

Kerberos Club House Rules

This document outlines rules for extending *The Kerberos Club for Wild Talents* into an epic mode, similar to the “Grand Campaign” of *King Arthur Pendragon*. It is assumed that a year of in-game time passes between adventures. The rules here track character development on this scale, while allowing for casual play.

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Character Creation

Character creation follows the rules of *The Kerberos Club*, with the following changes.

Errata

This is some of the official errata for the main rulebook (2nd edition). The Miracles Aces, *Dead Ringer* and *The Dodge-Podge* do not work precisely as described in the rulebook; look up the full errata on the Internet if you would like to use those powers.

Hyperstat and Hyperskill Power Qualities

In the section “Hyperstat and Hyperskill Power Qualities” (page 107 in both *Wild Talents Second Edition* and *Wild Talents Essential Edition*), the discussion of Hyperstat power qualities is incomplete. Replace the first three paragraphs with the following.

Hyperstats have the effects of all three Power Qualities (Attacks, Defends, Useful) by default.

You can add Power Quality Levels, Extras and Flaws to a Hyperstat at the usual costs. However, a Hyperstat isn’t exactly the same as a Miracle.

If you add Extras and Flaws to the Hyperstat, they apply to all functions of the Hyperstat—attacking, defending, and useful noncombat things—where the Extra and Flaw applies. (If the Extra or Flaw says it’s only for Attacks, it doesn’t apply when you use your Hyperstat to Defend.)

If you add Power Quality Levels to the Hyperstat, they apply only when you use the associated Power Quality. Adding four Attacks levels doesn’t help when you use Defends or Useful.

What if you want a Flaw to apply only to one or two of the Power Qualities? Easy. Just reduce the Flaw’s value by one if it applies to only two Power Qualities, or by two if it applies to only one Power Quality. You don’t get much mileage out of most Flaws by using them this way, but it might be worth it if you want a serious Flaw to apply to only some uses of the Hyperstat.

EXAMPLE: You have Hyperbody and you want to add the Flaw ‘Base Will Cost’ to Attacks but not to Defends or Useful. Ordinarily ‘Base Will Cost’ is worth –2 per die; but applying it to only one Power Quality of a Hyperstat means it’s worth –1 per die.

You can add another Power Quality to a Hyperstat for the usual 2 Points per die. This adds some new miraculous effect that uses the Hyperstat dice. You can add Power Quality Levels, Extras and Flaws to the new Power Quality at the usual costs; they don’t affect the core functions of the Hyperstat—the three ‘built-in’ Power Qualities.

Hyperskills are more narrow than Hyperstats: They have one of the three Power Qualities, depending on the Skill involved. Brawling has the Attacks quality; Block has the Defends quality; Perception has Useful; and so on.

You can add another Power Quality to Hyperskill for the usual 2 Points per die. You can add Power Quality Levels, Extras and Flaws to each Power Quality of a Hyperskill at the usual costs.

(The remaining text in this section is unchanged.)

Points

The power level of a *Kerberos* campaign increases as the world gets weirder. The total amount of Points available for building a new character is equal to the in-game year in which it is supposed to enter the game, minus 1600. This will only affect the “Customize” steps, as follows:

- Stats: 70 Points, as usual.
 - Skills: 60 Points, as usual.
 - Customization: The difference between the current year and 1730, instead of the usual 120 Points.
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Skills

Note the types of Skills that are used for Equilibrium on the different gauges of sanity (page 15), and see how this relates to character creation, on page 4.

Wealth (-/-I)

Personal and household wealth is managed abstractly, in the following way: Your Wealth is a special Skill with the Influence quality, meaning it costs 2 points per normal die. A Wealth rating above 5d or containing hard or wiggle dice does not require any Permission or represent anything superhuman.

This Skill, and only this Skill, indicates the general level of material resources at your disposal. Wealth is also a strong but less exclusive indicator of current social class (the company you keep) and lifestyle (the clothes you wear, the quality of your food etc.).

A Wealth rating allows you to gain bonus dice to skill rolls by dint of superior equipment, strategic donations, hired help – anything money can do to help. You can add Wealth dice to any roll, as long as the GM approves. Since it takes time to transfer funds and make purchases, using Wealth increases the time required for the action; the exact amount is up to the GM.¹

Your first 4d of Wealth represent amounts that are too petty to help you technically. You can use each die beyond the first 4 once per game session. You don't have to use them all at once, and must be careful to mark which ones are used. Those remaining at any point are called “usable Wealth”. Reusing a die before the end of the year is possible but means losing that die permanently.

Regardless of what kind of dice you have in Wealth, the size of the pool determines your total amount of resources. Hard and wiggle dice show that you have invested these resources in ways that are extraordinarily safe, reliable and accessible to you, such as liquid means stewarded by an unscrupulous, well-insured banker who is a close personal friend of yours and highly adept with a telegraph, as opposed to dusty, antique furniture at some Scottish estate. This is why even an ordinary human can have hard or wiggle dice in Wealth.

After character creation, you can no longer use Points to get Wealth. Your Wealth will develop through adventures and Money rolls (page 13) instead.

¹ *Wild Talents: Essential Edition*, p. 48.

The Wealth table

The following table tells you roughly what kind of lifestyle is expected (and therefore mandatory in 19th-century Britain) for a given level of Wealth as a Skill, and what types of other skills are needed to maintain that level or rise above it. See the Money roll on page 13.

Wealth pool	Real annual costs (1850)	Position	Degene-ration	Money roll examples (Stat + [suggested Skill content]) (up to 1850)
<u>10-8</u>	2000£ and up	Upper class.	±0d	Charm + [aristocratic fraternizing], Mind + [government, top-level finance or crime].
<u>7</u>	1000£	Upper middle class.	±0d	Mind + [medicine, theology, law, commodities trading, banking], Command + [large-scale manufacture, top-level military or criminal command], any fine profession or art.
<u>6</u>	500£	Middle class.	-1d	Command + [small-scale manufacture, theology, criminal leadership], Mind + [minor shipowning, criminology], any gentlemanly profession or art where you do not personally receive other people's money or do any real fighting.
<u>5</u>	250£	Lower middle class.	-1d	Coordination + [surgery], Charm + [shopkeeping], any profession free of significant physical labour.
<u>4-3</u>	150 to 80£	Normal person. Working class.	±0d	Body + [labour], Coordination + [craft], Command + [control of lesser servants in the house], any ungentlemanly profession.
<u>2</u>	40£	Poor.	±0d	Body + [heavy factory or farm work, soldiering], Sense + [burglary].
<u>1</u>	20£	Unemployed and/or homeless.	+1d	Body + [crude manual labour], Coordination + [pickpocketing], Charm + [professional skills, to find work].
<u>0</u>	Less than 10£	Destitute.	+2d	Body + [street-sweeping, mugging], Charm + [begging].

Starting sanity

The concept of sanity is explained on page 15.

A starting character can have as many Failed notches as you want, on any gauge of sanity. You can also take any amount of Hardened notches up to the level of your associated Skill for each gauge except Progress, and up to the level of your Command in the Progress gauge. This is recommended for experienced characters.

If you have at least 4 notches of each type, on all gauges combined, you may take up to two Insane or Tainted points of Base Will (page 18).

Annual Developments

Role-playing opportunities between adventures are typically limited, on the assumption that characters are too busy leading real lives to have adventures all the time.

Annual developments occur by agreement between player and GM, and by annual rolls. These happen in December of every year. They're supposed to cut down on session length. Just follow these steps:

1. Raise the **real age** of your character on your sheet, even if you happen to know his or her actual birthday. Do not raise the current year yet.
2. Unless you are protected from ageing by a Miracle, raise the **apparent age** as well.

You now have a starting pool of **Degeneration dice** equal to **1d for every full 10 years** of your apparent age. Don't roll anything yet.

3. **Raise your Willpower** to the level of your core Base Will. Insane or Tainted Base Will does not count. If higher than core Base Will, your Willpower is unaffected.
4. **Heal** all regular Shock and Killing damage, unless prevented by an Intrinsic.
5. Prepare your dice:
 1. Unless sufficiently Hardened, make your **Alienation** roll (page 6). Crime affects this roll.
 2. If sufficiently disturbed, make your **Aberration** roll (page 7).
 3. If you wish, make your **life events** roll (page 8).
 4. If it's 1800, 1805, 1810, 1815, 1820, 1824, 1828, 1832, 1836, 1840, 1843, 1846, 1849, 1852, 1855, an even-numbered year from 1858 to 1890 inclusive, or any year from 1891 onwards, make your **Money** roll (page 13). Important note: You must use a Stat and Skill appropriate for your *current* Wealth (page 4), not just any profession.
 5. If you have more than 1d left for **Degeneration**, roll to be weakened by age (page 14).
6. Unless isolated from your savings and sources of income, make all your **Wealth usable again**. There are two exceptions: Wealth tied up in assistants for Money rolls, and the first 4d.
7. **Get 1 Point!**
8. Extra **Points for Officers** (page 21) are discussed. Remind the GM if you've been responsible and helped the group.
9. You may **spend Points** freely on technical character development.
10. Raise the **current year** listed on your character sheet, by 1.

The last step is delayed to prevent you from accidentally moving ahead one year without the full consequences. As a further safeguard, please keep a note of your year of birth, and which years are not included in your apparent age for Strange reasons. Your apparent age is supposed to be your age with respect to normal biological wear and tear; it will only differ from your real age by magic, not beauty.

If there are several years of annual developments between your character and the next adventure, repeat the process until your personal "current year" matches the shared plot.

The cost of being a Stranger

Alienation rolls

Being weird is alienating and produces a constant temptation to use your special advantages in narrowly self-interested ways, such as solving your money troubles, menacing ordinary people who get on your nerves, or conforming to the popular expectation that you are a monster. This can erode your self-image and sanity.

Every individual power (Stat, Skill, or Miracle) you have contributes to the Intensity of an annual Equilibrium roll on the Character gauge of sanity, called the Alienation roll. Its default Intensity is 1. This increases by 2 if you are in fact exploiting or hurting ordinary people **professionally**, such as through burglary or war. Hardened notches may protect you from having to roll, as usual.

Superhuman powers add a minimum of +1 Intensity per power. Classify your powers:

Class	Power examples	Interval
<u>Light</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Powers that can only be used for helping others.Dud powers.Any Hyperskill, or Skill with hd or wd.	40
<u>Medium</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any Hyperstat, or Stat with hd or wd.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Exception: Hypermind counts as Heavy.Most at-will Miracles.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whether a Magus's non-permanent powers are Medium or Heavy depend on their typical use.	30
<u>Heavy</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hypermind, or Mind with hd or wd.Any Miracle that is or can easily be active the majority of the time, including anything with Permanent or Endless.Any Miracle that slows, eliminates or reverses your ageing process.Any Miracle that violates causality, such as time travel, and other potential sources of major paradox.	20

Now compare the full cost of each power to the interval for its class. For each new multiple the cost of the entire power starts upon, the Intensity of the annual roll increases by 1.

Example: Evelyn has 64 points invested in a Miracle that grants him reliable precognition at a price. This is judged to be a Heavy class of power, so that power alone gives Evelyn +4 Intensity for Alienation: +1 to begin with and +3 for exceeding 3 multiples of 20. If it were only a brilliant but much more human "Futurologist" Hyperskill, it would raise Intensity by 2 instead.

Evelyn has no other superhuman abilities, so he adds the +4 for precognition to the default 1. Every year, he has to roll for Alienation against an Intensity of 5, unless his powers change. This is noted on his character sheet.

Failure in your Alienation roll usually means that you are concerned by your dark impulses, or understand and pity those who lack your advantages. Success means you are learning not to care.

Aberration rolls

Failed notches indicate a frequently unsettled and vulnerable state of mind. Over time, in the course of your daily life, this can result in genuine madness, or find some other means of ventilation. It is not necessary to come up with a specific event or moment when this occurs. The process is typically gradual.

Roll 1d per Failed notch you have in all gauges of sanity, combined. Use **your highest success**, referring to the table below. "W" refers to the width of your roll. Any success lets you eliminate a number of Failed notches. If there is no success, you brood unproductively over what you have experienced and your Failed notches remain in place.

Height	Effect	Failed notches eliminated
<u>10</u>	Insanity. You gain W-1 points of Insane Base Will (page 18).	$W \times W$.
<u>9</u>	Villainy. You gain W-1 points of Tainted Base Will (page 18).	$W \times W$.
<u>8</u>	Roaming. You keep strange company and do some hard drinking, smoking or fasting to atone, or forget. Gain W+1 Degeneration dice this year and lose 1 die of Wealth.	$W+1$.
<u>7</u>	Denial. Raise the future Difficulty of all rolls on this table by 1, noted as Aberration Difficulty, defaulting to 1.	W .
<u>6</u>	Self-pity is for the weak. Choose W-1 of your Failed notches. Convert each of these to Hardened notches on the same gauge. If possible, the first gauge must be the one where you have the most Hardened notches.	Special.
<u>5</u>	Flight from responsibility. Lose 1 die of Wealth.	W .
<u>4</u>	Counsel or care at an institution, where you are not loved. Gain W-1 Degeneration dice this year.	W .
<u>3</u>	A burden to your loved ones. Reduce all of your relationship ratings by W-1. If you have no relationships with a positive rating before this, lose 1 point of core Base Will.	W .
<u>2</u>	Sympathetic companionship at the Kerberos Club, without ill effects.	W .
<u>1</u>	Your fellow Kerberans laugh at your misconceptions and show you what you are. Lose one point of Insane or Tainted Base Will, if you wish.	W .

Life events

Adventures are not the only thing in your life. Choose table A or table B below, then roll as many dice as you want (0 to 10), and check the results. If you get no matches, pick an item from the anecdote table that matches any one loose die you rolled.

For each die in your hand, you may expend 1 Willpower to set that die to any given height, instead of rolling it. No such dice can share the same height. In this way, you influence your everyday life, but cannot guarantee success.

This system should be seen as source of inspiration for a part of your Kerberan's story, not as a guide to his or her true character. The purpose is to provide a sense of time passing and your character being a rounded and grounded person. If an event doesn't fit, the GM will let you ignore or modify it. You are warmly invited to put down in writing your interpretations of events here and send them to the GM for inclusion in future plots. Where noted, you are required to do so.

The scale of romance

All romantic life events involve a **relationship**. These are rated as follows:

- **1** means you've met.
- **2** means mutual acquaintance and perhaps frequent letter-writing.
- **3** means steady romantic companionship, and in the upper classes, an engagement to marry if the partner is of a serious sort, i.e. not a mistress or prostitute etc.
- **4** would mean marriage in any normal, serious relationship. Reverting from this point means an unhappy marriage, and reverting to zero means a deeply shameful divorce.
- **5** and above means happy marriage, or some other paradoxically successful perversity.

The scale of family

There are two categories of family for life-event purposes. **Close family** refers to:

- Your spouse, if married.
 - If not married, you may count a love interest with whom your relationship rating is at least a 3.
 - Even if married, you may count a love interest with whom your relationship rating is higher than your marriage, instead of your spouse.
- Your legitimate children, if any, else your other children.
- Siblings, parents and grandparents living within your household or with whom you are on extremely good terms.

Extended family refers to everyone else who could be considered family, including kin by marriage or adoption, but not friends or lovers. Siblings, parents and grandparents are usually counted here. If in doubt, choose for yourself.

Table A

This is the simpler option. Use **all successes**, note the results in your diary (character log), and email your interpretations to the GM where it says “You must provide”. The more positive results (10-7) are voluntary.

Height	Results
<u>10</u>	Birth! If fertile and active, you have or adopt width-1 children. On a subsequent roll of 2+ on 1d, they are adorable. <u>You must provide:</u> Name and sex of children.
<u>9</u>	Romantic development. Width is added to your relationship with a partner. <u>You must provide:</u> Name, sex and status (serious or not) of partner.
<u>8</u>	Family development. Your extended family grows by width in people, or you hear of one possible relative if you have none.
<u>7</u>	Your Strange insights give you opportunities in the changing economic landscape of Britain. <u>Technical effect:</u> Width-1 in bonus dice to your Money roll this year, if any.
<u>6</u>	Romantic trouble. Width-1 is subtracted from your relationship with an existing partner, if any. <u>You must provide:</u> Specific partner.
<u>5</u>	Family tragedy. Width-1 individuals in your extended family die. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium roll (Violence or Progress, your choice), width in Intensity. By default, the inheritance does not affect your Wealth.
<u>4</u>	Household tragedy. Width-1 individuals in your close family die or disappear and are presumed dead. <u>You must provide:</u> Specific member of family. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium roll (Progress), width*height in Intensity.
<u>3</u>	Scandal! A feud or impropriety in your family or private life becomes known, perhaps through false rumours. Society disapproves. <u>Technical effect:</u> Width in penalty dice to your Money roll this year, if any.
<u>2</u>	Saved by the Club. You owe a fellow Kerberan a big favour.
<u>1</u>	Your participation in Club games or Traditions has been noted. You are widely recognized the following year.

Table B

This is a more complex option than table A. For each result, you must make at least one choice. No results are voluntary, except if deemed clearly inappropriate. "W" refers to the width of your roll.

Height	Option 1	Option 2
<u>10</u>	You have or adopt W-1 children . <u>You must provide:</u> Name and sex of children.	Frivolous or dangerous romance . <u>You must provide:</u> Name and sex of partner. <u>Technical effect:</u> W is added to your relationship with a partner you would not normally be able to marry, such as one above or below your station.
<u>9</u>	Serious romantic development . <u>You must provide:</u> Name of partner. <u>Technical effect:</u> W is added to your relationship with your spouse if married, else a partner you could respectably marry.	You move, get a second house, or make some improvements to your real estate , as your financial situation dictates.
<u>8</u>	<u>If you have living relatives:</u> Your extended family grows by W in people. <u>You must provide:</u> Family branch and location. <u>Else:</u> You hear of a possible distant relative or corresponding product of your origin. <u>You are invited to provide:</u> Your reaction, veracity of connection.	You make a new friend , who isn't Strange. <u>You must provide:</u> Name and occupation, reason for friendship. <u>You are invited to provide:</u> Location, frequency of contact.
<u>7</u>	Your Strange insights give you economic opportunities in the changing landscape of Britain. <u>Technical effect:</u> W-1 in bonus dice to your Money roll this year, if any.	W-1 people with whom you are mutually acquainted attain more noteworthy positions in life, which may benefit you later. <u>You must provide:</u> Name of acquaintances, their position.
<u>6</u>	<u>If romantically engaged:</u> W-1 is subtracted from your relationship with an existing partner due to romantic trouble . <u>You must provide:</u> Specific partner. <u>Else:</u> Your loneliness drains you. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium roll (Progress), W+1 in Intensity.	<u>If married:</u> You discover that your spouse has been unfaithful , or vice versa, or something similarly grave affects your marriage. <u>Technical effect:</u> W is subtracted from your marriage. If it reaches zero, you are divorced. <u>Else:</u> You get married . <u>Technical effect:</u> If you did not have an eligible partner already, your relationship with your new spouse starts at W and is assumed to be motivated by money, tradition or social ambitions, not love. <u>You must provide:</u> Name of partner.

Height	Option 1	Option 2
5	<p>If you have extended family: W-1 individuals in your extended family die or disappear. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium roll (Violence or Progress, your choice), W in Intensity.</p> <p>Else: You hear a childhood friend or former lover has died. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium roll (Progress), W in Intensity.</p>	<p>If you have family: Sensitive family matters, such as an old feud, culminate in violence. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium roll (Violence), W+1 in Intensity.</p> <p>Else: You hear an old mentor or benefactor has died. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium roll (Progress), W in Intensity.</p>
4	<p>If you have close family: There is a death in your household. Make a separate roll of all usable Wealth+1wd and treat it as opposing this set. W+1 individuals in your close family die or disappear and are presumed dead. Even if W is reduced to zero by the effect of Wealth, the long period of life-threatening illness is harrowing. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Progress), W+5 in Intensity. <u>You must provide:</u> Specific members of family.</p> <p>Else: A close friend or current lover is gravely injured, dies, or disappears.</p>	<p>A friend or love interest's honour is threatened, or yours is. Roll for Equilibrium (Violence), W+1 in Intensity, and proceed. <u>You are invited to provide:</u> The identity of the parties, the occasion and the outcome.</p> <p>If you succeed, or are too Hardened to roll: You fight. There is a scandal. <u>Technical effect:</u> W-1 in penalty dice to your Money roll this year, if any.</p> <p>If you fail: You withdraw dishonourably. <u>Technical effect:</u> W-1 is subtracted from your relationship with an existing partner.</p>
3	<p>An impropriety in your family or private life becomes known, or there are nasty rumours about your abilities, your Strange exploits or the company you keep. Society disapproves. <u>Technical effect:</u> W in penalty dice to your Money roll this year, if any. <u>You must provide:</u> Nature of scandal.</p>	<p>You are arrested for a crime, real or not. If you resist arrest or want to break out of your cell, this will require brief role-playing. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Progress), 2×W in Intensity. You are isolated from your savings (or must spend) and will therefore not regain usable Wealth. <u>You are invited to provide:</u> The charge and result.</p>
2	<p>The Club saves you in a potentially embarrassing interaction with society. You owe a fellow Kerberan a big favour. <u>You must provide:</u> Name of benefactor, unless the GM suggests one.</p>	<p>You have an unfortunate interaction with normal society, such as being chased by a mob, proclaimed a charlatan or denied the fulfilment of your particular needs. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Character, Progress or Violence; choose one you would need to roll for), W in Intensity.</p>
1	<p>Your values evolve with the times. <u>Technical effect:</u> 1 point of Base Will is transferred from one of your existing Convictions to another, possibly a new one. <u>You must provide:</u> The specifics. <u>You are invited to provide:</u> The reason.</p>	<p>You've achieved Club notoriety in one of its games or Traditions, such as the induction of a new Kerberan. As a result, you are more widely recognized at the Club the following year. <u>You are invited to provide:</u> The nature of the ceremony.</p>

The anecdote table

This is a supplement to tables A and B above. It is used for loose dice.

Loose die	Option 1	Option 2
<u>1</u>	A child in your family did an especially funny or fascinating thing.	You've attended a party below your station.
<u>2</u>	You've had a brush with death by drowning, a careless coach driver or some other hazard. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Violence), Intensity 3.	You've survived a duel, or seconded a friend in one. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Violence), Intensity 3.
<u>3</u>	You've been the victim of an attempted crime, but the criminal was not a Stranger. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Progress), Intensity 3.	You've met childhood friends who've grown apart from you and are shockingly old. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Progress), Intensity 2.
<u>4</u>	You've been on a hunt or long journey.	You've attended a party above your station.
<u>5</u>	You've been to a wedding.	You've been to a funeral.
<u>6</u>	You spend Christmas with virtually your entire family.	You have a lovely New Year's with your sweetheart.
<u>7</u>	You've obtained a rare item.	You've gained a pet or minor familiar.
<u>8</u>	You've lost a pet or minor familiar.	You've lost a precious item.
<u>9</u>	You've had a religious experience. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Strangeness), Intensity 2.	You've seen things in the streets of London that wouldn't have caught your eye before, but now you know. <u>Technical effect:</u> Equilibrium (Strangeness), Intensity 2.
<u>10</u>	You think you've understood an Oriental custom.	You've met a stereotype.

Money!

Your Wealth rating governs your financial opportunities. These opportunities consist of skill sets you can use to keep or expand your Wealth rating. This means that if you get wealthier, or poorer, you may suddenly need different skills to improve, because your social status has changed, and people expect different things of you. The Wealth table (page 4) shows what you may roll.

Partners and assistants

If you are a passive partner in a marriage or other Wealth-sharing relationship, your skills are irrelevant and it is the active partner who must roll for the both of you. Similarly, if you are married and supporting a partner (and/or children), you roll alone. Unless the passive partner is making an effort to economize, this type of relationship will give 1 penalty die to the Money roll.

If you wish to hire an accountant or other help to manage your money, you may add up to 2 regular dice from your usable Wealth to your Money roll. These will not be available for any other use until it's time for the next Money roll.

Results

- If the Money roll succeeds with a height greater than your Wealth: +1d Wealth.
- If the roll succeeds with a height equal to or lower than your Wealth: No change.
- If the roll fails: -1d Wealth.
 - This can be interpreted as a calamity unrelated to your work, e.g. your house burning down.
 - If already at zero Wealth, you do not survive the winter.
 - Normal dice are removed in preference to hd or wd. If only hd or wd remain, one is first converted (to 2d per hd, or 1hd and 2d per wd) before a die is lost.

Additionally, for each point of width above 2 in your highest set, you may perform any one of the following operations:

- Convert 2d to 1hd, or vice versa.
- Convert 2hd to 1wd, or vice versa.

The grim spectre approaches

For Degeneration, you roll all the dice in your current Degeneration pool. Use **your highest success** from this roll on the following table. Remember the effect of Wealth (page 4) and the many other things that may help or hurt here, before you roll.

Height	Result
<u>10</u>	Width-1 penalty dice to Stats of your choice.
<u>9</u>	Width-1 penalty dice to Skills of your choice.
<u>8</u>	Note an obvious cosmetic effect, such as smallpox scarring or white hair.
<u>7-5</u>	Roll for Equilibrium (Progress) using height in Intensity. You cannot gain more than one Failed notch as a result, and cannot gain any Hardened notches.
<u>4-1</u>	Set your Willpower to height.

Example: Benjamin is 47 (4 base Degeneration dice), leads a middle-class life (-1d) and rolls 3x10; very bad luck. He chooses 1 penalty die to Sense from hardness of hearing, and 1 penalty die to Mind from a worsening memory.

The largest amount of penalty dice (from Degeneration) you can have in a Stat is equal to the amount of native (non-Hyperstat) dice you have in it. At this point you are dead, or permanently unplayable as a result of advanced debility or senility. If the same thing happens to a Skill, it cannot be used (until improved), and cannot be picked to drop further (until improved).

Psychology

Various rules govern the life of the mind.

Equilibrium

Every PC has four gauges of sanity: Character, Progress, Strangeness and Violence.² It's possible to have one piece of this foundation crumble while the other three are solid.

The four gauges measure how damaged your character has become by their particular influences. When confronted by a shocking or deeply disturbing event, you must make an Equilibrium roll with a dice pool that represents your resistance to stimuli on that gauge. The pool is based on a Stat and a background-type Skill ("B/F/-" or "B/F/I"). Appropriate types of Skill are listed in the next table.

Having someone shoot at you is clearly cause for an Equilibrium (Violence) roll, but getting shot and then having to drag yourself a mile to the nearest farmhouse is a lot more difficult to internalize and overcome. Threats to sanity therefore have Intensity ratings from 1 to 10. This is a Difficulty number. The roll for Equilibrium must match or beat the Intensity to succeed.

The result of an Equilibrium roll points to a coping strategy. If you fail, you might run away screaming, but this is not necessarily unhealthy. Some people resist madness by becoming rigid and inflexible. While they retain control over themselves, this control comes at the price of increasing numbness and distance from the world. It becomes difficult to have a human reaction to anything at all. Strength of this sort is a burden as much as a blessing, because it turns Strangers into the monsters of Victorian society. It is represented here by Hardened notches.

When you succeed at a roll for Equilibrium on a particular gauge, you gain a Hardened notch on that gauge. When you fail a roll, you gain at least one Failed notch, and may suffer some ill effect. That can mean one of three trauma reactions: fight, flight or freeze. See below for details.

Hardened notches on a gauge offer protection against challenges of that type. You do not roll if the Intensity is equal to or lower than your Hardened rating. This means that every time you confront a challenge with Intensity equal to or less than your Hardened rating, your gauge won't change. Every time you face one greater than your Hardened rating, your gauge is going to change—you'll either get a Hardened notch or at least one Failed notch. Either way, you won't be the same.

² This material is based on the Madness Meter rules from *Nemesis: Roleplaying in Worlds of Horror* (2006), which is itself based on *Unknown Armies* (1998).

The gauges of sanity

Gauge	Basics	Equilibrium roll	Sample Intensities	10 Failed notches	10 Hardened notches
<u>Character</u>	This gauge deals with internal conflict and natural behavioural checks.	Command + [criminal or colonial background]. The same force of belief that bends others to your will can help you stay the course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Lying • 2: Stealing • 3: Buying a slave in 1805 • 4: Cheating on your wife with her friend • 6: Raping a native • 8: Deliberately spreading smallpox 	Paralysing guilt and shame over your selfish inclinations.	There are no drawbacks to constant lying, stealing and cheating. Life is all about getting ahead.
<u>Progress</u>	This measures your reaction to traumatic events that you cannot control, including cultural developments which reduce the influence or safety of the individual.	Base Will in dice. Only the raw force of your will can maintain hope.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2: Being mugged • 3: Being locked up for long periods • 4: Witnessing computing artillery • 5: A disfiguring illness • 6: Your invention leads to poverty • 8: Your social movement is squashed 	The new world is horrifying beyond belief and there is no protection from it.	All possibilities are equal. The limits have gone away at last. This opens many opportunities for you, the automaton.
<u>Strangeness</u>	This gauge deals with supernatural and clearly extraordinary events beyond your range of experience.	Mind + [weird background]. Even if your reasoning turns out to be mistaken, it's better than nothing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2: Seeing an unattended object move • 4: Seeing a vampire's eyes open • 6: Hearing a great herd of dinosaurs • 8: An audience with the Queen 	The Strange can never make sense. The only answer is a retreat to traditional methods and values.	The mundane world is a marginal epiphenomenon. Food and sleep are for troglodytes.
<u>Violence</u>	This gauge dictates how you handle violence, whether inflicting or suffering from it.	Sense + [violent background]. Your animal instincts kick in to preserve you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2: Being shot at • 3: Shooting at somebody far away • 4: Seeing a mutilated corpse • 6: Murdering a man for revenge • 7: Having your friend devoured • 8: Cutting down a dozen ordinary people 	The thought of blood makes you lose control.	Living things are only ever objects. Empathy is a joke.

Successful rolls: Stiff upper lip

A matching set with height at or above the situation's Intensity in an Equilibrium situation is sufficient to keep you in control, giving you a new Hardened notch. With enough notches one has "seen it all" and is immune to further shocks. This sort of callousness impedes one's ability to function as a person.

At **7 or more Hardened notches** in a single gauge, a character gets a bonus of 1hd to a given category of rolls, as well as 1 gobble die to some other type of rolls, which may not normally have been required. This combination of bonus and penalty is a sign of growing psychosis. At **10 Hardened notches** in a single gauge, a character is permanently psychotic and can no longer be played.

Gauge	1hd bonus at 7+	1 gobble die at 7+
<u>Character</u>	Rolls to lie and cheat.	Rolls to remember happier times and restrain egotism.
<u>Progress</u>	Rolls to maintain personal equilibrium in desperate situations.	Rolls to use traditional forms of knowledge and comprehend the motives of ordinary people.
<u>Strangeness</u>	Rolls to understand Strange phenomena.	Rolls to understand everyday phenomena and find simple explanations.
<u>Violence</u>	Rolls to intimidate.	Rolls to participate in a diplomatic solution.

Failed rolls: Excellent chance of a glorious death

When you fail an Equilibrium roll, subtract the Intensity of the event from the height of the roll. If there are no matching sets, use the Intensity number. The result is the amount of Failed notches you get on the gauge, if you do not have an immediate reaction. You are emotionally destabilized, at least until you've rested well.

Failed notches mean at least occasional mental discomfort and instability, just as Hardened notches mean isolation and alienation. Having 10 or more Failed notches on a single gauge makes you extremely nervous and potentially suicidal, but you're still a playable character.

If you have an **immediate reaction**, you only get 1 Failed notch from a single shock, but this is not always possible, or desirable. Rational thinking must be disconnected in one of three ways. You are then trapped in that reaction until the situation changes and you have a chance to gather your wits, or someone slaps you out of it. The possible reactions are:

- Flight: You run away at top speed from the terrifying stimulus. If you're carrying anything that isn't emotionally central to your life, you drop it. If there are multiple paths that go straight away, you take the closest, safest or most familiar route. You run until you can no longer hear, smell, see or feel the threat, or until you've failed enough Body rolls to collapse.
- Fight: You attack with primal, berserk fury until you either obliterate the stimulus, fall exhausted from failed Body rolls, or are destroyed. You cannot voluntarily stop fighting until the offending object, creature or person is clearly destroyed. Anyone who tries to stop you has sided with the enemy.
- Freeze: You hide and don't come out until you're sure the danger's passed, or you freeze up or faint. You may weep, scream, vomit, assume the fetal position, beg for mercy or similar, until the situation becomes much less threatening or you are dragged from the spot. If attacked, you are helpless.

If none of these seem appropriate, you cannot have an immediate reaction and must take the full amount of notches instead. This is typically the case when you are locked in your own head with a blackened conscience, or the implications of a dusty old tome dawn on you over a quiet week in the Club library.

Insanity

In an annual roll outside adventuring, Failed notches may result in special points of Base Will (page 7), which do not count towards core Base Will, but generally function the same way. Like core points, the special points must be invested in old or new Convictions. Be careful to note where, because this affects the content of a Conviction.

An Insane point of Base Will adds a definite irrational aspect to its Conviction. It is noticeably warped. A Conviction made up entirely of several Insane points would seem absolutely mad to the vast majority of people. It could still be rational in the narrow, technical context of Faerie law or some other alien discipline, but not in natural terms. If the Conviction represents a supernatural belief, the facts supporting it are misinterpreted, or the belief runs counter to one's natural interests, such as social status or well-being.

The greater the share of Insane points in a Conviction, the harder it becomes to get Willpower from it. The dramatic act in question would have to serve the Conviction as well as contradict one's natural interests. Frequent acts satisfying this requirement must result in dire poverty, starvation, ill health, disfigurement, ostracism, imprisonment, humiliation, an ugly and painful death, or any similar fate.

Example: As a result of Failed notches on her Progress gauge, Laura gets an Insane point of Base Will. Her player invests it in a new Conviction called The Tinkering Gremlin. Laura now imagines that she is being followed by a big-nosed and slippery grey monkey, though it shows itself quite rarely, and only to her. The creature investigates all the machines it can find, and usually breaks them, but says nothing. This often causes trouble; Laura cannot rely on any of the modern amenities in her home. By refusing to let her friends through the door when they come to see her, so as to "avoid" embarrassment, she gets a point of Willpower for following her Conviction. If she were to take a train across a long bridge, she would lose a point of Willpower, because the gremlin might sabotage the train and kill the passengers. In reality, the machines Laura thinks are out of order actually work, or broke naturally, or she unconsciously breaks them herself. The insanity is based on a combination of two private fears: Modern technology is dangerously unreliable, and Laura brings misery to others.

Another special type of Base Will is the Taint. It is invested in the same way as Insane points, but has a different meaning. Rather than being irrational, a Tainted Conviction is narrowly selfish in some way, and represents indulgence in a character flaw or depravity. When a single Tainted point is applied to a normal Conviction, its content is noticeably corrupted. An entirely Tainted Conviction demands acts that would disgust or horrify a normal person, but are joyful to the Tainted.

A dramatic act that produces Willpower from a Tainted Conviction must be shocking. The person performing it, and quite possibly any onlookers as well, must make an appropriate Equilibrium roll, unless sufficiently Hardened. The act must be so repulsive that its Intensity is at least equal to $2 \times$ the level of Taint.

Example: Julia fights to avenge her husband. She has a normal Conviction called Vengeance when she gains a Tainted point of Base Will. She invests it in Vengeance, and with the GM's permission, the name of the Conviction changes to Revenge, to reflect the difference in attitude. From now on, Julia desires to torture and kill anyone involved with the killing of her husband, rather than bring them to court.

There is always something hollow about the self-confidence and joy that results from an Insane or Tainted Conviction. For this reason, and because of the special requirements on dramatic acts for Willpower, it is not possible to gain Willpower through rest or downtime on the basis of Insane or Tainted Base Will, only from core Base Will.

A really good Insane or Tainted Conviction will come into play regularly, and is fun to play without being primarily comical, just like a regular Conviction. Choosing an insanity is a chance to reveal more of your character's nature, and let it evolve.

Like a regular Conviction, an Insane or Tainted Conviction can be cured by denying it dramatically while the game is in "adventure mode", until you lose the Insane or Tainted Base Will.

Further examples

A Conviction with only a single point of Taint can masquerade as a common vice. For example, a character may become a glutton, gaining Willpower from eating disgusting amounts, and losing it from imagined hunger. Some more examples of this:

- Addiction. Rapid indulgence can remove 1 Failed notch per session, gained in the last hour. Abstinence may result in penalty dice. Unskilled gambling can be the result of an Insane Conviction, and will require the use of Wealth.
- Anger. Intimidating when enraged. Easily taunted.
- Envy. Rewards the use of Wealth to get a flashier piece of equipment or clothing, or a luxurious souvenir. Punishes missed opportunities to upgrade or expand the collection.
- Greed. Likely to produce Equilibrium rolls for Character and Progress.
- Pride. Make a boast, rather than deprive the world of your greatness.
- Whoring. Unpaid sex does nothing.

Similarly, a strong prejudice or excessive trust (*naïvité*) can form the seed of an Insane or Tainted Conviction. The following table suggests a few variants.

Subject	Prejudice	Naïvité
<u>Women</u>	Manipulative piles of emotions.	Harmless innocents.
<u>Men</u>	Philandering apes.	Rightful, rational heads of family and state.
<u>The British</u>	Self-righteous tyrants.	Ruling with honour by the will of God.
<u>Darkies</u>	Subhuman filth.	Noble savages.
<u>Orientals</u>	Babbling infidels.	Wise beyond words.
<u>Religion</u>	A varnish over the basest inclinations.	The source of compassion.
<u>The Poor</u>	Scum driven by petty greed.	Happy to serve.
<u>Soldiers</u>	Worthless drunken criminals.	Courageous keystone of the Empire.
<u>Aristocrats</u>	Frigid nitwits.	Destined for great things.

Manipulating sanity

Skills can allow characters to manipulate the gauges of sanity in a controlled fashion.

Counselling

A Skill that includes some form of empathetic counselling will let a character “talk down” a friend who’s just emerged from a trauma. The counsellor rolls this Skill along with Charm or Command against a Difficulty equal to the patient’s current Failed or Hardened notches, whichever the counsellor’s addressing. With a success, a Failed or Hardened notch is erased. This can only be attempted once per traumatic event, and the counsellor has to be able to talk with the patient, hear the patient’s answers, and have a meaningful exchange of ideas. This takes at least a half hour in a safe setting.

Furthermore, counselling can snap someone out of an immediate trauma reaction. This only takes a minute of conversation, but it can’t be done in the middle of a fight, chase or other violent distraction.

Psychiatry

A dry and intellectual science of reshaping the thoughts of others may form a Skill, rolled with Mind. With a successful roll the psychiatrist can remove Failed and Hardened notches, or add them. It is not easy, however, and it is not quick. To apply psychiatry, the patient has to spend time in therapy. The more extreme his attitude, the more time is required to dig it out and restore him to a normal range of function. Fixing Failed notches takes longer than erasing Hardened notches.

Patients in residential therapy—isolated from the cares and stresses of everyday life and doing nothing but concentrating on getting well—have to spend a number of weeks there equal to all their notches in the gauge they’re trying to fix. Once the time has been put in, the psychiatrist rolls.

If the character being treated has done good roleplaying indicating someone who is really struggling with her issues and trying to get well, the psychiatrist may add a die to the pool (GM’s discretion). If the character has resisted therapy, the roll is at a 1d penalty.

The roll is made without a difficulty rating. Any success alters the gauge as planned, even for an unscrupulous psychiatrist who, for whatever reason, wants a patient to gain notches.

Psychology

Where psychiatry is methodical, psychology is more akin to an art. It’s more responsive, more personal and less clinical. Psychology often depends on the therapist’s strength of character and force of personality. It can therefore be included in a Command-based Skill. Forming a tight bond with a therapist can allow rapid progress, but unlike the repeatable methods of psychiatry, it depends on the patient as much as the therapist.

Psychology does not make people better, but it can help them get better, like counselling. It can also remove notches from gauges like psychiatry, with the same investment of effort. (It cannot be used to add notches to any gauge, however.) Psychology is versatile, but provokes a new Equilibrium roll, with an Intensity equal to the number of notches you’re trying to reduce. With a success, the patient loses 1 notch.

The Officer System

This is a player-level means of flattening the social hierarchy of RPGs. In the Officer system, each player may choose to take on a special role to reduce GM workload. As an Officer, the player assists the entire group with some aspect of the game, thus earning extra Points for developing his or her character.

The Brigadier

The Brigadier holds the highest rank. He or she takes on the responsibility and authority to arrange sessions of the game, and may earn Points even if there is no session.

The Brigadier automatically gets 1 Point for sending an email to all interested parties between six and three days ahead of the next scheduled opportunity for a session. Every current participant in the campaign must be unambiguously listed in this email as either willing and able to come, else unwilling or unable. If the GM can't come, it is sufficient to note this, but if the GM has previously announced that a session is off (at least six days before the scheduled time), the Brigadier gets nothing.

In order to produce all of this information, the Brigadier will contact players (or be contacted by them) as the GM normally would. A player may choose to publicly list him- or herself as absent or present by default to avoid this repetitive communication, but the onus will then be on him/her to convey atypical intentions to the Brigadier and the GM well ahead of time. If all players except the Brigadier have a default status and conform to it, the Brigadier does not get his or her Point for the email.

The Brigadier automatically gets 1 separate Point if, when the email is sent, it looks as if the session will happen (at least 3 players and the GM can come), and the Brigadier specifies a mutually agreeable time and location for the session in the email.

Colonels

Officer of...	Domain
<u>Sustenance</u>	This Colonel automatically gets 1 Point if adequate (reasonably ample, quiet, not-too-sticky) refreshments are available for a session. If someone else provides the snacks by order of the Colonel, that provider also gets 1 Point. Like the Brigadier, the Officer of Sustenance can thus earn Points without personally attending sessions. Unlike the Brigadier, this Colonel can ask for money for his or her services, at cost.
<u>Records</u>	This Colonel keeps a relatively careful and detailed log of events in the game. It can but does not have to be written "in character", as a diary. The Colonel gets 1 Point for posting the latest entry in this log to all participants after a session, unless it contains grievous errors of spelling, grammar, or worldbuilding. He or she gets another Point if the email also contains an elegant and edifying description of real events from the same year.
<u>Ambiance</u>	This Colonel is responsible for keeping participants focused on the game by limiting breaks and digressions. If he or she quells an unruly mob for this purpose, he or she gets 1 Point. This Colonel is also responsible for supplying, selecting and controlling suitable background music, which is worth 1 Point at the end of a Session.
<u>Paraphernalia</u>	This Colonel gets 1 point for bringing enough notebook paper, clipboards, dice, pencils, erasers, rulebook hard-copies and spare character sheets for all participants who do not otherwise have enough to share.

Captains & Lieutenants

A Lieutenant gets 1 extra Point per session if he or she gives a quick and plausible, or very good, answer to a question about his or her domain during the session, no matter who asks the question. A domain is an area of expertise, as applied to the game, and hence the shared, alternate history of the campaign.

Captains can get Points in precisely the same way, and get an additional Point for each meeting of the Worldbuilding Task Force they attend. The WTF meets irregularly to determine the future course of the collectively imagined universe. Each Captain is expected to predict the likely impact and further development of his or her domain at WTF meetings, which are initiated by the GM, and kept a secret from everyone else.

Example Domains follow. More can be invented as required.

Officer of...	Rank	Domain	Sample question
<u>Economics</u>	Captain	The wealth, resources and chief products and imports of major areas. Currencies, the functioning of financial markets, and so forth.	What is the cargo?
<u>Ethnology</u>	Lieutenant	Social structures and morés. The history of mentalities, morals, fashion, public ritual, social stratification and so on.	Who would speak first?
<u>Linguistics</u>	Lieutenant	What people actually say, and how this should be treated in the primary language of the participants.	What's a good Swedish word or phrase for "wainscoting"?
<u>Logistics</u>	Lieutenant	Modes of transportation and their speed. Weights and measures. If there is no Officer of Economics, currency is included here.	Given the rain, when do we arrive?
<u>Natural History</u>	Captain	Biology, ecology, and the study of environmental degradation.	Are there wolves?
<u>Ludology</u>	Lieutenant	The minutiae of the rules. This Officer is welcome to assist the GM at character creation meetings for new players, and rewarded for it.	Can I use my Augment?
<u>Technology</u>	Captain	Applied sciences, including consumer goods and new materials in architecture.	Is there a revolver for sale?
<u>Theory</u>	Captain	The history of ideas in all academic fields, and to what extent they are disseminated among the populace.	How would a doctor typically react to this abnormality?