

TEACHING GUIDE

When there's at least one person present who hasn't read the rules or played before, or if someone wants a refresh, take turns reading out each section of this guide and following the instructions in **brown**. After each section, pass the guide left unless the instructions say otherwise. You'll want a copy or two of the summary sheet in front of the group, too.

Flotsam is a game about outcasts, misfits and renegades living in the belly of a space station. We collectively imagine and describe what's happening in the fictional game world. Specifically, we'll focus on the everyday lives and relationships of the main characters. We'll also sometimes interrupt their lives with danger and strange events, but keeping it to a small scale so we don't distract too much from that main focus on relationships.

Each of us controls one *Primary* character, and explores their life and relationships. We'll also control one *Situation* – a constellation of threats and problems which we'll use to complicate the lives of the *Primary* characters. There are some rules – we'll get to them when we need them. But mostly, we just describe and narrate whatever occurs to us, one little step at a time, or talk in character, responding to what has already been described and narrated. We do this without lots of planning or thought. We're not trying to be cool or clever, or push a story. We're just inventing stuff that feels right to us. We'll often pick up stuff that others have invented and use that or build on that too.

READ THIS SECTION IF YOU ARE NOT USING A QUICK-START SCENARIO, OTHERWISE SKIP IT AND THE NEXT ONE.

We'll start by creating our *Primary* characters. Your *Primary* character is the main character you'll be playing in the game. The game as a whole is focused on the relationships between the *Primary* characters. This means it's important to create a character who feels real and human, who the other characters can relate to and connect with. Their relationships needn't be all happy and problem-free, of course. *Primary* characters are most interesting when they start out flawed and imperfect, with relationships that can develop over time – that's where the meat of play is.

- **Hand out the *Playbooks* and take turns reading out the introductory text from each one.**
- **Then everyone must select a *Playbook*.**
- **Two people can't have the same *Playbook*, so if there's a conflict, talk about it and see what other options might work.**

Now we'll individually fill out our *Playbooks*. You'll have quite a few choices to make and it's a good idea to have a look over your whole *Playbook* at the start so you can see how it all fits together. The front page has a list of options for setting your gender, appearance and so on. There's also some history questions you'll need to get answers to – some you can answer yourself, and some must be asked to others. Don't feel constrained by the options listed – if you want to tweak them or make up your own, let's talk about it.

On the back are *Strengths*, which your *Primary* character can use to get what they want, and *Weaknesses*, which cause trouble but gain you *Tokens* to power your *Strengths*. Finally, there's space to write down your *Relationships*. *Relationships* are really important in this game – your character improves by developing their *Relationships*, as well as by bringing in their *Weaknesses*.

If you want an option that isn't listed on your *Playbook*, let's talk about it.

- **Select from the options on your *Playbook* for gender, appearance and so on; and choose three *Strengths* and two *Weaknesses*, preferably including at least one *Flaw*.**
- **Show everyone the *Origins* sheet to help them decide their origin.**
- **Next, introduce your *Primary* characters to the group, describing them however you'd like.**
- **After that, take turns asking the relationship and history questions on your *Playbook*.**
- **When you ask a relationship question about a *Secondary* character, describe them and either ask the question for them or ask someone else to do so.**
- **Finally, you may fill out your relationship slots, if you wish. At least half should go to other *Primary* characters, the rest to *Secondary* characters.**

READ THIS SECTION IF YOU ARE NOT USING A QUICK-START SCENARIO, OTHERWISE SKIP IT.

We're now going to create our *Situations*. A *Situation* is a broad constellation of threats and problems linked by a theme. It's a chunk of the fictional

world that one player focuses on in addition to their *Primary* character. Each of us will choose one *Situation* that we have main responsibility for. We'll focus on breathing life into that *Situation* when we're not playing our *Primary* character.

- **Hand out the *Situation* sheets and take turns reading out their introductory text.**
- **Now everyone names a *Situation* that they personally would like their *Primary* character to grapple with. Those *Situations* are automatically included in the game. In the unlikely event that everyone named the same *Situation*, at least one of you needs to choose a different one.**
- **Once you've done that, each *Situation* must be allocated to someone other than the person(s) who named it. Volunteer for the one you like best.**
- **After that, if there's anyone who doesn't have a *Situation*, they can pick freely from the ones that weren't selected – choose one that excites you.**

Now we'll individually fill out our *Situation* sheets. On the front you'll find a list of options for customising the *Situation*. There's also some areas of focus, which will be your main tools for bringing the *Situation* to life and creating trouble for the *Primary* characters. Again, don't feel constrained by what's on the sheet – if there's something you want that isn't listed, let's talk about it.

- **Once you've decided on your *Situations*, select from the options given on the *Situation* sheet.**
- **Then introduce your *Situations* to the group, describing them however you'd like.**

READ THIS SECTION IF YOU ARE USING A QUICK-START SCENARIO

We're using a quick-start scenario, which means we get pre-generated characters and *Situations* instead of making them ourselves.

We'll start by choosing our *Primary* characters. Your *Primary* character is the main character you'll be playing in the game. The game as a whole is focused on the relationships between the *Primary* characters. This means it's important to portray our characters as real and human, as characters who the others can relate to and connect with. Their relationships needn't be all happy and problem-free, of course. *Primary* characters are most interesting when they start out flawed and imperfect, with relationships that can develop over time – that's where the meat of play is.

- **Hand out the scenario *Playbooks*. Take turns to read out the italicised intro text at the top, then choose a *Playbook* each.**

We'll now choose our *Situations*. A *Situation* is a broad constellation of threats and problems linked by a theme. We'll each choose one *Situation* to have lead responsibility for. We'll focus on playing our *Situation* when we're not playing our *Primary* character.

- **Hand out the scenario *Situations*. Take turns to read out the italicised intro text at the top, then choose a *Situation* each.**
- **Everyone reads out the text immediately below the intro text, which describes some important aspects of your *Situation*.**

NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT HOW WE PLAY THROUGH A SCENE

It's a good idea to look at the rules summary sheet while we talk this through.

Most of the time, we just say what we think would happen. *Situation* players describe places and people, and say what those people say and do. People playing their *Primary* say what they're saying and doing. We respond to each other and the game moves forward. The rules kick in in two circumstances: when we want to bring in or advance threats to the *Primary* characters, or we want our *Primary* characters to take action that's risky or challenging.

Start by looking at Flowchart 1, which is labelled *Threats* and *Weaknesses*. This shows how we make bad stuff happen that the *Primary* characters aren't going to like. If you're playing your *Situation*, you'll introduce and develop potential threats – anything that looks like it might harm the *Primary* characters, or their allies, or their interests.

When you want to introduce a *Threat*, just like anything else in the game, you have to ask a *Question* to a specific other player. We don't say "the skeevi-est establishment in the Below is Glassport"; we say "hey, Karen, what's the skeevi-est establishment in the Below?"

Having introduced a *Threat*, you only advance it gradually, leaving the *Primary* characters the chance to intervene. So we don't say "you walk into Glassport and immediately get jumped by three scary looking goons", you say "three scary looking goons are standing by the bar. They all turn to look at you and reach for their weapons. What do you do?"

After that, if the *Primary* characters don't do anything – or if they do, but their action is ineffective – then the *Threat* manifests and we can directly threaten a *Primary* character. That's when the goons jump you.

When we're playing our *Situations* in this way, we try to keep things small-scale and leave space for conversation. This is a game about relationships and everyday life, not constant action.

So there's three steps: create a *Threat* by asking a question, develop it but leave space for the *Primary* characters to intervene, and then manifest the *Threat* if they don't. This sequence repeats itself. The goons jumped you, now what do you do? If you don't act, or if your action fails, maybe one of them shoots you. You're bleeding, now what do you do?

A *Threat* can also manifest if a *Primary* activates one of their *Weaknesses*. When you do that, you get a *Token*, which powers your *Primary's Strengths*. We'll talk about those in a minute. For now, just note that activating a *Weakness* means one of the other players will jump straight to manifesting a *Threat*, without giving you the chance to intervene.

Ok, now let's look at Flowchart 2, which is labelled *Complications* and *Strengths*. This shows what happens when the *Primary* characters take risky or challenging actions. Notice how it only happens if the action is risky or challenging – that means that most of the time we just describe what our *Primary* characters do, and the rules aren't needed at all. But if someone else thinks your actions are risky or challenging, they can add *Complications*;

which might mean the character's actions are less effective, or costly, or even make things worse. The list of potential *Complications* is on your *Situation* sheet on the bottom right hand side.

Dealing with *Complications* and *Threats* is where *Strengths* come in. At any time, you can describe how you are using your *Strength* to tackle an emerging *Threat* or get stuff done, and spend a *Token*. When you do, not only can nobody introduce any *Complications*, but any *Complications* they already mentioned in relation to the current action are cancelled – they don't happen at all. You get full control over what happens, and can describe how you get what you want, free of outside interference.

You also have *Scrutiny Questions* on your *Playbook*. You can ask them any time you like, but the person responding can add *Complications* if they think it would be risky or challenging to get the answer, just like normal. This might include giving an incomplete answer. They do have to answer honestly, though. You can always spend a *Token* to get a full and helpful answer.

So that's three rules for when you're playing your *Primary*. Activating a *Weakness* gains you a *Token*, and causes a *Threat* to manifest without warning. Doing something risky or challenging means anyone can add *Complications* to your action. And spending a *Token* while using a *Strength* cancels any *Complications* added to your action, or gets you a straight answer when asking a *Scrutiny Question*.

That's all the rules that limit our actions during a scene. Is everyone ok with that? Are there any questions?

Ok, one last rule. This one's pretty simple: it's called *Objecting*. Like in a courtroom drama, when someone shouts "objection!" Any time someone describes or narrates something you think doesn't make sense, or breaks the rules, or contradicts something we've already established, or just feels wrong for the game, you can say "objection". There's a simple procedure for resolving *Objections* – we'll go through that when we come to it.

FACILITATOR, READ THIS SECTION:

It's time to frame our first scene. In each scene there will be one *Focal Character* that starts the scene in the spotlight, and we take turns to be *Focal Character* so everyone gets a fair share of scenes. There will be one person, called the *Scene Framer*, who decides where and when the scene will start, who is there, and what (if anything) is going on at the start. The *Scene Framer* is often the same as the *Focal Character*, but not always.

It's everyone's job to watch out for when it might be time to end a scene. Anyone can suggest at any time that the scene might be done. If anyone has something they still want to do, carry on – if not, the scene ends.

Who is *Scene Framer*, and what the scene is about, varies. As a summary, run through these steps, but skip step 1 on your first scene, and skip to step 3 for each *Focal Character*'s first scene if you're planning to play more than one session:

- **Is there something that obviously, burningly needs to happen in the next scene? If so, an appropriate person frames a scene around that.**

- **If the *Focal Character* wants to accomplish something or interact with someone, they frame a scene around that.**
- **If the *Focal Character* wants to activate a *Weakness*, or if a *Situation Player* wants to make trouble for them, then the person whose *Situation* will be causing trouble frames the scene around that.**
- **If nobody chose one of the above options, someone asks the *Focal Character* a *Question* about their everyday life, and the *Focal Character* frames a scene aimed at answering the *Question*.**

FACILITATOR, WATCH OUT FOR SOMEONE DOING SOMETHING RISKY OR CHALLENGING. THE FIRST TIME THEY DO, READ THIS OUT:

Ok, [character] just did [say what they did]. I'd say that's [risky or challenging]. As a reminder, whenever someone does something we think is risky or challenging, it gives all of us the opportunity to add a *Complication*. A *Complication* is an extra limitation or cost added to the action. We decide individually what's risky or challenging.

Complications can stop an action from having full effect, impose a cost to succeed, or add unexpected consequences. So if you were fleeing from security agents I might say "sure, you can escape from them, but you'll have to leave your backpack behind" or "you can't outrun them for long, but you can beat them to Pop's Tavern and take shelter there if you want". The full list of *Complications* is on your *Situation Sheet*.

As a reminder, we don't always have to just sit there and take it when someone adds *Complications*. When you're doing something that uses one of

your *Strengths*, you can spend a *Token* to cancel all *Complications* – you just get to describe what you want and nobody can interrupt.

FACILITATOR, YOU MAY ALSO WISH TO USE THIS TEXT WHEN SOMEONE USES A WEAKNESS FOR THE FIRST TIME

So you'd like to activate your *Weakness*. That's great. Activating a *Weakness* gets you a *Token*, but is also a clear signal to everyone at the table that you're ready for some trouble to come your way. If you don't really want any trouble right now then maybe look at other ways to get a *Token* – every *Playbook* includes a way that other characters can get *Tokens* – take a look at your fellow players' *Playbooks* and see.

Say what you're doing to activate your *Weakness*. *Weaknesses* come in two types: *Flaws* and *Problems*. If it's a *Flaw*, you'll have to do something to expose yourself to risk or danger, or to anger or alienate someone important. If it's a *Problem*, you don't have to take any action to make yourself vulnerable, unless you want to; but you can't be in a position that's entirely safe from your *Problem*.

You then ask another player to make trouble for you. By activating your *Weakness*, you've given them, and anyone else who wants to, permission to directly threaten you. Enjoy!

AT THE END OF THE FIRST SCENE, READ THIS BIT OUT

After every scene, we look back on the events of the scene to decide if any of the characters *Displayed their Heart*. What that means is, they let another character see their true self or their heartfelt feelings. A character can *Display their Heart* by how they talk, through their actions, or more subtle indications. They might do it deliberately or without meaning to.

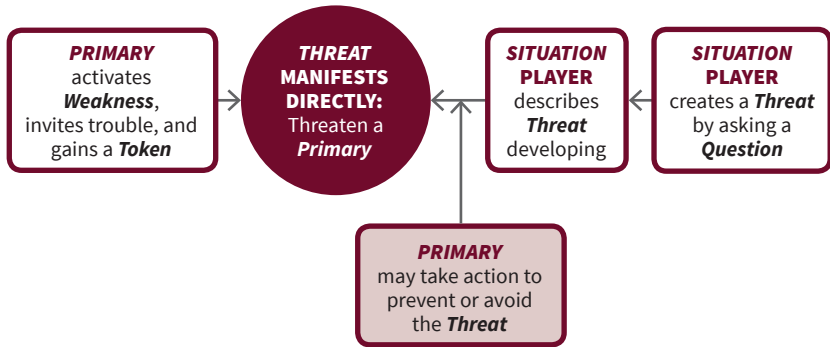
Once someone *Displays their Heart*, it's up to the other character to decide what effect it had. Did it bring them closer together? Did it push them apart? Or did it change their relationship? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then both characters get to *Mark* their *Relationship*. When the third box is *Marked*, you get to permanently improve your character.

You can also *Mark* your *Weaknesses*. That's a bit simpler – just ask yourself, did your *Primary's Weakness* cause any problems for them in the scene just gone. If you activated your *Weakness* during the scene the answer is likely yes! If your *Weakness* caused trouble for you, you get to *Mark* it even if you didn't activate it. Problems that only affect other characters don't count.

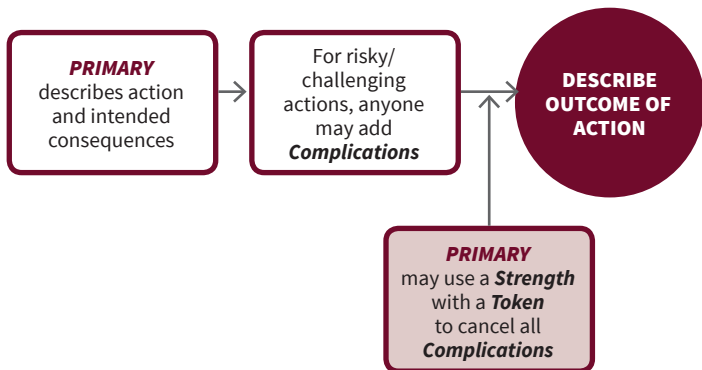
Finally, resolve any *Special Moves* on your *Playbooks* if you haven't already. *Special Moves* enable other characters to play to your character's strengths, and they get a *Token* for doing so. You don't get a *Token*, but you do get to *Mark* your *Relationship* with them.

RULES SUMMARY

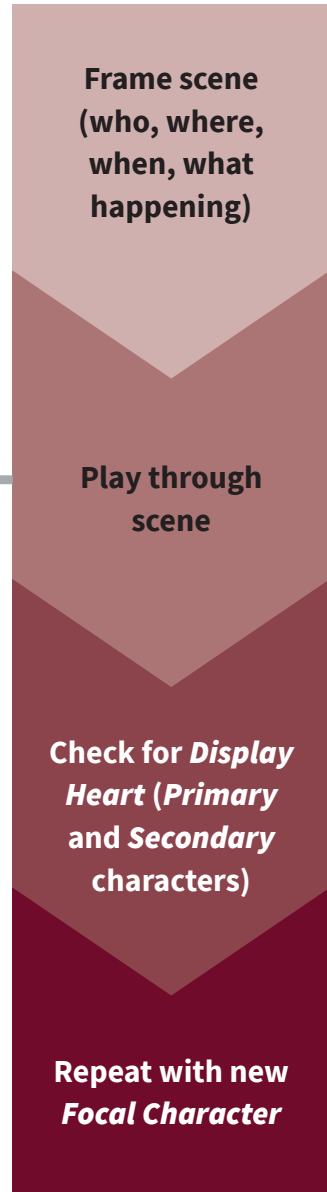
1. THREATS AND WEAKNESSES



2. COMPLICATIONS AND STRENGTHS



SCENE STRUCTURE



3. FRAMING SCENES

First:

— Is there anything that obviously, burningly must happen next?

Second:

For the current *Focal Character*, check in order:

- Does the *Focal Character* wish to accomplish something or interact with someone?
- Does the *Focal Character* want to activate a *Weakness*, or does a *Situation player* wish to do something with the *Focal Character*?
- Ask a question about the *Focal Character's* everyday life.

4. END OF SCENE

When you *Display Your Heart*, so that another character sees something of your true self or your heartfelt feelings, at the end of the scene, they say if any of the following apply:

- It changed your relationship with them
- It brought you closer together
- It pushed you further apart

If any of the above apply, you each may *Mark* your *Relationship* with the other.

When your *Weakness* causes trouble for you, at the end of the scene you may *Mark* your *Weakness*.

Check for any *Playbook Moves* you might have missed.

Play moment-by-moment, following the logic of the fiction • Nobody owns the world – so use what others create • Play with an open hand – no secrets

NAMES

Abe	Bishop	Crake	Fingers	Iris	Lina	Mona	Orson	Ripley	Subira	Trix
Abenna	Blaise	Cromwell	Flax	Issa	Lucy-lu	Morgan	Pandora	Rook	Sunbeam	Twilight
Adil	Bleak	Crystal	Galene	Itri	Luther	Mort	Parker	Ruba	Sweetpea	Twist
Alba	Brie	Curzon	Gordo	Jacks	Lykos	Moses	Persephone	Sabina	Tadenda	Vader
Alexis	Brin	Danya	Graves	Jalil	Madoc	Mosi	Pike	Scudmore	Talis	Vox
Alis	Buana	Darma	Gray	Jarrat	Malak	Nadra	Potro	Sergeant	Tamid	Wake
Amara	Cassia	Dock	Grief	Java	Manaia	Naomi	Preston	Shaker	Tasi	Wang
Amina	Caine	Drusilla	Hadia	Jorune	Marcus	Nikau	Prika	Shelby	Tau	Warwick
Amos	Chains	Echo	Haley	Kadek	Marple	Nikon	Primrose	Silver	Theodora	West
Anaru	Chastity	Eden	Hampton	Kalani	Marx	Nile	Quince	Snakebite	Tidir	Willis
Artax	Chima	Ender	Idir	Kallias	Maya	Nuru	Quintus	Solon	Titus	Zeb
Bailey	Clinton	Enu	Idris	Kobina	Mayamiko	Octavia	Rasima	Spink	Tizer	Zoe
Banks	Corpus	Faris	Iman	Langley	Mica	Okoro	Reeves	Stetson	Toad	Zuma
Baqir	Cosmas	Felix	Indigo	Lekan	Mistral	Omolara	Rex	Stratford	Tristam	Zuri

CHARACTERS

Write down names and details of *Secondary* characters here.

Make the game about the Primary characters and their lives • Play real, flawed, vulnerable people • Tell small-scale stories, leave space for conversation

ORIGINS

THE HATED

You hold views that are unacceptable to the society Above. Perhaps you follow a minority religion or sect, maybe your political views are abhorrent to the majority, or maybe it's something else. Such people live under the threat of attack, at risk of judicial harassment or incarceration, and struggle to make a life worth living. In the Below, such considerations do not entirely disappear – but your ideas are tolerated.

THE FEARED

Your mind or body do not conform to the template expected by the society Above. Perhaps your appearance causes fear or revulsion. Perhaps you belong to a species or mutant strain who are feared. Maybe you live with mental illness, or perhaps your behaviour is just viewed as deviant by society. Either way, the Society Above has driven you down into the shadows of the Below. Prejudice hasn't disappeared, but you are accepted here.

THE HUNTED

You are a law-breaker. Maybe you made one transgression that led to harsh consequences, or perhaps you were a regular offender who finally got their comeuppance. Such people often find themselves forced down into the Below, or even formally exiled by the law. Equally, some criminals find it convenient to pursue their professional interests far from the watchful eyes of the law.

THE ABANDONED

You are the victim of economic misfortune. Perhaps you are elderly, but have no family or funds to support you. Maybe you are young, but have no relatives or guardian to protect you. You could have become unable to support yourself through illness or industrial change that rendered your skills redundant, or you might have lost your livelihood by sheer bad luck. Either way, once your money ran out, there was only one place you could afford to go – the Below.

THE TRUEBORN

You have always lived down here. The laws and ways of the Below are more familiar to you than those of the strange folk who live far above your head. To you, this has always been home.

Play moment-by-moment, following the logic of the fiction • Nobody owns the world – so use what others create • Play with an open hand – no secrets

THREATS

Write down names and details of significant *Threats* here.

Make the game about the Primary characters and their lives • Play real, flawed, vulnerable people • Tell small-scale stories, leave space for conversation

THE THUNDER

The Below is a lawless place, teetering on the brink of anarchy. The Thunder is one of the people that holds that anarchy at bay. They might be the official enforcer or little more than a criminal, but they and their people keep the peace, such as it is. Keeping that peace requires violence: or the threat of violence, something the Thunder knows only too well.

CHOOSE A NAME

Temple, Hammer, Jazz, Piston, Grimes, Lester, Cobra, Lacey, Nebula, Mox, Halo, Tower, Schultz, Cerberus.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Face:** Grimy, hard, baby-faced, tattooed, weathered, sharp, inscrutable, gorgeous.
- **Body:** Wiry, ripped, ravaged, mutated, sturdy, lithe, hulking, compact, poised, elegant.
- **Skin:** Dark, warm, cool, light, brown, copper, olive, ivory, gold, rose, freckled, mottled, patterns, tattoos, scars.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE 1-3 WARDROBE STYLES FOR YOUR PEOPLE

Leather and chains, animal skins, masks, a uniform, military fatigues, sharp suits, rags, everyday wear.

CHOOSE THE NATURE OF YOUR TERRITORY

A shanty-town, defunct industrial area, service tunnels, shops and stalls, humble residences, old cargo space.

ORIGIN

Hated, Feared, Hunted, Abandoned, Trueborn.

PRINCIPLES

- **POWER AND CONTROL.** Think about how you maintain control, where your grip is weak, and what you are willing to do to protect your rule.
- **IDENTITY AND BELONGING.** Think about what keeps your gang together. Their shared purpose. Their common culture and values.

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- What did you steal from me?
- How have you betrayed me?
- When did you stand up to me?
- When did we fight shoulder to shoulder?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- Which of my people can't I trust, and why?
- What did I have to do to become leader?
- Who or what do I most want to protect?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and
SPEND A TOKEN
 to ignore *Complications*
 and narrate what happens

- Intimidating
- Authoritative and respected
- Skilled warrior
- Empowered with official authority
- Contacts (street) [R]
- Your gang – toughs with guns and knives [R]
- Highly defensible territory
- A high-tech armoury [R]
- Secret routes in/out and through your territory [R]

When you rely on me to protect you from a dangerous threat,
GAIN A TOKEN

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.
SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What should I be on the lookout for here?”
- “Who might be able to help with this?”
- “What’s the word on the street about this?”
- “How are you vulnerable to me right now?”
- “What’s my enemy’s true position?”
- “What’s about to go down here?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□

Activate a *Weakness* and invite trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness* and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- Your gang lie and scheme against you □□□
- Your gang are cowardly and stupid □□□
- A rival gang disputes your territory □□□

FLAWS

- You (and/or your gang) are addicts □□□
- You love your gang like a family □□□
- You are paranoid and vengeful □□□

When you have *Marked* all three boxes on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*, you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength, Resource* or *Weakness*

THE SPIDER

What do you need? Whether it's food, drugs, or information, the Spider can get it for you. Just don't forget, it comes with a price. The Spider makes a living through a carefully cultivated network of suppliers, haggling and hustling and schmoozing, building a fragile trade empire.

CHOOSE A NAME

Clubs, Grey, Quill, Queen, Shakespeare, Spider, Garrett, O'Connor, Lex, Barter, Mooney, Velvet, Cyrus.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Eyes:** Watchful, calculating, neutral, smiling, steely, cold, shrewd.
- **Voice:** Honest, down-to-earth, serious, mocking, whispery, icy, direct, cheerful, smug.
- **Skin:** Dark, warm, cool, light, brown, copper, olive, ivory, gold, rose, freckled, mottled, perfumed, blue, spines.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE 1-3 WARDROBE STYLES

Loungewear, a sharp suit, elegant formal wear, a smart uniform, tech wear, display wear, immaculate whites.

CHOOSE THE HOME TURF

A bar, a warehouse, a diner, a workshop, a casino, tunnels, a flophouse, a vehicle, a holo-suite, a market.

ORIGIN

Hated, Feared, Hunted, Abandoned, Trueborn.

PRINCIPLES

- **POWER AND CONTROL.** It's a dog-eat-dog world. Think about how you stay on top. Think about how you keep people hooked.
- **PRECARITY AND OPPORTUNITY.** You might seem like you've got it made, but your success is fragile. Explore the risks and opportunities of your enterprise: show how close to the breadline you actually are.

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- What deal did you make with me, only to renege at the last?
- Why do you trust me completely?
- What have you promised me and are yet to deliver?
- What have I hooked you on?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- Who wants revenge on me, and why?
- What have I never yet traded in, and why?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and
SPEND A TOKEN
 to ignore *Complications*
 and narrate what happens

- Deception
- Connections (The Above) [R]
- Connections (The Underworld) [R]
- Secrets [R]
- Debts owed to you [R]
- Useful items (weapons, medical supplies, tech) [R]
- Esoteric/luxury items (art, fancy food/drink, narcotics, alien artifacts) [R]
- People (enforcers, companions, staff) [R]
- Contingency plans [R]

When you hook me up with something I need, or vice versa,
GAIN A TOKEN

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.
SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What should I be on the lookout for here?”
- “Who might be able to help with this?”
- “What’s the word on the street about this?”
- “What does your character need right now?”
- “What do you have that I might want?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

.....
 Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□

Activate a *Weakness* and invite trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness* and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- You are in hock to a gang □□□
- Your contacts covet your position □□□
- Ruthless commercial rivals □□□
- You owe money to insatiable loan sharks □□□

FLAWS

- You are hooked on your own stuff □□□
- You are a control freak □□□
- You are greedy and ambitious □□□

When you have *Marked* all three boxes on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*, you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength*, *Resource* or *Weakness*

THE VOICE

Down here people are short on hope and purpose. They look to you to provide it. You might point them to higher ideals, a sense of unity and belonging; or maybe you're just the sort of person people like to follow. You've got a way of getting people to do what you want. Careful with that.

CHOOSE A NAME

Ash, Destiny, Candle, Dawn, Helix, Cirrus, Clio, Chorus, Wraith, Deacon, Gaius, Babel, Horizon, Raphael, Book.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Voice:** Warm, musical, calm, gravelly, deep, authoritative, smiling, lilting, precise, eloquent.
- **Body:** Vigorous, robust, well-fed, svelte, unblemished, venerable, youthful.
- **Skin:** Dark, warm, cool, light, brown, copper, olive, ivory, gold, rose, freckled, mottled, hairless, henna, iridescent.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE 2 WARDROBE STYLES

Flowing robes, silks and velvets, ordinary clothes, rags, one strong colour, iconic jewelry, handmade garments.

CHOOSE YOUR ROLE

Priest, hedge witch, wise-person, lawgiver, philosopher, cult leader, community organiser, union leader, demagogue, celebrity.

CHOOSE YOUR FOLLOWERS

Serious students, ordinary folk, waifs and strays, fanatics, escapists, obsessive admirers, fearful souls.

ORIGIN

Hated, Feared, Hunted, Abandoned, Trueborn.

PRINCIPLES

- **COMMUNITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE.** Show what you do to bring your followers closer to each other, and how you hold them together.
- **MYSTERY AND SPIRITUALITY.** What are your abilities for? Will you be just a selfish exploiter, or do you have a vision or mission?

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- Why do you fear me?
- Why do my followers distrust you?
- What vision have you sought my help in understanding?
- Why have you recently joined my following?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- What is your vision for the future? OR
What dark future are you trying to prevent?
- What has given my followers reason to doubt?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and **SPEND A TOKEN** to ignore *Complications* and narrate what happens

- Your followers – a flock of devotees [R]
- Psychic links to all your followers
- You can see and speak to spirits
- You can bind and banish spirits
- Your followers are fanatically loyal
- Your followers know how to fight
- Your followers are well-connected
- Counsellor
- Negotiator
- Demagogue

Act in my name or in support of my cause to **GAIN A TOKEN**

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.
SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What should I be on the lookout for here?”
- “Who might be able to help with this?”
- “What have my followers told me about this?”
- “Who or what do you love the most?”
- “How could I get you to _____?”
- “Whose words carry sway around here?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□

Activate a *Weakness* and invite trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness* and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- Your followers are needy and demanding □□□
- Your followers are chaotic and demanding □□□
- Your words inspire mobs and fanatics □□□

FLAWS

- You are arrogant and overconfident □□□
- You need to be loved and admired □□□
- You passionately believe your own rhetoric □□□

When you have *Marked* all three boxes on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*, you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength*, *Resource* or *Weakness*

THE SYBYL

You have a gift, powers that set you apart from normal people. Some say you are cursed, some say the gods themselves have chosen you for a purpose. You may be loved or feared – perhaps both. You must choose your words and actions with care. You will always be alone.

CHOOSE A NAME

Snowdrop, Cassandra, Hollow, Eleven, Wax, Mica, Jasper, Dalton, Willow, Fliss, Swift, Mercy, Aurora.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Eyes:** Unblinking, distant, rheumy, large, glassy, milky, alien, harsh.
- **Body:** Spindly, twisted, gnarled, sinuous, delicate, gaunt, stunted, wrecked.
- **Skin:** Dark, warm, cool, light, brown, copper, olive, ivory, gold, rose, freckled, mottled, hidden, moist, translucent.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE 2 WARDROBE STYLES

Rags and patches, plain clothing, heavy robes, masks, gloves, sombre blacks, pristine whites, archaic clothing.

CHOOSE HOW YOU CALL ON YOUR GIFTS

Incense and chanting, drawing sigils, alien speech, grimoires and scrolls, concentrate hard, drugs.

ORIGIN

Feared, Hunted, Abandoned, Trueborn.

PRINCIPLES

- **ISOLATION AND OTHERNESS.** How do your powers set you apart from others? How have they changed your basic humanity? What about you can they never understand? What about them can you never grasp?
- **MYSTERY AND SPIRITUALITY.** Your unique nature puts you closer to the spirits than anyone. But do they love you?

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- What of your secrets do you wish I had not discovered?
- How have you shown your distrust of me?
- In what way have we been intimate?
- In what way is our relationship thoroughly ordinary?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- What vision of my future have I seen?
- What was the first time my powers manifested, and who got hurt?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and **SPEND A TOKEN** to ignore *Complications* and narrate what happens

- Baleful aura
- Chaos
- Chimera
- Dreamwalk
- Malediction
- Soul Pierce
- Spirit Tongue
- Thoughtweave
- Thread of Fate

■ **TRUE PROPHECY.** When you beseech the spirits for guidance and spend a *Token*, ask a question. You get an immediate and clear vision that answers it.

Ask me to use my mysterious gifts on you, or act on one of my visions, to **GAIN A TOKEN**

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.

SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What would you give anything for?”
- “When have you felt truly happy?”
- “What do you secretly hope for?”
- “What is the worst thing you’ve done?”
- “What do you fear the most?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

.....
Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□

Activate a *Weakness* and invite trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness* and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- Your gifts aren't fully under your control □□□
- Spirits intrude on your life □□□
- You are the pawn of a religious cult □□□
- The superstitious hang on your every word □□□

FLAWS

- You are obsessed with your visions □□□
- You are manipulative and secretive □□□
- You are tactless and indiscreet □□□

When you have *Marked* all three boxes on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*, you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength, Resource* or *Weakness*

THE HYBRID

You look human but inside, something else lurks, a shard of something greater. Your strange nature sets you apart and makes you more and less than human. You have a shadowed past, either in the service of this shard, or belonging to its other incarnations. If anyone knew, they would surely hate and fear you.

CHOOSE A NAME

Kopesh IV, Shard 382c, David, Marie, Galileo, Athena, Shepherd, Justice, Dawn, Gamma, Lazarus, Pris.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Face:** Bland, bloodless, smooth, exquisite, sculpted, non-human, too-perfect.
- **Gaze:** Penetrating, inhuman, appraising, intense, emotionless, curious.
- **Skin:** Dark, warm, cool, light, brown, copper, olive, ivory, gold, rose, freckled, mottled, waxy, robotic, branded.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE YOUR STYLE

Formal wear, military wear, immaculate whites, hoods and robes, elegant black standards.

CHOOSE THE NATURE OF YOUR INHUMAN SIDE

A god, an angel, a spirit, an AI, a symbiote, alien genes, a previous incarnation, implanted commands.

CHOOSE YOUR SHADOWED PAST

Serial infidelity, charlatanry, murder, espionage, atrocities, subjugation, unforgivable failure.

ORIGIN

Feared, Hunted, Abandoned.

PRINCIPLES

- **IDENTITY AND BELONGING.** Who are you, really? What makes you you? How do you relate to others? Can you ever really fit in? Who do you admire, which groups do you aspire to belong to?
- **ISOLATION AND OTHERNESS.** Explore your strange nature and shadowed past. How are you different from others? What deeds continue to haunt you? What about humans will you never understand?

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- Why do I make you nervous?
- How has my presence disrupted your life?
- In what way are we alike?
- How have you shown your friendship to me?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- Why do I wish I could escape my inhuman side for good?
- What past action of mine or of my inhuman side do I feel terrible guilt about?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and
SPEND A TOKEN
 to ignore *Complications*
 and narrate what happens

- Inhuman physicality
(strength, stamina)
- Rapid healing
- Psychic weapons
- Uncanny stealth
- Superhuman senses
- Inscrutable
- A network of hidden followers
or informants [R]
- Codes and passwords [R]

Give me a chance to prove myself to you to
GAIN A TOKEN

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.
SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What should I be on the lookout for here?”
- “Who or what is here that doesn’t fit?”
- “What is everyone avoiding?”
- “What clues have been left here?”
- “What emotions are you concealing right now?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

.....
 Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one
 box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	
_____	_____	□ □ □
_____	_____	□ □ □
_____	_____	□ □ □
_____	_____	□ □ □

Activate a *Weakness* and invite
 trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness*
 and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- Vengeful victims of your
shadowed past □ □ □
- The dire reputation of your
shadowed past □ □ □
- Your inhuman side is reviled
by others □ □ □

FLAWS

- You don't understand
human ways □ □ □
- Your inhuman side has its
own persona □ □ □
- You don't understand your
own limitations □ □ □

When you have *Marked* all three boxes
 on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*,
 you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength*,
Resource or *Weakness*

THE CAST-OFF

You once lived a life of prosperity and stability. You had a place in the world. You had respect. But it all came crashing down around you. Now you're barely scraping a living, and sometimes not even that. You live off your wits, bartering what skills you have. You work for whoever will pay. Just hoping your past doesn't catch up with you.

CHOOSE A NAME

Scrim, Fisher, Lem, Trick, Bones, Scarlet, Jay, Taylor, Spencer, Frankie, Noble, Lux, Grace, Darius.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Face:** Honest, cheerful, wary, leathery, gorgeous, haggard, reserved.
- **Hands:** Fast, strong, greasy, clean, gentle, mutated, prosthetic hand.
- **Skin:** Dark, warm, cool, light, brown, copper, olive, ivory, gold, rose, freckled, mottled, pocked, scaly, lumpy.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE 2 PREVIOUS EMPLOYERS

A gang, a religious order, the docks, a known criminal, a trader, the station authority, rich above-folk.

WHY YOU'RE DOWN HERE

Brought down by scandal, hiding from your enemies, wanted by the law, bankrupted, random misfortune.

PRINCIPLES

— COMMUNITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE.

You rely for your livelihood on countless relationships. Customers. Patrons. And they rely on you. Explore those relationships and how you depend on each other.

- **PRECARITY AND OPPORTUNITY.** Explore how you cope with the hardship of living hand-to-mouth. Show how you respond to the opportunities that come your way.

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- How did you save my life?
- What lies have you told me?
- How did we become lovers?
- Why won't you hire me again?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- What recent job went south? Whose fault was it?
- Who do I wish I'd never worked for, and why?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and
SPEND A TOKEN
 to ignore *Complications*
 and narrate what happens

- Repair
- Hacking
- Entertainer
- Chemist
- Medicine
- Pilot
- Silver tongue
- Fast hands
- Lucky
- Hidden caches of supplies [R]
- Safe-houses and escape routes [R]
- Items you happen to have in your pockets [R]

Hire me for a gig or hook me up with one to
GAIN A TOKEN

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.
SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What should I be on the lookout for here?”
- “Who might be able to help with this?”
- “What’s the word on the street about this?”
- “How might I be of service to this person?”
- “Where could I get hold of _____?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

.....
 Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□

Activate a *Weakness* and invite trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness* and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- Unpaid debts □□□
- Haunted by a scandalous past □□□
- Hunted by old enemies □□□

FLAWS

- Reckless and impulsive □□□
- Haughty and superior □□□
- Fickle and led by your passions □□□

When you have *Marked* all three boxes on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*, you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength*, *Resource* or *Weakness*

THE SCUM

You were born here, down in the dark. You came from nothing, and you've still got nothing. Those Above regard you with complete loathing. But down here, you belong. You know this place like no other.

CHOOSE A NAME

Patch, Twist, Bumble, Sykes, Annie, Baker, Scar, Legs, Harry, Fable, Star, Pipes.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Build:** Hunched, gaunt, diminutive, sinewy, scrawny, sturdy, lanky, misshapen.
- **Smile:** Gap-toothed, lop-sided, cheeky, dazzling, charming, insincere, warm, wolfish.
- **Skin:** Dark, warm, cool, light, brown, copper, olive, ivory, gold, rose, freckled, mottled, blotchy, lumpy, jagged.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE 1–3 WARDROBE STYLES

Hand-me-downs, patchwork, wrong size, hand-made, rags, threadbare, gang colours, work gear.

CHOOSE 1–3 TRUSTED FRIENDS

Your uncle, your cousin, a childhood friend, your neighbour, your mother, your sibling, your lover, an employer, a pet, a ganger, a complete newcomer.

PRINCIPLES

- **IDENTITY AND BELONGING.** Explore the values and culture that you identify with, the things that you take pride in. What about your low birth makes you ashamed? What about it is a badge of honour?
- **COMMUNITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE.** You'd be nothing without the people around you. Show what you do for them, and what they do for you. Think about how you depend on the community.

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- Who have I made to feel welcome here, and how?
- Who will never be accepted here in my eyes?
- Who helped the community when we needed it?
- Who do I know is nothing but trouble?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- Who has never forgiven me for something I did years ago? What was it?
- What's tearing my neighbourhood apart? Why haven't I stopped it yet?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and
SPEND A TOKEN
 to ignore *Complications*
 and narrate what happens

- Tough
- Connections (The Below) [R]
- Beloved by all
- Scavenger
- Secret Places [R]
- Junk crafting
- Loyal gang of ordinary folk [R]
- Charming
- Sneaky
- Spotless reputation
- Short-cuts and secret paths [R]

When you put your trust in me to fix a problem for you,
GAIN A TOKEN

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.
SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What should I be on the lookout for here?”
- “Who would be willing to help with this?”
- “What’s the word on the street about this?”
- “Who would want or need this?”
- “How might this help the Below?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

.....
 Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP
_____	_____ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Activate a *Weakness* and invite trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness* and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- You're mixed up with a local gang
- You're addicted to something
- You've made an enemy in the community (who?)

FLAWS

- You are naïve and trusting
- You'd do anything for your friends
- You are vulgar and unsophisticated

When you have *Marked* all three boxes on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*, you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength*, *Resource* or *Weakness*

THE OUTSIDER

You're not from around here, not part of the Below or even the station. You're stuck here for now, pursuing your aims or performing your duties. You're getting drawn into local life down here, whether you like it or not.

CHOOSE A NAME

Evelyn, Croft, Jones, Garek, Han, Kimble, Leon, Cornelius, Chrisjen, Charlotte, Hallows, Ember.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Build:** Stocky, wispy, angular, wiry, massive, lean, obese, tiny, nondescript.
- **Hands:** Manicured, meaty, spindly, dainty, strong, weathered, scarred, leathery, clawed, mechanical.
- **Skin:** Dark, warm, cool, light, brown, copper, olive, ivory, gold, rose, freckled, mottled, papery, plates, weird.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE 1-3 WARDROBE STYLES

Plain blacks, workwear, ordinary clothes, formal robes, fancy attire, concealed armour.

WHAT ARE YOU?

Bounty hunter, assassin, spy, diplomat, missionary, aid worker, sociologist, trader, marooned.

PRINCIPLES

- **IDENTITY AND BELONGING.** You're not from here, but you're stuck here and you need to find a place. Who will you reach out to? Who will you make connections with? Who can you trust?
- **PRECARIETY AND OPPORTUNITY.** Out here, there's not much between you and the poverty this place is drowning in. How will you keep yourself afloat? What might you do to help others?

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- When you needed help, how did I aid you?
- How have you helped me settle here?
- Why do you want me out of here?
- How are you tied up in my mission?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- What went badly wrong when I first arrived here? Who blames me for it?
- What have I come here to do, and who is standing in my way?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and
SPEND A TOKEN
 to ignore *Complications*
 and narrate what happens

- Sharpshooter
- Concealment
- Alien tech [R]
- Obscure or arcane lore
- Deal-maker
- Inspiring
- Stealthy
- Disguise
- Security systems

When you draw me into the concerns of the Below,
GAIN A TOKEN

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.
SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What should I be on the lookout for here?”
- “Where can I find _____?”
- “What’s my best way in/past/through?”
- “Who is really in control here?”
- “Who here is sympathetic to my cause?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

.....
 Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one
 box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□

Activate a *Weakness* and invite
 trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness*
 and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- Hunted by deadly enemies □□□
- Your kind are despised here □□□
- Short on resources □□□

FLAWS

- You want to help everyone □□□
- Unfamiliar with local culture □□□
- Impulsive and overconfident □□□

When you have *Marked* all three boxes
 on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*,
 you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength*,
Resource or *Weakness*

THE VAPOUR

You are not one of them, the beings that live down here. You're an entity unbound by flesh: not a part of human society, and far beyond human concerns. But something draws you into their world. You pursue your own aims, but will you make a place down here?

CHOOSE A NAME

Hal, Prism, Wisp, Xerxes, Tera, Deep, Eve, Zuriel, Hypatia, Ada, Mathison, Orobas, Peri, Vikram.

CHOOSE A LOOK *(one or more from each list)*

- **Visage:** Human, animal, monstrous, beatific, terrifying, abstract, bizarre, glowing, intense, understated.
- **Voice:** Deep, monotone, whispery, commanding, ethereal, echoey, dreadful, glorious, warm, knowing, ordinary.
- **Gender:** Woman, man, nonbinary, transitioning, genderqueer, feminine, masculine, neutral, androgynous, hidden, other.

CHOOSE YOUR NATURE

A rogue AI, a household spirit, an alien entity, a ghost, a hologram, a demon, an ancestor spirit.

YOU ARE HERE TO...

Help people, become human, dominate and control
attract followers, destroy an enemy, understand people.

PRINCIPLES

- **ISOLATION AND OTHERNESS.** How will you connect to humanity? How will you understand them – and can you bridge the divide in your natures?
- **POWER AND CONTROL.** Find the limits of your power. What do you need? What do you fear? What matters to you? Look for where you're not in control and dive right in.

RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Ask two (or for quick-start, one):

- How have you helped me understand humanity?
- What have you done to earn my trust and respect?
- How have you bested me?
- Why am I fascinated with you?

HISTORY QUESTIONS

And ask or answer one of these:

- What mortal situation has caught my attention and drawn me in?
- What power has threatened me, and how might they yet bring me down?

Write the answers to your questions below:

Use a *Strength/Resource* and **SPEND A TOKEN** to ignore *Complications* and narrate what happens

- Remote senses
- Extensive library/database
- Superhuman intellect
- Connections (spirits) [R]
- Hallowed and revered
- Insubstantial
- Machine control
- Flesh puppets [R]
- Plans and schemes [R]
- BEYOND YOU.** When you call on powers beyond the ken of ordinary folk, spend three *Tokens* and say how your intervention changes the fate of the station.

Beg for my aid or my wisdom to
GAIN A TOKEN

ASK A QUESTION from this list at any time.
SPEND A TOKEN to get a full and helpful answer ...

- “What should I be on the lookout for here?”
- “Who might be able to help with this?”
- “What's my best way out/way in/way through?”
- “What technical or arcane solution am I overlooking?”
- “What have I secretly observed that's relevant here?”

... or **ASK THE SPIRITS**

.....
Let them see your true self or true feelings to get a chance to *Mark* one box. Also *Mark* if they use your *Special Move*.

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□
_____	_____	□□□

Activate a *Weakness* and invite trouble to *Mark* that *Weakness* and **GAIN A TOKEN**

PROBLEMS

- Enemies and rivals amongst your own kind □□□
- A powerful faction seeks your demise □□□
- Those who know how can bind or control you □□□

FLAWS

- You believe yourself to be invincible □□□
- You see others as mere pawns □□□
- You obey strange laws (e.g. you cannot break a promise) □□□

When you have *Marked* all three boxes on a *Relationship* or *Weakness*, you rewrite it and gain a new *Strength*, *Resource* or *Weakness*

COMMUNITY

The Below is filled to the brim with all kinds of people. Outcasts and criminals, paupers and kingpins, scroungers and scrappers and hustlers, all living their lives and struggling to survive.

Even down here, social divisions exist that decide each person's social standing, who gets what, and who can talk to whom. Sometimes these divisions create rivalries, distrust or even hatred.

The Below has been around a long time, and it has developed its own ways, which may look unusual or even bizarre to outsiders.

CHOOSE THE MAIN SOURCE OF SOCIAL DIVISION IN THE BELOW

A caste system, haves and have-nots, bosses and workers, ethnic groups, alien races, aristocracy, slavery, religious differences, one group was conquered by another, an ongoing war, political parties.

AREAS OF FOCUS *(ask questions about, drive forward)*

— Culture

- ◇ Social rules – taboos, superstitions, rituals, traditions, routines.
- ◇ Stories – rumours, gossip, propaganda, lies, legends.
- ◇ Culture in all its forms (slang, sayings, art, music, dance, food, and so on).

— Groups

- ◇ Social groups – religious, cultural, ethnic, political, social.
- ◇ Group responses – rivalries, distrust, solidarity, closing ranks, and so on.
- ◇ The pillars of each group – leaders, paragons, role models.
- ◇ Deviants within a group – dissenters, non-conformists, troublemakers.

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POVERTY

.....

Food. Clean water. Work. Education. Law and Order. Hope. They're all in short supply, and sometimes lack of them stretches individuals and society to breaking point. It isn't possible for everyone to get what they need, and many people go without day after day.

Everyday life is built around fulfilling those basic needs. The Below hums with the activity of people scraping and scrounging and hustling to get by. But it still isn't enough. Even so, the human spirit finds ways to survive and prosper despite it all.

.....

CHOOSE THE WAY POVERTY MANIFESTS IN THE BELOW

Everybody is destitute, haves and have-nots, random shortages, living off credit, Government handouts, crumbling infrastructure, basic needs go unmet, scavenging to survive, widespread crime, one group controls supplies, _____ is scarce.

.....

AREAS OF FOCUS *(ask questions about, drive forward)*

— Things people want or need, and ways to get them

- ◇ Infrastructure, resources, supplies, services.
- ◇ Freedoms, protections, privileges.
- ◇ Commerce, entrepreneurialism, work, crime.

— Lack and excess and responses to them

- ◇ Shortages, want, deprivation, homelessness.
- ◇ Gluts, privilege, wealth.
- ◇ Thrift, barter, sharing, jury-rigging.
- ◇ Despair, addiction, desperation, envy, rage and rioting.

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THE ABOVE

.....

The Above is what we call the upper decks and the people who live there. The ones with the identity papers, and the steady jobs. The ones with money and confidence. The ones whose trash makes its way down Below, and whose boots leave footprints on our lives, visible and invisible.

The Above is a mighty behemoth. It can crush individuals and communities as though they were bugs, intentionally or not. It is a capricious god, reacting suddenly and overwhelmingly. And yet, folk Below are utterly dependent on it.

.....

CHOOSE THE CHARACTER OF THE ABOVE

Dictatorship, democracy, feudal system, oligarchy, theocracy, colonial rule, militaristic, mass media, capitalist, communism, surveillance state, fabulous wealth, post-scarcity, high technology, galactic hub, religious fervor, hedonism.

.....

AREAS OF FOCUS *(ask questions about, drive forward)*

- Everything and everyone in the Above.
- Visitors from the Above.
- Things that trickle down from the Above.
- The greed, hostility, and demands of the Above.
- The laws of the Above, which apply to Below-folk whether they make any sense down here or not.

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THE GANGS

.....

Down in the Below, the law and order of the society Above is rarely enforced. In its place step those who are strong, feared, or respected enough to hold sway. Some gangs fancy themselves a bastion of civilisation in the Below, others are unashamedly criminal. It is dangerous to deal with the gangs. It may also be unavoidable.

The gangs also provide hope and direction for some. Aspiring young Below-folk can find belonging, a sense of purpose, status, and even a career in the arms of a gang.

.....

CHOOSE HOW THE GANGS WORK

Crime families, religious orders, military hierarchy, law enforcers, feudal loyalty, tribal ties, business partnerships, unions, mandatory membership, they run everything, small-time crooks, simple thugs, serious professionals, lots of different models.

.....

AREAS OF FOCUS *(ask questions about, drive forward)*

- The gangs and those under their sway, their territory, their ways.
- The internal factions within the gangs.
- The enemies of the gangs.
- The rules – rational or self-serving – that the gangs hold to and enforce.
- Violence and the threat of violence, in all its forms.
- Dominance and displays of power.

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SPIRITS

.....
The world we see every day is only one aspect of the universe. Hidden just beyond sight, just beyond your hearing is a world of stranger things. With the right ritual and sacrifice you can speak to them, if you have ears to hear what they say. And sometimes they come right out and poke their noses into our affairs, subtly or blatantly.

Most people pay some attention to the spirit world through little acts of worship or placation. Some devote their lives to it. When times are hard, people turn ever more to the spiritual, looking for a sense of hope or peace that they can't find elsewhere. And there is nowhere harder than the Below.

.....

CHOOSE WHAT THE SPIRITS ARE

Nature spirits, elevated saints, abstract principles, ghosts, fey, angels, demons, djinn, a pantheon of gods, thought-forms, incorporeal aliens, there is only one.

CHOOSE HOW WE CONTACT THEM

Prayer, meditation, chanting, bloodletting, mind-altering drugs, elaborate ritual, intercession by a priest, sacrifice or gifts, sorcery, speak in their language, divination (tarot, runes etc), go to a place where the veil is thin.

.....

AREAS OF FOCUS *(ask questions about, drive forward)*

— Strange phenomena

- ◇ Spirits and other supernatural phenomena: miracles, curses, magic.
- ◇ Visions, omens, prophecies, dreams.
- ◇ Fortune, misfortune, fate.
- ◇ The hidden and the unexplained.

— The spirit-touched

- ◇ People who follow the spirits.
- ◇ Psychics, witches, priests, prophets, exorcists.

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THE OUTSIDE

The Below is just one part of a space station, beyond the walls of which lie the vast reaches of space. The galaxy outside might seem distant at times, but then when you least expect it there will be a sudden and rude reminder that this place is just one mote floating in the storm of the galaxy.

The station bustles with people who come and go from outside. Off-duty soldiers rub shoulders with foreign diplomats, traders, smugglers, prospectors, and more. The bravest venture into the Below for adventures; and the more intrepid Below-folk may venture into the ports, looking for opportunities not available anywhere else.

CHOOSE WHAT'S NEARBY THE STATION

A civilised planet(s), resource-rich moons, haunted ruins, a black hole, a wormhole, an asteroid belt, mysterious structures, a holy city, a military base, a war zone, space pirates, a prison, a major trade route, an alien frontier.

CHOOSE SOMETHING THAT COMES OR GOES REGULARLY

Tourist ships, battle cruisers, cargo freighters, foreign diplomats, green colonists, missionaries, convict labour, smugglers, wounded veterans, refugees, conscripts, prospectors, merchants.

AREAS OF FOCUS *(ask questions about, drive forward)*

— Things found near the station

- ◇ Aliens and their technology.
- ◇ Celestial phenomena – comets, asteroids, radiation, space debris.
- ◇ Nearby planets and their inhabitants.
- ◇ The politics, trade, and warfare of the wider galaxy.

— Things that come and go from the station

- ◇ Spaceships!
- ◇ Travellers, traders, itinerant workers, smugglers.
- ◇ News and rumours from outside, and reactions to it.

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RESISTANCE

The lives of the people of the Below are fixed. Drudgery, poverty, mindless routine, and an early death, while the folk Above live in luxury.

But not everyone is content to accept this fate. The Below contains individuals and factions who yearn to tear down the established social order, and replace it with something else. They might be malcontents and criminals, ideological crusaders, or idealistic do-gooders.

One thing is certain: change is never peaceful.

CHOOSE WHO LEADS THE RESISTANCE

Religious fanatics, ruthless terrorists, high-minded activists, foreign agents, opportunistic criminals, power-hungry politicians, supporters within the Above, the intergalactic rebellion, ambitious gangsters.

AREAS OF FOCUS *(ask questions about, drive forward)*

— How the people are oppressed

- ◇ Skewed information (education, news, controls on communication).
- ◇ Kept poor (low or insecure employment, low wages, hoarding of resources).
- ◇ Under control (surveillance, aggressive policing, harsh punishments, disappearances).
- ◇ Exploited (conscripted, slavery, poor working conditions).

— People's reaction to oppression

- ◇ Conformity (rationalisation, false patriotism, informing on others).
- ◇ Resignation (cynicism, hopelessness, looking after number one).
- ◇ Working in the system (petitions, polite letters, voting).
- ◇ Covert resistance (slow working, sharing information, helping the resistance).
- ◇ Overt resistance (protests, strikes, sabotage, terrorism).

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WAR

.....

Outside the walls of the station, the galaxy is ablaze. Massive warships spew drop-pods loaded with armoured soldiers, or bombard planets into oblivion from orbit. Battle lines are drawn. Territory changes hands. Millions of lives are snuffed out. And the ones who control it suffer not at all.

Huddled in this cage of steel, the denizens of the Below watch the ships, the soldiers, the wounded, ebb and flow from the station. They live in fear that one day the guns will be turned on them.

.....

CHOOSE THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

Ideological struggle, fight over resources, territorial dispute, internecine strife, holy war, genocide, civil war, galaxy-wide conflagration, guerrilla uprising, war of aggression.

.....

AREAS OF FOCUS *(ask questions about, drive forward)*

— The effects of the war on the station

- ◇ Sudden influxes (warships, soldiers, captives, wounded, refugees).
- ◇ Scarcity (able-bodied people, supplies, information, freedom of movement).
- ◇ News (glorious victory, unexpected defeat, nearby battles, surrender).
- ◇ Oppression (martial law, occupation, constant military presence, conscription).

— People's reaction to the war

- ◇ Devotion (patriotism, tub-thumping, voluntarism).
- ◇ Fear (paranoia, resignation, panic, hoarding, flight).
- ◇ Hustle (news, gossip, black market).

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