
14	22	12	4
WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE	
BITE	+5	2D6+6	
CLAWS	+5	1D6+4	
SPECIAL FEATURES			

FAVORED STUNTS: Knock Prone, Skirmish, Shock and Awe, Vicious Blow

ARMORED: The wrathdog's tough skin grants it an Armor Rating of 2.

RABID: The wrathdog can perform the Shock and Awe stunt for 2 SP.

THREAT: MINOR

equipment from his wagon, or the characters can find them on their own if they search the vehicle.

Characters who succeed at a **TN 14 INTELLIGENCE (RESEARCH)** test using Rakk's books identify the fungus, or it takes Rakk himself an hour of fussing over the vitamins to do so. It's a magically mutated subspecies of "tigergrass", a fungus that grows under the Sea of Mists, off the shore of Threshold. The critical reference is found in a book authored by Magister Humphrey Bolton. "Yes, yes, he's the foremost authority on arcane symbiotic organisms," remarks Rakk, offhandedly.

If any of the characters or Shaol Rakk identified the fungus, Rakk is sure the cure consists of just rubbing the fungus off with a simple solution of clove oil in saline water mixed under a Fire and Healing Arcana effect, plus any way to increase "the fire element in the blood." Dion knows this means altering the body's acid-base balance towards acidity.

The cure is just out of the characters' reach, as it requires that the person preparing it have the Fire Arcana and Healing Arcana focuses, so they need to return to the Sodality or find a sympathetic arcanist with such training. If the characters don't mention it, have Gania remind them that they can take Shaol Rakk back to Threshold as proof that the disease is easily cured so they can send help, and if they reacted to her describing Bolton and his name on Rakk's book, that they now have evidence that the plague was manufactured.

MERCENARIES

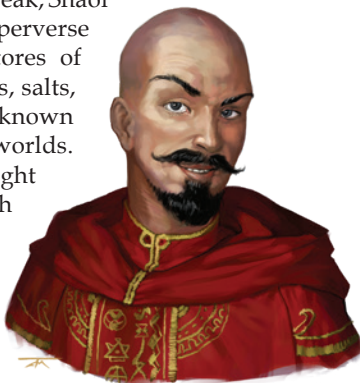
The mercenaries belong to villages in the deep woods and mountains, and have long supplemented hunting and gathering with banditry. Lady Silverwrath wishes to keep the nature of her forces in Tannebrim a secret, and pays these mercenaries to serve her in distant lands. They're not especially loyal, and were hired through Shaol Rakk. The mercenaries handle the wrathdogs and horses for him.

WRATHDOGS

These large dogs are bred for war by Lady Silverwrath. They have short fur of a silvery-white color and have a profile more akin to a hyena than a dog. They are unflinchingly loyal, but lose focus quickly if not actively commanded. Shaol Rakk brought them and trained them to obey the mercenaries, but subsequently acquired an offensive scent due to his alchemical experiments, and is now avoided by animals.

SHAOL RAKK

While his arcane power is weak, Shaol Rakk's makes it up with perverse inventiveness and vast stores of knowledge on plants, herbs, salts, and every other substance known to alchemists in many worlds. Lady Silverwrath caught him as he rifled through the corpses of one of her recent battles, and he impressed her with his completely amoral sense of curiosity. He



SHAOL RAKK

ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

ACCURACY 0, COMMUNICATION 2 (DECEPTION, LEADERSHIP), CONSTITUTION 2 (STAMINA, TOLERANCE), DEXTERITY 3 (CRAFTING, SLEIGHT OF HAND), FIGHTING 0 (LIGHT BLADES), INTELLIGENCE 5 (CHEMISTRY, EVALUATION, MEDICINE, OCCULTISM), PERCEPTION 2 (SEEING, SMELLING), STRENGTH 0, WILLPOWER 1 (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

SPECIAL FEATURES

ALCHEMIST: Above and beyond the knowledge suggested by his focuses, Shaol Rakk is a skilled alchemist, who knows the arcane potential of various substances. He could have synthesized several explosives, poisons and other dangerous things to aid him in combat, but he didn't expect to be fighting, and doesn't have the required components. Rakk has a subtle, acrid smell about him, the result of a failed alchemical experiment. The scent makes animals avoid him, making it impossible for him to control his horses and wrathdogs. All animals have a Hostile attitude toward him, and avoid him whenever possible.

THREAT: MINOR

has been working for her ever since, not caring about the real applications of his research, only caring to increase his own knowledge.

Note: Like other characters using these stat blocks, Shaol Rakk is a noncombatant. He will surrender in the face of any serious threat, or run when surrender won't save him.

SCENE 4:

YOU HAD ONE JOB

ACTION ENCOUNTER

With a cure and the truth in hand, the protagonists are ready to return to Earth, but the way is blocked: Magister Bolton is there to make sure their excessive efficiency does not interfere with his plans.

You are preparing to leave, the mad alchemist in tow, but the road is blocked by a group of people on horseback.

"This is unfortunate." Magister Bolton urges his horse a few steps forward. He's dressed as a local Vigrithian, and the three men with him are heavily armored and have their swords drawn. "You could have earned my gratitude if you had just left the issue resolved back on Earth. I wouldn't need to silence you. But, it's fine. I'll just report that you sadly became infected with the plague during your investigations, and your minds are not to be trusted."

He pulls a very technological-looking injection gun from his robes.

"That way, you can still be useful. You'll help show the Sodality that Earth cannot allow free passage from the primitive worlds."

If Jannika brought the characters to Vigrith, Bolton had to scramble for resources and he only has five common mercenaries with him (see below). If they traveled through the Sodality gate, he already knew where the characters would go and had time to hire three elite mercenaries in addition to the common mercenaries (see below).

Bolton cannot be reasoned with; if the characters try to engage in talk, he will humor them only to let his minions get closer to them. If the characters don't start combat, the Bolton and his mercenaries will as soon as they come within ten yards. They don't want to kill the characters, but subdue and infect them.

Just as in the previous scene, the characters can use the camp as cover and rally the refugees for help (same effects as before) even if they are not Friendly. Gania recognizes Bolton and realizes this man is the cause of her people's current suffering.

Bolton's common mercenaries use the same information as the Shaol Rakk's mercenaries, but carry long swords instead of axes (these have the same attack and damage ratings). Common mercenaries must each succeed on a **TN 9 Willpower (Morale)** test each time one of them is incapacitated, or flee the area. Elite mercenaries carry two-handed swords (Attack +4, damage 3d6+5) and wear mail armor (Armor Rating + Toughness 8; Speed 8 and Defense 8). Elites also have Strength scores of 3, not 2, and 30 health instead of 25. They're hardened warriors who fight to the death, and don't

need to make morale tests. Bolton's statistics and information is on page 15.

EPILOGUE

After defeating Bolton or escaping his grasp, the characters have some options and loose ends ahead of them. Informing the Sodality of the true nature of the plague, the man responsible, and its cure, should be among the first items in the characters' to-do list.

Returning through the Sodality gate in Threshold is easy. In his hurry to catch the characters before they discovered anything that implicated him, Bolton forgot to set the Sodality guards against them. If they are bringing Bolton as a prisoner, however, the guards get anxious and will call for a higher-ranking Sodality member. Play this for tension so the characters begin to suspect Bolton has allies on the Vigrith side of the gate, but ultimately, they will be allowed through.

Waiting for Jannika to pick them up (if she didn't rescue them as mentioned in the **Deus Ex Jannika** sidebar) will avoid uncomfortable questions and will bypass anything Bolton may have prepared for them.

Back on Earth, Magister Estevez will be expecting the characters where they appear, regardless of how they return from Vigrith, thanks to her Divination Arcana.

Estevez already suspected Bolton was doing something behind her back and confesses that assigning the characters was her way to rock Bolton's boat. She explains how Bolton had been pushing the notion that unrestricted travel between the worlds posed a much worse risk than previously, and was already pushing the "diseased invaders" narrative, waiting for the results of the characters' investigation to prove his point.

AFTERMATH

Estevez will support all efforts to prepare a cure and distribute it among the afflicted, tasking Dion and Val to take it to Baker Clinic to heal the drug dealers, Avery and Trace to deliver it to the Tanneb refugee camp in the city, and a dose for River's brother and a mission to represent the Sodality in taking the cure to the Tanneb refugees near Threshold.

If Bolton is still alive and the characters deliver him to Estevez, he will be sent away for trial and never heard from

DEUS EX JANNIKA

If combat goes badly for the characters due to bad dice rolls, not bad decisions, you can have Jannika Reach arrive out of literally nowhere, driving her van between the characters and their attackers, covering them with a sub-machine gun with a purple muzzle flash and arcane symbols on its barrel. She tells characters to get in, and later explains she used a tracer spell to keep an eye on their whereabouts. Once everyone is inside, including any other Non-Player Character they want to take with them, like Shaol Rakk or Gania Brackenstaff, the *Argos* departs for Earth.

again. Otherwise, he will escape and join the State to pursue his agenda of exclusion and isolation.

Shaol Rakk is taken back to Threshold for interrogation, and will remain in Sodality custody.

REWARDS

If you want to play new adventures with these same characters using the full *Modern AGE* rules, reward your players with one or two increases in level. Avery, Dion, and River will get an invitation to join the Sodality (Membership Rank 1), while Trace and Val will gain a new Reputation.

Alternatively, Jannika Reach can invite the characters to join the *Ferry*men instead.

If the characters befriended any of the non-Player Characters featured in this adventure (Magister Estevez, Jannika Reach, Gania Brackenstaff, or even Hopper the griffon cub), you can award them one Relationship instead.

LOOSE ENDS

The characters can start off new adventures by following any of the leads and information they discovered during the story: Why is no one helping Tannebrim? What is Lady Silverwrath's plan? Who are the rest of the *Ferry*men and what are they up to? What will happen to the Tanneb refugees both on Earth and on Vigrith?

These, and many other unanswered questions, can give rise to future stories full of intrigue, action, and discovery. Welcome to *Modern AGE*.

MODERN • AGE

MODERN AGE

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL
1

MOVE
12

RUN
24

NAME AVERY

AGE **HEIGHT & WEIGHT**

BACKGROUND EXILE

SOCIAL CLASS OUTCAST

PROFESSION BRAWLER

DRIVE PROTECTOR

ACCURACY RANG 0

COMMUNICATION RANG 1

CONSTITUTION RANG 3

DEXTERITY RANG 0

FIGHTING
BRAWLING, GRAPPLING RANG 3

INTELLIGENCE RANG 0

PERCEPTION RANG 2

STRENGTH RANG 3

WILLPOWER RANG 2

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	HEALTH
11	11	3	0	0	28
ARMOR TYPE				CINEMATIC	

TALENTS, SPECIALIZATIONS, & EXTRAORDINARY POWERS

TALENT - LIVING ON THE FRINGE: Other characters suffer a penalty of -2 to any tests to find information about you or your activities. This stacks with the Cover your Tracks exploration stunt.

TALENT - PROTECT: When you perform the Blockade action stunt, you can move up to 6 yards instead of 3.

TALENT - STRIKING STYLE: When you attack with your fists, you inflict 1d6+2 damage instead of 1d3+2.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
UNARMED	+3	1d6+2
KNUCKLE DUSTERS	+3	1d6+6

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL TIES

RELATIONSHIP: The owner of a gym whom you've known for years (Intensity 1)

PREFERRED STUNTS & OTHER NOTES

EQUIPMENT

Weathered clothes, knuckle dusters, backpack, survival gear.

EXPERIENCE	RESOURCES 0
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CHARACTER BACKGROUND

You've always felt uncomfortable staying in one place for long. You don't mind living day to day, doing odd jobs and touring the underground fighting scene or bouncing for seedy and understaffed bars. But when you saved an arcanist's apprentice from getting his face eaten off by a runaway demon, you came to the attention of The Sodality. Since then you've added a very unusual clientele that seems to always find you, regardless of how far you travel. Now you've been asked to meet a senior Sodality official at the upscale Crucible Club for a very delicate job.

Take a moment to customize your character's age, gender, height, weight, and distinguishing features.

MODERN AGE

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL 1

MOVE

12

RUN

24

NAME **DION**

AGE HEIGHT & WEIGHT

BACKGROUND **MILITARY**

SOCIAL CLASS **LOWER CLASS**

PROFESSION **SCHOLAR**

DRIVE **CAREGIVER**

ACCURACY **PISTOLS, LONGARMS** RA 2 NG

COMMUNICATION RA 1 NG

CONSTITUTION RA 1 NG

DEXTERITY RA 2 NG

FIGHTING RA 1 NG

INTELLIGENCE **MEDICINE** RA 2 NG

PERCEPTION RA 2 NG

STRENGTH RA 0 NG

WILLPOWER RA 3 NG

SPEED DEFENSE TOUGHNESS ARMOR PENALTY HEALTH

12 12 1 0 0

ARMOR TYPE

CINEMATIC

16

TALENTS, SPECIALIZATIONS, & EXTRAORDINARY POWERS

TALENT - EMERGENCY CARE: First Aid is a minor action for you.

TALENT - EXPERTISE (MEDICINE): You gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence (Medicine) tests when tending to wounds incurred in combat.

TALENT - OBSERVATION: If you fail a Perception (Seeing) test, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the result of the second roll.

WEAPON

ATTACK ROLL

DAMAGE

UNARMED

+1

1D3+2

SA HANDGUN

+2

2D6+4

HUNTING RIFLE

+2

2D6+6

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL TIES

REPUTATION: You are known as someone who will do their best to save people's lives. This reputation applies to first responders, military personnel, and the disenfranchised.

RELATIONSHIP: Fellow military doctor running a free clinic (Intensity 1)

PREFERRED STUNTS & OTHER NOTES

EQUIPMENT

Casual clothing, Beretta M9 (pistol), civilian AR15 (longarm), medic's kit, cell phone, pager.

EXPERIENCE

RESOURCES

6

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

You served your country not by killing its enemies, but by caring for its soldiers. You've seen combat and know that keeping a cool head is often the best way to stay alive. You were exposed to the magic nature of the world when your squad fended off a pack of vicious green-skinned humanoids, but you're the only one who remembers that. You quit the armed forces to work as an EMT and kept seeing strange things nobody would talk about. Now a strange man has invited you to the Crucible Club, promising an explanation, and a job.

Take a moment to customize your character's age, gender, height, weight, and distinguishing features.

MODERN AGE

NAME RIVER

AGE **HEIGHT & WEIGHT**

BACKGROUND URBAN

SOCIAL CLASS LOWER CLASS

PROFESSION NEGOTIATOR

DRIVE NETWORKER

ACCURACY RATING 1

COMMUNICATION
DECEPTION RATING 3

CONSTITUTION RATING 1

DEXTERITY RATING 1

FIGHTING RATING 0

INTELLIGENCE RATING 2

PERCEPTION
EMPATHY RATING 3

STRENGTH RATING 0

WILLPOWER RATING 2

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL 1

MOVE 11

RUN 22

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	HEALTH
11	11	1	0	0	16
ARMOR TYPE			CINEMATIC		

TALENTS, SPECIALIZATIONS, & EXTRAORDINARY POWERS

TALENT - CONTACTS: You can attempt to make a contact out of a Non-Player Character with a Neutral or better attitude toward you with a successful Communication (Persuasion) test. A contact's attitude shifts one step in your favor, and they will readily provide information without a test, as long as it won't harm them. They will usually not perform other favors without further persuasion.

TALENT - INTRIGUE: If you fail a Communication (Deception) test, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the result of the second roll.

TALENT - MISDIRECTION: As a major action, you can make a Communication (Deception) test opposed by an opponent's Willpower (Self-Discipline); if you succeed, your opponent cannot use stunts until the end of your next turn.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
UNARMED	+0	1d3+2

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL TIES

RELATIONSHIP: Younger brother (Intensity 2)

RELATIONSHIP: Police officer who's never failed to be kind to you (Intensity 1)

RELATIONSHIP: Waitress at a 24-hour diner who offers you free coffee and pie on bad days (Intensity 1)

PREFERRED STUNTS & OTHER NOTES

EQUIPMENT

Inexpensive but stylish outfit, cell phone, fancy cigarette lighter

EXPERIENCE	RESOURCES 4
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CHARACTER BACKGROUND

You come from a working family that tried to teach you that hard work was the key to success, but you quickly realized the key wasn't what you did, but who you knew, and how to get people to work with you. Your eyes opened to the magical nature of the world by putting two and two together from the tidbits of conversations you've picked up, and you managed to make yourself known as a valuable resource to the organization known as The Sodality. Now that your younger brother has fallen ill with an unknown disease, an invitation from The Sodality to meet at The Crucible Club seems too perfectly timed.

Take a moment to customize your character's age, gender, height, weight, and distinguishing features.

MODERN AGE

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL 1

MOVE 12

RUN 24

NAME TRACE

AGE HEIGHT & WEIGHT

BACKGROUND SUBURBAN

SOCIAL CLASS MIDDLE CLASS

PROFESSION INVESTIGATOR

DRIVE ACHIEVER

ACCURACY RANK 1

COMMUNICATION INVESTIGATION RANK 3

CONSTITUTION RANK 0

DEXTERITY RANK 2

FIGHTING RANK 1

INTELLIGENCE CURRENT AFFAIRS RANK 2

PERCEPTION SEARCHING RANK 3

STRENGTH RANK 0

WILLPOWER RANK 1

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	HEALTH
12	12	0	0	0	15
ARMOR TYPE				CINEMATIC	

TALENTS, SPECIALIZATIONS, & EXTRAORDINARY POWERS

TALENT - CONTACTS: You can attempt to make a contact out of an Non-Player Character with a Neutral or better attitude toward you with a successful Communication (Persuasion) test. A contact's attitude shifts one step in your favor, and they will readily provide information without a test, as long as it wouldn't harm them. They will usually not perform other favors without further persuasion.

TALENT - EXPERTISE (SEARCHING): You gain a +1 bonus to Perception (Searching) tests when searching through people's personal belongings.

TALENT - OBSERVATION: If you fail a Perception (Empathy) test, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the result of the second roll.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
UNARMED	+1	1D3+2
SA HANDGUN	+1	2D6+5

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL TIES

MEMBERSHIP: The Sodality (Rank 1)
RELATIONSHIP: Old-school editor who mentored you (Intensity 2), watch captain at a Vigrithian city who tries to make your work difficult in his city, but he grudgingly respects you (Intensity 1)

PREFERRED STUNTS & OTHER NOTES

EQUIPMENT

Comfortable, inconspicuous clothes, Glock 9mm (pistol), cell phone, small laptop, high-definition digital camera

EXPERIENCE RESOURCES 4

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Ever since you took the right picture at the wrong time and looked too much into it, you have been an associate member of The Sodality, inducted to leverage your talent for finding the truth. Working with mages and people with abilities out of legends, while being mundane yourself, has proved fulfilling as a challenge to your skills. Now some big-name Sodality official has personally requested you to meet them at the Crucible Club to be part of some sort of task force.

Take a moment to customize your character's age, gender, height, weight, and distinguishing features.

MODERN AGE

NAME VAL

AGE **HEIGHT & WEIGHT**

BACKGROUND ACADEMIC

SOCIAL CLASS MIDDLE CLASS

PROFESSION EXPERT

DRIVE JUDGE

ACCURACY RANK 0

COMMUNICATION RANK 2

CONSTITUTION RANK 1

DEXTERITY RANK 1

FIGHTING RANK 0

INTELLIGENCE RANK 4
HISTORY, OCCULTISM, RESEARCH

PERCEPTION RANK 2

STRENGTH RANK 0

WILLPOWER RANK 3

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL 1

MOVE 11

RUN 22

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	HEALTH
11	11	1	0	0	16
ARMOR TYPE			CINEMATIC		

TALENTS, SPECIALIZATIONS, & EXTRAORDINARY POWERS

TALENT - DIGITAL ARCANA: You gain the two novice effects associated with Digital Arcana.

TALENT - FIRE ARCANA: You gain the two novice effects associated with Fire Arcana.

TALENT - KNOWLEDGE: When you make a successful Intelligence test with a knowledge focus, the GM should give you an extra piece of information on the topic.

POWER POINTS: 16

POWER TEST: 3d6+4 **FORCE:** 13

SPELL - BYPASS: Cost: 2 PP • **Minor Action** • TN 9 - You bypass a single physical computer-controlled sensor or countermeasure you can see or touch. The affected device reacts to you as if you are authorized or otherwise unremarkable. Bypass does not provide you with passwords or other access, although it can unlock a digital device like a smartphone to give you access.

SPELL - TRACKER: Cost: 3 PP • **1 minute** • TN 9 - You place an invisible arcane "tag" on an object, which remains until you choose to dismiss it as a free action. Once an object is tagged, you can track it with a GPS-enabled device and another casting of this spell (TN 11). The GPS device picks up the tag's location as if it were an electronic transmitter.

SPELL - ARCANE LANTERN: Cost: 2 PP per hour • **Major Action** • TN 8 - You illuminate the area around you with a steady light like that of a torch or lantern. The spell illuminates a 10-yard radius centered on you. Arcane lantern lasts for one hour, but can be extended for 2 PP per additional hour.

SPELL - FLAME BLAST: Cost: 4 PP • **Major Action** • TN 12 - Fire erupts from your hands. The flame blast is 8 yards long and 2 yards wide. Anyone hit by the blast takes 2d6+1 damage. Targets who make a successful Dexterity (Acrobatics) test vs. your Force take only 1d6+1 damage.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
UNARMED	+0	1d3+2

RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL TIES

MEMBERSHIP: The Sodality (Rank 1)

RELATIONSHIP: Your master, who taught you magic (Intensity 1), a Vigrithian shopkeeper who claims you remind them of their late child (Intensity 1)

PREFERRED STUNTS & OTHER NOTES

EQUIPMENT

Fine but simple clothing, pin with an arcane symbol, cell phone, tablet loaded with arcane texts

EXPERIENCE	RESOURCES 8
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CHARACTER BACKGROUND

You grew up knowing the reality of the multiple worlds and the portals connecting them, fascinated with the ways magic can work. Traveling and studying across the different worlds has left you unprepared to face the challenges of the streets in Earth's cities, but you are confident that your knowledge and talent can see you through anything. You were tasked by your master to attend some sort of meeting at the Crucible Club, thought they stayed cryptic as to its purpose and what you are supposed to do there.

Take a moment to customize your character's age, gender, height, weight, and distinguishing features.

QUICK REFERENCE SHEET: ACTIONS & STUNTS

BASIC TASK FORMULA:
3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS (+2)
VS. TARGET NUMBER

ACTIONS

You can take a major action and a minor action, or two minor actions on your turn.

MAJOR ACTIONS

MELEE ATTACK: You attack an enemy within 2 yards in hand-to-hand combat.

RANGED ATTACK: You attack an enemy by firing or throwing a missile weapon.

RUN/CHASE: You travel up to double your Speed in yards. You must be in a standing position to do this.

GENERAL COMBAT STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	DUCK AND WEAVE: Gain +1 to Defense per SP spent until the beginning of your next turn.
1+	SKIRMISH: Move yourself or your attack's target 2 yards in any direction for each 1 SP you spend; you can choose Skirmish more than once per turn.
2	DOUBLE-TEAM: Choose one ally to make an immediate attack on your target, who must be within range and sight of the ally. Your ally must have a loaded missile weapon to attack at range.
2	KNOCK PRONE: Knock your enemy prone. Melee attacks against a prone foe gain a +1, but ranged attacks against a prone foe suffer a -1.
2	TAUNT: Roll Communication (Deception) vs. Willpower (Self-Discipline) against any target within 10 yards of you; if you win, they must attack or oppose you in some way on their next turn.
2	VICIOUS BLOW: Inflict an extra 1d6 damage on this attack.
3	BLOCKADE: Move up to 3 yards to position yourself between a foe and something or someone else. Until the beginning of your next turn, that foe must succeed at a minor action Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Might) test vs. your Defense to reach whatever or whoever you're protecting.
3	LIGHTNING ATTACK: Make a second attack against the same target or a different one within range and sight; you must have a loaded missile weapon to attack at range.
3	SHOCK AND AWE: When you succeed at a non-attack physical feat or take an opponent out, anyone who witnesses it rolls Willpower (Courage) or (Morale) vs. your Strength (Intimidation). If you win, they suffer a -1 to the next opposed roll they make against you, or a -1 to their Defense vs. your next attack against them, whichever comes first.
4	SEIZE THE INITIATIVE: Move to the top of the initiative order until someone else seizes the initiative. You may get to take another turn before some others act again.

DEFEND: You gain a +2 bonus to your Defense until the beginning of your next turn.

FIRST AID: You provide quick medical assistance to an injured ally. This is a TN 11 Intelligence (Medicine) test. If you succeed, your ally gets back an amount of Health equal to the Stunt Die + your Intelligence (minimum 1 Health point).

MINOR ACTIONS

READY: You unsheathe a weapon, pull out a tool, or otherwise get ready to use some stowed item on your person. As part of this action, you can also put away something you already had in hand.

MOVE: You travel up to your Speed in yards. If you limit your travel to half your Speed you can also fall prone, stand up, or mount or dismount a horse or vehicle.

AIM: You carefully plan your next strike. If your next action is a melee attack or ranged attack (even on your next turn), you gain a +1 bonus on that attack roll.

ACTIVATE: This action is used with certain powers or items whose descriptions say something like, "Use an activate action to..."

VARIABLE ACTIONS

RELOAD: Reloading a ranged weapon is a major or minor action, depending on the weapon.

POWER STUNTS (USED FOR MAGIC)

SP COST	POWER STUNT
1-3	POWERFUL MANIFESTATION (CORE): Increase the Force of your power by 1 per stunt point spent, to a maximum of 3.
2	SKILLFUL POWER: Reduce the power point cost of the power by 1. This can reduce the cost to 0. If the power requires a fatigue test, reduce its target number by 2.
2	MIGHTY POWER: If the power does damage, one target of your choice takes an extra d6 damage.
3	LASTING POWER: If the power has a duration beyond instantaneous, it remains in effect twice as long with no additional power point cost. <i>Burning shield</i> would last two rounds per point of Willpower instead of one, for example. Powers that last until the end of the encounter are extended by 1d6 minutes instead.
4	FAST USE: After you resolve this power, you can immediately use another. The second power must require a major action or a minor action's worth of time to use. If you roll doubles on the roll to use the power, you do not get any more stunt points.
4	IMPOSING POWER: The power manifests in a much more dramatic fashion than usual, or perhaps radiates a sinister aura. Until the beginning of your next turn, anyone attempting to make a melee attack against you must make a successful Willpower (Courage) test. The target number (TN) is 10 + your Willpower ability. Those who fail must take a move or a defend action instead.