BY ADAM VASS

welcome to the

PENTAWEB ™

please enter your password

and a blood sample

CONTENTS

I am The Wolf.
    I am the creature
        /that hunts in
        the city night
        /that lurks in
        the alley's
        shadow
        /that waits
        behind the lids
        of your eyes for
        slumber to come
    to feed my fury
    to drain you of blood
    and spirit
    to make your body mine

I am @theW0Lf
    I am the spirit
        /that syncs the
        songs stuck in
        your head
        /that uploads
        your doubt and
        hatred
        /that programs
        your every
        thought and
        movement
    to save your soul
    to connect you to the
    world
    to melt your mind

Hell is real. God is a feeling and I've gone numb. The city is ours.
Consciousness is a frequency. Plug me in and turn me the fuck up.

What is This?

Cybermetal 2012 is a tabletop roleplaying game for two or more players, including a gamemaster. You play as the **Citizens** of **Pentagram City:** stoners, metalheads, and losers struggling to survive on the technological scraps of a world that forgot about you.

Pentagram City is a walled-off metropolis ravaged by crumbling technology, past war, and the aftereffects of satanic rituals years prior. The people here survive by any means necessary using ingenuity, resourcefulness, and one another, in a world that stopped caring long ago. The characters of *Cybermetal 2012* persue goals of their own, whether it's taking down those who would absorb power and exploit their neighbors, or just getting high and collecting old metal albums.

This is a roleplaying game. Players tell stories together of the goings on of a fictional world and its inhabitants, creating drama and tension, describing action and violence, and building landmarks and intrigue. Playing *Cybermetal 2012* looks like having a chat with your friends, whether in person around a table or in a shared online space, playing make-believe. Imagine you're watching a movie in your mind. Describe the sights, smells, and sounds of a heavy metal cyberpunk city. You're free to tell any sort of story you wish, the rules of this book and the rolls of your dice help you make those decisions and keep things fun and interesting.

How to Play
You are the protagonists, the citizens of Pentagram City that struggle to survive in a world full of heavy metal and hate. Begin by creating your characters, starting on page 16. You're responsible for your character's actions, voicing their thoughts and dialogue, and tracking their assets.

One player is the **gamemaster** (GM). The GM's responsible for describing the setting and its inhabitants, everything that's not portrayed by the other players at the table. Present paths, tough choices, obstacles, and rewards. Collaborate with the other players and their dice to describe the consequences of their proposed actions. Check out the Gamemaster Advice section for more details, beginning on page 116.
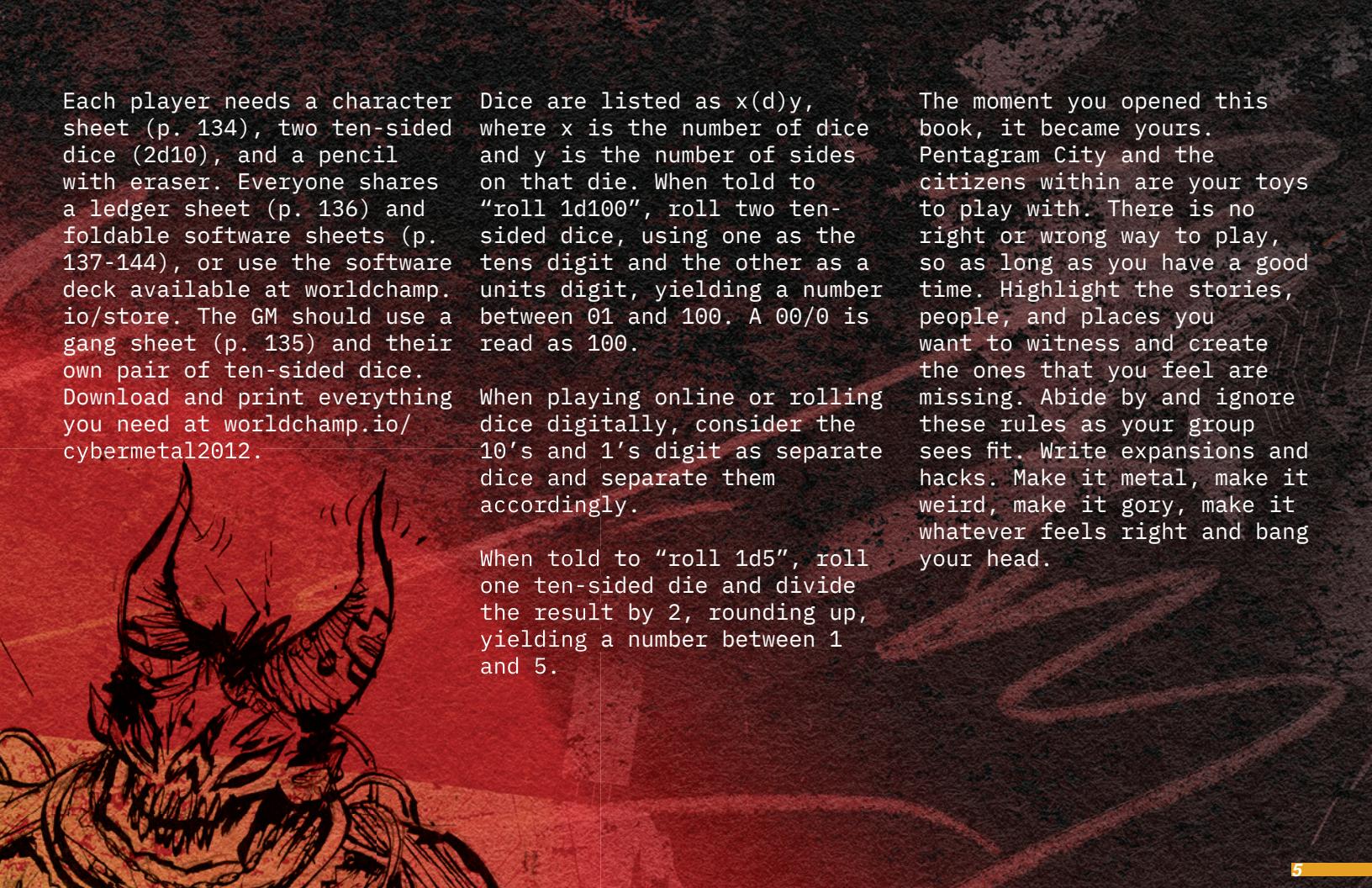
Each player needs a character sheet (p. 134), two ten-sided dice (2d10), and a pencil with eraser. Everyone shares a ledger sheet (p. 136) and foldable software sheets (p. 137-144), or use the software deck available at worldchamp.io/store. The GM should use a gang sheet (p. 135) and their own pair of ten-sided dice. Download and print everything you need at worldchamp.io/cybermetal2012.

Dice are listed as x(d)y, where x is the number of dice and y is the number of sides on that die. When told to "roll 1d100", roll two ten-sided dice, using one as the tens digit and the other as a units digit, yielding a number between 01 and 100. A 00/0 is read as 100.

When playing online or rolling dice digitally, consider the 10's and 1's digit as separate dice and separate them accordingly.

When told to "roll 1d5", roll one ten-sided die and divide the result by 2, rounding up, yielding a number between 1 and 5.

The moment you opened this book, it became yours. Pentagram City and the citizens within are your toys to play with. There is no right or wrong way to play, so as long as you have a good time. Highlight the stories, people, and places you want to witness and create the ones that you feel are missing. Abide by and ignore these rules as your group sees fit. Write expansions and hacks. Make it metal, make it weird, make it gory, make it whatever feels right and bang your head.

TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- **1980**
  - Heavy metal band **Death Agent** releases their self-titled debut LP to worldwide acclaim. They begin spreading their dark gospel in venues and on stages across the globe.
  - In a landslide victory as the result of falsehoods and exploited fears, Ronald Reagan is elected president of the United States of America.

- **1981**
  - A particularly spirited Death Agent fan shoots Ronald Reagan in an attempted assassination to impress the band. The assassination attempt fails, but garners the attention of the world, putting Death Agent and their rabid fans in the headlines.

- **1985**
  - Death Agent releases their second LP, Exorcize Me. It's an instant classic, not just in the genre but in music history as a whole, bringing metal to the mainstream.
  - Concerned parents form R.A.S.P. (Resisting Against Satanic Pressure) and begin protesting the works of Death Agent and similar heavy metal bands, resulting in court cases about their demonic influences and a phenomenon called "backmasking" involving hiding satanic messages in their records artwork, liner notes, and music.
  - X, the lead guitarist of Death Agent, dies in a motorcycle accident. Investigators rule the event a freak accident, but satanic sigils at the site bring that consensus into question. Fans spend countless hours to uncover what they might be and what the officials are hiding. The band's tour dates are indefinitely postponed.

- **1986 : The Ritual**
  - Death Agent books their highly anticipated return to the public eye with a scheduled performance in Washington D.C.
  - Death Agent invites President Reagan on stage during their introduction to ease nationwide tensions.
  - In the culmination of the band's years-long resurrection ritual, in a moment that changed history forever, Death Agent decapitates Reagan in front of tens of thousands of fans, his blood coagulates into the form of X, who then plays the best guitar solo ever heard.
  - The government scrambles into a state of emergency during the momentous three hour performance.

- **1987**
  - Government officials go into hiding as uprisings occur across America and the world.
  - Citizens begin using radio waves as a primary method of communication, information delivery, and entertainment to avoid governmental interference and influence.

- **1988**
  - Game designer Adam Vass is born, a few short hours away from what would become Pentagram City, USA.

- **1990: The Breach**
  - The gates of hell crack open, unleashing thousands of demons on the Earth above.
  - **The Hell War** begins, between the forces of hell and A.M.E.N. (Automated Military Engineering Neotronics), the robotocized and privatized forces acting on behalf of the American government.
  - Radiation from hell manipulates and warps the DNA of creatures nearer to its subterranean stronghold, shifting **Vermin** such as rats, roaches, and more into a more humanoid form. Vermin begin to be accepted within society.
  - Demons claim an early and powerful advantage: they cannot be harmed by conventional artillery. The military scrambles to develop powered suits and technological enhancements to replace their guns and missiles. The first prototype for a mechanical mind augmentation device begins testing, later known as the **NeuroNexus**.

- **1996**
  - The remains of the military and government surrender. Demons won the Hell War.
  - Remaining authority figures abandon a hell-ridden Earth, its crumbling infrastructure, and its devastated cities in favor of life upon the space station Exodus, leaving regular citizens to fend for themselves.
  - The flames of hell erupt around a city in the upper Midwest, enclosing it in impenetrable fire. The city is renamed **Pentagram City** and begins development in isolation from the rest of the world.

- **2000**
  - The start of the new millennium and Y2K wreaks havoc on computers as clocks read /00.
  - The Wired District, a hi-tech paradise within Pentagram City, is ravaged by the physical manifestation of this error called The Bug.
  - Citizens are infected with programming code via their NeuroNexus ports, creating flesh-wrapped automatons called **Husks**.
  - Play to find out more: *Y2K* is available at worldchamp.io/store.

- **2004**
  - Citizens cobble together a rudimentary local network called the **Pentaweb**. It allows for computers across the city to communicate with one another but are unable to reach outside of the city via wire or satellite due to the firewalls. The Pentaweb offers a database of information and files to be shared by citizens across the city.

- **2012**
  - Rumors spread on the Pentaweb of a brewing power war among the city's food suppliers.
  - The earth rumbles with the activity of satanic subterranean spirits that infect our nightmares.
  - Anti-Hell terrorists increase their violent efforts across the city to make real their prophecy of the end of days, threatening the fragile stablity of our anarchic society.
  - **Our story continues** in Pentagram City...

PENTAGRAM CITY

Before hellfire, Pentagram City was a flourishing manufacturing city in the American Midwest. Built near enough to a (now-dried) Great Lake and birthing at least one ineffectual and not-democratically-elected US president, the city's star seemed to be on the global rise before the gates of Hell cracked open and turned that star upside down.

Pentagram City was the epicenter of the demonic influx in the late 80's, pouring thousands of hellions into the streets. The de facto battlegrounds for the Hell War that would ravage the city's for years.

When military and government surrendered, the people in Pentagram City did what they could to pick up the pieces and carry on. Manufacturing returned, focusing now on metal work and cable to prepare for a technological future, and to recoup the massive loss of resources the government had taken from its people. Citizens did their best to assimilate with their new neighbors: husks from digital graveyards, vermin from below the dirt, demons from much further below that.

FIREWALL

Pentagram City is about 150 square miles wide, with the city proper, a few crumbling micropolitan suburbs, and various woodlands spotting the landscape. Surrounding it is an impenetrable wall of flames from Hell referred to as **the firewall**. The flames reach infinitely into the sky on every side of the city limits, thick enough to prevent any outward views, cutting off Pentagram City from the outside world, including satellite signals, phone lines, and of course any face-to-face interactions. As a result of the physical and digital isolation of the city, citizens turn to short-band walkie-talkies, pirate radio stations, and other local means of communication. Radio broadcasts share the newest demos from up and coming metal bands, spliced with severe weather warnings and crime bulletins in sultry, soft-spoken voices. Citizens call one another over intercoms to catch up and share secrets while praying to their dark lords that the wrong person isn't listening in—yet another concession the inhabitants of Pentagram City were forced to make in their isolation that eventually became a strength of the community.

POWER

We don't know how the firewall works. It captures or generates electricity, allowing for a very thin silver lining in their dark cloud of isolation: limitless free energy. There's no need for fossil fuels and other methods of power generation.

Most vehicles were abandoned in failure to convert to electrical energy, but a few dozen cars and trucks still drive through the city. Most citizens instead rely on skateboards, rollerblades, mopeds, and other short-range manual transportation.

WEATHER

Despite the wall of flames encircling the city, Pentagram City still enjoys a varied climate of four seasons. Winter yields considerable snowfall and summer yields considerable sunburns with temperate but fleeting spring and autumn in between.

LEADERSHIP

Pentagram City has no official ruling class or government. Citizens abide by the One Law ("Do What Thou Wilt," p. 13). Gangs and factions vie for power occasionally, mostly over control of resources in the area, but none are officially recognized as leaders or governing bodies.

NEURONEXUS

The **NeuroNexus** cerebral implant device was initially invented during the scramble to combat the forces of Hell in the late 80's and early 90's. Bullets were worthless against the forces of Hell, and the tide of battle quickly turned against the US government. A frenzy began to understand, refine, and implement technological advances that might make a difference. Scientists discovered their prior understanding of existence and consciousness were flawed— our bodies were merely nodes on long frequency waves of spirit, and the ability to monitor and adapt that wave could unlock humanity's true potential.

The NeuroNexus was quickly manufactured and installed in the spinal column and brain stem of every American as quickly as possible, allowing them to amplify, modulate, and otherwise alter their consciousness frequencies.

As the war ended and governing bodies of the world abandoned their peoples, the NeuroNexus remained a ubiquitous tool across human populations and was quickly adopted by demon and vermin in stride. Now, it's rare to find anyone who doesn't have a NeuroNexus installed.

SYNC

A quarter-inch cable plugged into a small metal input jack at the base of the skull allows for data transfer to and from wired computer terminals and the user's consciousness.

Rudimentary applications allow users to alter their knowledge manually, allowing for near-instantaneous expertise in useful trades that expedited the technological advancement of society rapidly (though the hassle of installing and overwriting application data was cumbersome enough that many simply forgo this feature).

SHAPESHIFTING

The NeuroNexus allows
for subtle subliminal
frequency shifting of the
user, a primary function
designed during the war
and a residual benefit
today. High-speed weaponry
like gunfire and grenades
were rendered near useless
as they now simply
passed between nodes of
the manipulated wave,
though slower and more
powerful weapons still
did significant damage by
catching the nodes
in their power
arc. Violence
in the 2010's
is brutal, face
to face, slow,
painful, and
bloody. Despite
this viciousness,
it is still an
ever-present
method of conflict
resolution.

They were ostracized by the external world, but through miles of wires, scraps of steel, and sheer tyranny of will, the citizens of Pentagram City produced a makeshift network by which to communicate and connect digitally with each other. The result is a local area network dubbed the **PentaWeb**. Since its implementation, every Sync terminal in the city has been connected to the network.

Users communicate via instant messaging, store saved past consciousness backup files (p. 41), watch and share viral video nasties (p. 77), anonymously warn others of potential threats, download new software applications (p. 28), monitor gang rankings and uprisings (p. 84), and otherwise connect in a virtual space and a momentary escape from their everyday life.

Hello, Citizen! It looks like you're new to the PentaWeb! I'm Lucy, your digital assistant, and my job is to help you navigate this techno-hellscape! Look for my helpful tips along your way and keep on rockin'!

Since the authority's exodus, Pentagram City operates without a centralized government. Instead, citizens are held accountable to themselves and one another by the one law. Any individual is allowed to do anything they want lest it inhibit another individual's ability to do what they want. This simple law is what delicately holds this city together.

Morality beyond adherence to the one law is a wide spectrum of objectivity. Some dedicate themselves to ensuring that others have the means by which they may pursue their will, while others step over anything and anyone in their way. A spectrum between altruism and egotism. Most land between these extremes, making Pentagram City a lively but tense society, worming through the cracked concrete and hardwired highrises of this fair city.

"'Do What Thou Wilt' shall be the whole of the law."

Safety Tools

The comfort of all players (and the GM) is paramount and takes precedence over any aspect of the game itself.

Open Door

Players should feel free to step away from play at any time if needed with no questions asked. A player's obligation to do what's right for themself outweighs that to finishing the game with their fellow players. Be upfront if you need to leave and be understanding if a fellow player decides to do so.

Lines and Veils

Using Lines & Veils allows players to make clear boundaries about the content in the game, and respects the emotional limitations of the people involved while maintaining important themes of the game in a healthy way.

Before the game begins, players are encouraged to voice anything they don't want included at all—these are **Lines** and should not be crossed. Topics established as Lines can still exist in the world of your story, but will not be explored or discussed at all during play. Lines are often used to avoid offensive content or subjects a player finds upsetting or triggering.

Veils are things that players are comfortable including in the story but want to control how overt they are. Metaphorically, these events or topics are hidden behind a veil—they happen in the world of the story but aren't described in detail. Veils are often used to censor graphic content that serves some purpose in the story but does not need to be described explicitly.

To supplement Lines & Veils and focus on the positive and exciting elements of the game, consider including **Palettes**— themes and instances that you specifically do hope are included in the setting and story. While some may be reserved for later use and others will immediately be included, Pallets further allow players to manage their expectations and make sure the game satisfies everyone involved.

X-Card

The **X-Card** is an excellent and quick way to remove unwanted content from play in the moment. Draw an X on a notecard or paper scrap and place it within reach of all players.

Whenever a player would like to remove something said from the game, whether it be upsetting, offensive, simply outside your story's established tone, or for any other reason, they can tap the X-Card to have it removed with no questions asked. Online players can do this by typing X in the chat, saying "X" or "X-Card," or making an X with their arms in front of the camera.

The X-Card was created by John Stavropoulos, tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg.

Script Change

Because most players are familiar with tv and movies, consider using language from those mediums to guide your experience. Script Change is a tool created by Beau Jágr Sheldon that integrates screen conventions into gameplay to maintain the enjoyment and comfort of all of your players.

At any time during play, any player can simply use the following words to guide your story or conversation safely:

- **Fast Forward** lets you skip over things that you don't want to describe or interact with. They may still take place in the narrative, but you don't need to go into detail and can skip ahead to a moment in the future where you want to continue interacting with the story.
- **Rewind** allows you to go back and change things, removing events and instances that don't fit your narrative or that make someone uncomfortable.
- **Pause** gives players a moment to think or find their center when things get challenging or intense. Use this when you need a minute to yourself, whether in response to content or simply to leave the room to grab a drink.
- **Frame-by-frame** slows things down and encourages players to tread lightly when dealing content that they may be unsure about. Continue playing while being careful of potential harm in these moments. The initiating player can at any time say **Play** to exit frame-by-frame mode and resume your usual method of play.

Using these terms in sentences can be helpful too, so instead of shouting "rewind," you can instead say, "let's rewind to just before the drone doused us in acid foam." The full text of Script Change is available at briebeau.com/scriptchange.

It looks like you're about to
CREATE A CITIZEN!
I'll show you everything you need to know on your character sheet!

TASK

USER

SPECIAL

NAME
PRONOUNS
HARDWARE
OS
LOOK
XP

CHARGE ● ● ●

SKILLS

96

VN POINTS
◀◀ ▶ ▶▶

inventory

ITEM   GRADE

At the top right of your sheet, you'll write down your personal details! These include:

- **Hardware** - your physical body, which includes a task, skill options, and cosmetic details (p. 18)
- **Operating System (OS)** - your chosen or assigned role in society (p. 26).
- **Mark** - a mark on your body that may hint at a greater purpose (p. 36)
- **XP** - a measure of your experience and meta-progress as a player of this game (p. 66)

You can draw your portrait or Mark in the user monitor provided!

Next, at the top left of your sheet, are a bunch of tools you can use to track and solve your myriad of problems!

- **Skills** - the methods you use to overcome conflict. These come with your chosen hardware and are measured in a value between 01 and 100 with higher values being more proficient.
- **Charge** - an abstract measure of your health, stamina, and fortitude, measured between 00 and 100 (with 100 being full and 0 being depleted). (p. 40)
- **Video Nasty Points** - a measure of your progress in Video Nasty competitions (p. 76)
- **Inventory** - a collection of gear and gadgets to drag along on your journeys (p. 46)

SOCIAL RANK

-10   -5   0   +5   +10

CONTACTS

FALLOUT

1-3: THINGS ARE GOOD

4-7: SOMETHING IS WEIRD

8-10: SHIT IS BAD

SKILL CHECK

ROLL d100 (as 2d10)
-UNDER: SUCCESS.
choose 1d10 as outgoing damage.

-OVER: FAILURE.
choose 1d10 as received damage, other d10 as

SYNC NOTE

DEBTS

In the bottom left, you keep track of your social life:

- **Social Rank** - a measure of your popularity and influence on a spectrum of 1 to 5 stars with 5 being the most popular (p. 72)
- **Contacts** - a collection of other people you know in Pentagram City and a simple measure of that relationship's health (p. 73)

Lastly, at the bottom right, is a modular section where you can take notes and install new abilities:

- **Software** - swappable additional abilities installed into your OS that enhance abilities (p. 28)
- **Reference** - a quick reference for important rules during play that is covered up when you install software
- **Debts** - your collection of blood money that you can use as currency or to call in favors (p. 70).
- **Sync Note** - a brief reminder you can leave to your past self if you die between Syncs (p. 41).

In the following pages, you'll figure out who you want to be, what you want to do, how you'll do it, and how you want to terrorize Pentagram City!

Hardware encompasses your physical body and what species you are: **Human**, **Demon**, **Vermin**, or **Husk**.

Each comes with a **task** (an optional pursuit you can attempt daily for future benefits)**,** **skills** (the means by which you overcome challenges, choose three of the available five), and an optional **look** (a cosmetic detail that helps you customize your character. choose one or roll 1d10 to randomize)

HUMAN

For centuries, humans were the dominant species of planet Earth, comfortable in their position at the top of the food chain. Now, after the gates of Hell opened and everything changed, humans are just another animal fighting to survive. A few signed up to combat the forces of evil in the Hell War, but more registered on behalf of the devil, and with the latter winning the war. The remaining humans today have developed a taste for the dark arts and hedonism that were once hidden from them. A staunch few resist this new status quo, praying and fighting for a return to an antedaemonium (pre-demon) lifestyle.

TASK

Contribution. Due to the lack of centralized authority, society only works if you **contribute**.

Once per in-game day, you can access a terminal and post an update to the PentaWeb to track danger, offer work trades, and otherwise collaborate. Your update should incorporate an imposing threat you witnessed or encountered during that day.

After each update, gain 1 XP. After six updates, Humans can gain important information, an interesting rumor, or a gig offer from the PentaWeb. This intelligence counts as a C-grade item when using it to overcome a challenge but does not take an inventory space.

SKILLS

- Metal
- Record
- Scramble
- Plead
- Bleed

LOOK 1d10

1. Many piercings
2. Forked tongue
3. Lush body hair
4. Waist-length hair
5. Leather clad
6. Wrapped in wire
7. Massive headgear
8. Rave pants
9. Prehensile tail
10. Ear parasites

After being summoned to the Earth's surface in the 1980's and wreaking havoc for years, many demons decided to just stay and hang out in Pentagram City. They're not as bad as Heaven's propaganda that we've been fed for thousands of years would have one believe—no more or less disposed to indecency and violence than any human. Demon rituals and powers are less powerful above ground but still inspire awe in the devout satanist and really-stoned observer. However, their associations and ties to the infernal beings beneath the planet's crust still cause social problems for the demons that reside in Pentagram City.

SKILLS

- Enflame
- Entice
- Amplify
- Anguish
- Bleed

TASK

Offering. Demons respect an arcane hierarchy and pay homage to their superiors. They must make routine **offerings** to an elder power of Hell (in fire, blood, song, or something worse).

Decide on a Liege, a named being to worship, who requests rituals and offerings. This could be a grandparent, royal being, ethereal force, torture artist, or something else.

After each offering, gain 1 XP, max one per day. After six appropriate Offerings, the higher power grants d5 points to increase the Demon's Skill values. This being can no longer be the subject of your worship.

FEATURE 1D10

1 Tusks
2 Ram horns
3 Spade tail
4 Clawed toes
5 Glowing eyes
6 Disconnected shadow
7 Exposed heart
8 Snake's jaw
9 Emitting smoke
10 Echoing voice

VERMIN

Hell's radioactive power leached into the soil for years after the summoning and breach, unnoticed by the humans and demons preoccupied with bloody battling. Bugs, rats, and burrowing creatures warped and grew into humanoids themselves, developing new dexterity, vocals, and other skills that eased their assimilation into our society. What was once considered gross are now just messing around town like the rest of us. Despite this humanization, vermin retain many of their pre-radiation features, like a proclivity for causing damage and a tendency to stick to their own kind.

Hoard. Vermin maintain **hoards** in and around their homes. Snacks, tools, cool records, shiny stuff, whatever they can get their hands on.

Your hoard can be your own or shared with other local vermin in your gang. Decide on an aesthetic or a collection you wish to pursue (band merch, rare metals, pre-war advertising, or something similarly niche). Once per day, collect and deliver a singular relevant **Treasure** to your hoard.

After each delivery, gain 1 XP. After six items are delivered, improve a single item in your inventory to A-grade.

SKILLS

- Sting
- Infect
- Stench
- Contort
- Crawl

SPECIES 1D10

1	Roach	6	Spider
2	Centipede	7	Opossum
3	Fly	8	Coyote
4	Mosquito	9	Toad
5	Slug	10	Rat

HUSK

A digital consciousness in a body of flesh, and one of the many unforeseen results of the Y2K bug on the technological works of the new millennium. Husks are a physical embodiment of our reliance on technology and our willingness to accept its advance at our personal cost. Though the debate rages on, husks are considered sentient beings and offered the same respect (or lack thereof) as any other citizen in Pentagram City. The degree to which a husk is a shadow of its former physical self or the manifested will of its computer programming varies, from a humanoid with digital influence to a completely pre-programmed living creature. A husk can inhabit any corpse with a NeuroNexus port.

TASK

Refresh. Your flesh body **rots** with each passing moment. Whenever you attempt a skill roll and the result is **over 60**, regardless of success, mark a Rot segment on your sheet. After marking each Segment, gain 1 XP.

When the Rot section is full (6), you must find/make a suitable new corpse host and Sync to it.

When you install your consciousness into a new host, you may swap one of your Skills with one your host would've had in life. The new Skill has a value of 60.

SKILLS

- Analyze
- Broadcast
- Download
- Disable
- Crawl

DECAY 1D10

OPERATING SYSTEM

Your operating system (OS) is your role in society: your job, your fashion style, your public presentation, or another defining characteristic that you choose that affects what others expect of you. Each operating system comes with a skill (choose one if multiple are listed), items (choose one, grade B), ways to gain XP, and/or special abilities.

BULLDOZER
HIT FIRST, THINK LATER.

Skill: **Crush**
Item: Baseball bat, spiked helmet, or boombox
Ability: You have advantage when attempting to dismantle or destroy non-sentient organic material (wood, clay, skeletal remains, etc.)
Gain 1 XP once per day when you step in to take damage that was meant for another.

WORSHIPER
ALL HAIL... WHOEVER YOU LIKE.

Skill: **Preach** or **Pray**
Item: Heart in a jar, holy text, or golden pendant
Ability: You may reroll skill checks that take on hallowed ground.
Gain 1 XP once per day when you quote your scripture in a social skill check.

INFLUENCER
LIKE AND SUBSCRIBE FOR MORE ACTION.

Skill: **Report** or **Haggle**
Item: Lighter, tape recorder, or megaphone
Ability: Gain advantage on skill checks when showing off in front of citizens who know your online handle.
Gain 1 XP once per day when your social rank changes.

DEALER
YOU LIKE WHAT YOU SEE?

Skill: **Barter** or **Contact**
Item: Bottle of painkiller, demon ashes, or subversive zines
Ability: You know someone to call when you're in a pinch, they'll always answer if they're able.
Gain 1 XP once per day when you sell drugs to an NPC.
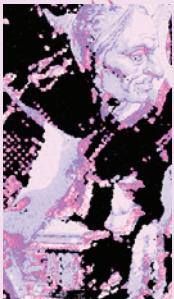
CRAFTER

Skill: **Comprehend** or **Assemble**
Item: Adhesive, box cutter, or spray paint can
Ability: You can upgrade one item in your inventory one grade per Sync.
Gain 1 XP once per day when you use an A-grade item to solve a problem.
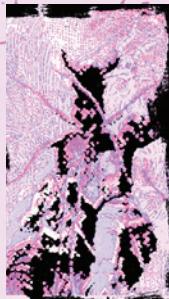
THRILLSEEKER

POUNDING OUT AGGRESSION TURNS INTO OBSESSION.

Skill: **Burst** or **Scream**
Item: Cigarettes, butterfly knife, or rollerblades
Ability: When you put yourself in danger to impress someone, limit your lost Charge to a maximum of 5.
Gain 1 XP once per day when you fall more than 10 feet and survive.
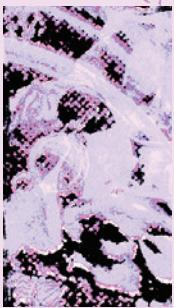
UNDERTAKER

ALLOW THE PURITY OF DEATH TO GUIDE YOU.

Skill: **Bury**
Item: Sealed urn, crucifix, or shovel
Ability: You may reroll up to 3 skill checks when you're underground, reset on Sync.
Gain 1 XP once per day when you take something from a corpse you created.

BLEEDER

WE ARE NOT WORTHY

Skill: **Sacrifice** or **Tribute**
Item: Chains, dagger, or facemask
Ability: Your debtor wants to ensure they collect. When you would reach 0 charge, instead gain 2d10 charge (once between Syncs).
Gain 1 XP once per day when you reach 0 charge.

Skill Points: At this point, players should have four skills. Give each skill a **threshold** value of 55. Distribute an additional 35 points among these four skills, with a maximum value of 72 for each skill. The higher threshold a skill has, the more likely you are to succeed when using it. Over the course of the game, skills can be upgraded up to 80 total threshold.

software

Software is an application installed into the NeuroNexus that allows for temporary ability proficiencies, allowing a citizen to prepare themselves for upcoming challenges. The limited NeuroNexus memory storage allows for only one software to be installed at a time, with citizens visiting Sync terminals to change them out as their objectives demand. Each software comes with additional specialties. Skills associated with software cannot be upgraded. Software sheets you can print and fold for play are included on page 137. Optional software cards are available for purchase at worldchamp.io.

metal

Bootleg: Harmonize your frequency to generate a nearly identical copy of your physical form. You may only have one active bootleg at a time. This copy has the same stats and can do whatever your character can (except generate another bootleg). This bootleg has three beats. For every failed skill check, bootleg loses one beat. When all beats aret gone, bootleg disintegrates. Reset an active copy to three beats with Sync.

Outcast: Give yourself one-star social rank. Passers-by will avoid looking your way, walking on your side of the street, or being in the same room as you.

DIY (80): You can use trash, scraps, and metal to instantly craft B-grade items on the fly. These items cannot be repaired. DIY can be used three times, reset uses with Sync.

Headbang: Bang your head, metal health will drive you mad. Instead of rolling to attack, you can auto-hit a target with your head or fist at close range. Inflict damage equal to the amount of charge you wish to spend (max 10).

utility ⚙

First Response: You can plug in directly to another citizen's NeuroNexus to restore 2d10 charge to them. A target can only be healed in this way once between Syncs. Using first response cancels the effects of drugs/poisons to both user and target.

Gambler: When rolling a skill check, you may roll 1d10 instead of d100.
- On **odd** results, succeed, inflicting maximum damage (if applicable) and minimum fallout.
- On **even** results, fail, inflicting minimum damage (if applicable) and maximum fallout.
Gambler can be used five times, recharge with Sync.

Infusion: Turn money back to blood–with a catch. The debtor is absolved but some aspect of their debt is imbued in the ichor. Transfusion or ingestion of this blood can turn the curse into a skill (for players) or compulsion (for non-player characters). Infusion can be used five times, charging with Sync.

Radio (75): You can temporarily utilize communication airwaves via your NeuroNexus. Use radio to:
- Gain intelligence
- Call for help
- Cause distractions
Radio can be used three times, recharge with Sync

technology 💾

Interface (73): After successful interface skill check, control up to three wired devices simultaneously. Controlled devices can attack using the interface skill, and are destroyed when damaged.

Drone: You can pilot a single B-grade drone, nanite hive, robo-companion, or other non-sentient technological being. It can relay video and audio, open and close passageways, or cause distractions. It's destroyed upon receiving any damage but can be repaired by conventional means.

Pilot (75): You can drive, repair, or otherwise utilize vehicles that you occupy. The vehicle is considered an A-grade item when used in skill checks. Pilot can be used five times, recharge with Sync.

Search (75): Access the inner workings of Pentagram City to gain hidden knowledge. On success, gain one intel. Store a maximum of three intel at once.
Intel works as a B-grade item when acting upon the gained intelligence for the duration of this software's installation. All intel is lost when this software is removed.

social

Buzz (78): You are a hub of social intelligence, a trusted source for the goings on in the city. Add one-star to your social rank. A successful buzz check allows you to plant rumors that will ripple outward through the city and will warp and exaggerate until this software is uninstalled.

Telepathy: Communicate silently and imperceptibly via your consciousness frequencies. You may contact anyone in your gang, any positive established contacts, and anyone within 30 feet.

Lust: You're an object of beauty and sex appeal. Give youself a five-star social rank. Citizens, even strangers, are infatuated with you, for better or worse. Existing positive contacts know your true self and are not manipulated in this way, treating you as uninterested until uninstalled.

Disguise (85): Impersonate another by downloading their cosmetic data (consensually via direct NeruoNexus interface or illegally via LAN file share) and emitting a cloud virus that infects nearby NeuroNexus users. Each successful Disguise check lowers its threshold by d10. Once you fail, the disguise is dropped, but those previously fooled remain convinced. Can be reset with Sync.

navigation

Drift: You are able to establish your own localized electromagnetic pull, allowing you to walk on walls, hang on ceilings, and float up to 10 feet off the ground.

Speed (72): You're able to move quickly on foot. You can act first in any initiative sequence. To make an additional attack at the end of a combat round, succeed a Speed test. Speed skill depletes d5 per use, resets on Sync.

Maps (80): You have perfect knowledge of the documented layout of Pentagram City. Test the Maps skill to learn the fastest and safest route to your destination. On failure, the data reveals something in the way (a massive threat, an environmental hazard, an enemy gang, etc.).

Stealth (74): You're able to move freely while obfuscating your presence. To pass by undetected, succeed a stealth check. On a failure, treat as a 4-7 fallout result.

drugs

Plug: You know who to get drugs from and where they hang out. You have a Plug contact with positive rank who will deliver what you need. They also know a few contacts in need of work if you're looking for help.

Concoct (70): Craft your own artisanal medications. You may either:
- Make and store five single-use doses, taking at least 15 minutes per concoction
- Craft three single-use doses immediately

Each dose, regardless of method, requires successful Concoct skill check. Failed Concoct checks imbue unintended effects in corresponding dose. Dose limits reset with Sync.

Trip (69): You take a profound journey through a parallel plane. Traversing the realms in this way grants you information otherwise unseen, such as hidden traps, thoughts, echoes of history, and anything else determined by the GM. Failure incurs a bad trip with unseen dangers and nightmares.

Immunity: You cannot be poisoned or dosed. You may take drugs without incurring negative skill effects.

hell

Offering (78): Ignore fallout on any roll by yourself or someone in your gang by making an offering to the dark lords. Skill depletes d10 per use. Resets to 78 threshold on Sync.

Consecrate (66): Imbue an item in your inventory or citizen in your presence with hellacious power:
- Give an item +1 grade
- Give a person a "Blessing" as B-grade item in their inventory, cannot be repaired.

Bless has three uses, recharge with Sync.

Banishment (73): Cast out and deter forces of Hell from your proximity. Demons, descendants, spirits, and any other devilish entity within 30 feet of you are attacked with a rotten stench and deafening feedback. You alone have advantage on skill checks that interact with the weakened forces. Any demon player characters are at disadvantage while within range.

Summon (66): Roll a Summon check to call upon the dark forces of Hell to do your bidding:
- On **success**, a devilish energy complies but asks for something in return. Dark forces do d5+5 damage when attacking. Incur fallout as if 1-3.
- On **failure**, they are offended by your request, incur fallout as if 4-7. On subsequent failure, incur fallout as if 10.

Resets with Sync

violence

Berserk: You feel no physical pain with this software installed and any damage you do take is reduced by 1 to a minimum of 1. Gain Skill: Berserker Bite (70) that can only be used in close range.

Whips//Chains: You have expertise over flaying weaponry. Manipulation attacks done with these items (wrap, flay, knock, disarm, and more) inflict damage.

Projectile (71): Inflict damage from afar with darts, arrows, missiles, or other projectiles. You have d10+3 ammo. Each Projectile skill check depletes 1 ammo. When ammo is low or out, Sync to reset.

Target Locking: Your mind connects with your target, giving you intense focus and aim and granting +10 to the skill threshold when attacking within range.
- On succesful attack, choose one of the following options: do 5 extra damage, knock enemy over, incur no fallout
- On a failed attempt, choose one of the following penalties. Each penalty can only be used once: item is dropped, lose 5 additional charge, Target Locking reduces to +5 bonus.

After three failures, Target Locking is disabled, resets on Sync.

CONTACTS

Now, roll a d100 to find your **Contact**, a fellow citizen in Pentagram City with whom you have an existing relationship. Decide if this is a positive (+) or negative (-) interaction and record them in the Contacts portion of your character sheet. More on Contacts and Social Ranking on page 72.

1 **A faceless director.** They send you missions occasionally over radio.
2 ...they keep you on a short leash and know everything you do.
3 ...they want to help you get out.

4 **A coworker.** They want to upstage you at every opportunity.
5 ...they help you out when you're in their neighborhood.

6 **A borrower.** They'll never repay you for saving their life.
7 ...they'll do whatever they can to escape your debt.

8 **A mentor.** They're retired and want to stay out of the game.

9 **A mark.** They aren't aware you're tasked with killing them.

10 **A drug dealer.** They offer goods in exchange for protection.
11 ...they craft unique hallucinogens you can't get anywhere else.

12 **An elite hacker.** They have plenty of digital dirt on you.
13 ...they want your help stopping plans they've learned.
14 ...they can access everyone's mental data cache except yours.

15 **A transporter.** They like to tinker on vehicles with you.
16 ...they have an important delivery for you
17 ...they share rewards from the organs you donate to them.

18 **A weapons expert.** They always have just what you need.
19 ...they refuse to do business with you after the last time.

20 **A parent.** harsh and cold.
21 ...overbearing but well-meaning.
22 ...who cares more about your older sibling.
23 ...who will do anything to earn your forgiveness.

24 **A sibling.** Seeking your teaching and guidance.
25 ...adopted by a different family and full of hate.
26 ...who taught you everything you know.

27 **A clone.** indistinguishable from you in nearly every way.
28 ...hoping to eliminate and replace you.
29 ...who always shows up when you're in trouble.

30 **A muse.** They command your every move.
31 ...who is never satisfied with your displays.
32 ...who doesn't know you exist.

33 **A lover.** The only person who knows what you really feel.
34 ...with a kink for acts of hyperviolence.
35 ...who hypnotizes when they utter your true name.

36 **A former flame.** They still love you but you've moved on.
37 ...who still has a ton of your stuff.
38 ...who pities you enough to help sometimes.
39 ...who loves to flaunt the treasures you stole for them.

40 **A debtor.** They reward you for erasing debts from others.
41 ...they send soldiers after you until you make good on your promise.

42 **Druid.** They attempt to recruit you to protect the Encroaching Wilds.
43 ...they forbid you from traversing the lush areas punctuating Pentagram City.

44 **Guardian.** They know you're up to no good and are constantly on your tail.
45 ...they know the ways around the city's security cameras.

46 **Assassin.** They can't finish their assignment without your help.
47 ...they've been tasked with killing you but will walk away for a price.
48 ...they give you the assignments they don't have time for.
49 ...they badly want to kill you but it would end their career.

50 **Soothsayer.** They warn you of the dangers in your path.
51 ...they believe you're the prophesied savior.
52 ...they tell you what you want to hear in exchange for drugs and gossip.
53 ...they know nothing but take advantage of your willingness to believe.

54 **Echo.** The disembodied spirit of someone you killed.
55 ...a smarmy veteran of the Hell Wars.
56 ...begging you to help them secure a body.

57 Priest. They declare you a heretic and warn their parish about you.

58 ...they are the only one you can be honest with.

59 Zealous cultist. They believe you are the truest form of Evil.

60 Celebrity. You are their biggest fan and worship at their feet.

61 ...you emulate your life after their roles.

62 ...you grew up together but they had all the talent.

63 Fan. They press physical albums of your consciousness uploads.

64 ...they follow you around everywhere hoping for validation.

65 ...they want your skull as the ultimate collectible.

66 ...they always step in the line of fire when you're in danger.

67 Metalhead. They have the most extensive Death Agent memorabilia collection.

68 ...they keep trying to convince you to join their band.

69 Artist. They craft visions of a dark, near future.

70 Veteran. You served together in the Hell War.

71 ...turned pacifist, they encourage you to resist violence.

72 ...they hoard rare guns and ammo.

73 Drone. It is sentient and hovers over your shoulder.

74 ...keeps tabs on you from above and you simply can't shed it.

75 Defector. You gave them just enough to get away, now they owe you.

76 ...they want to start a new gang with you and without your comrades.

77 Spy. They need you to lie to protect their safety.

78 ...They offer you insider intelligence for Death Agent merch.

79 Commander. They ask you to perform the tasks they cannot allow.

80 Captain. They refuse to address you after what you did.

81 ...they constantly try to recruit you back to the gang.

82 Runner. You're one of many stops on their blood delivery route.

83 ...they won't leave you alone about buying their old bike.

84 Your Apprentice. They are perpetually nervous around you.

85 ...they lack respect for you and spread nasty rumors.

86 Liaison. They still give you tips on fuckers around town.

87 ...they don't know you got kicked out of the gang.

88 ...they give you false information to lure you to danger.

89 ...they'd do anything for you to abandon your friends and join their gang.

90 Torturer. Your blood is their favorite flavor.

91 ...they seek your advice on administering pain.

92 Benevolent Devil. You hang out on weekends.

93 Guard. They never speak aloud but to you.

94 ...they keep tabs on your exploits, lest you disobey.

95 Harvester. They are owed your heart.

96 ...they will do you favors in exchange for donated organs.

97 Trickster. You do drugs and pull pranks together.

98 ...they owe you a favor for the time you saved their life.

99 Prince. They stole your rightful throne.

100 You from a parallel timeline. They've lived your life. They've dreamt your dreams. They've seen the end.

Lastly, roll a d10 to establish your **Mark**, a symbol somewhere on your body. Roll 2d10 after that and assign each dice to a source and location to learn additional information about that symbol and its significance to your character.

source

location

1-3: Leg

4-6: Arm

7: Chest

8: Back

9: Buttocks

0: Face

1-5: Tattoo. Why did you choose this specific design?

6-7: Birthmark. What does it predict about your future?

8-9: Scar. How did you acquire it (accident, battle, etc.)?

0: Brand. As punishment, reward, or ritual—Why?

FLOWER

CANCEL

DARK ARTS
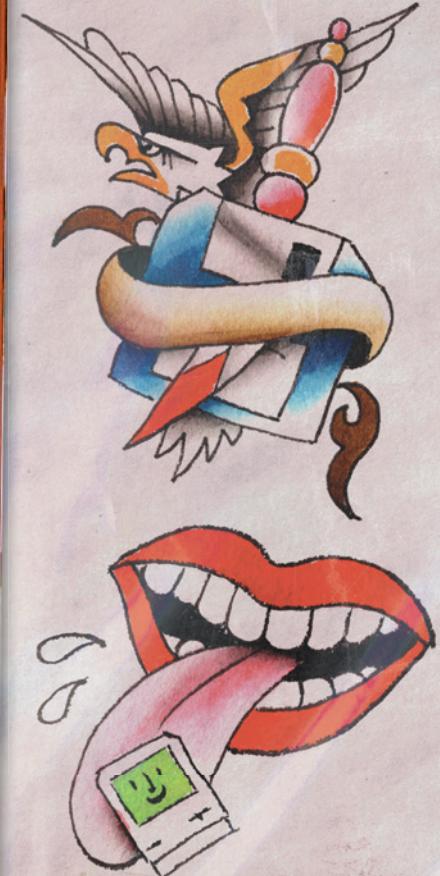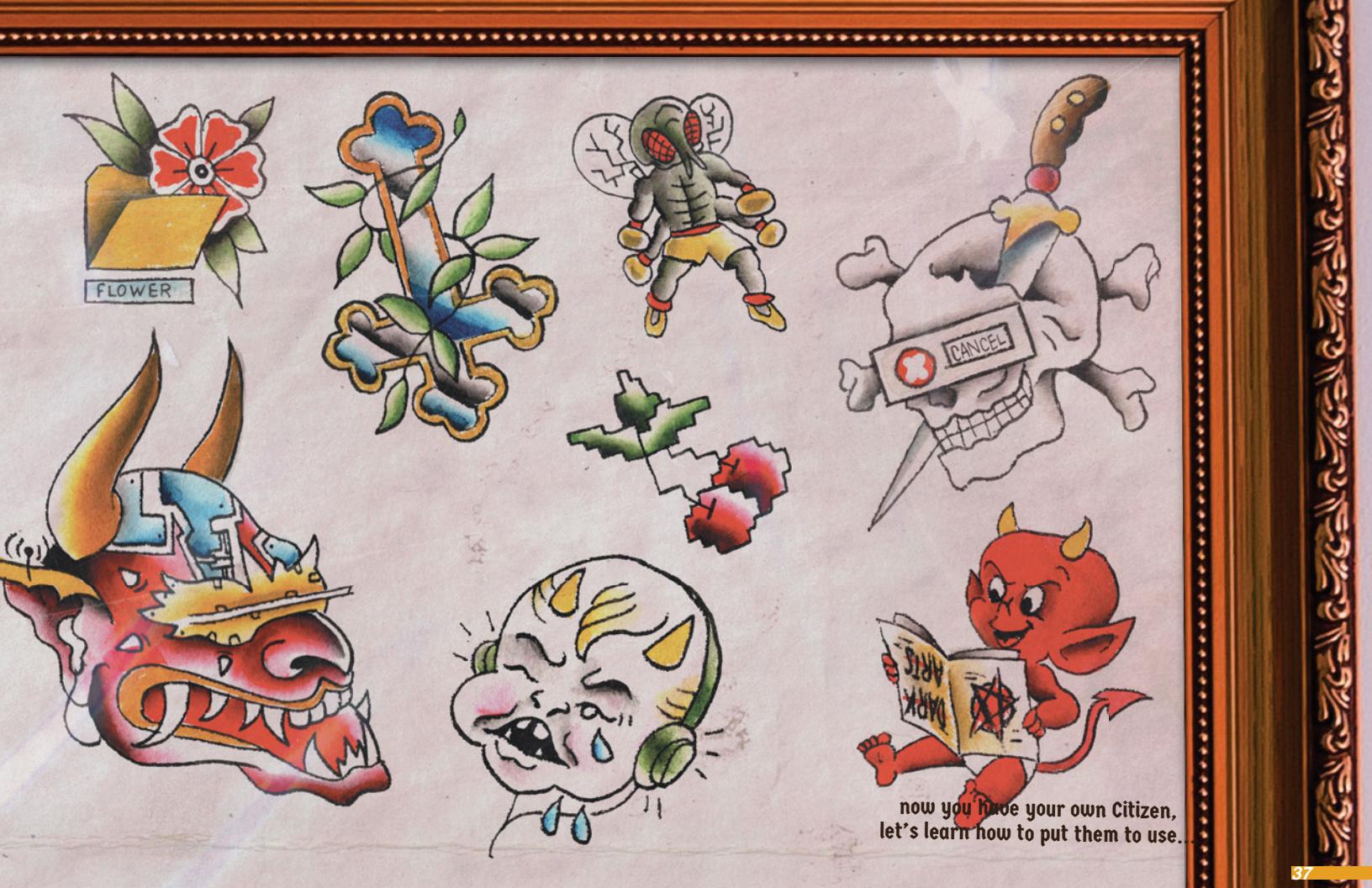
now you have your own Citizen,
let's learn how to put them to use...

CRITICAL INTELLIGENCE

CONVERGENCE

CHARGE

Charge is a measure of your ability to go: the battery life of your brain and the sanctity of your skin. Charge is measured on a scale of 100 (full) to 0 (depleted).

Each character begins the game with 100 charge. This may be the only time you'll ever be at full charge. Life in the city beats you down.

RECHARGING

Charge can be regained. To refill your charge, plug into a **Sync terminal** (wired computers across the city that are connected to the Pentaweb and allow for consciousness manipulation) or **remote charge station** for at least an hour to recharge up to 100-d10 charge.

Remote charge stations are rare but popup occasionally affixed to the exterior of important locations. You can recharge here but you cannot fully Sync (you cannot swap software, record your consciousness, or otherwise make mechanical changes to your character).

Terminals are used as consciousness save points, a recording of your concentrated self at a particular moment in time. Think of it like backing up your brain's hardware states. When you recharge at a terminal, write down a note on your character sheet to your future self in the event that you perish between Syncs. This could be a warning, a recap of important events, a secret you want to protect, a backup plan, or anything else.

While plugged into a terminal, you may replace or recharge your currently installed software. Simply choose new software and place it in the appropriate space on your character sheet, removing and overwriting your last piece of software in the process.

1-3: an available terminal for Sync

4-6: a terminal in need of basic repairs

7-8: you think you saw one just up ahead

9-10: no operational computers available

ZEROCHARGE

Reaching **0 charge** means your character is totally depleted. You can talk and move but just barely—you're on your last wind and need to do something about it quickly.

Any skill checks you attempt while at 0 charge are at **disadvantage**.
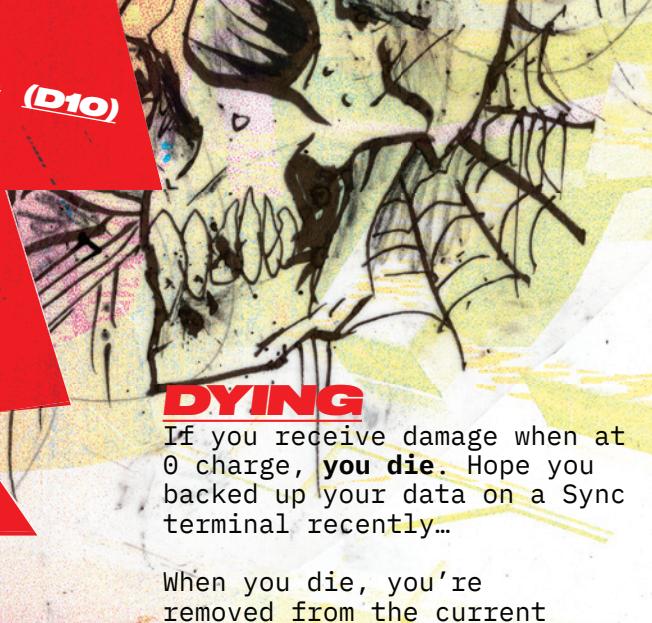
DYING

If you receive damage when at 0 charge, **you die**. Hope you backed up your data on a Sync terminal recently…

When you die, you're removed from the current narrative situation as your consciousness leaves your body. Continue taking your turn in the round and in lieu of acting, describe the otherworldly sights you experience in the limbo between life and death. These could include interactions with a higher power, glimpses of your memories, moments of regret or unfulfilled ambition, or anything else.

After the encounter, the following happens to dead characters:

Sync Terminal Download
The nearest Sync terminal will begin downloading and printing your most recently saved body and mind, completing at the same time the encounter ends for the surviving players in your crew allowing you to rejoin them as the GM sees fit. You may simply reappear at this time or require the other players to reach a terminal to collect you, your choice.

Lose Progress Since Last Save
Any information you learned, progress you made, XP you gained, or changes you implemented since your last Sync are lost. Lose one Social Rank (to a minimum of One Star).

Note to Self
Read aloud the note you left for your future self at the last Sync in the event of your death.
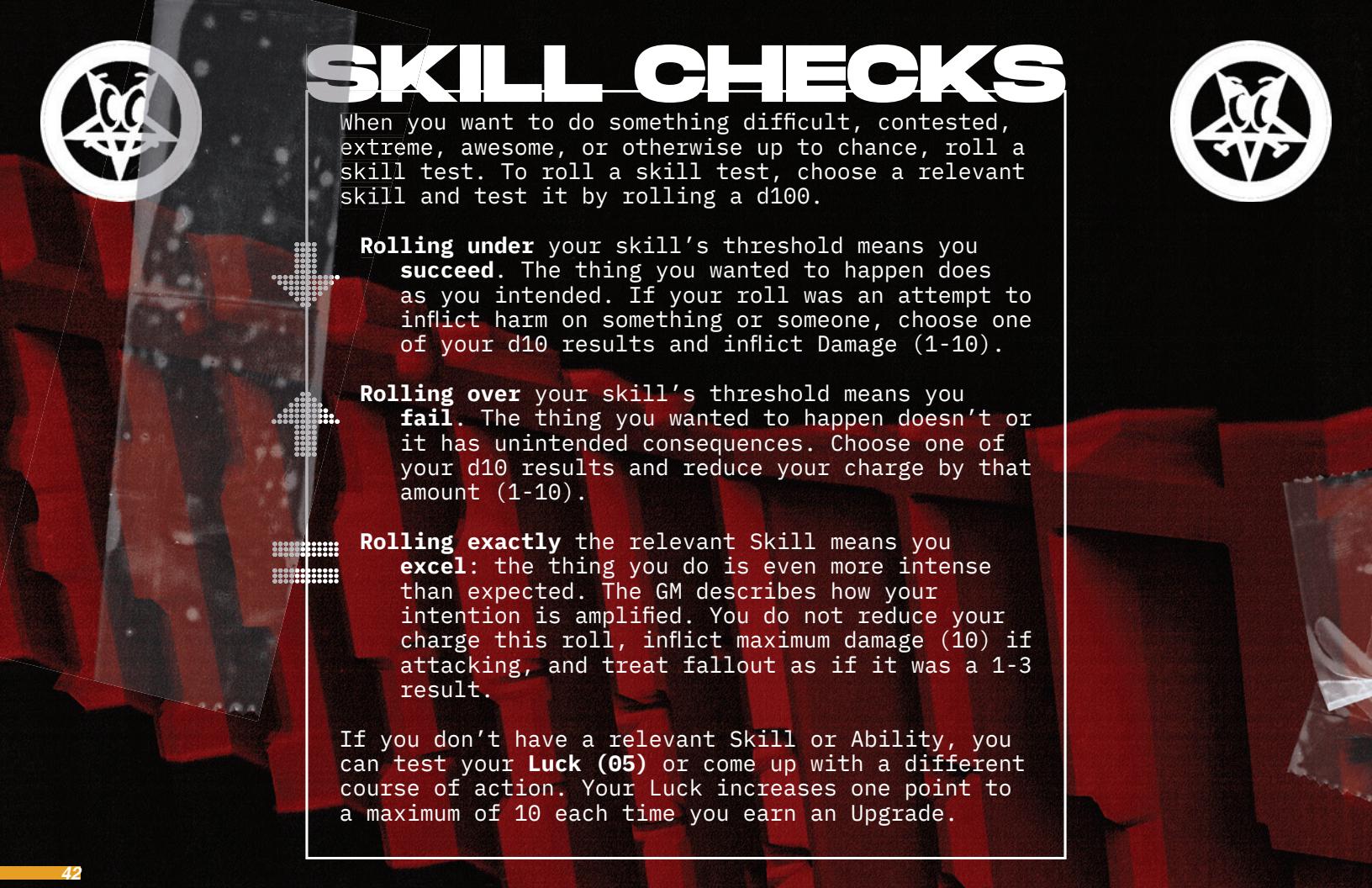
SKILL CHECKS

When you want to do something difficult, contested, extreme, awesome, or otherwise up to chance, roll a skill test. To roll a skill test, choose a relevant skill and test it by rolling a d100.

Rolling under your skill's threshold means you **succeed**. The thing you wanted to happen does as you intended. If your roll was an attempt to inflict harm on something or someone, choose one of your d10 results and inflict Damage (1-10).

Rolling over your skill's threshold means you **fail**. The thing you wanted to happen doesn't or it has unintended consequences. Choose one of your d10 results and reduce your charge by that amount (1-10).

Rolling exactly the relevant Skill means you **excel**: the thing you do is even more intense than expected. The GM describes how your intention is amplified. You do not reduce your charge this roll, inflict maximum damage (10) if attacking, and treat fallout as if it was a 1-3 result.

If you don't have a relevant Skill or Ability, you can test your **Luck (05)** or come up with a different course of action. Your Luck increases one point to a maximum of 10 each time you earn an Upgrade.

FALLOUT

Fallout is a measure of the external results of your action, such as how your gang's circumstances change, how others in the area react to you, how the enviornment shifts, and other significant change that complicates your attempts to survive. Regardless of Success/ Failure, use the remaining 1d10 result to determine the fallout, or choose one of the 2d10 if your skill check doesn't involve dealing damage:

1-3: things are good.
Circumstances change in your favor (an alarm goes quiet, an enemy ignores you, your vehicle continues on its course, etc.)

4-7: something is weird.
It might get messy from here but you have time to make a plan (smoke pours out, an enemy investigates their suspicion, the hallucinogens kick in at the wrong time, etc.)

8-10: shit is bad.
Things are getting worse quickly (alarms sound, enemies attack, computers shut down, etc.)

ASSISTANCE

When another character **assists** with their own relevant skill or ability, add +5 to your threshold and roll as normal. The assisting player rolls an additional 1d10 which can be used as the fallout result. On failure that deals damage, both characters lose the same amount of charge.

+/−

Advantage: after careful planning, perfect timing, or dumb luck, the GM can decide you are at an irregular Advantage. The lower of your 2d10 must be considered the 10's digit.

(For example: rolling d100 as two ten-sided dice, a player yields a 3 and 6. The lower value, 3, must be the 10's digit, resulting in 36.)

Disadvantage: when circumstances are not in your favor and the GM dictates that you are at Disadvantage, the higher of your 2d10 must be considered the 10's digit.

(For example: when rolling d100 as two ten-sided dice, a player yields a 3 and 6. The higher value, 6, must be the 10's digit, resulting in a 63.)

Success & Damage

T3chLord is a Husk Dealer with a decaying ant corpse, infiltrating a sewer cult in an effort to collect their unholy wine that is rumored to give its drinker a euphoric high and taste better than anything the synthetic flavor labs offer. She finds herself behind the pulpit with the demonic priest before her spinning a censer on a chain spraying disgusting green clouds of poisonous gas around the chancel.

She attemps to use her hardware skill **Broadcast (67)** to emit a high pitched scream and inflict harm on the sewer priest. She rolls d100 yielding a **26** (as 2 and 6 on 2d10), well below her skill threshold and succesfully attacking with a debilitating squelch.

T3chLord assigns the 2 to fallout and 6 to the outgoing damage. The GM decides that because of the low fallout result, the priest's censer burns out and stops emitting the disgusting gas. The GM also reduces the priest's charge by 6, but since it is not a killing blow, the battle continues.

Cecil is a Vermin Undertaker who is trying to summon a demonic entity by pressing their consciousness frequency onto a vinyl record and playing it backwards in a backmasked ritual.

They are going to use their hardware skill **Contort (68)** to manipulate the soundwaves and bring the creature to reality. Phaze, a Demon Thrillseeker in the gang, decides to use their hardware skill Amplify to help, increasing the volume of the ritual and temporarily increasing the threshold by 5 to **73**. Phaze rolls d10 and yields a 6 which can be used as the fallout die in case things go awry. Cecil then rolls d100, yielding exactly **73** and **exceling**.

Because Cecil excelled, the fallout is automatically 1-3, meaning things turn in their faor. The results of the ritual are then amplified—rather than communing with the entity's spirit as intended, Cecil summons a flesh and blood succubus to the room who is ready to hear their request.

Honey is a Human Crafter leading his gang through a former corporate high rise in search of intel on a pending planned attack by R.A.S.P. (Resisting Against Satanic Pressure). Honey wants to use the OS skill **Comprehend (59)** to infer critical information from scrolls of code on an old glitching computer. The GM decides, since the computer is not in great shape, that this attempt is disadvantaged.

He rolls d100 yielding **47**. While this would normally be a success, the disadvantage forces Honey to use the larger value as the 10's digit, yielding a **74** which is a **failure**. In self-interest, he decides to use the 4 for loss of charge, which the GM describes as electrical current from the glitching computer offering a subtle shock to his arms through the keyboard. The 7 is used for fallout, meaning something is weird, and the GM describes that accessing the computer causes the building's lockdown protocol to kick in, sealing the doors of the room and forcing the gang to find a new way out.

Gear AND Gadgets

The right trinket in your pocket, weapon on your back, or implant in your skull can make the difference between being scraped across the asphalt and walking home safely. Items that you can collect in your bags and pockets are called **gear** while items implanted into your body physically are called **gadgets**, but both work similarly.

Gear can be picked up and tossed aside when you no longer want to carry it, or wish to free up space for something newer and shinier. Gadgets (technological implants) cannot be removed or swapped for other items without **surgery** (p. 52).

Inventory Slots

Each character has six inventory slots on their character sheet. Each slot can contain one item. Multiples of a single item only take one space, for example, having one or twenty tabs of acid takes up one slot regardless.

Citizens are expected to have a few basics in their pockets like writing utensils, sunglasses, playing cards, a lighter, and simple shit you'd reasonably expect to find in the bottom of your purse or backpack. These basics do not count against inventory slots, and they don't offer any benefits to dice rolls, but instead act as inspiration for your creativity and grease for narrative moments that may otherwise incur logical friction.

Grading

Using relevant gear and gadgets gives a boost to your skill threshold, depending on the quality of the item. There are four grades of items:

Decimated (D): 0
Crappy (C): +3
Basic (B): +5
Amazing (A): +10

If you use an item for a skill check, and it fails, reduce the quality of that item one rank. C-rank items reduce to D-rank, useless until fixed by an expert.

Expended gear can instead be removed from inventory if you don't want to carry around its decimated form or to make space for new items, but D-grade gadgets stay in your inventory until removed via surgery (as seen on page 52).

Armor and Shields

Armor and shields are graded similarly and reduce incoming damage to a minimum of 1 damage. There are three grades of armor and shields:

Decimated (D): 0
Crappy (C): -1
Basic (B): -2
Amazing (A): -3

Each time an armor/shield reduces damage in this way, it decreases by one rank. Decimated armor does not reduce any damage until fixed by an expert. Armor repaired in this way can only ever rank B at highest and can no longer be raised to A rank.

Tags

Tags are special exceptions to the rules granted by particular abilities or conditions assigned to items. Like skills, tags are subjective and interpretable, allowing for creative uses of your trinkets in a given moment. Consider the component pieces going into the piece. The GM may grant bonuses or special conditions to an item's use according to a tag while other players have the ability to put those uses to their logical extremities.

Tags can be narrative-focused, mechanically-focused, or anywhere in between. A gadget with the tag "loud" might not have an effect on skill checks or dice rolling but offers a flavor for potential fallout and encourages the player to use it in bombastic ways. An object with the tag "ranged" however would imply a mechanical effect increasing the ability to inflict damage beyond hand-to-hand combat. This tag would require on-the-fly interpretation by both the player and GM and could be resolved as offering advantage to skill checks, changing the skill check's threshold, increasing/decreasing fallout, or otherwise working the item's special qualities into the mechanics of gameplay.

Crafting

The citizens of Pentagram City are scrappy. They make do with what they find, are given, or can pull out of their bodies to make their lives better. From a young age, citizens are taught how to create makeshift tools and contraptions to better their odds of survival. Players are able to use this tradition to craft their own new devices during downtime or in moments of relative peace in anticipation of future conflict.
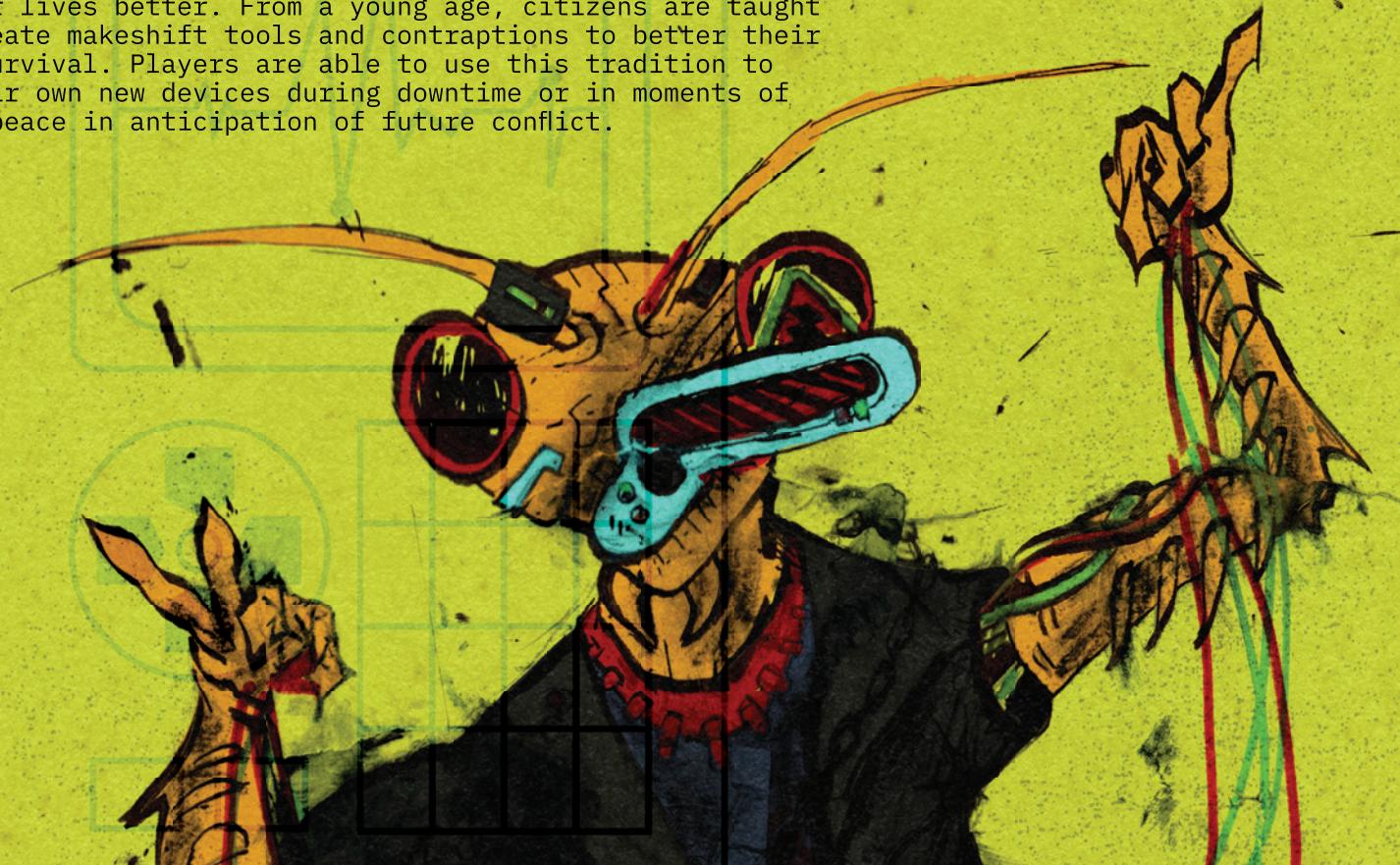
Crafting can be used to make new gear from component parts. Taking **at least an hour** of in-narrative time, the player cobbles together the respective pieces into something hopefully more than the sum of its parts. Components can be carried in a player's inventory, ravaged by destroying existing gear and gadgets, or rummaged from corpses and destruction of recent calamity. Basic components, like wires, steel plates, or other commonplace pieces can be found without deliberate investigation or rolling dice. More rare components, like battery packs or gas canisters, can only be found with successful relevant skill checks. Gear made in this way can be volatile and does not always serve its intended purpose but it certainly does *something*.

To craft gear, a citizen must have at least one piece of each of the following component categories, along with one hour of in-game time:

Power: batteries, plugs, generators, capacitors, motors, etc.
Fixture: tape, glue, bolts, wires, solder, metal hooks, etc.
Base: steel, plastic, ceramic, glass, stone, bone, etc.
Accoutrement: magnets, crystals, teeth, fire, venom, discs, etc.

**Citizens can craft offline gear that does not require a power source, such as bludgeoning weapons. The process remains mostly the same but the device cannot be graded higher than a B. 1-2 results on the Grade roll are treated as a 3-5.

Once the gear is assembled, roll a 1d10 to determine its grade. Citizens with a relevant skill or software get a -1 to this roll:

1-2: Amazing (A)
3-5: Basic (B)
6-9: Crappy (C)
10: Failed, components are lost in the process

Crafted gear performs a function derived from its component parts. The crafter can declare its intended purpose, the GM has final say over the new gear's use.

Ex: Crafting @abot

A player wants to create a wearable tech before charging into a room filled with decommissioned Reaganoids. They need power, a fixture, a base, and an accoutrement. They trash their taser to get some capacitors (power), pull some plated steel and wires from a nearby server room (fixture and base), and throw some bottled holy water in for good measure (accoutrement).

They roll a 1d10 and get a 4, resulting in a B-grade item. Considering the factors in the craft, they ask for assistance from GM and together they describe a helmet that sprays water in all directions, arcing lightning between them, allowing the player to use it as a weapon to attack multiple robots within a short diameter of their person. The GM agrees that using the item in this way allows the user to inflict damage on any robot in range.The player accordingly adds the "Arc Lightning" tag to this new helmet in their inventory.

Ex: Crafting @ffline

After defeating a gang of rabid humans, a player wants to pull out their NeuroNexus to create a glove or knuckle-type weapon. They use the NeuroNexus ports as the base and some residual spinal fluid as the accoutrement. They decide to forgo using power since this will be an offline device on their fist. They offer up an old cd-rom from their inventory as the base and roll 1d10, getting a 2. However, since they are crafting an unpowered piece of gear, their steel-plated knuckle dusters can be B-grade at the highest. Because of the CD-ROM inclusion, the GM decides the knuckles reflect light and can be used to temporarily blind enemies when they're punched in the face in addition to doing damage, so the player adds a tag of "Blinding" to the item in their inventory.

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SURGERY

The installation of technological devices into flesh is a particularly difficult and painful procedure, even for the mechanically and biologically inclined. Gadget implementation should be left to the experts, but time, money, and pride often get in the way and sometimes you're left to figure it out on your own.

Surgery is the only method by which gadgets can be installed and removed. The procedure's difficulty, pain, and cost depend on the location on your body.

When receiving a surgical procedure, a player makes a **Surgery roll,** with the threshold determined by the procedure's difficulty.

To determine the difficulty, decide whether the surgery is done by an expert or not:
- If the surgery is being performed **by a pro, +10** to the skill threshold.
- If the surgery is being performed **by a non-expert other than themself**, the threshold stays the same.
- If the surgery is being performed **on themself, -20** to the skill threshold.

Then, pick the surgery location:
- **Forearm, thigh, calves, ear, or nose: simple (85)**
  - Manageable pain, manifesting most commonly as burning and piercing at the implant site.
  - Low risk, can be performed by oneself with adequate prep or drug use.
  - Hiring someone to perform the surgery comes at low cost, rarely even incurring a blood debt.
  - Recovery takes a day at most.
- **Shoulders, pecs, buttocks, or back: moderate (75)**
  - Severe pain that ripples through the entire body. Often requires drug-use or anesthesia to calm the patient enough for surgery to work.
  - Can be performed by a particular daring or well-educated citizen, but recommended you seek an expert for the modest cost of a trade of labor or medium blood debt.
  - Recovery takes a couple days, up to one week.
- **Knees, elbows, chest, stomach, face, throat, or genitals: difficult (65)**
  - Immensely painful, frequently causes blackouts, shock, and hallucination.
  - Should only be performed by a professional. Costs depend on negotiation and relationship with the practitioner but are considerably high, including XL blood debts.
  - Recovery takes a week or more.

Once you've determined a difficulty based on the surgery location and practitioner, roll a d100 under the surgery threshold:

On **success**, the implant is installed correctly and as intended. The surgical site will be sore for a while and the patient should lay low until the recovery time has lapsed.

On **failure**, apply your 1d10 of choice on a unique **surgical fallout table**.

- **1-3: The procedure will take, but not as intended. Choose one:**
  - Recovery takes quite a bit longer than predicted. Usage before the new recovery period has ended will be at disadvantage.
  - The gadget was wired incorrectly and serves a function different than its intent.
  - Additional components are needed to finalize the procedure. Expend an appropriate item from your inventory to facilitate its safe completion.
- **4-7: The procedure has unforeseen complications. Choose one:**
  - The gadget begins communicating with its new host, asking for a recurring sacrifice.
  - The gadget cannot generate energy from the body and must be fed energy for recurring use.
  - The gadget yields a painful infection that causes its owner to vomit multiple times per day.
- **8-10: The procedure was a horror show. Choose one:**
  - The patient's body rejects the implant, permanently destroying the gadget and creating a painful scar at the incision that whispers to only you.
  - The surgery is stopped midway as a parasite within you makes a getaway for its freedom.
  - You die during the procedure. Your last-saved consciousness file begins printing a new body at a nearby terminal with something unique now missing and a strangely misplaced device in its place.

The city is rampant with makeshift medicines of various flavors and effects. Chemists drip sweat into careful concoctions, herbalists build intricate vertical planters for the finest flowers, and pharmacists farm your favorite powders into pills for you to swallow and snort at your leisure.

A drug is considered an item for sake of inventory, but doesn't include a grade. The stickiest icky and the skunkiest dirt weed have the same effects mechanically. Multiple instances of the same drug do not require additional inventory space, one joint or a pack of twenty take up the same space.

Drug effects are fleeting and last for one encounter, with residual side effects left up to GM discretion. Different types of drugs affect different skills, but their interpretation is subjective and can be agreed upon by player and GM.

Roll 4d10 to create new drugs, considering the resulting type, medium, and variables to better inform the way they'd manifest physically, mentally, and spiritually:

d10		Variable 1	Variable 2t
1	**1-3 Depressant:** +10 to the threshold of social skills for the duration of the next encounter. −10 to the same skills until Sync or another drug is taken.	Electric/Void	Honey/Sludge
2		Paralytic/Gutter	Breath/Root
3		Spirit/Carcass	Glass/Echo
4	**4-6 Stimulant:** +10 to threshold of physical skills for duration of next encounter. −10 to the same skills until Sync or another drug is taken.	Dream/Toxic	Fungus/Grub
5		Rose/Sacred	Acid/Oil
6		Seismic/Coffin	Blood/Flesh
7	**7-9 Hallucinogen:** +10 to threshold of mental/spiritual skills for duration of next encounter. −10 to the same skills until Sync or another drug is taken.	Hellfire/Serpent	Fire/Leaf
8		Phantom/Power	Egg/Hunger
9		Bone/Mammoth	Express/Juice
10	**10 Opioid:** reduce incoming pain by 1 (to minimum 1) for the duration of the next encounter. +1 to all incoming damage until Sync or another drug is taken.	Sugar/Stone	Thorn/Mold
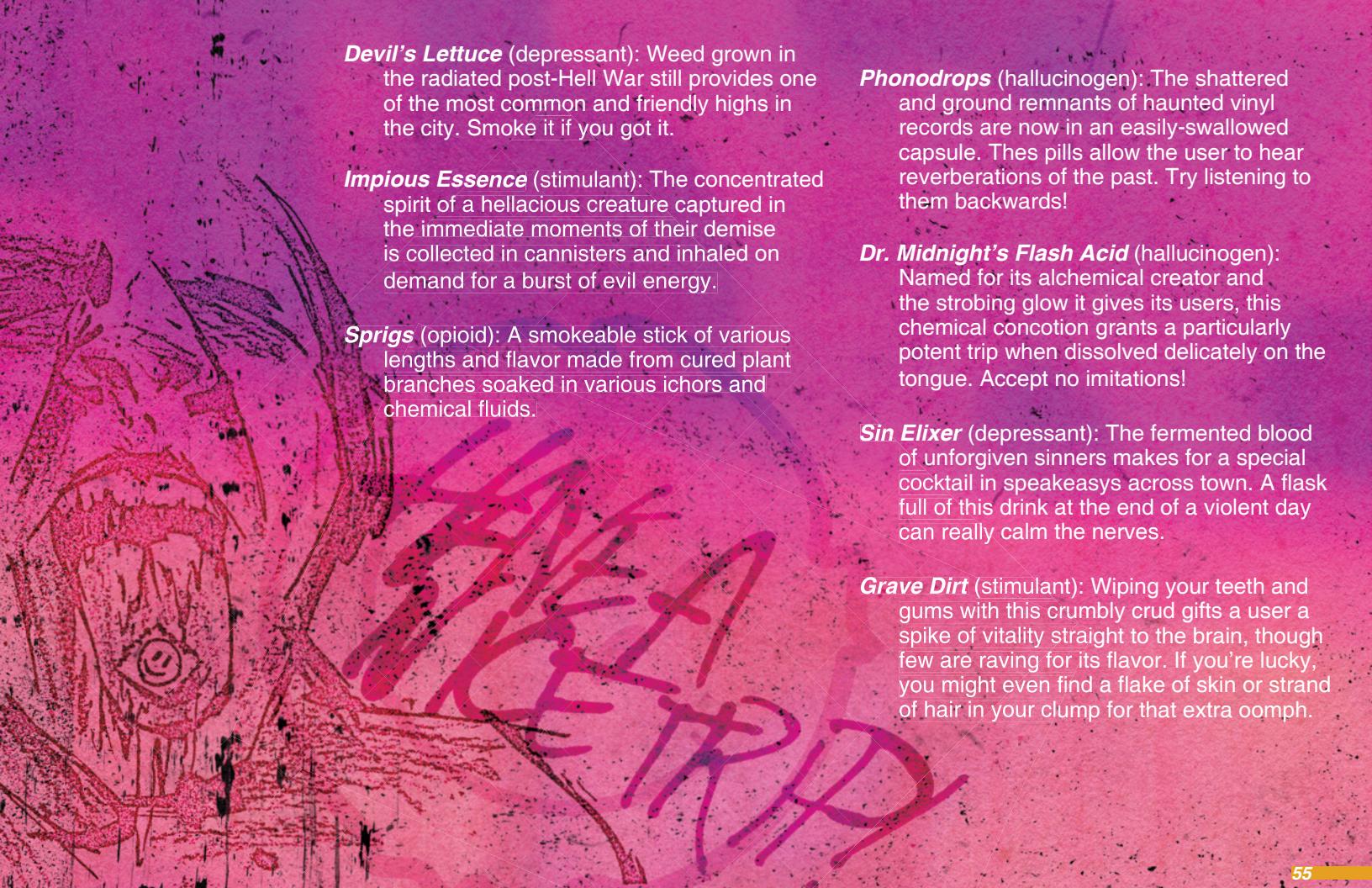
Devil's Lettuce (depressant): Weed grown in the radiated post-Hell War still provides one of the most common and friendly highs in the city. Smoke it if you got it.

Impious Essence (stimulant): The concentrated spirit of a hellacious creature captured in the immediate moments of their demise is collected in cannisters and inhaled on demand for a burst of evil energy.

Sprigs (opioid): A smokeable stick of various lengths and flavor made from cured plant branches soaked in various ichors and chemical fluids.

Phonodrops (hallucinogen): The shattered and ground remnants of haunted vinyl records are now in an easily-swallowed capsule. Thes pills allow the user to hear reverberations of the past. Try listening to them backwards!

Dr. Midnight's Flash Acid (hallucinogen): Named for its alchemical creator and the strobing glow it gives its users, this chemical concoction grants a particularly potent trip when dissolved delicately on the tongue. Accept no imitations!

Sin Elixer (depressant): The fermented blood of unforgiven sinners makes for a special cocktail in speakeasys across town. A flask full of this drink at the end of a violent day can really calm the nerves.

Grave Dirt (stimulant): Wiping your teeth and gums with this crumbly crud gifts a user a spike of vitality straight to the brain, though few are raving for its flavor. If you're lucky, you might even find a flake of skin or strand of hair in your clump for that extra oomph.

HAVE A NICE TRIP

WEAPONS

With the implementation of the NeuroNexus and the subsequent forced obsolescence of firearms, citizens quickly turned to sorting things out in close quarters with fists, blades, bludgeons, and flails, with bloody results. While there is no shortage of available weaponry on the streets and in the shops, a clever few like to innovate and raise the artistry of the medium by making never-before-seen weaponry.

Roll 3d10 to create new weapons, considering the resulting type, vehicle, and variables to better inform the way the user can inflict specific violence. Use the resulting variable combinations to create unique weapon tags when appropriate:

d10	type	Variable 1	Variable 2
1	Baton	Acid/Bloodthirsty	Syringe/Surprise
2	Pole (+5ft range)	Shock/Smoke	Wheel/Terror
3	Handheld	Makeshift/Ice	Basilisk/Codex
4	Collapsible	Steel/Hologram	Mercy/Claw
5	Chained	Divine/Erosion	Stone/Hornet
6	Digital	Rotten/Nanite	Bones/Virus
7	Bladed	Virtual/Gas	Testament/Sickle
8	Autonomous	Rainbow/Radiating	Vampire/Key
9	Phantom	Rose/Corrupting	Flames/Fist
10	Unholy	Time/Neon	Silence/Prayer

Barbed Wire Bat: It's a classic because it works! A common favorite among citizens.

Rusted Butterfly Knife *[secret]*: Be careful where you flick that thing. If the blade doesn't get you, the tetanus might.

Electrifist: Elevated knuckle dusters that deliver a shocking punch.

Chain Flail *[heavy]*: A torturous device wielded by the particularly strong and sadistic, often capped with the skull of prior victims.

Martyr Thorn: A rare treat crafted from fire-scorched bone and sharpened to an absurd point, this claw can pierce the toughest demonic hide.

Holosso *[manipulation, +1 range]*: It might seem like a irridescent illusion until it's wrapped around your torso. A tried & true convention for keeping someone alive but subdued.

5-string Double-Axe *[loud]*: Cry all you want but the blade soars today. Low end booms resonates through the shattered bones of impact.

CONFLICT

Combat and Competition

ENEMIES

The foes you face in Pentagram City are not so dissimilar from yourself. People trying to survive in a world full of hate, though those methods of survival may be at odds with your own. That leads issues. The most common method of conflict resolution in Pentagram City is grim face-to-face physical violence.

Like the characters, enemies have charge. When an enemy reaches 0 charge, they're incapacitated or killed. Enemy charge is notated in parenthesis next to the enemy's name, like this: Demonic Tormentor (16). The characters can deplete enemy charge with actions.

Sentient enemies with less than 10 charge often try to escape or reach some sort of agreement rather than fight to the death. Bestial enemies will take your grudge to the grave.

Some enemies come with additional information, such as strengths, weaknesses, immunities, goals, special items, unique attacks, and more. These details function similarly to tags (p.47), offering additional information that can be interpreted to create advantage/disadvantage, special damage considerations, or other mechanical exceptions. Peruse a collection of available enemies on page 126.

Ex: **Sable, digital guitarist siren (C: 33, charming, stubborn, immune to musical violence)**
The GM can use this information to describe Sable's actions and attitude towards the players, giving her witty but rude dialogue and dismissing their requests to help. With the tag Stubborn, the GM decides attempts to coerce her using skills would be at disadvantage. When in combat, the GM rules that Sable cannot have her charge reduced by sound-based attacks, but those instead will be treated as manipulation attacks.

ROUNDS & TURNS

Conflict is quantified in rounds composed of turns. Every actor (player, ally, and enemy) performs one turn each round.

During each turn, actors can take an action and move. Actors may opt to move and act, only move, only act, or neither.

ACTION

An action is anything that involves a skill check. Typically in conflict, this action is an attempt at violence, but manipulation, technological interfacing, using software, or other skills are all considered actions.

The player attempts a skill check by describing their intended action, choosing an affiliated skill, and rolling d100 as 2d10 and comparing the result to the skill's threshold value. Rolling under the threshold is a success, assigning one of the 2d10 to damage output and the other to fallout. Rolling over the threshold is a failure, assigning one of the 2d10 to damage that player receives and the other to fallout. For a reminder on skill checks and fallout, visit page 42.

MOVEMENT

A move allows a player to move from one range to the next, or about 20 feet. There are three ranges:

- **Close**, within striking distance of an opponent within arm's reach.
- **Near**, within 5 to 20 feet of an opponent. Melee weapons can be thrown within close range and still potentially inflict damage. Some tagged weapons like long pipes or lengths of chain might still be able to hit at close range.
- **Far**, 20 or more feet away, but within eyeshot. Attacks cannot be done from far distance without software assistance.
- **Out-of-range** actors are further than Far, out of sight or in remote locations. They still get to take a turn each round but are unable to attack or be attacked conventionally.

COMBAT ORDER

Combatants act in teams (enemies vs. characters and allies), with every member of a team taking a turn before the other team. Within a team, characters can act in any order. Once each member of a team has acted, the other team reacts. Once every team has taken a turns, a new round begins. Rounds continue until a team is completely wiped out, one escapes the other, an agreement is reached, or the conflict is otherwise resolved.

The GM can decide to have each enemy on a team take a turn, or take a single turn as a horde, describing a single action on behalf of the enemies instead of describing and resolving each particular move.

INITIATIVE

The group that instigated conflict acts first in combat. If it's not clear who the instigators are, the enemies act before the characters. If the characters are ambushed by a street gang, the street gang takes all of their turns before the characters. If the characters stumble into a warehouse of lounging worms, the characters can choose to take their turns first.

DAMAGE

Inflict damage to reduce enemy charge, bringing their material body closer to demise. Damage is measured by loss of charge, whethet inflicted on a victim by a player's successful skill check or to the player character attempting action when their check fails. Players only give and receive damage on dice rolls and cannot be arbitrarily hurt by the GM. That said, a player can incur damage from a failed skill check even outside of combat.

///Armor and software can reduce the amount of damage rolled.

///Succesful checks deal damage to the target dictated by the player character. The amount of damage ranges from 1-10 and is chosen by the acting player from the 2d10 that composed their skill check, with the other die value being assigned to fallout.

///Failed checks deal damage to the player character who rolled them, using one of the 2d10 that composed their skill check, potentially including or worsening fallout with the other die, forcing the player to decide between worse harm to their own character or worse circumstance for all their fellow players.

DEFENSE

Players roll skill checks to avoid, absorb, deter, deflect, or otherwise avoid incoming damage from enemies. As usual, succesful skill checks result in players inflicting damage on their opponents and failed skill checks involve players receiving damage. As such, players will often roll more than one skill check during a round. For the sake of clarity, these defensive maneuvers are not considered a player's turn, but instead a reaction on an opposing actor's turn.

MANIPULATION

Manipulation is a means of molding a situation to your advantage without inflicting harm: moving someone towards a trap, knocking down a server tower to create an obstacle, tying someone's legs and pulling them to the ground. Characters can attempt particular moves to manipulate their circumstances at the cost of inflicting damage. These maneuvers are called **Manipulation Attacks**. They consist of attacks with the player's goal of wrestling, tying up, knocking over, distracting, disarming, or otherwise messing with their target. These attacks **don't deal damage** (unless otherwise subverted by tags or software).

To perform a manipulation, describe your plan and then roll the corresonding skill check:

Success: the manipulation attack works as described, shifting the targets circumstance. The actor still picks a fallout die as normal, which may compound the results of the manipulation.

Failure: the manipulation has unintended consequences, incurring damage to the player character.

NONVIOLENT COMPETITION

Not every conflict has to be settled in blood (though it can be quite fun that way). Some gangs prefer competing in nonviolent ways, such as a race, a pageant, a battle of the bands, or a game of S-K-A-T-E.

These competitions are structured like combat: each actor gets a turn to make actions. Damage done to charge represents the competition, rather than a measure of physical health.

Certain competitions may subvert the combat order for the sake of show, like a drag ball trading off a player's turn for an enemy turn rather than having groups act as teams.

Ex: The Red Raiders challenge your gang to a band battle, setting up on opposing stages with an audience in between and going song for song until a clear victor is decided. Each actor uses their turn to perform, using whatever skills they can justify to scorch the ears of the crowd. A demon using Amplify to rip a brutal double-bass drum solo rolls a skill check the same way they would in a fight, reducing the enemy drummer's charge upon success. The battle continues until performers reach 0 charge, being drained of their charisma and energy by the gratuitous rock and determining the conflict's clear victor.

ENDING A CONFLICT

A combat sequence or nonviolent competition ends when the winner has been made clear. While this often involves the total death of an opposing force, it may insetad end with escape, a ceasefire, or any other means. If the player gang is the winner, each member of the gang gains XP equal to the GM-deteremined difficulty of the confrontation.

Easy: 1
Tough: 2
Hellacious: 3
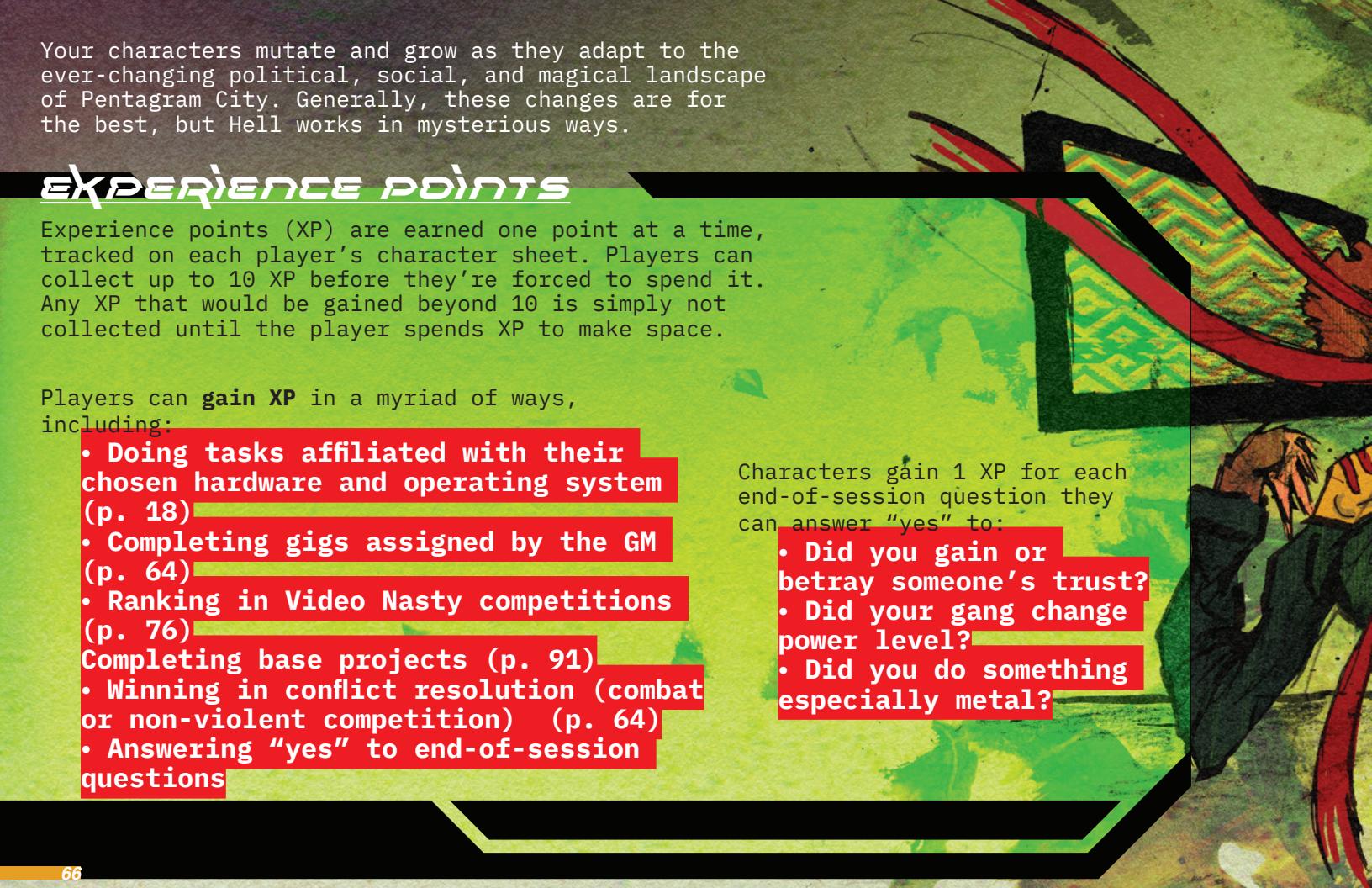
Your characters mutate and grow as they adapt to the ever-changing political, social, and magical landscape of Pentagram City. Generally, these changes are for the best, but Hell works in mysterious ways.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Experience points (XP) are earned one point at a time, tracked on each player's character sheet. Players can collect up to 10 XP before they're forced to spend it. Any XP that would be gained beyond 10 is simply not collected until the player spends XP to make space.

Players can **gain XP** in a myriad of ways, including:

- **Doing tasks affiliated with their chosen hardware and operating system (p. 18)**
- **Completing gigs assigned by the GM (p. 64)**
- **Ranking in Video Nasty competitions (p. 76)**
- Completing base projects (p. 91)
- **Winning in conflict resolution (combat or non-violent competition) (p. 64)**
- **Answering "yes" to end-of-session questions**

Characters gain 1 XP for each end-of-session question they can answer "yes" to:

- **Did you gain or betray someone's trust?**
- **Did your gang change power level?**
- **Did you do something especially metal?**
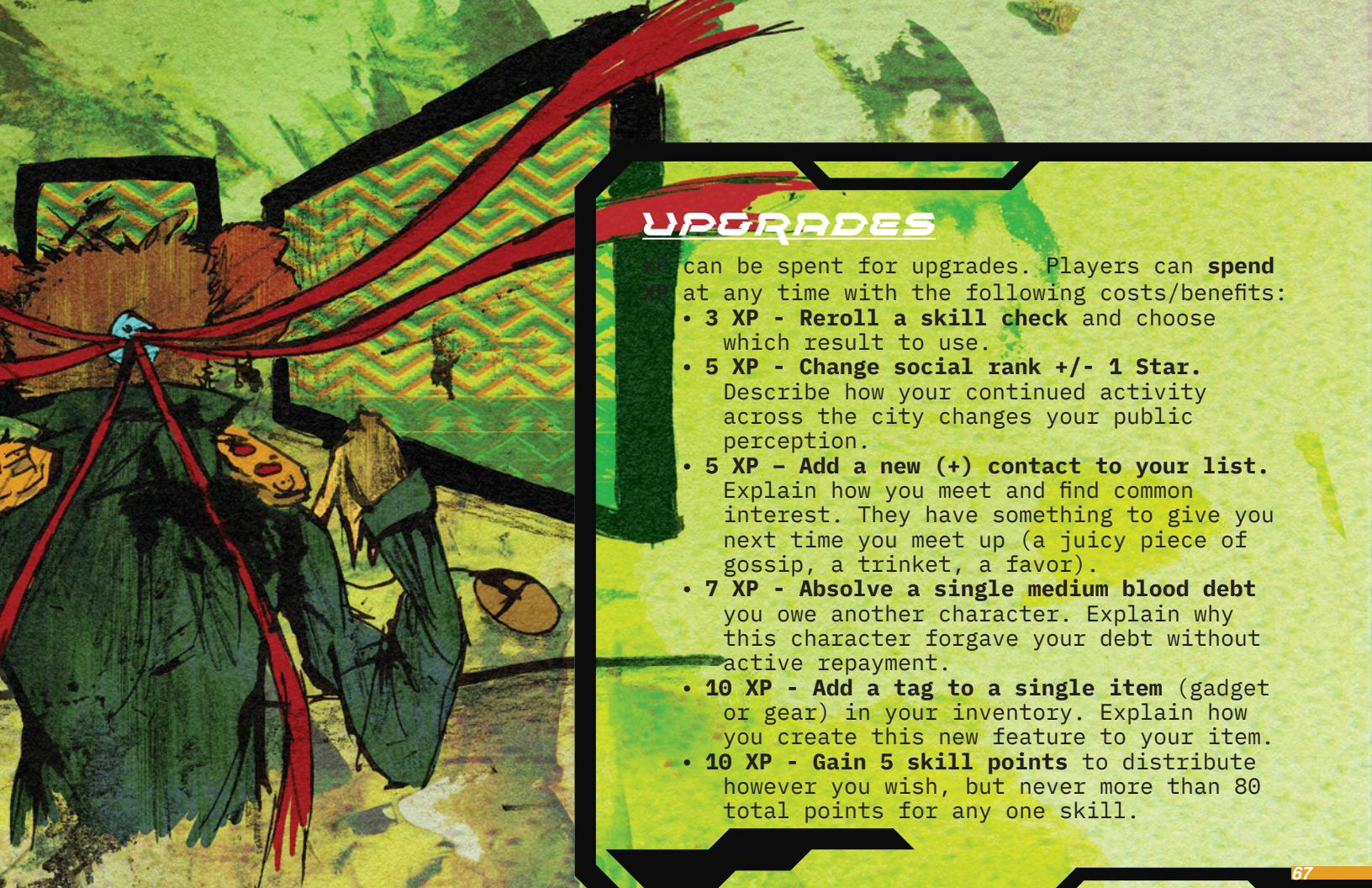
UPGRADES

XP can be spent for upgrades. Players can **spend XP** at any time with the following costs/benefits:

- **3 XP - Reroll a skill check** and choose which result to use.
- **5 XP - Change social rank +/- 1 Star.** Describe how your continued activity across the city changes your public perception.
- **5 XP – Add a new (+) contact to your list.** Explain how you meet and find common interest. They have something to give you next time you meet up (a juicy piece of gossip, a trinket, a favor).
- **7 XP - Absolve a single medium blood debt** you owe another character. Explain why this character forgave your debt without active repayment.
- **10 XP - Add a tag to a single item** (gadget or gear) in your inventory. Explain how you create this new feature to your item.
- **10 XP - Gain 5 skill points** to distribute however you wish, but never more than 80 total points for any one skill.

BUFFERING

BLOODMONEY///

The dollar is dead. No gold standard, no freight shipments, no nothing. Instead, we figured out a system that works for us.

Barter and trade pull heavy weight among the citizens of the city, allowing for simple exchanges of necessary resources and cassette tapes (arguably also necessary) between crews. Occasionally, though, a citizen finds themself in need with nothing to offer. Manual-entry ledgers quickly grew long and any attempts at an economy that resembled the old was fruitless. The lack of formal trade caused tension with the One Rule, do what thou wilt.

So we created blood money (shortened to B$).

When an individual finds themself in debt to another and unable to offer a suitable favor or trade, they pay in blood. A glistening, metallic, crimson coin, minted in a near-instant chemical reaction between hellacious energy and intentional thought. These coins can be scanned and traced at any terminal to identify the original donor, preventing fraud and keeping the indebted accountable when the time comes to collect.

The quantity of blood is proportionate to the size of the debt, though this measurement is subjective and unregulated. There is no exchange rate with blood money either, in other words, two small coins don't necessarily equal a medium coin. The bigger the favor, the more blood let, and the bigger the coin.

Generating a B$ coin costs the creator an amount of charge determined by the size of the coin and the severity of the involved debt:

Small: 1d5 charge. Most citizens let debts of this size slide, a simple handshake or nod is enough to someone they trust. Small coins are about the size of a fingernail. Only persnickety or distrusting citizens trade in small coins. A small debt would cover a drink or two, a short ride, a couple unmarked pills, a simple and immediate favor.

Medium: 1d5+5 charge. The most commonly traded currency on the streets of the city, a coin about the size of an eyeball. Covers favors in the moment, C-grade gear, a vinyl record, multiple meals or drinks, or underground information.

Large: 1d10+10 charge. Serious business that can't otherwise be settled at the moment. Creates a coin about the size of a CD. Ongoing assistance, B-grade gear, a sheet of acid tabs, a night of private pleasure, an outpatient surgery, and other intense favors.

XL: 2d10+15 charge. Risky debts that tend to be of critical importance or pure desperation. An XL coin is about the size of a vinyl LP. Covers A-grade items, a hit, a cover-up, a place to hide when things get hot, or an inpatient surgery. Most merchants do not exchange XL coins because of the risk involved and the unlikeliness the debtor will make good on it.

Tracking Blood Money

Character sheets have a space to track a very rudimentary measure of debt: how much B$ you have. For further tracking, including inbound and outbound debts in detail, your group can share a ledger sheet (p. 136). Here, you can detail the size of the coin, the person whose blood was used to make it, and the debt it was created for to more finely measure a suitable method of making good on it.

Some people just don't care! A medium coin is just a medium coin and they're gonna forget the context, and that's okay! If your group is particularly ruthless or lazy, skip the ledger and buy/sell debt on a whim! It surely won't cause you big bloody problems later!

In addition to the bloody debt economy, there exists another system by which citizens measure one another's worth: popularity. Each individual is rated publicly on a five-star spectrum, with the most charismatic and well-liked citizens displaying a five-star rating and the backstabbers, deadbeats, and blood suckers displaying a measly one-star.

Use your popularity ranking to alter the threshold of skill checks during Social interactions:

Five-Star: Adored (+10). Citizens will do favors when asked, reduce the blood cost of incurred debts when possible, and otherwise do what they can to aid you in your exploits.

Four-Star: Rising Star (+5). Niche communities care for you, though the general public might not be aware yet. Social situations are slightly greased by your charisma.

Three-Star: Nobody (+0). People don't know your name, don't recognize you on the street, and don't care what you do as long as you don't do it to them.

Two-Star: Nasty (-5). You're gaining a reputation, just maybe not the one you hoped for. Some seedy folks will still aid you but debts you incur will be weighted and cost more Blood.

One-Star: Disgusting (-10). You are a blight among the city's inhabitants. Unknown citizens avoid being in close proximity to you and are actively discouraged from helping or associating with you. Being this intensely unpopular is way more detrimental than being the most popular jerk in town is beneficial.

POPULARITY
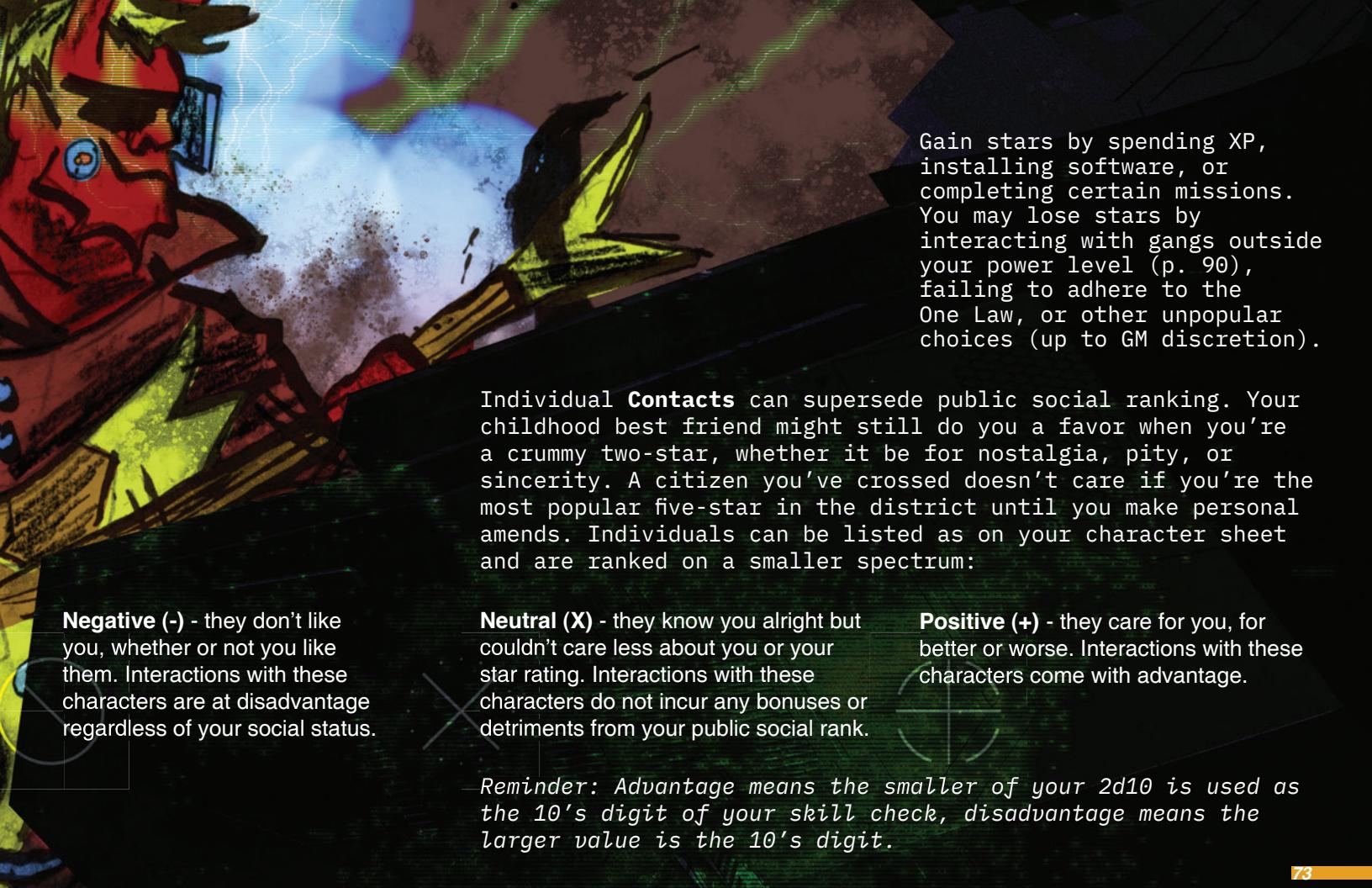
Gain stars by spending XP, installing software, or completing certain missions. You may lose stars by interacting with gangs outside your power level (p. 90), failing to adhere to the One Law, or other unpopular choices (up to GM discretion).

Individual **Contacts** can supersede public social ranking. Your childhood best friend might still do you a favor when you're a crummy two-star, whether it be for nostalgia, pity, or sincerity. A citizen you've crossed doesn't care if you're the most popular five-star in the district until you make personal amends. Individuals can be listed as on your character sheet and are ranked on a smaller spectrum:

Negative (-) - they don't like you, whether or not you like them. Interactions with these characters are at disadvantage regardless of your social status.

Neutral (X) - they know you alright but couldn't care less about you or your star rating. Interactions with these characters do not incur any bonuses or detriments from your public social rank.

Positive (+) - they care for you, for better or worse. Interactions with these characters come with advantage.

Reminder: Advantage means the smaller of your 2d10 is used as the 10's digit of your skill check, disadvantage means the larger value is the 10's digit.

FIREPOWER

When the Hell War was in full swing, the demonic forces
obliterated everything on the battlefield. The humanity was
too shortsighted to when they still could've made a comeback.
Their doom was written in blood, dust, and lead.

They knew guns weren't doing shit to the agents of Hell,
but it took years to figure out why: old-school bullets pass
through the hellions like water through a net. The demons
could phase shift through inbound ammunition. By the time we
understood that, the war was decided and America lost.

Now, that intel is common knowledge. Manual frequency
manipulation, or shifting, is a daily practice, as second-
nature as breath air, or collecting teeth. While firearms
aren't illegal, guns, bullets, and missiles are relics of the
past, melted down and used for forging more useful tools like
sledgehammers, bats, chains, flails, and more. The slower a
weapon moves, the more likely it is to catch a node of the
victim's consciousness frequency, to hit them mid-shift. The
heavier the weapon is or the more clever its bearer, the more
it's gonna hurt.

The forgers and smelters who deal with this unwanted weaponry
are outcasts, unwelcome in the central districts of Pentagram
City. The toxic, melted-lead fumes stick to them, you can smell
it from blocks away. Mix that with the ever-present sulfur
stench from the pits of Hell, and entire neighborhoods reek
with the wretched smells of their labor. These dealers, with
voices hardened by exhaust and muffled by makeshift gas masks,
aren't terribly hard to find. A particularly entrepreneurial
sort may even, with some begging and a big enough offering
of blood, sell you a gun in its original working condition,
though god knows what you'd use it for anymore.
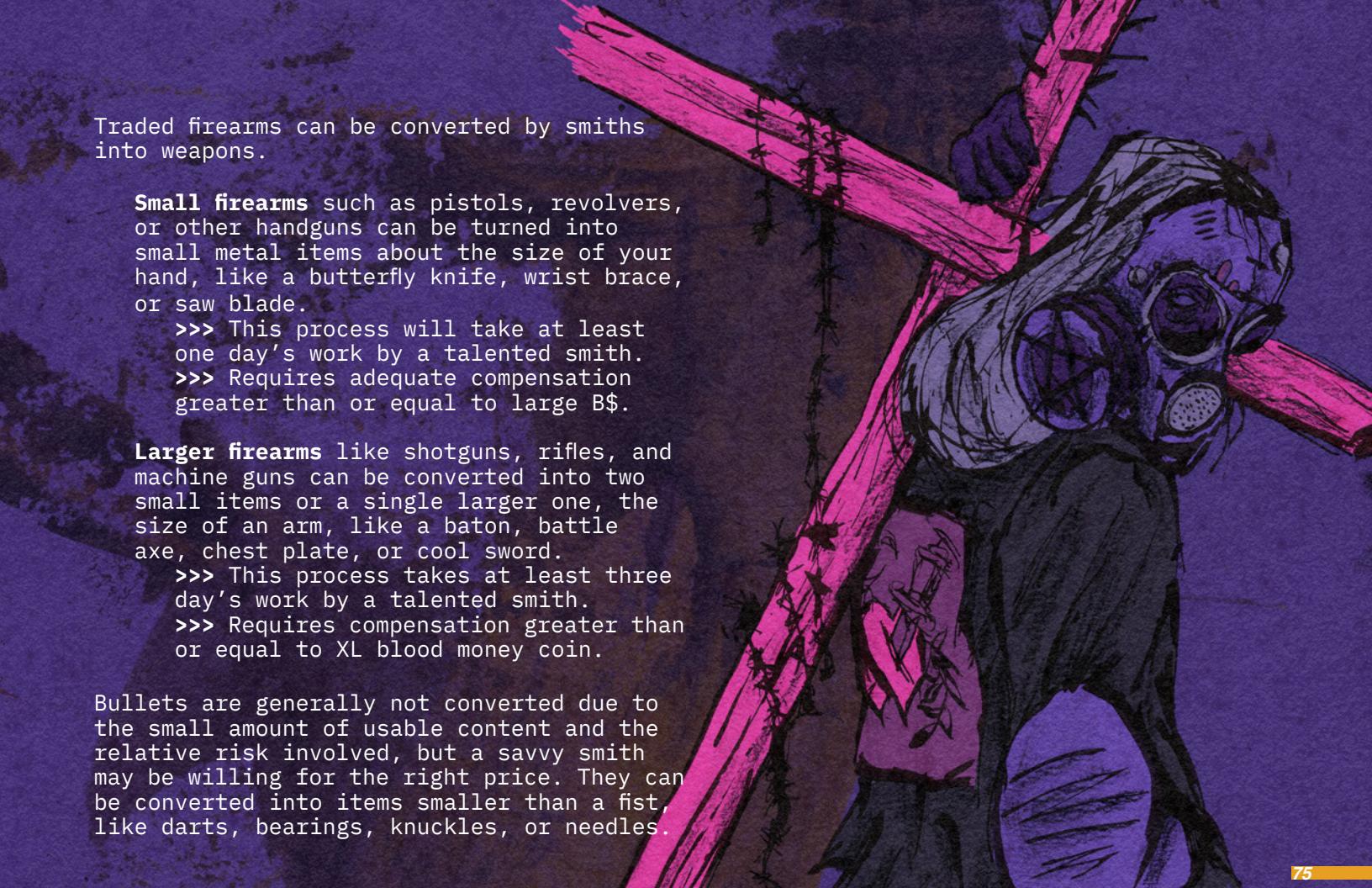
Traded firearms can be converted by smiths into weapons.

Small firearms such as pistols, revolvers, or other handguns can be turned into small metal items about the size of your hand, like a butterfly knife, wrist brace, or saw blade.
>>> This process will take at least one day's work by a talented smith.
>>> Requires adequate compensation greater than or equal to large B$.

Larger firearms like shotguns, rifles, and machine guns can be converted into two small items or a single larger one, the size of an arm, like a baton, battle axe, chest plate, or cool sword.
>>> This process takes at least three day's work by a talented smith.
>>> Requires compensation greater than or equal to XL blood money coin.

Bullets are generally not converted due to the small amount of usable content and the relative risk involved, but a savvy smith may be willing for the right price. They can be converted into items smaller than a fist, like darts, bearings, knuckles, or needles.
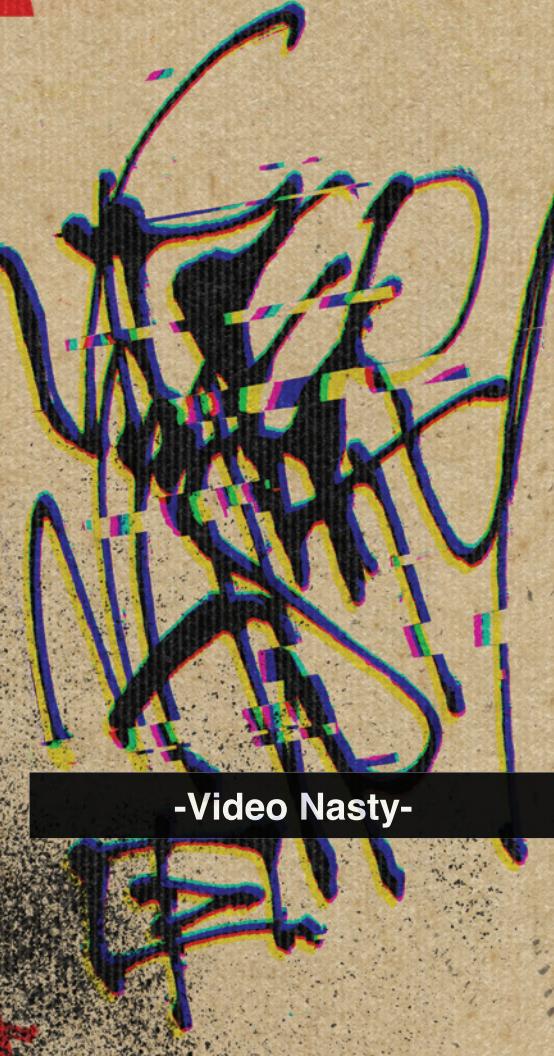
The premier form of entertainment among citizens of Pentagram City is the video nasty. Video nasties are a mix between reality TV competition shows, fail compilations, and horror movies. Have you seen the video of the dancing lady in the clown mask who falls off the couch? How about the viral video of a short-circuited Reaganoid screaming infernal hymns and summoning a dozen imps that systematically tear it to pieces?

These recordings play on every monitor and holoscreen in the region, creating a fervent demand for constant output of new footage. Thus, the video nasty competition was born, a game where people compete in regular events and collect points while simultaneously contributing to the feed of new video nasties. Competitors can collect up to and not exceeding 100 total points during a competition period of one week.

There are two main manifestations of the video nasty competition:

- ¤ **Hit lists,** seasonal pseudo-scavenger hunts to display sweat and swagger
- ¤ **Raids,** pop-up phenomena of massive scale for fresh carnage

-Video Nasty-

Show me your guts! All of it in HD! Now, please!

HIT LISTS

Hit lists are a catalog of requests made by viewers, particular gangs, or other sponsoring bodies. Completing a hit list request gets you points, with higher rewards going to acts that are particularly difficult, gory, flamboyant, or otherwise eye-catching.

Hit lists are curated and themed around holidays, changing seasons, promotional events, or other tie-ins. A single hit list lasts a week (unless altered to accomodate a particular event theme), allowing the combatants enough time to get creative with their bloodshed and rack up a worthy amount of points. At the end of the week, the winners are announced and the leaderboard is posted. Those who rank high are sure to gain popularity among their audience (nearly every sorry soul in the city).

PLAYING A HIT LIST

Get points for performing hit list requests, which are tracked on character sheets. Hit list requests can only be completed once, and a hitlist competition maxes out at 100 points.

To perform a hitlist request, roll a skill check and if successful, gain the associated points. Some requests, like "crash a vehicle into a building" are obvious, while others like "make a Soulless One's head spin" are more subjective. It's up to the discretion of your fellow players whether an act qualifies for a particular request—the group, including the GM, votes to approve or deny a player's action as appropriate for the given task, with any ties landing in favor of gaining points.

MAKING A HIT LIST

To make a hit list, create around 20 objectives for the players to pursue. Most objects are worth 5-10 points, with a few difficult but enticing 20 point options.

At the end of a hit list period, generate the scores for the competitors, equal to double the number of players. Use the name/handle generators on page 130 to give personality to noteworthy competitors and roll a d100 to determine their score. Those who score especially high and those who may interfere with the players ability to rack up their own scores may become interesting antagonists in your world as a result.

EXODUS

On the anniversary of the governmental evacuation at the end of the Hell War, we celebrate! We invoke the themes of space, explosion, victory, and emptiness.

5

Deface a monument	Perform a guitar-driven victory anthem	Defile an effigy of an influential citizen	Commune with a past explorer
Hold a sky burial	Win a fight with no software installed	Hack an aerial drone	Set off fireworks at a ritual site

10

Install an explosive gadget	Pilot a hacked ship or vehicle	Summon a star being	Send a message into orbit
Liberate the Jester's stockades	Plummet off a building and survive	Drink the blood of your enemy	Blow up a rival gang's base

20

Topple a three or more story building	Explode an enemy on a rooftop	Evacuate a city block	Let your scream echo throughout an entire district

WINNING

There can only be one individual winner. Winning the hit list grants:

- **10 XP**
- **+1 star popularity**
- **A random A-grade drug or weapon (p. 46)**
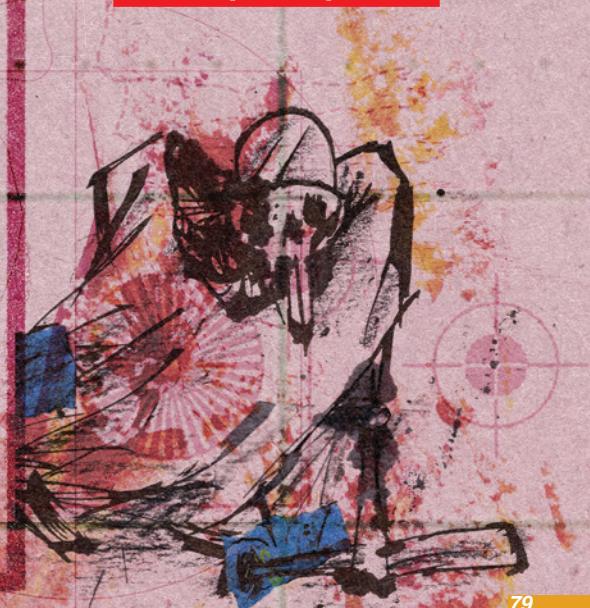
Raids

Raids are special events centered around the summoning and destruction of larger-than-life beings. Using advanced holographic projections, risky summoning rituals, or other abstract means, a massive ferocious target (20-100 feet tall) is summoned for the sake of sparking competitor creativity at the risk of their own lives for our own entertainment.

Raids are pop-up events lasting only a few minutes, for maximum effect. Competitors are encouraged to freestyle the harm they inflict on their colossal target, extracting as many points as possible before the event comes to a crushing conclusion. These pop-ups happen sporadically, sometimes to celebrate the end of a hit list season and other times with no apparent reason at all.

RAID CREATURES

A raid creatures are massive. Rather than charge, a raid creature has a rank, a factor determined by its summoners. Ranks between 1-10, with 10 being the most vile and difficult target possible. Rank is displayed similarly to charge in rules text, like so: *Spectral Reaper* [RAID: 5, 60 ft., *phases through buildings*].

Competitors must creatively and explosively inflict harm on the raid creature to get points. To get points, take actions and roll skill checks against the raid creature:

- **On a success, get points equal to the the damage dealt**
- **On a failure, take damage equal to the raid creature's rank. Fallout still works as expected, choosing one of your 2d10 as the fallout value and comparing it to the table.**

Competitors can use this opportunity to collect a lot of points in a short amount of time, but at the heightened risk of losing swaths of charge on their failed attacks. The raid continues until the raid creature has dealt damage a number of times equal to its rank.

gangs

collective power and advancement

Gangs

Pentagram City is rife with powerful forces and factions that aim to shape their surroundings to their will: powerful fuckers, squads of underlings, drug chemists, seedy cabals, shitty cover bands, power-thirsty warbands, neighborhood watches, and more. These influential groups are called *gangs*, and regardless of their influence or size, they pose a serious threat to your ability to get your shit together.

A gang has a title, description, power level, grand plan, goals, strengths, and weakness. Let's take a deeper look at each of these:

- **Title:** what they are called, whether they name themselves or society has assigned them a name in a desperate attempt to quantify their fears.

- **Description:** a short summary of the gang's deal. Notable members, history, rumors, and other obtained intelligence.

- **Power Level:** a measure of their ability to bend and warp the city and its citizens, ranging from 1 (lowly, street level, very little influence) to 5 (ruling class, highly influential). Gangs tend to primarily interact with other gangs within one level of their own.
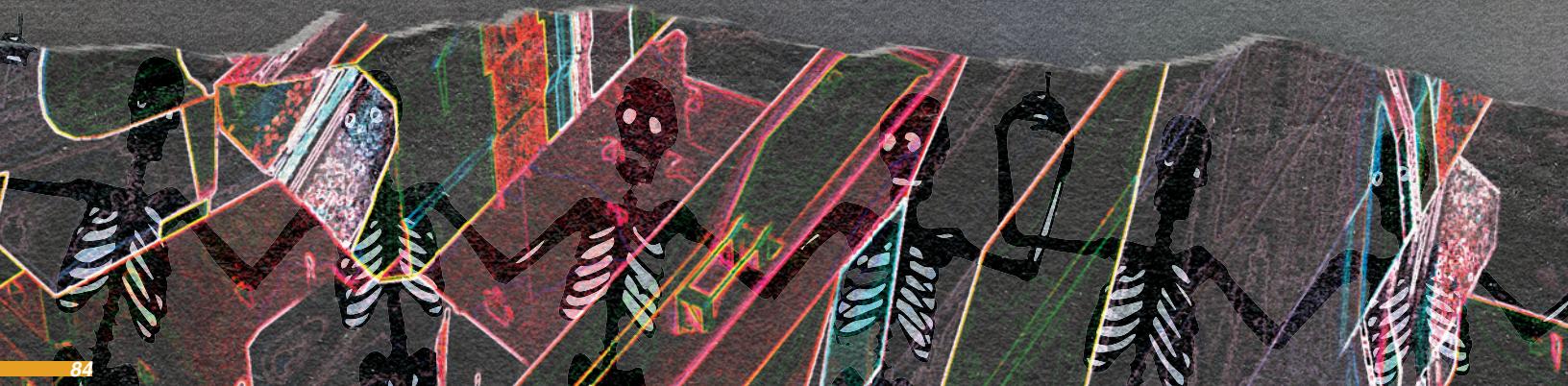
• **Grand Plan:** what they want in a broad sense, their ever-present objective. The grand plan is not quantified but instead a guiding force for establishing and pursuing goals.

ex: Control the district, eradicate the woodland perimeter of the city, monopolize the water supply, prevent terminal access to non-members, implement a government, reduce the city to ash.

• **Goals:** the incremental plans the gang enacts to pursue their grand plan. These tasks are measured in complexity from 2 (simple) to 5 (grueling or time-consuming).

ex: Take over the production facility, recruit additional forces, erase their blood of debt, rewire the district's terminals to their mother computer, split the consciousness wave of their former leader into distinct tracks for remixing.

• **Strengths:** Aspects of the gang that benefit their ability to pursue their goals.

Strengths can be ongoing (such as being well-connected to a surveillance network) or fleeting (blessed upon a new moon).

Player characters joining or aiding a gang counts as a singular strength for the purpose of rolling dice. Gangs often will attempt to gain the favor and assistance of the player characters in this pursuit, which may put them at odds with other gangs.

• **Weaknesses:** negative traits or hold-ups that delay the gang's ability to pursue their Goals.

Conflict with another gang counts as one weakness per level disparity (a level 5 gang holding back the progress of a level 2 gang would count as 3 weaknesses).

Player characters sabotaging or combatting a gang counts as a singular weakness for the purpose of rolling dice.

GANG ADVANCEMENT

Gangs change and evolve between game sessions. Between games, roll for each gang in their city to pursue their goals and attempt to change their power level. The gang roll determines the success, growth, failure, and setbacks each gang faces, allowing the cityscape to change and feel alive.

When a gang completes a goal, they gain a new, relevant strength to their list.

When a gang completes a number of goals equal to their current power level plus 1, increase their power level by 1 to a maximum of 5. A gang at power level 5 is at the top and there is no where left to go but down.

**Gang roll
=
1d10
+
(Strengths)
-
(Weaknesses)**

Any relevant strengths and weaknesses are included in this calculation, but each strength and weakness has a value of 1 regardless of its perceived strength.

- **8 or more:** great progress is made, +2 to a single goal or +1 to two separate goals.

- **4-7:** they make incremental progress, +1 to a single goal

- **3 or less:** They suffer a setback. -1 to a single goal.

  If there are no goals to remove progress from, the gang loses one power level.

  If their power level would be reduced below 1, the gang is depowered, dissociated, dismembered, or otherwise removed from consideration as an influential force in Pentagram City.

Your Gang

The player characters are all members of their own gang, whether named and recognized on the streets of the city or just for the sake of tracking their collective successes and failures compared to those around them. Player gangs are different than others, they have the following elements:

- **Base**: where you hang out/live and keep your stuff.
- **Inventory**: a collection of gear, gadgets, trinkets, trophies, and whatever else you collect along your way but don't want to keep on your person.
- **Power Level**: how you compare to other gangs in the city, a measure of your reputation and ability to do what you want
- **Projects**: plans you have to develop your gang and home

Let's explore these concepts.

BASE

Even the hardest bodies in Pentagram City need somewhere safe to rest their heads. Your base is your home, decrepit as it may be. You can sleep here, find some basic food and water, Sync to a shared terminal, smoke one another out, and otherwise feel relatively safe. Brainstorm together to describe your base's look and style: how many rooms there are, what it looks like, what you call it, what sort of security you've implemented, what your relationship is with the neighbors, and other details. Unless there is an interesting narrative reason for you to be located somewhere else in the city, your Base is assumed to be in The Spike district (p. 110).

Roll 4d10 to generate a base randomly:

	BUILDING	LAYOUT	STYLE	NEIGHBORS
1.	Someone's Garage	A big shared room for everything	Blacklight and stoner posters	A gang of losers just like you
2.	Abandoned Restaurant		Modern and clean	A creepy hermit plotting something
3.	Sewer	Each Citizen has their own room	Black and lightless	A noise band that practices at all hours
4.	Shack		Bohemian eclectic	A crotchety commune who demands silence
5.	Cookie-Cutter Apartment		Wire-ridden tech rat's nest	A drug dealer with guests over all the time
6.	Converted School Bus	Shared bedrooms with one communal space	A candlelit shrine to Satan	Sketchy cult who wants to recruit you
7.	Unhallowed Church		Leaking, cracking, falling apart	A duo of clever alchemists and their noxious fumes
8.	Warehouse	More rooms than you know what to do with	Throwback to another era	Empty, save for the mold
9.			Grandparents' basement	
10.			Absolute pig sty	

INVENTORY

Any extra stuff you acquire on your journeys can be stored here somewhat safely. Your base can hold up to **20** inventory slots. These function the same as your personal inventories in that multiple instances of the same thing only take up one slot, so feel free to save every barbed-wire-wrapped baseball bat you collect in case one breaks. This number can be altered by completing projects, as in a following section.

POWER LEVEL

Your gang's power level works the same as other gangs: a measure of your influence and ability to realize your vision, as well as a way to compare yourself to other gangs. Your gang begins at power level 1. Unlike rival gangs, your gang power level cannot go below 1. Increase your gang's power level by completing projects.

PROJECTS

Projects are how your gang levels up, increasing the quality of your own circumstance. Projects are goals set by the group to advance your collective station, improve your living conditions, affect the citizens around you, redistribute critical resources, and otherwise cement your way of living in Pentagram City.

Citizens make progress on projects during play, using their successes to increase the gang's reputation. These tasks are measured in complexity from 2 (simple) to 5 (grueling or time-consuming).

Projects gain incremental progress during play and between sessions of play using a gang roll. When using the gang roll to measure your progress, strengths are considered steps taken by the gang during play that would facilitate a project's development and weaknesses are failed plans or other missteps along the planned route to the project's completion. It is the players' perogative to decide on your collective strengths, the GM is in charge of determining weaknesses. Your gang can make at most one gang roll per session of play and one between each session.

- **8 or more**: You make great progress, +2 to a single project or +1 to two separate projects.
- **4-7**: You make incremental progress, +1 to a single project
- **3 or less**: Your gang suffers a setback. Describe how you fail to make progress on your intended project.

Unlike other gangs, your gang does not lose progress on low rolls, you instead gain the ire of someone who witnesses your failed attempts to flex (a rival gang, a greedy prince of hell, a money lender more than happy to exploit you, etc.). Instead, your gang only loses progress by being actively deterred or harmed via other gangs' interference. In these instances, a rival gang can use progress they would otherwise assign to their own goals to instead reduce progress on your goals. If you have no progress to attack, your gang instead loses a power level. Your gang cannot go below power level 1, you just fail to impress anyone in the city with your gang's efforts and are considered a joke until you can change their minds with your collective actions.
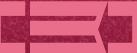
COMPLETING PROJECTS

When a project is completed, each player in the gang gains XP equal to the complexity ranking of the completed project. Completing a number of projects equal to your gang's current power level +1 increases your gang's power level by 1.

Joining another gang and helping them complete a goal can also count as one of your gang's projects. Tracking their goal is reflected in tracking your project—the project is marked as completed when their goal is met.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

Here's a list of suggested available projects your gang can take on. The GM should offer a list of available projects in the form of gigs and missions (p. 120). Your gang can pursue any project at any time, but they may only have a number of in-progress projects equal to the number of players in the gang. Your gang may decide to abandon a project-in-progress for a new one at any time.

	THROW A METAL SHOW IN YOUR BASE	CLEAN UP A BLOODY MESS YOU MADE	FERMENT NEW ALCOHOLS FOR YOUR OWN CONSUMPTION	RAID THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH FOR USEFUL DESECRATED ARTIFACTS
	CLEAR OUT A NEARBY MUTANT INFESTATION	IMPLEMENT NEW SECURITY MEASURES (FENCING, TOWER, CAMERAS, OR SOMETHING ELSE)	BUILD AND DESTROY AN EFFIGY OF YOUR RIVALS TO SWAY POPULARITY	BUILD A PRINT SHOP TO HAWK YOUR GANG'S MERCH
	BUILD ADDITIONAL ROOMS ON YOUR BASE (+5 INVENTORY CAPACITY)	FOSTER A GROW ROOM TO PLANT AND DISTRIBUTE YOUR OWN DRUGS	CONVERT YOUR NEIGHBORS TO WORSHIPING YOUR CHOSEN DARK LORD	HIJACK THE RADIO WAVES TO BROADCAST YOUR MANIFESTO
	CREATE A RESOURCE PLANT FOR YOUR DISTRICT (ELECTRICAL BATTERY, WATER PURIFYING, MEAT GROWTH, OR SOMETHING ELSE)	TAKE OUT A RIVAL GANG AND ACCUMULATE THEIR POWER SOURCE	DESTROY AN IMPORTANT BUILDING IN AN ACT OF VIOLENT PROTEST	PUSH BACK THE ENCROACHING WILDS AND EXPAND THE CITY WESTWARD

Gangs of Pentagram City

Resisting Against Satanic Pressure, or R.A.S.P. (3): Initially formed in the 1980's in defiance of the rise of heavy metal and so-called satanic influence, this group was driven underground by the subsequent breach of Hell and warped into something more maniacal than a group of concerned misinformed parents.

Mission: Exorcize the forces of Satan from our cultural landscape
Goals: Restore the defiled church as their new home base (3)
  Burn "evil" records and books in public demonstration (3)
  Overtake pirate radio frequency to broadcast their brainwashing sentiments (4)
Strengths: Resistance to infernal temptations, stubborn to new information
Weaknesses: Reliance on outdated ways of life, shaky faith, depleting membership

The Millennium (2): A group of pre-millenium bunker hoarders rejecting the unfamiliar world they emerged into.

Mission: Bring back a pre-millenium Pentagram City
Goals: Take down the Light Tower (5)
  Infect computer terminals with recruitment virus (4)
Strengths: Secretive operations, plentiful rations
Weaknesses: Outdated technology

Abscession (3): Mutant radiation addicts obsessed with altering their physical form.

Mission: Liberate citizens from their digital reliance. Inflict pain as a reminder of their physicality
Goals: Convert the Session Concert Hall into their torture lodge (4)
      Publicly perform acts of pain to remind onlookers of their true nature (3)
Strengths: Selflessness in the face of danger, rumors of powerful mutations that make them immune to conventional damage; **The Skin Melter (C: 51)**, a warped scorpion that uses the stinger on its tail to interface physically with digital beings and download their most private thoughts
Weaknesses: Sensitive to loud sounds, depletion of radioactive strength resources

MUTATIONS

1. Transparent skin
2. Muscle liquidity
3. Sight of sin
4. Absorb your shadow
5. Eyes all over
6. Possession by echo
7. Open a portal door
8. Melting teeth
9. Instant Clone
10. Unending scream

Neon Black (2): The most popular metal band in town.

Mission: Be the best band in Pentagram City
Goals: Write their next big hit (4)
      Do a gig (2)
      Summoning Circle Pit (5)
Strengths: Devout fandom, full stack amps that are loud as hell
Weaknesses: Burnt out, derivative of Death Agent, no support from The Jester

Infinite Journey (4): Powerful escapists who collect resources from consumers to later abandon them.

Mission: Escape Pentagram City by any means
Goals: Build a rocket (5)
      Commune with the Starbrethren (5)
      Offer new flavors to attract more customers (3)
Strengths: Massive blood money income from Flavor Farm, covert operations facility, immediate river access, adjacency to battery plant
Weaknesses: Powerworms are easily distracted by sultry desires, in need of scientific advisors, metal shortage

Devout Servants of the Unholy Child (4): Zealots clinging to a devolving sense of faith and rushing into a intensified demonic future.

Mission: Foster the birth and infinite reign of the Unholy Child
Goals: Facilitate the birth of the Child (5)
      Recruit powerful new members (2)
      Inflict signal interference on the Record Pressing Plant (3)
Strengths: Unwavering faith, plentiful access to resources, high-ranking membership, masking their corruption efforts by invoking the One Law
Weaknesses: Ignorant to goings on of other districts, in search of rare arcane items for birthing ceremony

Omega Click (1): A collective of artists, graffiti writers, and performers yearning to liberate themselves from their current exploitation.

Mission: Take back Art from The Jester's grip
Goals: Fill Graffiti Row with subversive messaging (3)
      Convert/recruit more residents of the creative housing (3)
Strengths: Creative problem solving, ability to commune in secret, alchemical knowledge
Weaknesses: Lack of weapon access, lack of resource access outside The Jester's supply, lack of public support

Jester's Bacchanalia (5): Hedonistic citizens in service of the Entertainment District's most powerful promoter.

Mission: Absorb infinite power in the name of entertainment
Goals: Throw another great show (4)
Repurpose the propaganda in Graffiti Row (3)
Shame the leader of any rival gang in the Stockades (2)
Strengths: Security Virus squadron, inaccessible tower, limited schedule, massive influence
Weaknesses: Always open to a deal, rarely sober

@Brug0l (1): A solitary satanic soul abandoned in the wake of the Y2K bug attacks.

Mission: Revitalize and control the Wired District
Goals: Sever his tie to the 6/66 Building (2)
Recruit new followers (3)
Revive the Y2K bug under his sole control (5)
Strengths: Proclivity for violence, undying
Weaknesses: Lonely, waning hellpowers

Mischief (2): A group of evolved beings aspiring to reverse their curse of consciousness granted by hell radiation.

Mission: Revert vermin and husk to an unevolved lack of sentience
Goals: Map the vermin brain (4)
Greet the Agent of Death (5)
Further isolate the Hoards from technological advances (3)
Strengths: Plentiful gear in nests, river adjacency, coded vermin language
Weaknesses: Adjacency to radio tower, relatively small number of members, disconnected from eastern aspects of the city

PENTAGRAM CITY

Pentagram City is a closed society, its geography is static and reliable, separated into six districts (with an unofficial seventh forming in unoccupied territory):

- The **City Center** is a beacon for all within the firewall, a congested downtown full of rock concerts, crowded living quarters, and power hungry citizens climbing over one another to survive. Our lives rotate around this fulcrum, like a spiral always drawing us closer to an impending crunch.

- To the northeast, the **Supply Ward**: a collection of resource farms rife with corruption and overrun with competing powerlords.

- In the east, an **Entertainment District**: a decaying shrine to the music that brought us to this decrepit era and a grim vision at the future of our hedonistic ways.

- The **Wired District** in the southeast: a once powerful development to plan for a technological future that didn't quite arrive, now a crumbling relic to our dying high-tech dreams. The site of the Y2K outbreak that created the Husks.

- In the south is **The Spike**: a collection of residential buildings built on top of one another to host the unspecial population of the city at minimal cost.

- The Grand River separates **Riverside** from the other districts. It's isolation and underdeveloped, still ravaged by the destructive fallout of the Hell War and struggling to meet the technological standard of our new world.

- The **Encroaching Wilds** encroach to the west: an expanse of trees, mutations, and the corpse-painted druids that protect it from society's "advances". They push against the city in a lush, green, cold war.

CITY CENTER

II. The Abyss. A historic and unholy site, the Abyss was one of hundreds of holes that appeared during the Breach in the 1980's that welcomed Hell's inhabitants to our earthly plane. The infinite cavity has grown cold and dark, extending its depths into lightlessness. Still, a few devout demons traverse the cavern each month. Those who have claimed to return from these excursions are generally considered frauds as logic dictates surviving such a trek would be impossible for even the strongest adventurers.

I. The Light Tower. The tallest highrise rests at the center of Pentagram City's arcane layout, launching beacons of red and white light infinitely up towards the sky. The tower can be seen from any location within the firewall, making it a useful landmark when traversing unknown alleys of the city. Some hope to manipulate the bright beams to grab the attention of anyone outside the walls who may be looking to end this exodus.

III. Mourning Ritual. This cyber-cafe has plenty of Sync terminals for customers to recharge and swap software while ingesting synthetic speed and downloading the strange flavors of a now-unavailable delicacy called "coffee." Breakout rooms host d5+1 technologically adept **Pleasure Programmers (C: 22, technologically adept)** who engage in unknown tinkering and wiring behind code-locked doors.

IV. **Y2K Bunker**. Beneath downtown and through a network of arcane basements and storage units lies a prepper bunker built before y2k that hosts **The Millennium,** a small commune of brainwashed humans in hiding since before the year 2000 who long for a long-gone past version of Pentagram City.

V. **The Blood Trust.** Store, transfer, absolve, and purify blood used in the exchange of debts. Citizens are able to decipher the debt associated with a given blood money coin. Unclaimed, expended, or tainted blood is poured into pools below the surface where a hive of reticent serpentine **Adjudicators (C: 39, bloodthirsty, aquatic)** swim. Adjudicators absorb the thoughts and feelings of the blood donors, creating a psychic network to monitor and evaluate and ensure the sanctity of the One Law. Adjudicators are rumored to deploy spiritual forces to regulate and punish those who disobey the One Law or who are predicted to do so in the near future.

VI. **Arcane Minds**. Citizens can make offerings and trade resources with a myriad of specialized satanic vendors in exchange for curses, cassette tapes, and anything between. Blood money prices are high, but many purveyors make deals with different currencies, like job offers or shards of soul.

VII. **Junkyard**. A field of scrap metal and frayed cable with more than its fair share of dumped corpses hidden in the midst. The walls of trash surround an obfuscated central pit.

VIII. **Radiation Den**. Hidden within the putrid depths of The Junkyard lies a small concrete building encircled by barb-wire. Inside, a cluster of radiation junkies of all hardware polluting their innards with residue from decommissioned nuclear weapons of the former American military. The dangerous high of radiation inflicts terrible pain but comes with the possibility of physical mutation. The Radiation Den is the main base for a group of mutant extremists called **Abscession**.

IX. **Session Concert Hall**. The premier performance destination for ever metal band in Pentagram City is Session, the solitary still-standing venue from the 80's that hosted all of the pre-war metal bands of the Midwest and beyond. Session hosts a tape & LP swap popup a few times each month. Only bands that prove themselves in the Entertainment District can play here. The best band in town, **Neon Black**, performs here once or twice a month to the delight of the metalheads who can afford to attend.

SUPPLY WARD

I. Electric Taste. A figurative heaven full of downloadable digital delights, synthetic smells, and tantilizing tastes. The firewall prevents citizen access to many of the foods they'd grown accustomed to in the time before, leaving many desperate for a taste that they can no longer access. Where there is a demand, there is a clever duo of mucous-encrusted **Powerworms (C: 61 each, lustful)** willing to offer supply, be it in a tube of delicious grey paste or a pleasurable digital download straight to the brain. Unlike many of the resources in the Supply Ward, flavor is considered a luxury and is only offered at considerable cost.

II. Launch Site. A secret rocket build-site, hidden behind Electric Taste. A group of husks and humans known as **Infinite Journey** believe they can traverse the firewall by escaping it through the stars.
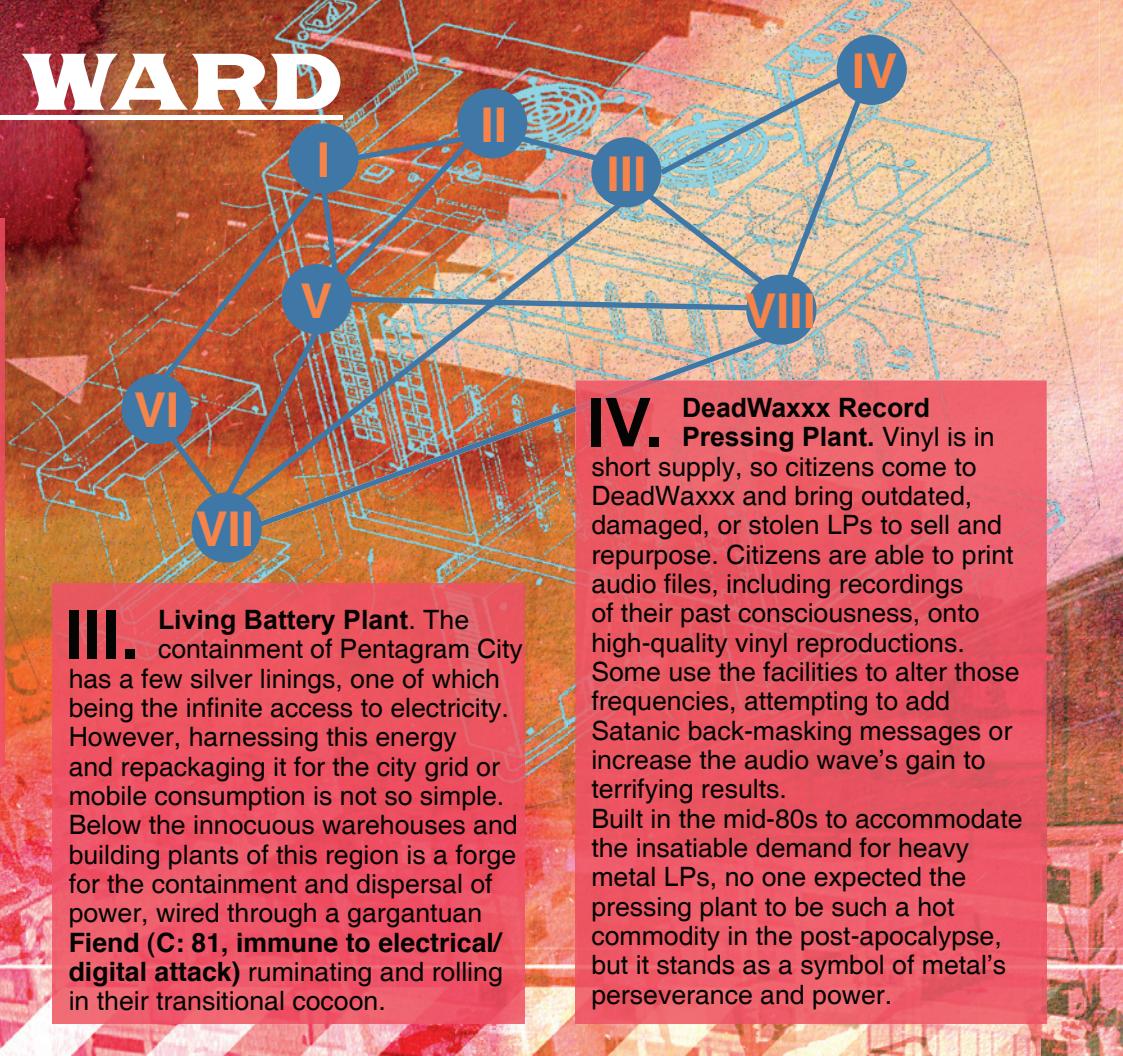
III. Living Battery Plant. The containment of Pentagram City has a few silver linings, one of which being the infinite access to electricity. However, harnessing this energy and repackaging it for the city grid or mobile consumption is not so simple. Below the innocuous warehouses and building plants of this region is a forge for the containment and dispersal of power, wired through a gargantuan **Fiend (C: 81, immune to electrical/digital attack)** ruminating and rolling in their transitional cocoon.

IV. DeadWaxxx Record Pressing Plant. Vinyl is in short supply, so citizens come to DeadWaxxx and bring outdated, damaged, or stolen LPs to sell and repurpose. Citizens are able to print audio files, including recordings of their past consciousness, onto high-quality vinyl reproductions. Some use the facilities to alter those frequencies, attempting to add Satanic back-masking messages or increase the audio wave's gain to terrifying results.

Built in the mid-80s to accommodate the insatiable demand for heavy metal LPs, no one expected the pressing plant to be such a hot commodity in the post-apocalypse, but it stands as a symbol of metal's perseverance and power.

V. **Community Gardens**. A majority of the city's plant-based produce is grown here in highly fertile farmland surrounded by vertical hydroponic systems. Growth is focused on nutrient-dense food that takes up the least amount of space/resources, including legumes and greens. The system is mostly automated with a few vermin **Caretakers (C: 15, skittish)** that tend to the farming machinery. They then use the adjacent waterflow to distribute the crops to residential areas down river. The community gardens are surrounded by a restricted area patrolled by teams of demonic **Will Enforcers (C: 36 ea, alert)** armed with molten copper batons and lengths of chain to protect the sanctity of the grow operations. Only caretakers and enforcers are allowed within the restricted area, invaders will be attacked without questioning.

VI. **Church of The Unholy Child.** A massive stone unhallowed temple, a house of faith for a forsaken spirit. **The Devout Servants of the Unholy Child** gather here to worship the unborn child of **Nul (C: 69, lustful, royal, immune to Hell power)**, a pregnant succubus and one of the high-ranking soldiers of the Hell War. The father of the child is unknown, though Nul claims them to be a holy figure that will unite the citizens of Pentagram City in an infinite reign.

VII. **Church Commune.** Beyond the stone facade of the church lies a plot of land surrounded by high walls and razor wire, protecting the secrets within. Followers of The Unholy Child live here in tents and shacks, stripped of most of their possessions. New recruits come here for orientation, to test their willpower and to learn the truth from Nul. On the edge of the Firewall, the commune is only accessible through a network of catacombs beneath the church itself.

VIII. **Synthetic Meatlabs.** There's no meat in Pentagram City, unless you make it yourself. The ravenous citizens are unable to sate their hunger for meat. The Synthetic Meatlabs are able to fabricate passable substitutions for beef and pork using lab-grown proteins in a secretive process. The origins of these faux meat products are rumors, ranging from experimental crossbreeding to unabashed cannibalism. Many skeptical citizens have since adopted a vegan lifestyle and would nary look at these synthesized scraps.

ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

I. AlchemiCo Creative Housing. An exclusive residency for the most adored artists in Pentagram City. Conditions here are considerably nicer than elsewhere in the city, but tenants are expected to abide by a strict code of The Jester's design, including the constant production of content for public consumption. Artists raid nearby bunkers and apartment complexes in search of inspiration, kitsch, and fluids to paint with. **Omega Click** is a subset of this artist commune who aspire to subvert The Jester's orders and experience some semblance of freedom.

II. Graffiti Row. The region's most prolific writers have reclaimed brick and concrete walls as a physical message board. Summoning sigils and secret messages sprayed in various colors, a psychedelic mess of drip and aerosol. Political propaganda posters from the 80s and 90's can be seen behind plexiglass protectors, a rare sign of historical reverence for a culture obsessed with tomorrow.

III. The Jester's Tower. A goliath broken finger of metal and glass pointing towards an unreachable heaven, the tallest building in the district is inhabited by a powerful lord known as **The Jester (C: 69, by appointment only).** This hedonist oversees the pleasure of all citizens below, catering to even the most obscure desire in exchange for power and blood, as if he doesn't have more than he could ever use in a lifetime. Just be careful what you wish for. The immediate area beneath The Jester's Tower is restricted and patrolled by **Security Viruses (C: 21 each, regenerates 1d10/round unless at 0 charge)**.

IV. LVST Cyber Brothel. No desire is too taboo for the virtual realm. Cybersexual experiences are offered here, one of many public services offered by The Jester, to stave off the population boom while allowing citizens to get their rocks off. Experiences are curated by customers, paid for in advance, and uploaded to their NeuroNexus, overwriting any installed software at the time.

V. Starfire. A large, hollowed out retail complex, outfitted with gaudy lighting and toxic sludge fountains, as an arena. The Jester curates a weekly event and invites the brightest stars of Pentagram City to display their talents on a glistening stage, a tradition that rivals Video Nasties for the premier form of entertainment among the citizens. Winners get popularity stars and a trip to the Jester's tower to further cultivate their talents for public consumption. The losers to the Stockades for public shaming.

VII. **J.E.R.K. Surgical Partners.** The Jester Entertainment Rise Kollective Surgical Partners offers new faces and features to those who have been embarrassed by their public failures on the stage. This complex extorts the unfortunate losers of the Starfire competition. A collection of expert surgeons are available for the installation of various gadgets that could make the difference between a future performance's success or another night in the stockades.

Beyond the expected cosmetic offerings, rumors are whispered of additional services offered by the partners that can actually alter your consciousness. This experimental procedure manipulates your brain waves and frequencies instead of your body, allowing the patient to become someone completely new, by less superficial standards. The expensive and exclusive procedure, if the rumors are true, allows citizens to change who they truly are. Players might redistribute spent skill points and even possibly invent new skills altogether.

VI. **Stockades.** Those in low social standing, especially those whose lose Starfire competitions are locked in restraints of splintered wood, a much different form of public entertainment than they intended to offer. Citizens are able to purchase past-prime produce from nearby stalls to throw at the flunkees on display. Low-level gangs recruit vulnerable citizens here while many others simply disappear after their sentence in bondage has ended.

VIII. **Body Dump.** The J.E.R.K. generates a ton of biological waste, so necessity birthed a junkyard of carcasses. A combination of deceased competition losers, surgical scraps, and those who have crossed The Jester are piled up here to feed the worms below. Though the remnants that end up here are often undesirable for many reasons, desperate husks occasionally are caught pilfering through the wastes in search of new host bodies.

WIRED DISTRICT

I. **Epicenter.** This is where the Y2K bug outbreak began. Warehouses and mid-sized structures for the techno-corporations at the turn of the millennium, the area is now vacant. The quiet streets rest in the shadow of a decommissioned monorail, now an eyesore from which decaying cables hang, a reminder of our city's shattered dreams.

II. **Ball Drop Site.** This area was the centerpiece of a part of a lively downtown district and host to many a raucous party before the year 2000. The spirits of those annihilated in the new year's terror at the turn of the millenium are said to echo through the remnants of the city with shattered fragments of disco balls and champagne bottles collecting along the curb. What started in 2000 as **Bug Saplings (C: 4)** have mutated, evolved, and grown into dozens of crab-like **Malwarasites (C: 19 each or swarm [4+] C: 51, feed on electricity and data, piercing, slow)** that lie mostly dormant in the district waiting for the unfortunate passerby with whom to interface and drain their charge.

III. **6/66 Convenience Store.** A weathered storefront that once housed a particularly brutal gang of humans and moths who have long dried out and rotted. Their leader, a winged fang from hell named **@Brug0l** now resides here alone, still seated on his throne of metallic skulls. He resents his current state, longing for a return to his former glory or some sort of multimedia afterlife, and would offer hell's spoils to anyone able to provide either.
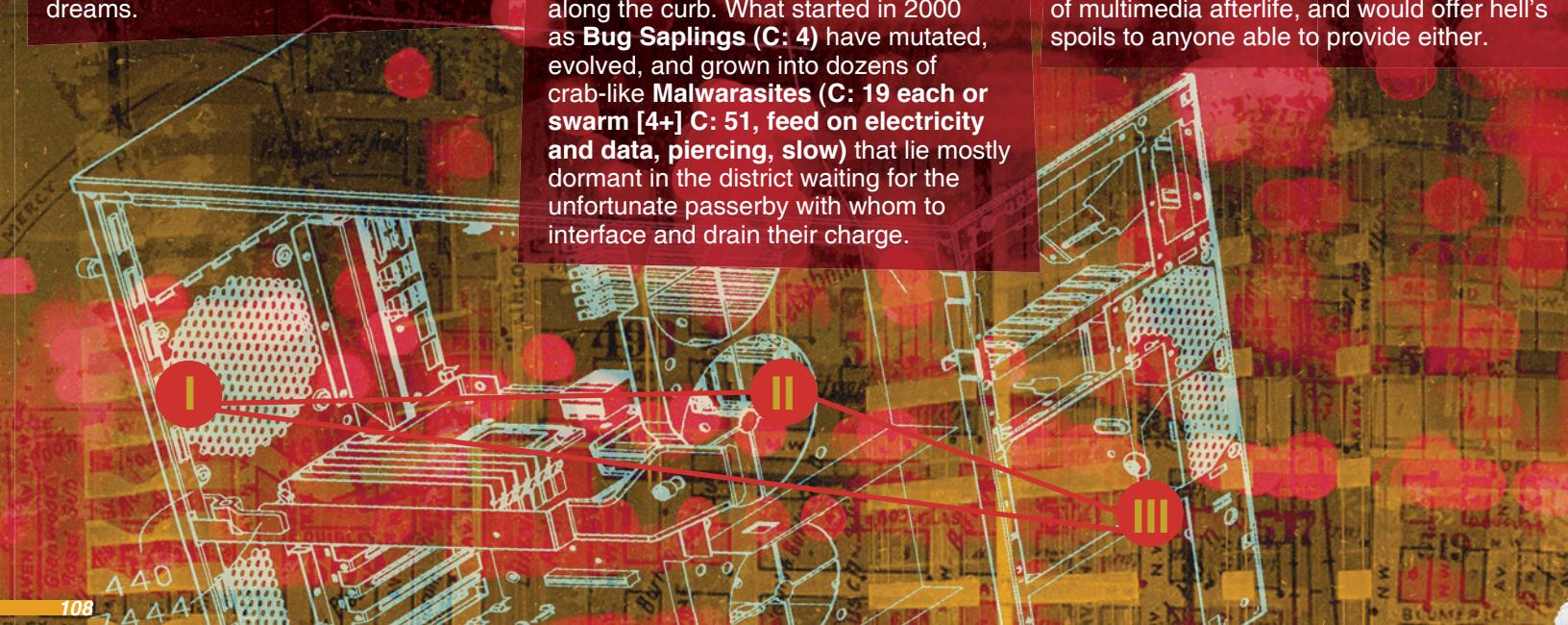
RIVERSIDE

I. Fraudulent Commune. A collectivist resort for radical dropouts who foolishly praise the forces of nature. They live in the remnants of bomb-blasted military complexes and roadside diners where highways once connected the city to the world outside the firewall. They attempt, again and again, to create an autonomous society free of reliance on the corrupt Supply Ward, making frequent exceptions for Sync terminal access and to indulge in synthetic flavor tasting. They know not the true power of the spirits they worship. **Hippies (C: 7, gullible).**
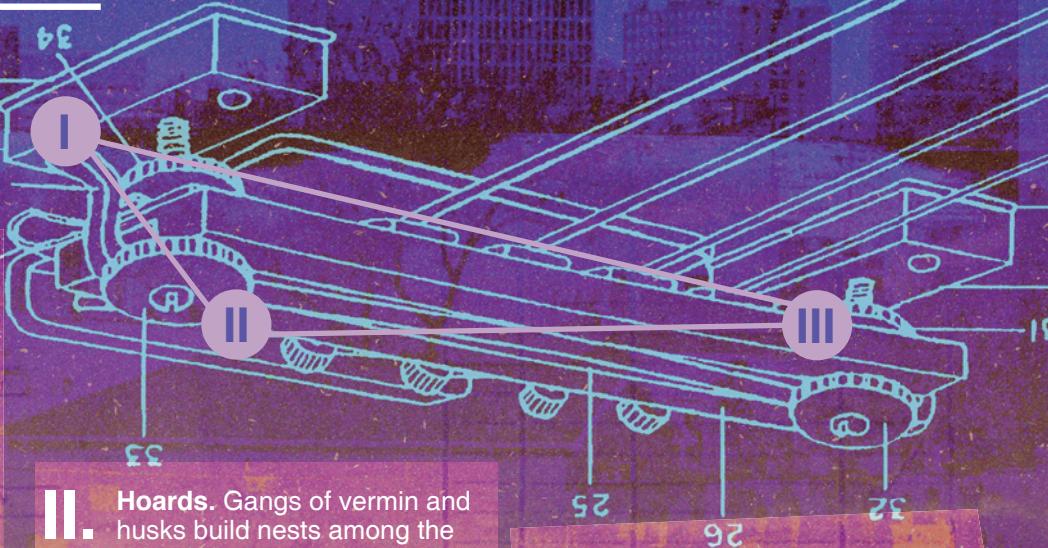
II. Hoards. Gangs of vermin and husks build nests among the wreckage, slow to welcome outsiders. They feel cursed with their recent consciousness, an assimilation to a hellish culture they never asked to be part of. The inhabitants of The Hoards, called **Mischief**, conduct dark experiments on one another in an attempt to revert to their former primal state of peace, living among roosts of scrap dotted with the still-hanging skeletons of crucified intruders.

III. Radio Tower. In direct opposition to their vermin neighbors, citizens at the southern edge of Riverside aspire to reconnect with their fellow citizens across the River with wireless technology. Radio communication and pirate broadcasts are still wildly popular across the city, so a broadcast relay offers a level of power to its controllers that would surprise those who take the airwaves for granted.

THE SPIKE

I. **The Bridge.** The metal ligament once connected Riverside to The Spike, until it fell during the raids of the Hell War, now rusting in the river. Its frail spires now act as a sort of dam, collecting fresh water and the occasional tainted fish for harvesting.

II. **Tunneltown.** A community of demons and vermin, in defiance of the urban expansion of City Center and the frequent floodwaters of the adjacent river. Developed downwards into the ground in an effort to more closely emulate their native habitats. Carving caves into mud and cable, these citizens dwell in cooler areas and continue to dig further and further towards Hell. Whether access to the unholy land is possible or not is yet to be seen. Husks avoid Tunneltown lest the flowing water capture their rotting bodies beneath, unable to transfer to a new host body before succumbing. Invasion and attack by burrowing **Grout Slobs (C: 27, blinded by light, soaking wet)** are relatively common and a known danger to the residents below.

III. Omega Plaza. Merchants and vendors set up shop in darkened alleys and rows of stalls, hanging wares from fire escape ladders and sewer grates, using every possible inch of the space for commerce. Backalley surgeons, drug dispenser bots, blade crafters, and anyone you'd ever need to give your blood to are available among this crowded pseudo strip mall.

IV. Apartments. Buildings on top of one another, the Apartments is a vertical maze preventing many residents from seeing the sun or stars even on the clearest days. Citizens of Pentagram City reside in all sorts of homes here: derelict vehicles, inverted churches, crusty warehouses, cookie-cutter complexes, and anything else.

V. Human Pyramid. The cramming of so many sorry souls in such close proximity is bound to create problems. The Human Pyramid is this mess, manifest. A clamoring for power by the powerless. While not literally a pyramid, and catering to all citizens, human or not, this collection of connected complexes (once housing what looks like a museum, based on the weird decaying stone artifacts inside) is a center for aggression, an arena for minor squabbles to be settled in blood. Unlike Starfire, competitions here are for personal grudges to be settled, not just the entertainment of the audience. A small staff of **Custodial Slugs (C: 13, slow)** mop up the blood leaving pink trails of sanitized slime in their wake. It is not known where these slugs take the fallen corpses or their valuables once the score is settled.

THE ENCROACHING WILDS

The Encroaching Wilds is an unmapped territory, a best guess made by elder citizens that can never guess what dark rituals take place beyond the thickened treeline of lush forest. The Encroaching Wilds lurch towards the city with new moss and mold growth bubbling at its borders. Eyes peer out from behind tree trunks and thick brush, whether they be those of mutated woodland beasts or their humanoid protectors and technological defectors of the city.

The Green (3) are a loose group of corpse-painted druids that lurk among The Encroaching Wilds. They protect what they perceive as the sanctity of nature at any cost. Their pulled-out NeuroNexi, still often dripping with spinal fluid, hang from tree branches as a deterrent to any who might wish to investigate the goings on beyond the treeline.

Mission: Take back Pentagram City on the behalf of natural forces

Goals: Destroy city-populated territories along their borders (4)

Raise Gaia, the earth spirit, to defy the invasion of Hell (5)

Bring the moon closer (5)

Deploy hallucinogenic seed bombs across the districts to further their influence (2)

Strengths: lack of reliance on technology, psychic communications, intimacy with forestborne creatures

Weaknesses: lack of technological advancements
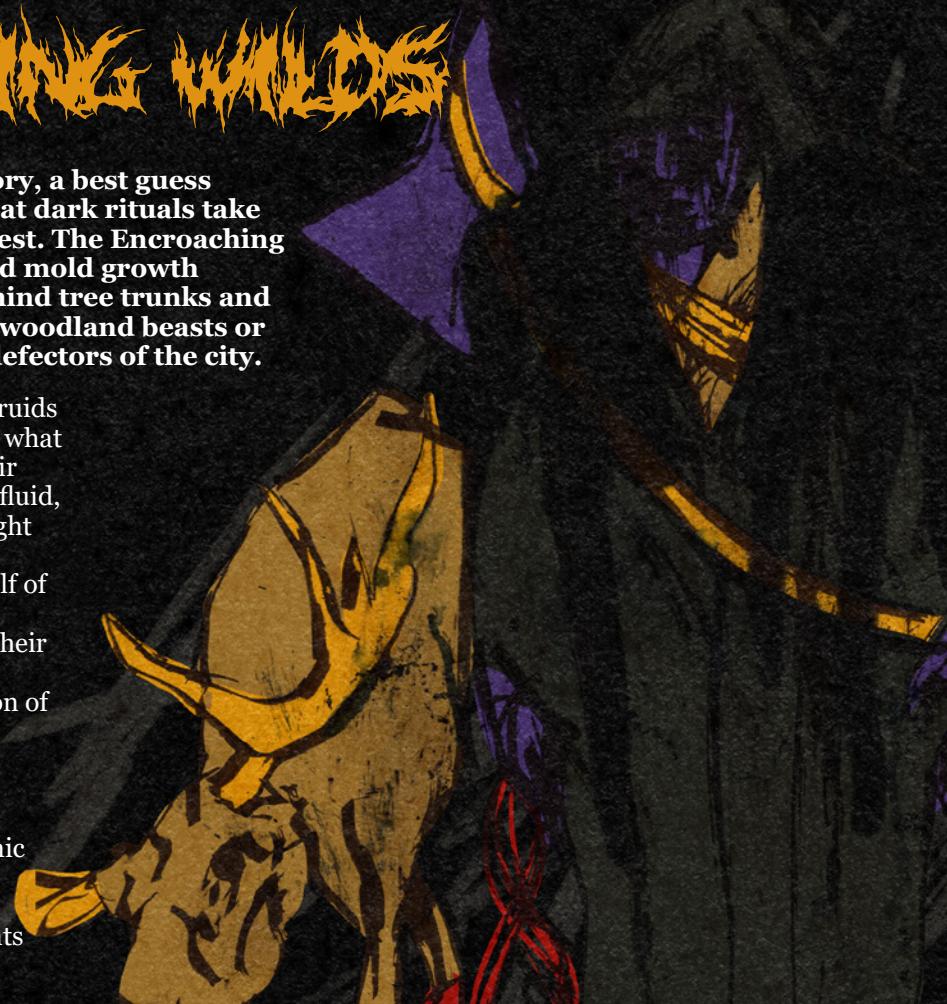
CREATURES OF THE WILD

Antlered (C: 66). Knots and webs of bone grow from the skulls of these majestic beings, capturing unsuspecting birds flying above for ingestion. They grind their horns along tree trunks to create fire. Said to be tameable mounts for the druids of The Green.

Amphibicide (C: 24, color-changing, proficient on land and water). These slime-coated creatures hop vast distances, creating tremors when they land that can faintly be felt even in the city. Protruding tongues grapple their prey for quick ingestion.

Vixen (C: 32, hypnotic). A mysterious being of flowing fur that hops between dimensions, hiding behind a plant only to emerge from an unconnected growth. A captured Vixen is said to grant wishes to its captors in exchange for safe release.

Feather Swarm (C: 36, iridescent). An amalgamation of rainbow feathers of various flying beasts thought extinct, glued together by an unseen muscle mass beneath. It slogs across crowded branches, dropping on targets below to absorb their lifeforce through exposed skin on its underside.

Megalith (C: 41 stone). A goliath creature with an ancient aura that moves so slowly it can be perceived as stillness. Said to create the illusion of a firepit, a cabin, or other functional space to lure humanoids within and crush them to a bloody paste for sustenance.

Tree Spirit (C: 27, telepathic, phantom). Wandering specters said to be the souls of the forest itself, their branchlike claws reach outward from the brush in attempts to pull passing citizens into their forested dwellings.

RUMORS

- There is a gap in the Firewall at the furthest reaches of the forest that The Green use to collect resources.

- Hell's radiation that created Vermin and the forest's monstrosity can be collected to heighten the devourer's consciousness beyond human understanding.

- There exists a rare plant growing in droves past the treeline that guarantees a trip good enough to justify the risk of its retrieval.

- The Green Man beckons, audible only to those who remove their NeuroNexus.

- The Tree Spirits have crafted a weapon that would reverse the invasion of Hell.

- The Firewall catches growth with the flames of Hell, slowly shrinking the perimeter of Pentagram City and soon consuming all within.
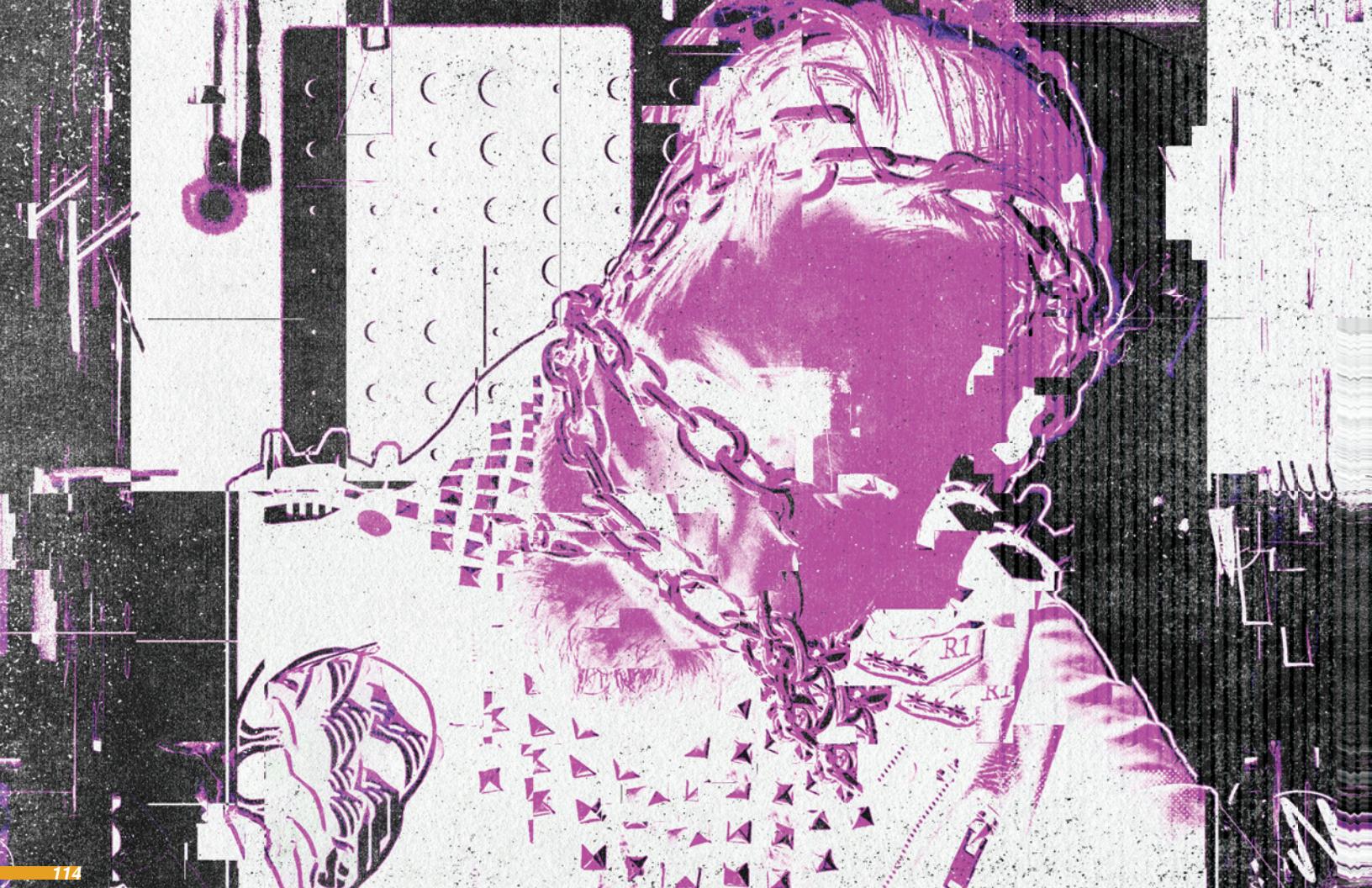
GAME MASTER

advice and adventure

Advice

The gamemaster (GM) plays an important role in the game. You're like a producer to your group's metaphorical band. You control the tempo and volume, dictate who gets a solo and when, determine the setlist and when it's time to walk on or off stage. Everyone is here to have a good time and you are the facilitator of that good time. While it sounds like a lot of responsibility and pressure, it's super fun and breezy. For new GMs, it can be helpful to consider the following tips:

BONDED BY BLOOD (HAVE FUN)

This is a game, after all. Despite the responsibility that befalls a GM, you are also one of the players of the game and you should be having fun while also facilitating the game for others. If improvising and orchestrating isn't your bag, maybe ask another player to take over as GM so everyone can have more fun.

MASTER OF PUPPETS (LIVING CITY)

Pentagram City is a city full of life, even if it's a life you wouldn't want for yourself. Hundreds of people live in the crumbling high rises, plugging into the PentaWeb and forming a fragile community. The GM's biggest responsibility is inhabiting the role of the world itself, not just the people that players choose to interact with. Remember that even when player characters aren't there, the city lives on-buildings rise and fall, gangs battle, fires burn, and the world keeps turning. Make the setting feel alive by having circumstances change around the player characters, by having a myriad of citizens to interact with, and by having action occur at every possible turn.

BREAKING THE LAW (RULINGS/RULES)

The rules of this book serve to give you direction and guidance when necessary but it is not a bible. When a player wants to do something awesome and there isn't a rule for it, use your best judgment. If something feels bad during play, ignore it or come up with a rule that suits your group. You are the judge of what's right for your group, not me. Let the players do cool stuff as long as they can justify it with their skills and software, don't be a stickler for the book if it's inhibiting creativity.

CURSE OF SATISFACTION (MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY)

Combat taking too long? The enemies can offer a ceasefire or change up their plan of attack. A trip across town taking too long? Throw out some robots looking to plug into the players' brains or open up a shortcut through an infernal portal. Deus ex machina can be your friend to keep things from getting boring, to continue drenching your story in hellacious flavor, and to keep your fellow players engaged. Fuck things up and worry about how it makes sense later, the characters can always owe you a part of their souls in exchange.

METAL UP YOUR ASS (SETTING EMPHASIS)

Cybermetal 2012 should be extremely Cyber and extremely Metal. Whenever you get the chance to imbue circumstance with these tones, do it. A regular person walking down the street that bumps into a player could just as easily be a four-armed demon, a malfunctioning cyborg, a sopping wet possum person, or something similarly weird. Bring all your made-up tech words, your black spell books, your studded leather jackets, and make sure the world you display is as Cybermetal as you can make it.

Successful attacks have an average damage output around 5, so alter enemy charge levels depending on how many punks are in your gang! Don't let it become a drag to beat someone up!

LAST CARESS
(PLAYER DEATH)

Don't be afraid to kill your player characters, they'll forgive you. It is often the GM's instinct to protect the player characters in service of everyone having a good time and being epic, but this game isn't about heroes. Player characters are regular jerks and the frail society around them couldn't care less if they struggle or survive. Decisions are only interesting when there are consequences and death is one of the biggest and coolest consequences possible. Besides, if they are accessing Sync terminals regularly enough, it won't sting so bad and they can continue to play accordingly.

TWIST THE KNIFE
(ASK AND ANSWER)

While you are pulling most of the puppet strings on behalf of the city and its other inhabitants, you shouldn't be the only one creating the world. If a player asks a question you didn't have an answer for, like "who lives in that blackened church?" you can have them answer their own question and take it in stride. Allow input from the other players to ease some of your responsibilities and share the creative elements of the game, which will get them more invested in the setting and encourage them to play deeper.

FADE TO BLACK (SKIP THE FILLER)

If nothing important is happening, forget about it. We're making a story and we can skip the boring scenes. We play this game because we want action, satanic rituals, mosh pits, acid trips, and more. If ever things slow down to a crawl, introduce something interesting (a new threat, an explosion up the street, a job offer, etc.) or pass some time to something more important. Players can of course roleplay and have conversations in downtime, this isn't filler and should be encouraged! But we don't need to see them sit around til sunrise, wait til their meetup three days from now, or otherwise kill time. Montages, fast forwarding, and camera cuts can be your friend to keep things lively.

Don't forget your safety tools! These aren't just for the start of the game, it's good to go over them at any time. Go back to page 14 when you need a reminder. Keeping everyone happy is paramount, the world has enough bad shit in it and we don't need more when we're playing our games!

Characters in Cybermetal 2012 can do anything. This city is a sandbox and every crumbling skyrise, black mass, rock concert, and power struggle are your toys. There is no right or wrong way to engage with the story as long as you are having a good time. Your group can choose what's right for you, whether it is small scale drug hunts and mosh pits, massive scale city altering heroics, or anything in between.

With that in mind, it can be helpful to offer the players a handful of options at the start of play and see what interests them the most, allowing that excursion to snowball and get tied up in the goings on of the city and its other citizens and naturally progressing into new stories. Consider giving your players three events that are taking place and see which one they pursue. You can reuse the unused prompts later or fold them into your ongoing narrative. Here are some ideas for hooks to get going:

The Jester has summoned a goliath fallen angel for a raid event, but despite reaching 0 charge, it won't die.

The winner of the most recent competition is touring the city. You can make them look like an absolute fool in public… for points.

The winter season competition is beginning and this week's theme is Fire & Ice.

giss

R.A.S.P. terrorists are planning a chemical attack on the Synthetic Meat Labs. The scientists are offering extra rations in exchange for protection.

There are rumors of a crash site full of rare tech in the Encroaching Wilds, The Rat King will absolve the debts of any who bring back something valuable without dying.

A surgeon's apprentice needs live practice. Bring them gadgets and test subjects and they swear they'll hook you up.

little shit

debt

A flagellating husk in the stockades is offering digital curses in exchange for bodily fluid to keep their corpse body from drying out.

You've got so many small B$ coins, they're burning a hole in your pocket, let's have a psychedelic night on the town, what can go wrong?

Some asshole you've never seen shows up with an XL blood money coin saying you owe them your life, don't you remember?

Your vermin neighbors started a band and they absolutely suck. They're keeping you and everyone up all night.

A dealer you know across town has the drop on some exclusive new product that will "let you see the true face of god," but it doesn't come cheap.

Your record collection went missing from the base when you were out. Find out whoever took them and make them pay.

big shit

A demon horde has started injecting water into their veins for the cooling sensation, tainting it for future consumption and reducing the drinking supply.

The river is evaporating, revealing skeletal remains, rotting garbage, and some kind of unknown bacterial growth that seems to be pulsating.

The Hell Pit in City Center is suddenly quivering and growing, dragging skyscrapers tumbling into its darkened depths.

DIVINING ADVENTURE

When you can't think of what obstacles to throw in your players' path, what gangs want to face off, what spell the powerlord is using to protect their domain, you can leave it up to fate and your imagination. Grab a deck of tarot cards, your software cards, the junk in the bottom of your tote bag, whatever you have handy and get creative. Many of the gangs, jobs, and setting elements in this book were created with the help of divination and inference.

Decide what it is you want to create: a rival gang, a building interior, an entire adventure arc, whatever. Determine what its defining characteristics might be and write them down in a grid or line, ranking them by significance if possible. Typically, the ending and the beginning of storylines are the most important while you and your fellow players will be able to fill in gaps in the middle.

Then, assign a card or item to each. Reveal the cards/items one by one starting with the highest significance and try to infer some meaning from it. Use a tarot guide book if you are unfamiliar with the cards' meanings or just pull something inspiring from the art, the title, the colors, anything. Use this inference to guide the next logical steps, allowing past inferences to inform new ones until you have enough information that you can integrate your findings to your game.

You may find that you don't need to complete the divination sequence, that's good! The inferences you make with more significant aspects of these designs should trickle down into the others and get your creativity flowing.

Gang: Goal. Leadership. Underlings. Strength. Weaknesses. Location.

Adventure Arc: Opposing Force. Final Battle. Impetus. Obstacles. Distraction.

Building Layout: Target Room. Entryway. Dangerous Force. Security Measures. Unexpected Complication. Gear Rewards. Terminal Access.

Example: I'm creating an adventure using the art in *SSD: Symbolic Skin Designs* as my divination tool. The first thing I'll infer is the opposing force, or the thing my players will find themselves up against. I flip to a painting of a snake composed of RCA cables wrapped around a hand. From that, I infer that a technological beast is running rampant and wiping people out in part of the city. I flip to another page and get a demon with tech head gear as my final battle impetus. From that, I can see that a high ranking hellion is controlling these inanimate objects with curses and spells, they'll be the wizard behind the curtain of this confrontation and a considerable foe in their own right. I can continue flipping pages and pointing at random paintings for inspiration until I feel comfortable enough that I can guide my players through this journey with a natural pacing and without feeling caught off guard.

ACCOUTREMENTS

RANDOMIZERS AND REFERENCE

ENEMIES

Enemies are listed by their name, charge, and additional tags such as strengths, weaknesses, immunities, goals, special items, unique attacks, and more. This information that can be interpreted to create advantage/disadvantage, special damage considerations, or other mechanical exceptions.

Reaganoids (C: 16, electrical, confused). Remnants of the Hell War, these cyborg clones of the assassinated president acted as the disposable front lines of American military operations against Hell. Long decommissioned, a few remaining bots wander without orders, lashing out at perceived demons and offering their unreliable services to perceived figures of authority.

Flying Drones (C: 23, flying). While primarily used as surveillance during uprisings of the 80's, dozens of aerial drones still litter the skies of Pentagram City with infrared scanners and prehensile pincers, though no one is sure who is piloting or monitoring them anymore.

Hellhounds (C: 30, hate for humanity, immune to Hell power). The carnivorous canines of the netherworld accompanied their bipedal brethren after the breach but were driven feral by the light of the sun. They roam in packs, seeking shady respite in derelict buildings and occasionally having to sink their sharp black teeth into the unfortunate dwellers within.

Earthen Boor (C: 9, hivemind). A parasitic creature that developed from the murky depths of the river leaking into nearby resource farms, these long glistening tendrils burrow through the dirt and asphalt below your feet, digging into NeuroNexus nodes of the unsuspecting and wreaking absolute havoc.

Goon (C: 13). Some people just want to cause trouble. Look at someone the wrong way, come up short on a debt, or otherwise be an ass and you might just get stabbed walking down the street.

Skills are deliberately abstracted. Usages listed here are examples and suggestions but not comprehensive. Your desperate interpretation of Distortion as you flee a gang of chain-wielding demons is more exciting than simply saying "you make loud noises," so get as weird as you'd like with it. The GM will be able to regulate any interpretations of skills that stretch possibility or feel outside the spirit of play.

AMPLIFY
make louder, upgrade, worsen

ANALYZE
evaluate, predict, prevent

ANGUISH
inflict pain, curse, wail

ASSEMBLE
build, gather, concoct

BARTER
trade, persuade, con

BITE
chomp, copy, sting

BLEED
drain, combine, sacrifice

BROADCAST
announce, leak, radiate

BURST
combust, infect, rally

BURY
cover up, insult, dig

COMPREHEND
understand, learn, foresee

CONTACT
touch, communicate, connect

CONTORT
twist, bend, squish

CRAWL
search, bar hop, skulk

CRUSH
pulverize, compact, flirt

METAL
be loud, use machinery, defy authority

SCRAMBLE
obfuscate, hurry, disrupt

DISABLE
disarm, shut down, silence

PLEAD
beg, pray, defend

SCREAM
shriek, party, call out

DOWNLOAD
collect, enable, synchronize

PRAY
bless, enchant, commune

STENCH
reek, intoxicate, uproar

ENFLAME
light on fire, provoke, glow

PREACH
convince, proclaim, sing

STING
pierce, cheat, betray

ENTICE
seduce, bribe, captivate

RECORD
document, play music, capture

TRIBUTE
offer, honor, flatter

HAGGLE
make a deal, plead, swindle

REPORT
tattle, explosion, chronicle

INFECT
spread, poison, bewitch

SACRIFICE
martyr, ritual, murder

Random Tables

DIO	NAME	HANDLE
1	Hammer / Phase	_Xcore
2	Slime / Wish	_420
3	Laser / Sonata	_4Satan
4	Skye / Quag	_3000
5	Vengeance / Code	MoMmY_
6	Acid / Silver	_isDEAD
7	Flux / Hate	The-Only_
8	Honey / Toad	K!NG_
9	Desolation / Paradox	C:/_
10	Nuke / Junior	_'s-AnGeL

EVENTS

1. Rave
2. Assassination
3. Heist
4. Riot
5. Upload
6. Collapse
7. Evacuation
8. Summoning
9. Blackout
10. Revelation

sparks (2d10)
[use to make cool stuff on the fly]//

IDIO	CYBER	METAL	HELL
1	Projection / Reboot	Leather / Knuckles	Deceased / Sigil
2	Floppy / Connectivity	Studded / Corpse	Fallen / Leviathan
3	Pirated / Program	Distortion / Festival	Blackened / Church
4	Trackball / Download	Shredded / Brutality	Torture / Spirit
5	Optical / Matrix	Screaming / Rebel	Possessed / Sadist
6	Pixelated / Virus	Mosh / Breakdown	Sinful / Desecration
7	Cathode Ray / Superhighway	Feedback / Witch	Weeping / Sacrifice
8	Defrag / Interface	Inverted / Arena	Infernal / Exorcism
9	Neon / Kilobyte	Sludgy / Headbang	Flaming / Worship
10	Analog / Harddrive	Gothic / Axe	Burning / Curse

THE HERETICAL HEART

1. The church entrance features hastily-painted portraits of dozens of citizens whose corpses have been used as Cr0ss's fleshy vessel. Stone walls sweat condensation making the room humid and slowly degrading the paintings. D6 Heretics welcome any wanderers who pass through the main door and prevent any faithless from entering further.

2. A series of confessional booths allows new believers to purify their consciousness before their final upload. Sins confessed here are recorded straight to tape and used to blackmail any followers experiencing crises of faith. D10 per booth. On 1, booth is occupied with a fragile citizen who begs for your help. On 10, a Hellhound is poised to attack.

In the unobserved vacancies of the Wired District, **The Whisper of Fate** is a quickly growing organization deadset on spreading their pseudo-spiritual scourge across the city. Thanks to generous donations of corpses by followers all-too-eager to discover some promised post-mortem truth, their leader, a husk called **Cr0ss**, frequently uploads their consciousness to new corpses to avoid detection and infiltrate vulnerable communities. They won't stop until every last body in Pentagram City, living or dead, rots in service to the eternal spirit of CR0SS.

Reasons to get involved:
- A close friend of the gang has become a member of the congregation.
- The Whisper Band is throwing concerts near your base and they sound like shit.
- A recruitment popup appears on the Pentaweb, its invasive advertisement seemingly infects your mind and you see Cr0ss when you close your eyes.

3. A luxurious garden terrace where growths of thorny vines reach up the walls and through any cracks of the stone. A fountain of unholy water douses the area inelegantly with fluid draining through cracks to unseen depths below. Various small blood coins rot beneath its algae-coated surface. The unholy water can be used to desecrate gadgetry or defile holy relics. d10+10 psychotropic frogs hop around the garden grounds.

4. The Pulpit hosts Cr0ss addressing 3d10 Heretics. They sing in a guttural voice of necessary sacrifice in service to Cr0ss, the present iteration of an eternal dark lord and the bringer of hellpower to Pentagram City. Without this service, they preach, Cr0ss is in danger of reverting to a past consciousness save which could destabilize the city's necessary resource flow. A flask of poisonous ichor is passed to willing heretics. Cr0ss will take over a fresh body and go into hiding. Beneath the pulpit is a hatch leading to a secure basement.

5. The office is in disarray with various spell books and technical files scattered about. A Sync terminal sits on the desk. A slowly moving dot matrix printer spits out spools of ascii images of Cr0ss's true self: a malignant computer application designed to purge connected devices of critical document storage.

6. The church basement reeks of decay with unholy water pooling up to one's knees. Rats nests of wire dangle from the building above conducting electricity as they graze the liquid sludge. A few stone statues of antedaemonium religious figures erode beneath the frequent dripping. A loose-fitting manhole grants access to the city's labyrinthian sewer line. A fallen statue and an occult seal block the rusting steel entrance to an interior barracks. Within, a collection of corpses pile up, potential hosts for Cr0ss in the event of emergency. A small collection of desecrated armaments [crucifix saw blade/ putrid censer/nanite cluster bomb/other] hang from the wall. A fusebox spits sparks from beyond the corpse heap.

Heretic (C: 20, desecrated armament, easily manipulated, will martyr self in service to Cr0ss).

Cr0ss [Husk] (C: xd10+1-, where x=the number of players; they have unhackable tech, fast-rotting, and charismatic). Once defeated in Husk form, Cr0ss becomes a phantom.

Cr0ss [Phantom] (RAID: 7, immune to attack by offline gear, desperate for a new host body, confined to church). Phantom Cr0ss can revert to Husk form by infecting any corpses within the church.

PERPETUAL 2012

SKILLS

#

[LUCK]

VN POINTS

%

inventory

ITEM   GRADE

SOCIAL RANK

-10   -5   0   +5   +10

CONTACTS

TASK

USER

NAME
PRONOUNS
HARDWARE
OS
LOOK

HP

SPECIAL

SKILL CHECK

ROLL d100 (as 2d10)
-UNDER: SUCCESS.
choose 1d10 as outgoing
damage.

-OVER: FAILURE.
choose 1d10 as received
damage, other d10 as
fallout.

-EQUAL: EXCEL.
amplify intent,
treat fallout as 1-3.

FALLOUT

1-3:
THINGS
ARE GOOD

4-7:
SOMETHING
IS WEIRD

8-10:
SHIT IS
BAD

SYNC NOTE

DEBTS

PLUG IN SOFTWARE

Gang

Title

Power Level

Mission

Goals

Strengths

Weaknesses

Gang

Title

Power Level

Mission

Goals

Strengths

Weaknesses

Gang

Title

Power Level

Mission

Goals

Strengths

Weaknesses

Gang

Title

Power Level

Mission

Goals

Strengths

Weaknesses

Ledger

reason	owed to	debtor →	size
			Ⅹ ㄹ ㎜ ☊
			Ⅹ ㄹ ㎜ ☊
			Ⅹ ㄹ ㎜ ☊
			Ⅹ ㄹ ㎜ ☊
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			Ⅹ ㄹ ㎜ ☊

Bootleg: Harmonize your frequency to generate a nearly identical copy of your physical form. You may only have one active bootleg at a time. This copy has the same stats and can do whatever your character can (except generate another bootleg). This bootleg has three beats. For every failed skill check, bootleg loses one beat. When all beats aret gone, bootleg disintegrates. Reset an active copy to three beats with Sync.

Outcast: Give yourself one-star social rank. Passers-by will avoid looking your way, walking on your side of the street, or being in the same room as you.

Headbang: Bang your head, metal health will drive you mad. Instead of rolling to attack, you can auto-hit a target with your head or fist at close range. Inflict damage equal to the amount of charge you wish to spend (max 10).

DIY (80): You can use trash, scraps, and metal to instantly craft B-grade items on the fly. These items cannot be repaired. DIY can be used three times, rest uses with Sync.

First Response: You can plug in directly to another citizen's NeuroNexus to restore 2d10 charge to them. A target can only be healed in this way once between Syncs. Using first response cancels the effects of drugs/poisons to both user and target.

Infusion: Turn money back to blood—with a catch. The debtor is absolved but some aspect of their debt is imbued in the ichor. Transfusion or ingestion of this blood can turn the curse into a skill (for players) or compulsion (for non-player characters). Infusion can be used five times, charging with Sync.

Gambler: When rolling a skill check, you may roll 1d10 instead of d100.

- On **odd** results, succeed, inflicting maximum damage (if applicable) and minimum fallout.
- On **even** results, fail, inflicting minimum damage (if applicable) and maximum fallout.

Gambler can be used five times, recharge with Sync.

Radio (75): You can temporarily utilize communication airwaves via your NeuroNexus.

Use radio to:
- Gain intelligence
- Call for help
- Cause distractions

Radio can be used three times, recharge with Sync.

Interface (73): After successful interface skill check, control up to three wired devices simultaneously. Controlled devices can attack using the interface skill, and are destroyed when damaged.

Pilot (75): You can drive, repair, or otherwise utilize vehicles that you occupy. The vehicle is considered an A-grade item when used in skill checks. Pilot can be used five times, recharge with Sync.

Drone: You can pilot a single B-grade drone, nanite hive, robo-companion, or other non-sentient technological being. It can relay video and audio, open and close passageways, or cause distractions. It's destroyed upon receiving any damage but can be repaired by conventional means.

Search (75): Access the inner workings of Pentagram City to gain hidden knowledge. On success, gain one intel. Store a maximum of three intel at once.

Intel works as a B-grade item when acting upon the gained intelligence for the duration of this software's installation. All intel is lost when this software is removed.

Buzz (78): You are a hub of social intelligence, a trusted source for the goings on in the city. Add one-star to your social rank. A successful buzz check allows you to plant rumors that will ripple outward through the city and will warp and exaggerate until this software is uninstalled.

Telepathy: Communicate silently and imperceptibly via your consciousness frequencies. You may contact anyone in your gang, any positive established contacts, and anyone within 30 feet.

Lust: You're an object of beauty and sex appeal. Give youself a five-star social rank. Citizens, even strangers, are infatuated with you, for better or worse. Existing positive contacts know your true self and are not manipulated in this way, treating you as uninterested until uninstalled.

Disguise (85): Impersonate another by downloading their cosmetic data (consensually via direct NervoNexus interface or illegally via LAN file share) and emitting a cloud virus that infects nearby NeuroNexus users. Each successful Disguise check lowers its threshold by d10. Once you fail, the disguise is dropped, but those previously fooled remain convinced. Can be reset with Sync.

Drift: You are able to establish your own localized electromagnetic pull, allowing you to walk on walls, hang on ceilings, and float up to 10 ft off the ground.

Speed (72): You're able to move quickly on foot. You can act first in any initiative sequence. To make an additional attack at the end of a combat round, succeed a Speed test. Speed skill depletes d5 per use, resets on Sync.

Stealth (74): You're able to move freely while obfuscating your presence. To pass by undetected, succeed a stealth check. On a failure, treat as a 4–7 fallout result.

Maps (80): You have perfect knowledge of the documented layout of Pentagram City. Test the Maps skill to learn the fastest and safest route to your destination. On failure, the data reveals something in the way (a massive threat, an environmental hazard, an enemy gang, etc.).

Plug: You know who to get drugs from and where they hang out. You have a Plug contact with positive rank who will deliver what you need. They also know a few contacts in need of work if you're looking for help.

**Concoct (70):** Craft your own artisanal medications. You may either:
- Make and store five single-use doses, taking at least 15 minutes per concoction
- Craft three single-use doses immediately

Each dose, regardless of method, requires successful Concoct skill check. Failed Concoct checks imbue unintended effects in corresponding dose. Dose limits reset with Sync.

Immunity: You cannot be poisoned or dosed. You may take drugs without incurring negative skill effects.

Trip (69): You take a profound journey through a parallel plane. Traversing the realms in this way grants you information otherwise unseen, such as hidden traps, thoughts, echoes of history, and anything else determined by the GM. Failure incurs a bad trip with unseen dangers and nightmares.

Offering (78): Ignore fallout on any roll by yourself or someone in your gang by making an offering to the dark lords. Skill depletes d10 per use. Resets to 78 threshold on Sync.

Banishment (73): Cast out and deter forces of Hell from your proximity. Demons, descendants, spirits, and any other devilish entity within 30 feet of you are attacked with a rotten stench and deafening feedback. You alone have advantage on skill checks that interact with the weakened forces. Any demon player characters are at disadvantage while within range.

Consecrate (66): Imbue an item in your inventory or citizen in your presence with hellacious power:

- Give an item +1 grade
- Give a person a "Blessing" as B-grade item in their inventory, cannot be repaired.

Bless has three uses, recharge with Sync.

Summon (66): Roll a Summon check to call upon the dark forces of Hell to do your bidding:

- On **success**, a devilish energy complies but asks for something in return. Dark forces do d5+5 damage when attacking. Incur fallout as if 1-3.
- On **failure**, they are offended by your request, incur fallout as if 4-7. On subsequent failure, incur fallout as if 10. Resets with Sync

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Berserk: You feel no physical pain with this software installed and any damage you do take is reduced by 1 to a minimum of 1. Gain Skill: Berserker Bite (70) that can only be used in close range.

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Whips//Chains: You have expertise over flaying weaponry. Manipulation attacks done with these items (wrap, flay, knock, disarm, and more) inflict damage.

Target Locking: Your mind connects with your target, giving you intense focus and aim and granting +10 to the skill threshold when attacking within range.

- On succesful attack, choose one of the following options: do 5 extra damage, knock enemy over, incur no fallout
- On a failed attempt, choose one of the following penalties. Each penalty can only be used once: item is dropped, lose 5 additional charge, Target Locking reduces to +5 bonus.

After three failures, Target Locking is disabled, resets on Sync.

Projectile (71): Inflict damage from afar with darts, arrows, missiles, or other projectiles. You have d10+3 ammo. Each Projectile skill check depletes 1 ammo. When ammo is low or out, Sync to reset.

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Take a double-sided software sheet

Fold it in half longways
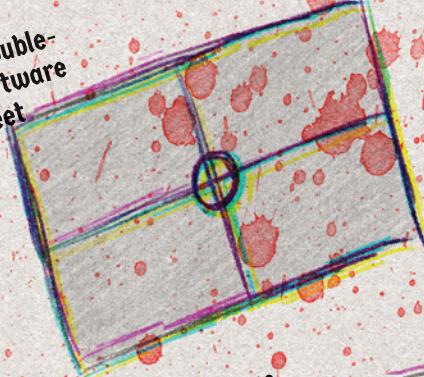
then fold it in half again shortways,

and plug it right into the alotted space at the bottom right of your character sheet

CHARACTER SHEET
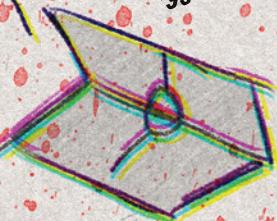
fold it backwards to reveal other software! 8 fit on each sheet.

Software sheets can be folded twice to plug into your character sheet! This lets you swap software on the fly whenever you Sync during play. Tear them out of this book, photocopy them, or just download and print new ones from worldchamp.io!

remember to
**BACK UP
YOUR FILES**

THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO PLAY THIS GAME!

You are the citizens of Pentagram City, a walled-off metropolis ravaged by crumbling technology, past war, and the after effects of satanic rituals years prior. Hack your bodies, spill your blood, and annihilate your enemies in an attempt to survive in a world that stopped caring about you long ago.

Cybermetal 2012 is a heavy-metal lo-fi cyberpunk tabletop roleplaying game for 2+ players including a gamemaster. Written, illustrated, and published by Adam Vass of World Champ Game Co.

WORLD CHAMP GAME CO.

WWW.WORLDCHAMP.IO