

# **Kult to Nemesis Conversion**

Everything in this document assumes you have already read or plan to read (hopefully) the Nemesis System rules. Otherwise, you won't be able to make sense out any of this.

I've included a LOT of stuff taken from The Last Cycle ([www.kult-rpg.com](http://www.kult-rpg.com)) and Project Nemesis ([www.nemesis-system.com](http://www.nemesis-system.com)).

I wanted to make an all-inclusive document for my gaming group, which combines a lot of stuff available separately. Many traits and disadvantages came from the following: Agent Donald, Martin Landgren, Pablo Barron, Steven M. Finger, John Nixon, Torben Rygg, Chris Warren, Johan Westerlund, and various unnamed ensigns.

The Archetypes list credits

The contributors I've "borrowed" from include: Josh Chewing,  
Kult's Credits: Michael Petersén and Gunilla Jonsson

The Skills list is credited to Josh Chewing

Nemesis Credits: Dennis Detwiller, Greg Stolze, and Shane Ivey

Enjoy. If you have any suggestions on how to improve this document, please feel free to send me a message at [nathantruant@comcast.net](mailto:nathantruant@comcast.net).

## Abilities / Statistics

Kult uses abilities to handle the basic information for each character, such as their strength, constitution, ego, etc. Nemesis handles things in much the same way except for a couple of different terms.

<b>Kult Abilities</b>	<b>Nemesis Stats</b>
<b>Agility (AGL)</b>	Coordination
<b>Strength (STR)</b>	Body
<b>Constitution (CON)</b>	Body
<b>Comeliness (COM)</b>	*
<b>Ego (EGO)</b>	Empathy
<b>Charisma (CHA)</b>	Command
<b>Perception (PER)</b>	Sense
<b>Education (EDU)</b>	Mind

*\*Covered as either a disadvantage or trait in Nemesis*

The conversion from Kult abilities to Nemesis stats is vague as Nemesis uses single statistics that cover multiple Kult abilities. Comeliness isn't counted at all, in Nemesis there is statistic to measure how good looking a character is. Mind and education don't exactly relate either, but you get the overall picture. In order to convert the actual hard numbers of abilities into Nemesis's statistic dice use the following formula:

$$\text{(Kult Ability Score)} / 4 = \text{Nemesis Statistic}^*$$

*\*Rounded to the nearest 10<sup>th</sup>--When dealing with STR and CON simply add both scores together and divide by two, then use the above formula.*

**Example:** Karl, a character from Kult, has the following Ability Scores: AGL-11, STR-14, CON-8, COM-18, Ego-14, CHA+4d, PER-12, EDU-6. His Nemesis stats, using the above formula, would be as follows: Body-3 (the average of STR and CON is 11, plugged into the conversion formula equals 2.75 rounded to the nearest 10<sup>th</sup> is 3), Coordination-3, Sense-3, Mind-2, Command-4, and Empathy-4. Karl's Comeliness (COM) ability does not translate over, it will be purchased as a trait.

The rest of Kult's sub-abilities are negated as those numbers are dealt with by the Nemesis stats.

## Mental Balance

This was one of the hardest parts to translate from Kult into Nemesis. The Nemesis Sanity Gauge is wonderful and expresses something very realistic in how humans might deal with horrifying situations. The problem is Kult has a very specific method for handling the way a character will either slip into their inner darkness or surpass that to let their inner light shine through. Hardened Notches make this impossible. There is no way (as far as I can see) to translate the four types of sanity to something workable for Kult. I love the Sanity Gauge; it just doesn't work for Kult.

Certain traits will allow a character a small bonus to their Mental Balance score and all disadvantages will take away a certain number from their score.

The Kult Mental Balance Table runs the gamut from -100 points to +100 for normal characters (generally speaking). The following table will give you an idea of where a character will stand (mentally) depending on their score.

<b>Negative Mental Balance</b>		<b>Positive Mental Balance</b>	
<b>-15</b>	You emit a weak negative aura, which makes children and animals uneasy in your presence.	<b>+15</b>	You emit a weak positive aura, which makes children and animals feel comfortable in your presence.
<b>-25</b>	Disturbed. You may have magical intuition. You are so ill that health control would single you out as abnormal.	<b>+25</b>	You may have magical intuition. You are known to be a harmonious and stable person, whom everybody likes.
<b>-50</b>	You are so warped that mental examinations would classify you as mentally ill.	<b>+50</b>	You have a natural empathy. People feel safe in your presence.
<b>-75</b>	Psychotic. When shocked, your body changes. You may begin to get limitations as well as disadvantages. You are developing problems with maintaining emotional contact with other people and will break off any relationship that gets too intimate.	<b>+75</b>	Beings with a negative mental balance down to -100 avoid you if they can. You cannot be possessed by creatures with a higher mental balance than -250.
<b>-100</b>	Your traits that give you Mental Balance drop by 1d for every 10 points of balance under -100. You are permanently losing control of your disadvantages, just as you could temporarily at higher balance levels. Your light sides take the form of a light shadow that follows you and attempts to contact you.	<b>+100</b>	You automatically get the trait "body control" if you didn't already. Creatures with a negative balance of -200 or lower avoid you if they can. For every 10 balance points over +100, your disadvantages disappear by 1d. You are no longer able to use force or to feel a destructive aggression in any situation. You will meet your own dark shadow, a materialization of your repressed dark sides.

## Mental Balance and Equilibrium

Nemesis uses Equilibrium, a floating skill with no base Stat to determine the modifier to go along with rolls against sanity. In Kult we will use the Equilibrium skill in much the same manner, where the stat it uses will depend on the situation. The modifiers for this roll are based on the intensity of the situation and the character's mental balance score. The following table shows the bonus or penalties given, based on the character's mental balance.

Mental Balance	Modifier
+75	+5d
+60	+4d
+45	+3d
+30	+2d
+15	+1d
0	0
-15	-1d
-30	-2d
-45	-3d
-60	-4d
-75	-5d

## When to roll?

The only time an Equilibrium check should be rolled is when the character is faced with a situation intense enough to warrant it. Never over-roll or the severity and importance of rolling to maintain ones cool in the face of unspeakable horror will become meaningless.

## Which stat should I use with Equilibrium?

**Body:** When the character receives serious bodily injury, whether being stabbed in the back (literally), shot in gut, or physically tortured with electricity. This should only be used when the character is *greatly* harmed.

**Mind:** When the character is in serious danger of completely losing his mental stability, such as severe lack of sleep, being betrayed by a family member, or tortured through non-physical means. Mind can also be effected by hallucinations brought on by drugs or other things. This should only be used when the character is in extreme situations.

**Empathy:** Empathy should be rolled when the character is participating or witnessing in the victimization of others, such as seeing a friend or loved one badly hurt or killed. When selling out a friend, loved one, or someone innocent such as a child, an empathy roll should be made. This would include performing torture, murder, etc. Most empathy rolls are made when dealing with issues of conscience or morals.

**Coordination, Command, and Sense:** Not used.

## Mundane Traits

Traits are purchased with the excess die left over from your statistics. Remember that whatever your total pool of dice is right now will be spent for skills as well. Finding you don't have enough dice? Disadvantages (found after the traits) will help you get some extra dice and flesh out your character, but they come at a price.

Some traits will be marked with an asterisk<sup>\*</sup>, remember to add the mental balance bonus value of those traits to your Mental Balance score. At first, some of those traits may seem a little strange, in that not all of them necessarily give your character any overt advantage. If you look at it as though the traits with the asterisk are qualities of your personality or morals that make you less easily sucked into darkness or insanity, you will see how beneficial they can be. Kult is built to have dark characters, but having too dark a character can put you at risk for a trip to the rubber room.

### ***\*A true friend (3d)***

**Prerequisite:** Empathy 3

**Effect:** The character is well attuned to the emotions or other people and even animals, and is able to perceive a person's true emotions with ease. The character always knows what others think of them, though most find it easy to like empathetic people. Characters with this advantage are often a shoulder to cry on and the first ones asked for help.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 15

### ***Age well (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character has a very youthful complexion, retaining the smooth looks and robust body of someone in the prime of their life. People often assume the character to be younger than they actually are, and the character's looks do not diminish with age. If the character is already young, this advantage can become a +1d disadvantage: *Baby faced*. The character's peaches-and-cream complexion makes them look immature, and causes others to doubt the character's maturity.

### ***\*Altruism (1d/2d)***

**Prerequisite:** 3d+ Empathy stat

**Effect:** The character tries to do good by others and is truly unselfish. The character gives to beggars and will not feel comfortable enjoying things when confronted with those without.

At 3d points, the character is compulsively generous, unable to enjoy his or her own luxuries whilst knowing that others are deprived. Characters with this trait do not find material possessions important, favoring people first, an attitude that helps them to make friends easily.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5/10

### ***\*Animal friendship (4d)***

**Prerequisite:** 2d+ Empathy stat

**Effect:** The character is especially good with animals, able to set them at ease and calm their hostilities. The character will not be attacked by guard dogs, thrown by a mount, charged by a gorilla or eaten by a shark. Characters with this advantage are also good at communicating with humans who have succumbed to their animal natures and forgotten their humanity.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 15

### ***\*Approachable (1d)***

**Prerequisite:** 2d+ Empathy stat

**Effect:** You appear friendly and non-threatening. Passers-by will ask you for directions, and old women ask you to help find their lost cats. This advantage can be helpful when trying to make a good impression, giving the character a +1d bonus when trying to win someone's trust. Of course, this veneer of amicability needn't be a reflection of your true personality: many sociopaths display an approachable persona.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

### ***Backup (1d/2d/4d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You have contacts that can bring in significant backup in dangerous situations.

At 1d this just means more equipment.

At 2d vehicles and equipment.

At 4d it means people, equipment and vehicles.

The exact effects remain up to the GM to decide. Some characters can call for help without this trait; any cop can call out an emergency and have several others come running to help. The Backup trait represents unusual gear and specialists.

### ***Bête-noir ally (3d/6d/9d)***

**Prerequisite:** A mental balance -10 or less

**Effect:** The character has a friend amongst the Children of the Night or similar group of outcasts. The player and GM should work out the exact nature of the NPC ally, the player's relationship to him/her, and how they figure into play. The more powerful the ally, and the more frequently they appear, the higher the point cost of this advantage.

### ***Body awareness (5d)***

**Prerequisite:** 3d+ Body stat

**Effect:** Your mind is highly attuned to your body, giving you a greater level of physical aptitude than most. You are also able to feel the onset of illnesses and injuries much sooner than others would. The character can sacrifice two points of height from a body related check to increase the width by one. If the height is two or less using *Body Awareness* does nothing.

### ***\*Chivalry (1d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is respectful of women and tries to help them out of bad situations when the need arises. A chivalrous character will never hurt or insult a female and will gladly fight to protect one. While in moderation this attribute is noble and classed as an advantage, a character who takes it too far might be considered slightly sexist or brash. The character does not necessarily have to be male, either.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

### ***\*Code of honor (1d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character lives by a strict code of conduct. The code may be religious in foundation, prohibiting the character from wilfully harming others or from lying or acting selfishly; it may be lifestyle choice such as straight-edge or veganism; or the character may simply be trying to live up to a good example set by someone they respect.

The player should write down which rules the character tries to live by, and the GM should reward the player for adhering to the parameters of the code during the game.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

### ***Contortionist (4d)***

**Prerequisite:** 3d+ Coordination

**Effect:** As a result of dedicated training and fortunate genetics, the character is able to twist, stretch and contort their body in extraordinary ways. They are able to bend over backwards, do the splits and squeeze through the tiniest of spaces. This trait grants a +1d to the character's *Agility* skills.

### ***\*Cool (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is able to stay calm under pressure or when confronted with an alarming or stressful situation (not necessarily a terrifying one), preferring to maintain full control of their emotions at all times. The character receives a +1d versus intimidation checks. This trait is the opposite of *Brash*.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

### ***\*Cultural flexibility (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** 2d+ Empathy

**Effect:** The character is the opposite of xenophobic, embracing foreign cultures and adapting to them with ease. This advantage does not confer knowledge of foreign cultures on the character (that comes from the skill *Education*); the character simply displays humility and respect for others and their culture, which helps them avoid conflict.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 10

### ***Danger Sense (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You gain +2d on reflexive Sense rolls for your character to detect an impending ambush. This kind of roll is typically made prior to the first turn of a surprise attack. Your character has a well-developed survival instinct that warns him of impending danger. Perhaps he's adept at reading subtle clues in his environment or he possesses an uncanny "sixth sense" when it comes to avoiding trouble.

### ***Direction Sense (1d)***

**Prerequisite:** 3d+ Sense

**Effect:** Your character has an innate sense of direction that instinctively allows him to remain oriented. They can enter unfamiliar territory and always retrace his steps back to their starting point, and can orient themselves to any of the compass points (i.e., face north, face south) without references.

### ***\*Dreamless (1d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character does not dream while asleep. In the world of Kult, this counts as a valuable advantage: the character is immune to nightmares caused by shock or magic. This advantage prohibits the character from entering Dreamworlds through sleep; it also means he cannot develop his own Dreamworlds or attempt to use dream magic, and as a result the GM is at liberty to treat this characteristic as a disadvantage.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

### ***\*Driving goal (1d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character's entire life is organized around the accomplishment of a single objective. For this drive to be an advantage, the goal they are striving to achieve must be something

positive and altruistic in some respect. The character's drive and spirit is inspiring to others. If the character allows their desire for their goal to become obsessive, this may lead to an unhealthy obsession (*Ambitious, Mental compulsion*).

**Mental Balance Bonus: 5**

### ***Eidetic memory (5d)***

**Prerequisite:** Mind 4

**Effect:** The character has a photographic memory and is able to recall scenes, faces and sensations with utmost clarity. The game master should provide the player with information that the character would know, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant (i.e. a police officer's badge number, the tones of a phone number dialed, etc.). The character also receives a bonus of +1d to any skill where memorizing facts is useful; most scholastic skills fall in this category. Furthermore, any tasks that rely on memory receive a +1 height bonus to the effect.

Note that an eidetic memory is not supernatural in nature, and so does not negate memory loss or amnesia resulting from magic or destruction of the Illusion.

### ***Endure heat/cold (1d/3d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is able to withstand extremes of heat and/or cold, possibly due to the environment in which the character grew up. Characters with this advantage take half normal losses from extreme temperatures.

At 1d points the character is able to withstand either heat or cold.

At 3d points the character is equally inured to both.

### ***Endure hunger/thirst (3d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is able to function for long periods of time without food or water, and incurs only half the normal losses when under such conditions. The maximum amount of time the human body can survive without water is four days. Dehydration sets in at two days, bringing on headaches, hallucinations and the cessation of perspiration. After the third or fourth day without fluids, it is likely that dementia will set in and the character will die.

### ***Endure pain (4d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is able to shut out sensations of pain and continue to function as normal. Elite athletes and special forces soldiers may possess this skill due to their harsh training regimes. The character receives a +1d to Body related equilibrium rolls.

### ***Endure torture (3d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** This advantage allows the character to withstand the psychological and physical rigors of torture, and receives a +1d bonus to both physical and mental torture Equilibrium rolls. The character also has a resistance to terror, confusion and humiliation, which makes it possible for them to endure lengthy torture without breaking down.

### ***Enhanced awareness (2d/6d/8d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character possesses the abilities of schizophrenics to extend their senses into other dimensions, see through time and speak to the dead. Note that this advantage does not mean the character is schizophrenic: they simply know how to deal with their abilities without cracking up. Characters with this ability do not have exact control over their powers or perception as

visions and fugues may occur without warning, though the character is not terrified or traumatized by them, at least not to an intolerable degree. It is up to the GM when the character experiences a vision, or whether or not it is possible to provoke one.

### ***Expert (4d)***

**Prerequisite:** GM's permission

**Effect:** This allows you to purchase Expert dice in skills, or upgrade existing dice in skills to Expert dice. Without it, you cannot possess Expert Dice. This allows you to buy them in any skill through normal character development. Expert Dice cannot be purchased in stats.

### ***\*Faith (1d/2d/3d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character possesses a deep-abiding faith in some concept or notion, which they believe is greater than themselves. This concept needn't be religious in nature: the character could have faith in the law or science, faith in the non-existence of God, faith in another person or group. The character is able to use this conviction to their advantage; it preserves their psychological stability and brings them peace of mind. If the character is determined to foist their beliefs on others, they have the disadvantage *Fanaticism*. The GM should decide the point value of the character's faith depending on how it figures in play.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5/10/15

### ***Far Shot (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** Coordination 3

**Effect:** Your character is an expert at long ranged shooting. They no longer suffer the -1d penalty to long range shooting.

### ***Fast healer (4d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character's body heals quicker than most people, cutting the recuperative times of injury and illnesses in half. The character is still susceptible to infection, however, and all other effects of wounds.

### ***Fast Reflexes (2d/4d)***

**Prerequisite:** Coordination 3

**Effect:** At 2d you receive a +1 width for initiative purposes per die.

At 4d it is a +2 width for initiative.

Your character's mix of sharp reflexes and steady nerves helps him get the drop on adversaries.

### ***\*Fearless (5d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is especially brave in when confronted with a frightening situation and receives a +1d bonus to Terror throws. The source of the character's bravery in the face of terrifying situations may stem from a genuine psychological strength and confidence, or may simply be a result of the character being too stupid or suicidal to care about harm being done to them or others.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 15

### ***Fighting Finesse (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** Coordination 3 + Melee Weapon [Type] 2

**Effect:** Your character prefers to fight with a chosen weapon in a manner that favors agility over

power. With that one weapon (a rapier or katana, for example), you may substitute your character's Coordination for Body when making attack rolls. This Trait may be purchased multiple times to gain agility with more weapons, one for each purchase.

**\*Forgiving (1d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character has a magnanimous spirit and is able to forgive or forget transgressions against them. Characters with this advantage cannot take oaths of revenge or hold serious grudges against others.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

**\*Gift of sleep (1d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character has the ability to sleep anytime, anywhere, and needs only half the time normal people need to get adequate rest (4-5 hours). Most common noises and movement due to travel or surrounding activity do not affect the character when sleeping.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

**Good Childhood (4d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You had an extremely stable home life and a solid emotional foundation from early childhood.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 20

**Good reputation (1d/3d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is generally well liked and accepted as a good person.

A 1d point advantage means the character is respected by their colleagues and respected by the people s/he works with.

A 3d point advantage means the character is renowned outside their profession, and may have acquired some amount of fame or publicity.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5/15

**Gunner (4d)**

**Prerequisite:** Expert Die in Firearm [machine gun]

**Effect:** Your character gains an Expert Die to their Spray Pool when using a machine gun.

**Gunslinger (2d)**

**Prerequisite:** Coordination 2 + Firearms [Type] 1

**Effect:** Your character's capability and experience with firearms is such that they can accurately fire two pistols at the same time. They no longer suffer the -1d penalty for multiple actions when firing both pistols in a single round.

The Merit can be used with pistols only.

**\*Honesty (1d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character tries his best to be honest. Others regard him as trustworthy and credible, and thus the character is the last person to be suspected of lying or being insincere.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

**\*Hulking (2d)**

**Prerequisite:** Body 2

**Effect:** The character is large, frighteningly large. While they may not be the strongest man around, their sheer size is enough to deter would be assailants or frighten most people with their girth. They appear hard, built, muscular even, without necessarily being as tough as they look. Hulking characters receive +1d to all intimidate rolls.

### ***Influence (1d-8d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:**

### **Government**

Examples:

1d - Trace utility bills.

2d - Fake a driver's license or birth certificate; Disconnect a small residence's utilities; Temporarily close a small road

3d - Fake a passport, green card, or death certificate; Close a public school for a day; Turn a single utility on a block on or off

4d - Initiate a phone tap; Fake land deeds

5d - Initiate or alter a movement for a city-wide program or policy; Rezone areas; Obliterate city and county records of a person

6d - Arrange a fixed audit of a person or business

For reference, there are essentially three forms of government: Federal, State, Local (City/County), each "sub"-sphere an independent area of the others. Influence in one form of government does not carry over into another.

### **Church**

Examples:

1d - Pass as a member of the clergy; Peruse general church records (baptism, marriage, burial, etc.)

2d - Track regular congregation members; Suspend lay members

3d - Open or close a single church; Look for the average church-associated hunter; Access to private archives of a church

4d - Discredit or suspend higher-level members; Manipulate regional branches

5d - Organize major protests; Access ancient church lore

6d - Access church relics or sacred items

7d - Use the resources of a Diocese .

Churches have different denominations and are not associated with one another. For example, if you are trying to get marriage records from a Baptist Church, your character can't do that if his influence is in the Catholic Church. Each denomination is considered a separate "sub" sphere.

### **Finance**

Examples:

1d - Learn about major transactions and financial events; Learn real motivations for financial actions; Raise capital

2d - Trace an unsecured small account; Raise capital to purchase a small business

3d - Purchase a large business

4d - Manipulate local banking (delay deposits, credit alterations); Attempt to ruin a small business

5d - Control an aspect of citywide banking (shut off ATMs); Purchase significant control of a major company

6d - Spark an economic trend

Remember that insider trading is still against the law and any attempt to do such will be subject to FCC charges. Influence beyond level 4 will be extremely restricted.

### **Health**

Examples:

1d - Access a person's health records; Fake vaccination records; Get blood

2d - Access to some medical research records; Have minor lab work done; Get a copy of a coroner's report

3d - Instigate minor quarantines; Corrupt results of tests or inspections; Minor alterations to medical records

4d - Acquire a body; Institute large-scale quarantines; Shut down businesses for "health code violations"

5d - Suggest special research projects; Have people institutionalized or released; obtain a license to practice medicine from the State Medical board. (This requires government contacts as well, preferably state)

### **High Society**

Examples:

1d - Learn about performance events well before the public; Obtain hard-to-get tickets; Get invited to parties

2d - Track celebrities and luminaries; Be a local voice in the entertainment field. Discredit promising rising careers; Hobnob well above your station

3d - Minor celebrity status

4d - Appear on a major talk show; Ruin a new club, gallery, or other high-society gathering

Who does your character know and how did they meet and what is the connection between them? With whom does he spend most of his time? Why is he so important to the social strata?

### **Industry**

Examples:

1d - Learn about industrial projects and movements

2d - Have minor projects performed; Arrange small "accidents"

3d - Organize minor strikes; Appropriate machinery for a short time

4d - Revitalize or close down a small plant

5d - Manipulate large local industry

6d - Cut off production of a single resource in a small region

Again, story is key here. Example: If you have contacts with every rice producer in the low country AND every grocery store supplier in the region (i.e. Agriculture Influence) not only does the Keeper want to know how, but why the heck you want to cut off the supply of rice in Charleston.

### **Legal**

Examples:

1d - Get free representation for small cases

2d - Avoid bail for some charges; Have minor charges dropped

- 3d - Manipulate legal procedures (small wills, court dates); Get good representation
- 4d - Issue subpoenas; Tie up court cases; Have many charges dropped; Cancel parole
- 5d - Close down all but the most serious investigations

Who are you lawyer friends? Do you have friends on the bar? Make it elaborate. NPCs can be allotted as necessary.

### **Media**

Examples:

- 1d - Learn about breaking stories early; Submit small articles
- 2d - Suppress small articles or reports; Get hold of investigative reporting information
- 3d - Initiate news investigations and reports; Access media production resources
- 4d - Ground stories and projects; Write fake stories (local only)
- 5d - Broadcast fake local/state stories

If you have contacts at one news station or newspaper that doesn't mean you can break the story at another station or paper. However, the media is highly competitive. If one station airs a sensational false story, another may want in on it and start investigating. That can be both bad and good for your plan, your inside contact. Note that for purposes of the campaign, Media Influence is tied to essentially one TV or Radio Station or Newspaper. Having leverage in one paper doesn't necessarily give you leverage in its cross town rival.

### **Military**

Examples:

- 1d - Gain access to non-secured parts of a military base
- 2d - Learn about local projects; Obtain military records
- 3d - Arrange for a court-martial of a minor officer; Obtain equipment from loosely-tracked inventories (ammunition)
- 4d - Access secure facilities; Hear about major operations before the fact
- 5d - Borrow serious personal equipment

Which Branch of the Military? How was the contact obtained? Higher levels of Influence here, (30% and up, generally means the Character has some level of Security Clearance. What did he do to get it? How did he get it? Or does his contact have the clearance?

### **Occult**

Examples:

- 1d - Contact common occult groups and know their practices; Know some of the more visible occult figures
- 2d - Access resources for most rituals and rites
- 3d - Know the general vicinity of certain supernatural entities; Access very rare material components, or occult tomes and writings
- 4d - Research Rituals
- 5d - Access minor magical items or rare rituals

Like Church, there are different systems of occult belief. If your character is a Wiccan, do not expect to obtain tomes or ritual items for Santeria.

### **Law Enforcement**

Examples:

- 1d - Learn police procedures; Get police information and rumors; Avoid traffic tickets
- 2d - Have license plates checked; Avoid minor violations; Get "inside information"
- 3d - Get copies of an investigation report; Have police hassle, detain or harass someone
- 4d - Access confiscated weapons or contraband; Start an investigation; Have some serious charges dropped
- 5d - Institute major investigations; Arrange setups; Instigate bureau investigations; Have officers fired
- 6d - Close down an investigation; Paralyze departments for a time

Note that this sphere is also sub divided into Local (city/county), State, and Federal sections. Influence in one does not necessarily give you pull in the others. Someone with State or higher Influence needs a good story to go with it.

### **Politics**

Examples:

- 1d - Identify real platforms of politicians; Minor lobbying
- 2d - Meet smalltime politicians; Have a forewarning of processes and laws
- 3d - Sway or alter political projects (local parks, renovations)
- 4d - Enact certain minor legislation; Dash careers of new and minor politicians
- 5d - Get your candidate in a minor office; Enact more significant legislature
- 6d - Block the passage of bills; Suspend laws temporarily
- 7d - Usurp countywide politics
- 8d - Declare a state of emergency in a region

Note that this sphere is also sub divided into Local (city/county), State, and Federal sections. Influence in one does not necessarily give you pull in the others. Someone with State or higher Influence needs a good story to go with it.

### **Street**

Examples:

- 1d - Has an ear open for the word on the street; Identify most gangs and know their turfs and habits
- 2d - Keep a contact or two in most aspects of street life; Access smalltime contraband
- 3d - Arrange some services from street people or gangs; Get pistols or uncommon melee weapons
- 4d - Mobilize groups of homeless; Have a word in most aspects of gang operations; Get hold of a shotgun or rifle
- 5d - Control a medium-sized gang

### **Transportation**

Examples:

- 1d - Travel locally quickly and freely
- 2d - Track an unwary target if they use public transportation; Arrange passage safe from mundane threats (sunlight, etc.)
- 3d - Seriously hamper an individual's ability to travel
- 4d - Temporarily shut down one form of mass transit
- 5d - Reroute major modes of travel; Smuggle with relative impunity
- 6d - Extend control to nearby areas
- 7d - Isolate small or remote regions for a short period

Note that it is much like the Industry Sphere, this sphere gets specialized as well, depending on the mode of transport used.

### **Underworld**

Examples:

1d - Locate minor contraband

2d - Obtain pistols, serious drugs, stolen cars; Hire muscle to rough someone up; Fence minor loot

3d - Obtain a rifle, shotgun, or possibly SMG; Distribute contraband

4d - White-collar crime connections

5d - Hire a hitman or firebug; Fully supply local drug needs of a small area

It is one thing to know a local pusher, it is another thing entirely to be able to call on a member of organized crime to do you a "favor". And remember, favors demand similar treatment. Once you are in, you can't get out.

### **University**

Examples:

1d - Access to low-level university resources; Get records up to the high school level

2d - Know a contact or two with useful knowledge or skills; Minor access to facilities; Fake high school records; Obtain college records

3d - Faculty favors; Cancel a class; Fix grades; Discredit a student

4d - Organize student protests and rallies; Discredit faculty members

5d - Falsify an undergraduate degree

6d - Arrange major projects; Alter curriculum; Free run of facilities

*Note that Influence here is restricted to a chosen college/ Tech School. Again, pull in one University doesn't necessarily carryover to the others.*

### ***In a flash (4d/8d/12d)***

**Prerequisite:** Coordination 3

**Effect:** At 4d you are able to make multiple actions in one combat round using the larger of the two dice pools.

At 8d you can make your second action without the -1d to your roll. Your third action would suffer the same -1d

At 12d you can make a third action without the -1d penalty. A fourth action (damn near impossible) would suffer a -1d.

Your character's mix of sharp reflexes and steady nerves helps him get the drop on adversaries.

### ***Influential friends (4d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is connected to people of influence and power (businessmen, politicians, law enforcement, media agents, crime bosses, etc.). The character is able to call in favour from these people to help them out of bad situations. The player and GM should make a list of the character's friends, plausibly linked their background.

### ***\*Inspiring Voice (5d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** Characters with this Quality have commanding, attention-grabbing voices that inspire others, and lend them a ring of authority. This Quality grants the character a bonus to any Social Tasks or Tests to command, inspire, or lead others.

**Bonus:** +1d Inspiration, Leadership and Counseling (If a skill has not been bought yet it becomes a 0d skill instead)

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

#### **\*Intuition (4d)**

**Prerequisite:** Empathy 3

**Effect:** The character has the ability to read another's body language and subconscious signals to determine if they are lying or hiding something. A character with *Intuition* can detect a lie with ease, and is also able to perceive signals within groups of people to figure out what they will do next. Characters with Intuition can exchange their Sense score with their Empathy score when making sense related skill checks regarding social situations.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

#### **\*Iron will (3d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character has a strong will and cannot be deterred once they have set their mind to something. Iron-willed characters are not easily influenced by the opinions or threats of others. They may also be non-suggestible and therefore immune to hypnosis. This advantage gives a +1d bonus to will-related Empathy throws, including magic.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

#### **The Law (2d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You are the law in your area. This gives you authority to enforce the standard laws of your city, county or country. This would represent something like a local sheriff. To increase your pull, add the Backup and Resources traits. For example, an FBI agent might have The Law (2d), Backup (4d) and Resources (2d) for a total cost of 8 dice.

#### **Library (3d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** If the character has access to his library, the character gets a bonus on Investigation and Knowledge related rolls. Depending on the nature of the library, the character might be able to take all or some of it with the character (packing a few books into the trunk of the his car or the back of the character's van, downloading a database to his laptop). However, if the character divide his library, it provides only part of the bonus (GMs discretion). Likewise, if the character's library is damaged but not destroyed (by a fire, explosion, shootout, plumbing leak, or some other such disaster to which agents are prone) the character's Library bonus also drops (again GMs discretion). The character doesn't have to buy the trait again to restore the bonus, but the character does have to spend a little time and energy (how much is up to the GM) rebuilding the character's collection, files, or whatever.

**Bonus:** +2d to research based searches.

#### **Linguist (5d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** Your vast knowledge of human languages makes it possible for you to try and understand languages which you have studied. With a succesful the character can understand or be understood when discussing simple subjects after only a few minutes of exposure to the

language.

**Bonus:** For familiar languages (ie Dutch vs German) you may roll the familiar language with a 1d penalty to grasp the other language. You may attempt any other human language even though you have no skill dice in it (normal penalties apply.)

Some supernatural languages may also be attempted but this is up to the GM.

**\*Luck (5d/10d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The fates smile upon characters with this advantage. The character usually benefits in situations where chance is the deciding factor. A lucky character can reroll one roll per day for 5d or two rolls per day for 10d.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5/10

**\*Magical intuition (10D)**

**Prerequisite:** Mental balance +25/-25

**Effect:** Magical intuition is the ability to perceive the presence of magical phenomena which are hidden from other people. Characters with this advantage are attuned to supernatural forces and are able to detect the presence of magic and the meaning of rituals.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 10

**\*Mental resolve (4d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You are able to make yourself believe in an alternate truth. For instance you have just seen a ghost and have to make unnatural roll, instead of doing this you may make your character believe it was just the wind and one of the curtains moving. This also works when you are close to a demon, but as you believe it's not there you won't flee and more than likely will be it's next meal. The GM decides when you can attempt to use Mental Resolve  
Requirements: GMs permission.

**Bonus:** You may roll any Empathy + Mental Balance Modifier for the above example.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

**Mentor (GM's Discretion)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** A mentor is a very special kind of contact. A mentor can provide information, education, and support. He can also provide cryptic plot hooks and be a general source of irritation or outright danger. The character should work with the GM to design an appropriate mentor. If the character wants to be anal about it, the player can build the character's mentor like an experienced PC, statting him out with starting points, then levelling him up with extra dice (GMs discretion). If a DG agent takes this trait the mentor can either be a high-ranking official in his alphabet soup agency or an experienced (ex)DG agent.

**Bonus:** GM's discretion

**Money (3d)**

**Prerequisite:** GM's permission

**Effect:** You're rich. For whatever reason (and this reason must be defined at character creation) your character doesn't have to worry about money; it's just there. How much you can buy and when remains up to the GM.

**\*Motherliness (1d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** Due to a maternal or otherwise non-threatening demeanor, the character has a knack for making children and other vulnerable people feel safe and understood. The character rarely has to worry about male aggression, and has the ability to calm troubled minds.

**Mental Balance Bonus: 5**

### ***Multiple identities (1d/3d/4d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character has one or more alternative 'official' identities, which s/he can assume at will. These false identities come with birth certificates, social security numbers, driver's licences, passports, credit ratings, etc.

At 1d points the character likely has one alternate identity of passable credibility, but professional scrutiny will reveal it as false (i.e. you could rent a car and borrow library book under the assumed identity, but don't count on making it through the airport).

At 3d points the character can either have two of the aforementioned identities, or a single superior false identity complete with professional-calibre documentation and a stamped passport. Such paperwork would not raise flags with local law enforcement, but could be revealed as fraudulent with an FBI or intelligence services check.

At 4d points, the character can have four identities of the first classification, two of the 3d-point classification, or one superior to both; an airtight ID which would fool anyone, and could only be revealed as fake by an investigation by the intelligence services.

Note that characters travelling under an aliases or who have purchased a fake drivers license do not need to buy this advantage.

### ***Natural Immunity (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** Body 2 + Health 1

**Effect:** Your character gains a +2 width on Health rolls to resist infection, sickness and disease. His immune system is exceptionally effective at resisting infections, viruses and bacteria. Your character can probably count on one hand the number of times he's been seriously ill.

### ***Natural Swimmer (1d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** In your past life you were a fish and you feel at home in the water. As a result you swim faster and can hold your breath for a longer period of time before suffocating.

**Bonus:** +1d to all swimming related skills (ie swimming, diving etc) +1d to resistance rolls vs drowning and +1w to swimming speed and 1d endurance while swimming.

### ***Nodal time perception (5d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You perceive points in time that are important and that will start chains of causality. You are not likely to see exactly to the hour when a change will occur, but you do sense an inexplicable feeling of dread, or alternatively, optimism, when watching certain things take place (for example, the character would feel distressed if they were in Boston airport in the early hours of September 3dth, 5d01).

### ***Occultist (5d)***

**Prerequisite:** Mind 3 or higher, Occult 2 or higher, History 2 or higher and at least two foreign languages.

**Effect:** An occultist devotes his life -- or at least his leisure time -- to studying the occult. He is familiar with many of the traditions of occultism and is likely to have heard of or be able to research many different aspects of occultism. As such the Occultist has a greater chance of success on anything occult related and an increased chance on Mythos based rolls.

**Bonus:** +2d to all Occult based rolls, +2 contacts occult.

At least 5d in occult (including the 2d bonus) character also gains a 1d Mythos as it can link his/her occult knowledge to their Mythos knowledge.

### ***Occult Mentor***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** Same as Mentor but with an Occult background.

**Bonus:** GM's discretion **Cost:** GM's discretion.

### ***\*Old soul (10D)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character has undergone many reincarnations, not all of which have been completely eradicated from their memory. As a result, their soul has become stronger, and may be subconsciously aware of the realms beyond death (perhaps through dreams of past purgatories or the Primal Sea). Characters with old souls tend to be very mature and precocious for their age, and may possess a unique charisma or level of insight. Whatever the character's orientation, it is usually more extreme having been honed over several lifetimes. The player and GM can work out who the character's past selves were, where they lived, and what they knew. The character may have visited Purgatory or Metropolis in their passage between lives, and is able to recall memories of that journey, particularly when in shock. The character may be able to tap into the knowledge possessed in past lives, leading to the possibility of 'remembering' skills and abilities they have no way of possessing in their current incarnation. The exact nature and ramifications of this advantage must be determined by the GM.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 10

### ***\*Optimism (1d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is the opposite of *Cynical*, and always tries to keep a positive attitude no matter how bad the situation gets. They always manage to see past the negative and find something positive. This may help others stay calm, though some may find the character's upbeat approach annoying. If the character takes their optimistic view too far, they will develop the disadvantage *Delusion*.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5

### ***\*Pacifism (1d/3d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is averse to violence and will try any means to avoid it.

At 1d the character will only ever use physical force in self-defense.

At 3d points, the character is totally prohibited from acts of violence no matter what the situation. The character will never be suspected of committing any violent acts.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 5/15

### ***\*Psychic power (8D/10D/12d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** Inclusion of this advantage is entirely at the GM's discretion. A psychic character has powers far beyond those of normal people, with the ability to read or influence the minds of others, contact the dead, or even to affect the physical world through some form of psychokinesis. Below are various forms of psychic ability:

*Clairvoyance* or *Remote Viewing* is the ability to project the normal senses to another point in space, seeing and hearing things which would otherwise be inaccessible to the character in their physical body.

*Precognition* is the ability to project the senses into the future and learn of things that have not yet come to pass. This ability differs from the advantage *Sixth Sense* in that it is much more specific in the information it reveals about the future.

*Psychometry* is the ability to see the history or future of a specific object, place or person usually through physical contact with it. A character with psychometry could hold a bullet and see the face of the person who fired it, for example.

*Telepathy* is the ability to communicate with another person using only the power of the mind. Only the person being telepathically contacted can hear the character's 'voice'. Telepathy may also be used to trigger emotions and sensations, such as fear, joy or depression. Exceptionally powerful telepaths may be able to render other people unconscious or comatose, destroy or alter memories, hijack their conscious mind or even cause death.

*Psychokinesis* is any ability that affects physical reality, such as telekinesis (the power to manipulate kinetic forces and move objects by concentrating on them), or pyrokinesis (the power to alter temperature and control fire).

***Mental Balance Bonus:*** 5/10/15

### ***Quick Healer (4d)***

**Prerequisite:** Body 4

**Effect:** Your character's healing abilities are remarkable, allowing him to bounce back quickly from injuries that would leave most people bedridden for months. Your character recovers from injuries in half the time that others do. All Shock damage can be healed with a good night's rest. Killing damage healing works as in the Nemesis rules (pg 27), except two days of complete rest is required instead of a whole week.

### ***Renown (3d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You are somewhat of a local celebrity. When choosing this trait specify social group or region.

**Bonus:** You gain 2d to your credit rating for the chosen group/region.

**Penalty:** Being famous has its disadvantages, everyone knows you and its almost impossible to not be recognized. (GMs discretion)

### ***Resilient (5d)***

**Prerequisite:** GM's permission

**Effect:** At the end of a particular combat or spell casting session (as judged by the GM), all the Shock damage you suffered evaporates. This does not affect Killing damage at all. (This trait fits best with fourcolor and some cinematic settings.)

### ***Resources (1d/2d/4d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You have pull and can call someone to look into things.

At 1d this means you know someone who has access to the research materials, a good head on his or her shoulders and who owes you a favor.

At 2d this jumps to someone with a little more professional skill who can actually travel to locations and look things up.

At 4d it means access to nearly any official file—DMV paperwork, criminal records, an FBI file, etc. Of course, the more important and useful the files, the more trouble your contact could get into for accessing them.

### ***Rich (1d/3d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is unusually well off, perhaps as a result of inheritance or good investments early in life. For 1d points the character is one level higher than normal in living standard for their profession. For 3d points the character has a living standard two levels higher. Note that this can become a disadvantage real fast in certain situations, as the character's wealth can breed animosity amongst friends and colleagues.

**\*Sixth sense (4d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character is able to unconsciously sense what is yet to happen. These premonitions can relate to both good and bad things: the character will experience a chill when someone is intending to attack them, or feel unusually upbeat when purchasing a lucky lottery ticket. The character's sixth sense applies only to themselves and does not detect imminent danger to other persons. Note that the feelings derived from *Sixth Sense* are extra-sensory and inexplicable, unlike the advantage *Intuition*, which relies on the normal senses and learned abilities.

**Mental Balance Bonus:** 15

**Social chameleon (1d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** You have the ability to blend into any crowd, and can picking up the lingo and mannerisms of social groups quicker than others. One day you could be a Yuppie yes-man the next an inner city dweller. The character only needs to expend half the normal points to acquire social skills such as diplomacy, acting, carousing, or etiquette.

**Status (1d/3d/4d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character occupies a higher position than most in society, such as a police officer, priest, businessman or politician. He is regarded as more credible than the average person, and may have special powers and responsibilities. The GM should decide on the exact point value of a character's status, with 1d being equal to a uniformed cop, 3d equal to a detective, army officer or high-ranking corporate executive, and 4d being equal to a judge or politician.

**Striking Looks (2d)**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** Your character is exceptionally attractive by modern standards; heads turn and conversations stop when they enter a room. For two dice, your character gets a +1 die to all Command or Empathy rolls when they attempts to use their looks to entertain, persuade, distract or deceive others. *Sexually Tantalizing* requires the character to have this trait.

**Strong Back (2d)**

**Prerequisite:** Body 3

**Effect:** Your character gains a 50% increase to their Lift and Throw thresholds. Eg, a character with Body 4 and this trait can lift 600lbs and throw 75lbs

**Strong Lungs (2d)**

**Prerequisite:** Athletics 2

**Effect:** Your character is practiced at holding their breath for long periods of time. They might be a pearl diver or escape artist, capable of staying underwater without aid for longer than most people believe is possible. The period of time they can hold their breath without making an Endurance roll is doubled. E.g., a character with a Body of 3 and this trait can hold their breath

for 6 minutes without making a check (ordinarily it would be 3 minutes).

### ***Stunt Driver (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** Coordination 3 + Drive [Type] 1

**Effect:** Your character can drive a vehicle and perform an unrelated action (e.g., fire a gun, punch another passenger) in the same round without incurring the usual 1d penalty for multiple actions. NOTE: this only applies to vehicles covered by your skill. This Trait can be taken more than once. Each time it applies to a new Drive [Type] skill.

### ***Talent (1d/3d)***

**Prerequisite:** None

**Effect:** The character has a natural aptitude for a certain skill, or a broad range of skills. Decide the nature of the character's talent and how wide is its scope: for 1d points the character is skilled in one particular skill, such as writing or driving. For 3d points the character excels at all skills of a similar classification, i.e. all physical skills, artistic skills, mechanical skills, etc.

### ***Toxin Resistance (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** Body 3

**Effect:** Your character gains +2 Width to existing matches on rolls to resist the effects of drugs, poisons and toxins. His body is capable of withstanding high levels of chemicals without suffering any ill effects. He's probably never had a case of food poisoning, much less a hangover.

### ***Two Handed Fighting (4d)***

**Prerequisite:** Coordination 4

**Effect:** Your character gains 1 Spray Die to the Melee Combat Focus of their choice, enabling them to use it on multiple (or the same) targets, enabling them to use their off-handed weapon to come in with a secondary attack. Targets must be called in advance.

### ***Whirlwind Attack (2d)***

**Prerequisite:** Coordination 4

**Effect:** Your character gains 1 Spray Die to the Hand to Hand skill of their choice, enabling them to use it on multiple opponents (NOTE: the skill must be nominated at purchase, and cannot be altered). You can purchase this skill multiple times, each time it applies to a different skill.

### ***Occult Library (3d)***

**Prerequisite:** Atleast 2 hardened noggles in The Unnatural and Occult 2 or higher.

**Effect:** Same as Library but with Occult material.

**Bonus:** +2d to occult research based searches.

## **Disadvantages**

This is where things veer away a bit from how they work, traditionally, in Nemesis. Usually in the Nemesis System you have a selection of Traits, which cost a number of dice and give you certain abilities. In order to make Kult's Mental Balance system work with Nemesis I had to do a bit of rearranging in order to incorporate it properly. One of the primary differences between Kult and Nemesis is the way their Madness Meter functions. In Kult it's more constricted, in that

you can only go towards the positive or negative, whereas in Nemesis you can have shades of grey regarding your sanity, but none of those shades are really positive. To deal with this I chose to eliminate Nemesis's sanity meter and replace it with a close translation of Kult's.

The way this works is by separating out Nemesis's Trait's that work more efficiently in a role as a Trait that costs dice, but will raise a character's mental balance. Disadvantages are harmful to your character. Those marked with an asterisk \* take away points from their mental balance, but have two **great** benefits: 1. they give your character more personality, and 2. they give you extra dice to spend on Traits and Skills!

You may wish to limit the number of Disadvantages a character may have, if they have *too* many it can be difficult to keep track and to role-play accordingly.

### **\*Aggression (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character has an inability to moderate and control their aggression, even towards the slightest annoyance. This disadvantage means that the character is unable to handle stress well and may lose all control and start lashing out vocally, or physically, when they find themselves in a worrying and demanding situation.

At +1d the character could be described as merely "hot-headed"; they are easily irritated and sometimes have an irascible attitude that usually only serves to conflate any problems that cause stress. While this makes the character difficult to get along with in hard situations, they are usually able to control their anger after an initial outburst.

At +3d, the character has a clinical anger management problem and often "sees red" when irritated, lashing out vocally or physically at those around them. They also have trouble dissipating their anger after stressful situation, and may remain enraged and unable to relax for several hours afterwards.

At +4d the character is dangerously aggressive almost all the time and is frequently driven to violence by the slightest provocation (Equilibrium + Empathy check required to avoid losing all control and attacking anyone in sight). This condition may be a result of a chemical imbalance or deeper disorder.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### **\*Ambitious (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character is motivated by a hunger for power, influence, and status and will go to any length to achieve it, perhaps limited only by what sense of caution or morality s/he might have.

At +1d the character could be called a "go-getter"; they never miss a day of work, kiss the boss' butt at every opportunity and are work-orientated in their spare time.

At +3d the character could be classed as a workaholic; they are first to arrive at work and last to leave, constantly focused on climbing the ladder to success and, should the opportunity present itself, going against their better judgment and morality in order to advance their career.

At +4d the character is a snake; they will seize upon any opportunity not only to advance their own prospects, but also to screw over any competition that may hinder them in their meteoric rise to power. They will have no qualms about breaking the law while doing so, either. Ambitious characters may be motivated by a past rooted in poverty or abuse, and this may give rise to other psychological disadvantages such as *Low self-esteem* or *Manic-depression*.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### **Amnesia (+4d/6d)**

The character cannot remember some period of their past due to amnesia, caused by either damage to the brain or by some form of breakdown. (If the character is only unable to

remember a single event or a limited series of events from their past, then they have a *Mental constriction*.)

At +4d, some of the character's memory is blank: the character knows their own name and background, but recent episodes of their life, in particular the days or weeks preceding the onset of their amnesia are missing from their mind. Though the character's life is hard for them to recall, they may regain some or all of their memories as time passes.

At +6d the character's memory is nearly all gone, retaining no idea of who they are or where they come from. They do not recognize loved ones or friends from their past, nor can they recall a single characteristic about themselves. If this is the case, the GM should choose a few advantages and disadvantages, and maybe some skills, the character is unaware of.

### **\* Animal enmity (+2d)**

For some reason, all animals perceive the character to be a threat, and so brings out aggression and fear in other species by their mere presence. No horse will allow the character to mount, and household pets raise their hackles and growl at them. If the character is ever confronted by a dangerous animal, they are invariably the first to be attacked. Hostile animals near the character may not necessarily attack on sight: instead, they will bide their time and attack when the character is unsuspecting or weakened.

***Mental Balance Penalty: -5***

### **\* Anxiety disorder (up to +5d)**

The character suffers from an anxiety disorder: a blanket term denoting some kind of fear or nervous condition that can come on suddenly and prevent them from going about their normal daily routine. The character may have a reliance on tranquilisers, anti-depressants or other medication to function normally. Anxiety disorders can be of varying nature and magnitude, including:

*General Anxiety Disorder (GAD)*, the most common form of anxiety disorder, characterised by uncontrollable worrying about everyday things. The frequency, intensity and duration of the worry are disproportionate to the actual source of the worry. Characters with GAD will often experience anxiety towards their job, their finances, and the health of themselves and their family, as well as more mundane things like timeliness for appointments, making the right impression on people or keeping their home and workspace well ordered. GAD can be worth up to +3d.

*Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD)* is a common form of disorder that causes sufferers to dread the social interactions and public events of everyday life, e.g. parties, meetings, or even making a phone call or walking into a shop to purchase goods. SAD stems from an abnormal fear of being judged, watched and possibly humiliated in public as a result of their behaviour, appearance or actions. There are many mild forms of SAD (gaining not more than +1d) including the fear of public speaking, known as stage fright; aversion to eating and drinking in public; or paruresis, or shy bladder, the inability to relieve yourself in the (real or imaginary) presence of others. A true social phobia is worth up to +4d, and in its most extreme form constitutes an overwhelming fear that can keep the character housebound and isolated for long periods of time.

*Separation Anxiety Disorder* is a condition in which the sufferer has excessive anxiety regarding separation from home, or from those with whom they have a strong attachment. This form of disorder can give up to +3d.

*Obsessive Compulsive Disorder* (not to be confused with the more serious Obsessive Compulsive personality disorder) is an anxiety disorder characterized by the obsessive need to perform some task (these tasks are known as rituals). In many cases the task that the OCD sufferer does may seem simple to the layperson, but the sufferer feels that he or she must perform it in some particular way for fear of dire consequences. Examples may be checking that

one has locked one's car many times before leaving it parked, or turning the lights on and off several times before leaving a room. Some people with OCD, which affects around 2-3 percent of the population, may be completely aware that their obsessions are not rational, yet they feel bound to comply with them because otherwise they experience a sensation of panic or irrational dread. For people with severe OCD, it may take several hours a day to carry out the compulsive acts. More often, they avoid certain situations and places altogether.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5 to -20

**\*Asthma (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character suffers from a respiratory complaint triggered by mild allergies, stress or exercise. Most people with asthma know about it and carry an inhaler to instantly alleviate the symptoms, but it is possible to live for years before suffering the first attack (usually triggered by stress or trauma). Refer to the Kult rules for suffocation and drowning to play out asthma attacks.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

**\*Attention deficit disorder (+1d/3d)**

ADD is a controversial syndrome which occurs most often in children, but is increasingly recognized in adults. Its symptoms in children include hyperactivity, inattention and impulsivity. In adults, the main problem is the sufferer's inability to structure their lives and plan simple daily tasks, thus inattentiveness and hyperactivity become secondary problems. Characters with ADD must make Empathy + Discipline checks in order to stay focused on any task they are undertaking; failure of the check means the character simply forgets all about what they are doing and pursues some other activity that has caught their attention. ADD sufferers may be prone to bouts of aggressive behavior (*Aggression*), and might also be hyperactive (*Mania*).

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10

**Bad luck (+4d)**

For some reason, the fates are aligned against the character and will seemingly do anything to see him fail. The character knows from his catastrophic track record that betting on horses, buying shares or going skydiving is not advisable. In any situation where an outcome is determined by chance (as opposed to skills and abilities), the GM should roll a percentile. On a result less than 5, the worst possible outcome will befall the character, if they fail.

**\*Bad reputation (+1d/3d)**

A cloud of suspicion hangs over your head at all times: for some reason, people have a bad opinion of you, and perhaps rightly so. When something goes missing, you are the first person people look to. Everybody expects the worst from you and is seemingly itching to run you out of town on a rail. You may be a convicted criminal, known liar or simply the victim of some slanderous accusation.

At +1d, this suspicion is a local or professional thing: if you're a doctor, it is likely only other doctors regard you as untrustworthy. If you're a cop, your colleagues at the station will not want to partner with you. Your neighbors try to avoid you at all costs.

At +3d, everybody is on your case. You can't walk down the street without people watching you from the corner of their eye. Word spreads quickly wherever you go that you are not to be trusted. This disadvantage differs from *Persecuted* in that it is based on some perceived misdeed in the character's past, and has no connection to the character's personality, race, sexuality, etc.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10

**\*Black sheep (+3d)**

Your parents never regarded you as their own, and now, as an adult, you are estranged from most or all members of your family. You suspect that maybe you were adopted, because it seems unlikely that you could be a product of their gene pool. Maybe you are a liberal in a family of conservatives, you might have been ostracized for being gay, or you may follow another religion, etc. There may be no apparent cause: your family does not love you.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -10**

**Blindness (+1d/3d/5d)**

The character's vision is somehow impaired.

At +1d the character's eyes are less than 20/20: he may be short or long sighted, night blind (trouble differentiating shades) or color blind.

At +3d, the character is extremely long/short-sighted, and while they may be classed as legally blind, may still be able to distinguish shapes and movement if not details (or, the character may only have one eye - this affects depth perception and field of vision). The character's Sense cannot exceed 2d for visual rolls. The character still has other senses intact.

At +5d the character is completely blind. The character cannot roll Sense for vision; his other senses may be elevated slightly. Add 1d to Sense on all rolls involving hearing or touch.

**\*Body dysmorphia (+3d/4d)**

You are pathologically sensitive or ashamed of your body, or, in the extreme case, you may feel that your body is not your own. Perhaps you work out constantly in an attempt to remodel yourself. You may abuse steroids or blow a fortune on beauty products and plastic surgery in an attempt to achieve your notion of physical perfection.

At +4d the character is convinced, due to some neurological condition, that a part of their body (usually a hand, in which case the condition is known as Alien Hand Syndrome) is not their own. The body part will occasionally misbehave or act out, doing exactly the opposite of what the brain wants. The character will avoid using the hand and may keep it covered.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -10/-15**

**\*Brash (+1d/3d)**

The character prefers actions to words. In any situation where others prefer to deliberate before acting, the character gets impatient and may rush into the fray without thinking.

At +3d, the character is pathologically incapable of considering the results of their actions and almost never pays any thought towards consequences.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-10**

**\*Chronic pain (+1d/3d/4d)**

You suffer from a chronic pain in some part of your body. This could stem from arthritis, osteoporosis, tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, or some other illness or injury. You may also experience numbness related to the condition. The pain requires that you take regular doses of painkillers and/or see a medical professional (such as a chiropractor or acupuncturist) frequently. The GM and player should work out the exact nature of the condition.

At +1d the condition is fairly minor: arthritis in one hand, mild toothache, fallen arches, etc. and the character can control the pain with pills.

At +3d the complaint is more serious, such as lower back pain or serious arthritis. Though the pain is debilitating, it is not constantly present, and so the character is able-bodied much of the time.

At +4d the condition is almost fully debilitating: osteoporosis, widespread arthritis, circulation problems, etc. The character needs a constant supply of painkillers and the regular attention of a medical professional. Characters with *Chronic pain* may also suffer a *Drug addiction* to painkillers.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-10/-15**

**\*Compulsively healthy/hygienic (+1d)**

Not exactly a neurosis (yet), this disadvantage means the character is very concerned about staying as clean and healthy as possible. The character exercises daily, takes multi-vitamins and protein shakes, and meticulously plans every aspect of their diet. The character may also have very rigid grooming standards, involving a range of hydrating soaps and herbal shampoos, exfoliating face-scrubs, etc. There may be activities the character is unwilling to participate in, places they won't want to go (the sewers, McDonalds, etc.)

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5**

**\*Compulsive Judas (+1d/4d)**

The character seems doomed to betray those he holds dear.

At +1d the character is merely untrustworthy. S/he does not put enough stock in personal reliability or trust, and so often fails to come through on promises or contracts when it comes to the crunch.

At +4d the character seems to be cursed to betray or otherwise sabotage any relationship they enter into. The of this curse may be supernatural or psychological: perhaps they have abandonment issues or problems fully trusting people, or perhaps greater forces are at work. Whatever the cause, they end up stabbing those they love in the back.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-15**

**\*Consuming hobby (+1d/3d)**

Your life is dominated by an all-consuming pursuit from which you derive some pleasure but no practical benefit. This central preoccupation could be anything: the point being that the character allows their interest to dominate their life at the cost of everything and everyone else in it, including work, relationships and even the maintenance of their own body.

At +1d the character spends most, but not all, of their free time engaged in their hobby. They may take days off work to pursue it, and have lessened interest in things outside of the hobby. While this is annoying to those around the character, it is not a major life problem.

At +3d the hobby dominates the character's life, and may have cost them their job and personal relationships. Almost all of the character's thoughts are structured around the hobby, and they find it hard to be interested in anything else, or relate to people who have no experience of the hobby.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-15**

**\*Covetous (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character longs for wealth, luxury or some form of material possession, and will go against their better judgment in trying to obtain it. Perhaps they are miserly and wish to accrue as much money as possible, or perhaps they desire a complete collection of Hummel figurines and are willing to kill to get it.

At +1d the character will not go against their greed easily. They may spend an inordinate amount of time ruminating on the fixated object, and will put up a protest when deprived of it.

At +3d the character's desire goes nearly unchecked - they will not willingly give up the thing they want without putting up a great deal of resistance. If confronted with the object of their desire, they must make an Empathy check to resist trying to possess it, even if the only way to possess it is to steal it.

At +4d, the character's lust for the fixated object is uncontrollable. If presented with an opportunity to obtain it, they will go to any lengths, harming others and selling out their friends to satisfy their greed. *Covetous* differs from *Ambitious* in that covetous characters are not necessarily concerned with power or influence, nor struggling to achieve any significant sway in

the world. They simply want to have some materialistic desire satisfied, and do not care about anything else.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

**\*Cowardice (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character is irrationally afraid of being harmed, and will go to any lengths to avoid risking their neck. The character may not be aware of their cowardice, believing themselves to be just as brave as the next person, until they are confronted with a dangerous situation, at which time their resolve will simply crumble. When in a terrifying situation which threatens them with physical harm, the character's Equilibrium + Body check suffers a penalty equal to the point value of their cowardice.

At +1d the character is easily scared and intimidated, and is averse to taking risks or exposing themselves to the possibility of violence, but will fight when cornered or when the odds are stacked in their favor.

At +3d the character is even more cowardly, and needs to pass an Equilibrium + Body check in order to enter combat or any potentially dangerous situation. If the roll is failed, they will run away or otherwise go to any lengths, no matter how demeaning, to save their own skin.

At +4d the disadvantage is extreme: truly dangerous or heroic acts are simply impossible, as the character will under no circumstances endanger themselves, and may even betray close friends and family in an effort to save themselves from being harmed. If the character feels they are in danger for more than a few minutes, they will lose control of their bodily functions.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

**\*Cruel (+1d/4d)**

The character delights in causing suffering. If character is simply cold-blooded and unconcerned with causing pain and suffering to others, then they are a *Sociopath*. Some people, however, are perfectly normal and nice most of the time, but when angered or given offence, make their enemies pay, and love doing it. This disadvantage has two levels of intensity:

At +1d, the character would never contemplate hurting a friend or loved one, but would gladly go to any extreme in punishing their enemies.

At +4d, the character is a genuine sadist, and never passes up the chance to inflict pain on others when the pretext exists for doing so, no matter how close the connection to their victim might be.

A *Cruel* character need not be into whips and chains; malicious gossip, workplace conspiracies and petty acts that bring harm and pain to people are just as effective as physical violence.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-15

**\*Curse (+3d/5d)**

The character is the victim of some form of supernatural curse. The more the character tries to escape their cruel destiny, the more they are dominated by it. The GM should decide the exact nature of the curse (it may entail another disadvantage; a curse of eternal unhappiness means the character will always be *Depressed*)

A +3d curse is something that does not dominate the character's life.

A +5d point curse controls the character's life and blights their entire destiny. The character may or may not realize that they are cursed.

*Some possible curses:*

You are doomed to die poor and alone

Your first-born son will die

Wars/plagues/natural disasters follow you  
A supernatural entity has 'marked' you  
Cursed to go to purgatory after death

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10/-20

**\*Cynic (+1d)**

The character tends to see the worst in everything and does not hesitate in pointing it out to others. This does not mean that the character is anhedonic or depressed: they are simply very pessimistic in their outlook and forever expecting failure. This disadvantage may grate on others' nerves (particularly those who try to be optimistic).

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5

**Deafness (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character is partially or profoundly deaf. This disadvantage should work the same as *Blindness*, with PER being reduced for any roll requiring hearing, but being elevated for the other senses. Hearing-impaired people will probably know lip-reading and/or sign language.

At +1d, the character is merely hard of hearing. Perhaps they have lost hearing in one ear, or it is simply diminished with age or some medical condition. The character Sense is lowered by 1d for rolls dependent upon hearing.

At +3d the character is legally deaf, but not profoundly deaf, and is able to hear loud noises and raised voices. The character's Sense cannot go above 2d in tasks requiring hearing.

At +4d the character is profoundly deaf, and has been since birth. No hearing-dependent Sense rolls are allowed.

**\*Death wish (+3d)**

Deep down, the character longs for death. This subconscious drive for self-destruction may stem from a multitude of causes and manifests in an equal multitude of ways. Often a person with a death wish not recognize their desire for death even to themselves, and will not contemplate suicide. They may engage in dangerous acts or destructive habits such as drug abuse or violent behavior. Note that *Death wish* is not the same as *Low self-esteem*. The character with *Death wish* may have a normal opinion of themselves, but still secretly long for death.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10

**\*Debt (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character owes someone something: money from college loans, revolving credit, etc., or a favour for help received in the past. The character has trouble forgetting about the debt and finds it difficult to focus on other things.

If the debt is monetary in nature, the player should reduce the character's living standard by one level. The GM and player should decide on the general size of the loan, and more importantly to whom it is owed. In the world of Kult, repo men are the least of a debtor's worries. If the debt is of a favour owed, then the player and GM should work out the back-story for the disadvantage (it may be repayment of a deed done for a character's family in the past - a character involved in organised crime or *zaibatsu* corporate culture may be honour-bound to repay what was done for his father or grandfather).

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

**\*Delusions (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character holds beliefs that have no basis in reality, or at least reality as understood by society at large. The character refuses to abandon such beliefs even in the face of

overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The point cost is determined by the impact the delusions have on the character's life, and how people react when they discover the delusion.

At +1d the character may entertain delusions of grandeur, mild prejudices or foolish beliefs that are easily dismissed. People may disagree with the character or view them as an ignoramus when they discover their delusion.

At +3d the character believes something that is not only false, but probably offensive and potentially dangerous: strong prejudices or offensive revisionist history beliefs, or outlandishly silly notions like hollow/flat/donut-shaped earth theories. The character believes these notions completely, and will engage in lengthy arguments with anyone who tries to persuade them otherwise.

At +4d the character holds violently extreme or laughable views which nobody else agrees with. The character believes these ideas wholeheartedly, and may structure his or her whole life around them, rarely with any company, and will even go as far as violence in defending their beliefs. If the belief is strange enough, the character runs the risk of being committed on mental health grounds, and their problems adapting to reality may well be the beginnings of *Schizophrenia*.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### ***Dependant (+1d/3d/4d)***

The character is responsible for the welfare of another, perhaps a child or invalid spouse or parent. The GM should determine the point value of the disadvantage depending on how often the dependent comes into play, and to what extent the character's life is affected.

At +1d, the character may have to support a spouse or teenaged child. While not helpless, the dependant relies on the character financially and emotionally. At +3d the character has to support a small family or an invalid spouse or parent. They cannot afford to lose their job or be absent for long periods of time.

At +4d the character is responsible for a large family or a critically ill person. They have to devote most of their energies to looking after their dependant/s, and may have little time to themselves.

### ***\*Depression (+1d/4d)***

The character finds being happy to be an uphill struggle. Characters with depression tend to forever see the bad side of things and want to quit when the going gets tough. Depressed people are often dependent on pills or alcohol to make it through the day. They may sleep long hours and cry uncontrollably for seemingly no reason.

At +1d the character is melancholic, always preferring the negative response to the positive, and generally wallowing in misery at every opportunity. While this can be annoying to others, the character's daily functioning is not adversely affected, and they are able to maintain a job and strained relationships.

At +4d the character is clinically depressed, and may entertain thoughts of suicide. Their daily functioning is heavily disrupted by their condition, and they may lack even the will to get out of bed in the morning, much less maintain a job or any relationships. When in a particularly despondent state of mind, depressive characters must make an Empathy check to accomplish any kind of significant action or series of actions. Failure of the roll means the character cannot find the will to undertake it, and will resort instead to crying and lying down.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-15

### ***Diabetic (+3d)***

The character suffers from diabetes mellitus, and needs regular daily shots of insulin (up to four times a day) to avoid hyperglycemia, which will send them into shock and then possibly a coma. The character needs to be constantly aware of their fluctuating blood sugar levels, which can

change in response to diet, exercise and physical and psychological stress. If the character misses an insulin injection, they will suffer symptoms such as unquenchable thirst and appetite, and perhaps nausea and trembling. People entering a state of diabetic shock may experience rapid breathing and mood swings between hostility and mania, confusion and lethargy. If the character misses an insulin shot, their stats decline by 2d10/4 for six hours, and each hour they must make a Body roll to avoid unconsciousness and eventual coma.

### ***Domineering (+1d)***

The character is a control freak, forever telling others what to do and using the threat of physical violence or psychological cruelty towards those who resist. The character always expects others to listen to their opinions and follow their advice/orders, and has problems accepting the authority of others. Domineering characters make no secret about their desire for control, and may be regarded as overzealous or even as a bully.

***Mental Balance Penalty: -5***

### ***\*Drug addiction (+1d/3d/4d/5d)***

The character craves substances such as alcohol, narcotics (includes nicotine) or medication for their happiness, even against their better judgement. Most addictive substances eventually have an adverse effect on health, and many are also illegal, and may land the addict in prison for possession or dealing. If the character's addiction is strong enough, there is no depth to which they will not sink in their pursuit of a fix, resorting to stealing and committing major crimes, selling their body, or betraying friends if it will end the craving. When an addicted character hasn't gotten their usual fix, they are sluggish and feel ill, and so their actions suffer mild penalties until the addict can get what they need. Advanced addiction to stronger narcotics such as heroin can cause serious physical side effects including shakes and tremors, vomiting, depression, suicidal tendencies, etc.

At +1d the character relies on heavily on cigarettes and booze, or light use of marijuana, or the occasional painkiller or line of cocaine to take the edge off the day and relax.

At +3d the character could be said to be a functional alcoholic or mild addict, dependent on all-day drinking or heavy use of marijuana, painkillers or hallucinogens, or light use of cocaine or barbiturates.

At +4d the character is fully addicted to cocaine or barbiturates, or is at the beginning of a heroin habit.

At +5d the character is half way to hell from long time heroin and other narcotic use, and would require a lengthy course of methadone treatment to reduce the habit. They will never be free of their drug dependency, however.

Obviously, drug addicts are a bundle of disadvantages, and will probably also have *Death wish, Low self esteem, Depression, Debt*, to name but a few.

***Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-10/-15/-20***

### ***Dyslexia (+1d/3d)***

Dyslexia is a learning disorder which causes difficulty in trying to understand written language. A dyslexic individual may be perfectly intelligent and articulate in speech, yet is incapable of learning to read due to some problem in their neurological make-up (dyslexia need not have an effect on the character's Education skill).

At +1d the character can read, but only very slowly and with some degree of frustration. A Mind + Education must be made to interpret or write any message, with a chance (depending on the height of the roll) of totally misunderstanding the message.

At +3d the character is completely illiterate, and can never learn to read or write. There are other forms of learning disability which may co-exist with dyslexia:

*Dyspraxia* is a developmental coordination problem that makes it difficult for the sufferer to make their body do exactly what they want it to do. Dyspraxia affects fine motor control, balance, and kinesthetic coordination, lowering the character's Coordination stat dependent upon the severity of the condition.

*Verbal Dyspraxia* is a disorder characterised by difficulty in the use of certain speech sounds.

*Dysgraphia* is a disorder characterised by distorted and incorrect writing.

*Dyscalculia* is a disorder characterised by a problem learning fundamental numerical skills. Often people with this disorder are capable of understanding very complex mathematical concepts and principles but have difficulty processing formulas and even basic addition and subtraction.

### **\*Eating disorder (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character is compelled to eat too much or too little. They may have anorexia or bulimia, or be at the other end of the spectrum and be an obese gastropod with an uncontrollable lust for food. The player and GM should decide the character's weight in relation to this disadvantage. If the eating disorder has existed for a while, it is likely the character has a range of other health problems, lowering their attributes.

At +1d the character's eating habits are manageable. They pay a little too much (or too little) attention to what they eat and may constantly be on an improper diet. There should be no significant attribute penalties at this stage, though the character's problem is noticeable in their appearance.

At +3d the character has a disorder and may jeopardize their health if they continue eating as they do. The character must make an Empathy + Resist check whenever confronted with food to see if they are able/unable to eat. The character's Body die should be lowered to account for this.

At +4d the character has a serious disorder, and may need psychological help to overcome it. The character must make an Empathy + Resistance check every day to determine if they will eat at all/do anything but eat for the duration of that day. The character cannot have a Body or Coordination attribute above 2. Note that being malnourished or grossly over-nourished may cause *Chronic pain, Illness* and/or *Asthma*. Refer to the rules for hunger in the Kult rulebook to determine what penalties malnourished characters suffer.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### **Ecomaniac (+1d)**

The character is obsessed with the environment, and cannot bear to see it defiled. They recycle compulsively, hurl abuse at passing SUV drivers and spend weekends picking up trash on the beach and picketing zoos. The character can barely stand to walk across grass, and will try anything to ensure that nature's harmony goes unharmed by the evils of humankind. This ecomania may be the result of a deeper neurosis or vague feelings of *Guilt*.

### **\*Egotist (+1d/4d)**

The character holds themselves in inordinately high regard, always thinking of him/herself before anyone else. Egotistical characters have the belief that the world orbits around them, and will always read a situation only according to how it affects them personally.

At +1d, the character is mildly egomaniacal and has an inflated opinion of their own importance and uniqueness. Their default thought processes are to look out only for "number one", with no regard for others or their feelings. While this is an obnoxious flaw, it does not qualify as a pathology.

At +4d, the character could be classified a megalomaniac, and as such is nigh incapable of registering genuine respect for anyone but themselves, and possessed of an unflinching self-

belief which can make them not only annoying to deal with, but nearly impossible to relate to and perhaps even dangerous.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-15

**\*Fanaticism (+3d)**

The character is fanatically devoted to some idea, religion or group. The character is unable to see the world in any other way than relating to their beliefs. If anyone suggests differently, they are wrong and must be indoctrinated/ignored/wiped off the face of the Earth.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10

**\*Fixation (+1d/4d/5d)**

The character is obsessed with a specific person. At +1d the character is considered lovesick; perhaps they have just been dumped or recently divorced. The character experiences longing for the person they love, possibly leading to *Depression*.

At +4d or +5d, the character's obsession becomes a little less ordinary. As a result of some psychological instability, the character is irrationally obsessed with someone they needn't have even met before (maybe an actor or a chief political figure). They spend most of their spare time cutting out pictures in magazines, digging the net for information about the subject. The character may alternatively be obsessed with a person living in the apartment opposite, spending nights with expensive surveillance-equipment looking into their windows, bugging their calls and secretly getting to know their personal life.

For 4d it is uncertain whether the character is going to do something drastic. If they don't get a grip on themselves, it is likely that the obsession will evolve into a +5d disadvantage.

For 5d the character's view is entirely clouded - they both love and hate their subject, and are likely to spend every waking hour thinking of ways to keep him/her for themselves by either taking them hostage or murdering them. These fantasies will quickly become a reality should the character go into shock.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-15/-20

**\*Forgotten (+3d)**

For some reason, the character has been blotted out of peoples' memories. The character may have slipped through society's cracks and sunk into obscurity as a homeless person, or perhaps people actively try to forget their association with the character due to some acrimonious or embarrassing event in the past. The character has no close friends, and is surrounded only by strangers. Even the character's family members (parents and siblings; a forgotten character cannot be married) rarely attempt contact.

**\*Flashbacks (+1d/3d/4d)**

Certain events and situations trigger memories that you would rather forget. Sometimes these memories are so overpowering that they overlap reality. Flashbacks may be linked to and caused by an *Anxiety disorder* or *Posttraumatic stress disorder*.

At +1d the character's flashbacks are short and mild, and usually triggered by being unexpectedly reminded of the distressing experience. The character's perceptions are altered slightly for a few minutes, and the experience leaves them shaky and distressed.

At +3d the flashbacks are more severe. They are also caused by unexpected reminders of the past trauma, but they last twice as long and may require an Empathy + Mental Balance Modifier check throw for shock.

At +4d the character's flashback experiences are nearly uncontrollable and can happen at any time. They will involve many traumatic experiences and Equilibrium + Empathy checks. Such powerful flashbacks threaten the structure of the Illusion as the character's personal dream intrudes. The GM may want to turn such experiences into adventures in themselves.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

**\*Reckless gambler (+3d/4d)**

The character is addicted to gambling.

At +3d the character is addicted to *one* particular form of gambling (horse racing, poker, slots, etc.).

At +4d the character is addicted to any and all forms of gambling: he'll play pennies with kids in the street if he has to, and can only derive the necessary thrill when playing for unreasonably high stakes, whether he can afford it or not. Once engaged in gambling, the character is unable to leave the game until either all his money is gone or he has won everything he can win.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10/-15

**\*Guilt (+1d/3d)**

The character is consumed with feelings of guilt over some past misdeed for which they feel responsible. These feelings cause problems for the character and may cause them to desire punishment.

At +1d the character has vague feelings of guilt, and worries about everything from the ozone layer to what baby Jesus thinks of them.

At +3d the character either *has* committed or *believes they have committed* some reprehensible act in their past which they are unable to let go of (this may be tied in with a character's dark secret). Guilt can be the root of many other disadvantages, such as *Depression, Drug addiction* or even *Death wish*.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10

**Gullible (+1d)**

The character is very suggestible and naive, and is easily deceived by others. Perhaps they have lived a life shielded from the duplicitous nature of the modern world, and as a result they have trouble perceiving any lies they are told. The character is the kind of person that believes the pitch of every salesman that comes their way, and is disappointed when the products they buy do not live up to the advertising. This disadvantage cannot be combined with the trait *Intuition* or the disadvantage *Cynic*.

**\*Habitual liar (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character lies a lot, either out of boredom and a sense of superiority to those around them, or out of personal insecurity.

At +1d, the character's desire to tell whoppers is controllable: s/he merely has a habit of telling lies instead of the truth whenever it seems practical (or funny) to do so.

At +3d the character will go out of their way to lie, provided they feel confident that the lie can be concealed.

At +4d the character is pathologically incapable of telling the truth.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

**Haemophilia (+4d)**

Due to a genetic disorder, your blood is deficient in coagulants, meaning that when a blood vessel is broken, the wound will not scab and will continue to bleed for a long period of time. Such dangerous wounds may not only be external: blood may be leaked internally, into muscles, joints or hollow organs, meaning the character's life may be in danger from practically any injury. Haemophilia can be controlled through regular injections of clotting factor such as Factor VIII. Though the disease most often affects men, female haemophiliacs are not unheard of. Adult female sufferers of the disease must inject clotting factors to survive menstruation.

**\*Haemophobia (+3d)**

You suffer from a nervous condition that causes you to pass out at the sight of blood. This condition differs from other phobias in that it triggers a physiological response that causes pressure on a nerve in the brain stem, making the sufferer fall immediately unconscious. The condition can exist from birth and need not stem from any traumatic event. The character must make an Equilibrium + Empathy check to avoid passing out at the sight of his own or someone else's blood. When the character received a killing wound, he must make an Equilibrium + Body check to remain conscious.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -10**

**\*Hatred (+1d/3d)**

The character is consumed by a strong hatred of someone or something. This hatred may be irrational and grounded in prejudice, or it may stem from experiences in the character's past, and is entirely understandable, if a little overblown.

At +1d the character's hatred causes them to lash out with verbal abuse and threatening behaviour, or simply blank the subject of their hate and leave their company as soon as possible.

At +3d the character is consumed by hate and anger, and finds violent confrontations hard to avoid when in the company of the focus of their hate.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-10**

**\*Haunted (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character is haunted by some kind of supernatural entity or entities (the souls of dead people, a demon of some kind, etc.) of which they may or may not be aware. The haunting spirits may manifest in the character's dreams, or may make themselves known in the waking world through frightening and possibly threatening acts. Haunting by small, harmless spirits costs +1d. Haunting by anything dangerous or terrifying gives +3d or +4d (GM's decision based on the strength of the entity).

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-10/-15**

**Health/Hygiene negligent (+1d/3d)**

The character is neglectful of their diet, appearance and/or personal hygiene, rarely taking showers, brushing his/her teeth or using deodorant. This can be because the character has something else on their mind or because they were simply born a slob. The character's eating habits are equally revolting. Most people will not want associate themselves with the character unless they absolutely have to.

**Hypoallergenic (+1d/3d/5d)**

You are afflicted with a range of allergies that affect your life, and must be wary of the things you eat, touch or breathe in.

At +1d the character has an allergy to a food, such as shellfish or nuts. These allergies may not be immediately apparent, instead they may exist undetected until the body goes into anaphylactic shock and requires an adrenaline shot to survive.

At +3d the character has an allergy to a common but avoidable substance, such as soaps or latex. Merely touching the substance, or breathing it in, results in the character going into mild shock.

At +4d the character has a serious allergy to something very common, such as sunlight (Xeroderma Pigmentosa) or dust. This condition shapes the character's life and limits his interaction with people. Exposure to the allergic substance may result in serious illness or injury to the character.

**\*Hypochondriac (+1d/3d/4d)**

You are convinced that you are ill. You tell anyone who will listen about your multitude of symptoms, pay constant visits to the doctor to complain about your health, and perceive the slightest discomfort as a potentially fatal illness. A more extreme form of this disorder is Munchausen's Syndrome, where the sufferer will actually resort to secretly harming themselves (over-medicating, ingesting harmful substances, physical abuse blamed on another, etc.) in order to get attention. Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy is a (highly disputed) disorder whereby the sufferer will secretly harm someone in his or her care to procure attention (it's most common form is in mothers who harm their children).

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

**\*Illness (+1d/3d/4d/5d)**

The character suffers from a long-term or chronic illness of some description. Characters who contract a brief illness such as the flu do not need to list this as a disadvantage. A mild illness (up to +1d) is a mere annoyance, such as a recurring skin complaint or irritable bowel syndrome.

At +3d, the character's condition is serious, but is under control and is not necessarily life threatening provided they take medication and receive occasional medical attention. Examples would be hypertension, organ problems or a respiratory disease.

At +4d, the character is suffering from a potentially fatal condition, and the quality of their life is diminished by their disease. This may be something like HIV, heart disease or cancer in temporary remission.

At +5d and above, the character is suffering from a fatal disease that will eventually kill them. They may require regular medical attention and a gamut of medication to control their symptoms. Note that if the condition's only manifestation is pain (i.e. an ulcer, a bad back, arthritis, etc.) it should only be listed as *Chronic pain*, and not *Illness*.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15/-20

**\*Impotence (+3d)**

The character is unable to become sexually aroused due to some psychological or physical problem. In men this manifests as the inability to achieve an erection. In women it is perceived as frigidity and the inability to have an orgasm. This disadvantage may or may not be linked to *Sexually repressed*, as the character's spirit may be willing but the flesh is weak.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10

**\*Internet junkie (+3d)**

You are addicted to the Internet. You crave the anonymity, the jargon, the freedom. Using the web is your primary source of communication with other people, and you have been logged on for so long that you can barely remember how to interact with people in the real world. Sometimes you go weeks without seeing another human being, all the while communicating with scores of people just like you around the world. When it comes to speaking to a person face to face, however, you may be a stuttering fool with no social graces.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10

**\*Insomnia (+1d/3d)**

For some reason, either psychological or physiological, the character cannot sleep.

At +1d the character is able to grab only brief periods of rest (3 or 4 hours) per night.

At +3d the character finds sleep nearly impossible: they invariably wake twenty or thirty minutes after falling asleep, no matter how tired they are. The character may be reliant on medication to allow them to sleep at all. Insomniacs often have trouble focusing their attention

for any length of time. They may also become bad tempered, depressed, delusional (or even MB imbalanced or slightly schizophrenic) after long periods without proper rest.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10

**\*Intolerance (+2d)**

The character is intolerant of other people's opinions and behaviour and is not afraid of telling them how wrong he thinks they are. The character's fascistic criticisms can be very annoying, and may lead to other disadvantages such as *Hatred* or *Fanaticism* if unchecked.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10

**\*Jealousy (+1d)**

The character is consumed by jealousy towards some other person, and covets some aspect of the person's life, possessions or personality. This probably stems from some dissatisfaction in the character's life, and they have a sense of injustice towards the person because of their undeserved gifts. *Jealousy* taints the character's relationship with the person and may lead to stronger feelings of antipathy (*Aggression*, *Hatred*, etc.) in the future.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5

**\*Lecherousness (+3d)**

You enjoy the company of the opposite/same sex a little too much, and have a very strong libido which you are not afraid to make known. You too often misinterpret comments as come-ons, and are very forward in your pursuit of sex. Characters with *Lecherousness* may be accused of sexual harassment and end up in a lot of fights, and may have trouble remaining faithful to one lover.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10

**Low pain threshold (+3d)**

The character does not endure pain well. The character's Empathy + Resist is halved when determining if they can remain conscious when wounded or otherwise experiencing a high level of pain. Characters with *Low pain threshold* may also display *Cowardice* as a result of their heightened fear of pain.

**Low self-esteem (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character views him/herself as fundamentally bad or unworthy of respect, and may think of himself or herself as ugly, stupid or unliked. This self-hatred may manifest in any number of forms, and be the root of many other disorders. The character might openly degrade himself and tell people he is useless, or simply avoid contact with other people. Self-esteem is a person's self-image at an emotional level, circumventing reason and logic. The term differs from ego in that ego is more an artificial aspect; one can remain highly egotistical while underneath have very low self-esteem, so the character may occupy the other end of the spectrum and aggressively demand respect from others to feed his ego and counter his own low self-opinion. The point value of the disadvantage is determined by how the character's self-loathing affects their life.

At +1d, the character views themselves as somewhat unworthy, and has a tendency to sell themselves short and criticize their own actions harshly.

At +3d the character is convinced that they are worthless, to the extent that the disadvantage becomes pathological - the character's excess degree of self-criticism keeps them from functioning normally, and it causes various other problems: perhaps *Drug addiction* or *Depression*.

At +4d the character despises himself and is a danger to himself and others. His self-hatred is overwhelming and lays behind any number of co-existing disorders from *Self-injury* to *Death wish*.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### **Maimed (+3d/4d/6d)**

The character has lost the use of one or more limbs as a result of an accident or disease (such as cerebral palsy, Lou Gherig's disease, etc.), affecting their Coordination stat. If the character has lost the limb, they may wear prosthesis of some kind, which effectively hides their disability when clothed.

At +3d the character may lack the use of a hand or have difficulty walking due to some problem with one of their legs, which requires a walking stick or crutches.

At +4d the character is paraplegic.

At +6d they may be missing their arms or legs or be quadriplegic.

### **\*Mania (+4d)**

The character is almost always extremely upbeat and unnaturally cheerful, unwilling or unable to relax even for a moment. Marginal or peripheral concerns can occupy the character's mind for hours and seem extremely important. Manic characters have lost all sense of the proportion of everyday events, and will often rush ahead without thinking, their mind racing in a hundred directions at once.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -15

### **\*Manic-depression (+1d/5d)**

The character suffers from a mood imbalance which causes them to experience periods of hyperactivity and happiness followed by equally extreme periods of crushing despair.

At +1d the character has a condition called cyclothymia, which causes their mood to fluctuate over a 24-hour period. They may wake up happy and effusive, and end the day in a morbid state of depression. These fluctuations in mood are rapid and can be unpredictable, but their rapidity works to reduce their magnitude, and the character may be able to spend most of their days on a more or less even keel.

At +1d, the character is fully bipolar, their moods fluctuating from one extreme to the other over the course of several days or weeks. When in an ecstatic phase, the character may engage in exciting, daredevil antics, possibly risking life and limb in order to express their joy and excitement. When the pendulum swings the other way, however, they may be unable to stop crying or rise from their bed, and may even contemplate suicide. It is possible to normalise manic-depression with medication, but some sufferers reject help in order to keep experiencing the 'highs' associated with the condition.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-20

### **\*Manipulative (+1d)**

You could be described as interpersonally exploitative: you enjoy holding control over the people around you, and use any means at your disposal to make them do what you want. Manipulative characters are disadvantaged because they derive enjoyment from controlling people - their relationships are one-way streets from which they derive the only benefit.

*Manipulative* differs from *Domineering* in that the manipulative character is more subtle, and probably crueller, in their methods, employing methods such as emotional blackmail, promises of sex or friendship rather than overt intimidation.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5

### **\*Martyr (+1d/3d)**

The character suffers from a compulsive urge to martyr themselves and portray themselves as carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders. The character believes that the world owes them a debt of gratitude and never does anything for anybody without expecting some return. Some people may find the character's non-stop moaning insufferable.

At +3d the character will even adopt someone else's problems as their own, provided they can derive some extra suffering and griping from it.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10

### **\*Mental compulsion (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character is compelled to commit or dwell on some specific act or idea. This can be anything from a small quirk to a disturbing fixation. Perhaps the character feels the need to always avoid the cracks in the pavement or has mild kleptomania, or perhaps they have some very strange, annoying and possibly pathological personal habits or impulse control disorder. *Mental compulsion* is a kind of catchall disadvantage for any psychological issue without it's own listing (of which there are hundreds). The GM should decide the exact point value of the character's compulsion. This disadvantage needn't be linked to a specific event in the character's past; it may simply be the outward manifestation of internal tensions or anxieties.

*+1d Mental compulsions:*

*Co-dependant* - the character is one half of an unhealthy relationship in which each partner feeds the other's neuroses.

*Obsessive rumination* - the character dwells on past events for hours, days or weeks at a time.

*Show Off* - the character is compelled to seek validation through exhibitionist behaviour.

*Shopaholic* - the character is reliant upon 'retail therapy' to relieve stress.

*Some more serious compulsions:*

*Cannibalism* - a fixation with eating human flesh

*Cleanliness* - the character is obsessed with germs and bacteria and must clean everything around them (this is more extreme than *Compulsively Healthy/Hygienic*)

*Collecting* - the character is a hoarder; everything they have ever owned, they *still* own.

*Memorisation* - the character tries to retain every useless fact they learn.

*Numeromania* - compulsive need to juggle numbers.

*Orderliness* - the character must place everything in its rightful place or position.

*Pyromania* - an obsession with lighting fires.

*Superstitious* - the character would not walk under a ladder if their life depended on it.

*Trichillomania* - the character despises their own body hair, and plucks, shaves and rips at every opportunity.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### **\*Mental constriction (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character has some unpleasant event from their past buried in their subconscious mind.

This experience or knowledge may be linked to a character's dark secret and other disadvantages (it may surface in the character's psyche as *Nightmares*, *Phobias* or a *Death wish*). Only through hypnosis, psychotherapy and other treatments can the character hope to uncover their lost memories and deal with them. The point cost of the disadvantage is up to the GM, to be determined in relation to the relevance and importance of the missing knowledge.

*False memory* is a condition whereby a psychiatrist implants (knowingly or unknowingly) memories of an event in the mind of their patient. These memories seem totally real to the patient and may be very distressing, nevertheless they are untrue and imaginative. Victims of false memory often claim to have experienced satanic abuse or alien abduction as children, though in fact their recollections stem from some dark, taboo source in their own mind or

that of their psychiatrist.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### **Migraine (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character is prone to migraines which debilitate them for several hours or even days at a time. During a migraine attack, all the character's skills are modified by  $-1d10/2$  (to the nearest  $10^{\text{th}}$ ), and rolls against pain stemming from anything other than the headache are automatically failed.

At +1d the character has a 5% chance of having a migraine attack that day, with the attack lasting  $2d10/4$  (to the nearest  $10^{\text{th}}$ ) hours.

At +3d the character has a 20% chance of an attack lasting  $2d10-1$  hours.

At +4d the character has a 40% chance of suffering a strong attack that lasts  $1d10/2$  days.

A migraine is a neurologic disease characterised by sharp attacks of pain, usually occurring in one half of the skull and caused by excessive blood pressure on the nerves around the brain. A migraine attack can come on suddenly, and may be accompanied by nausea, vomiting, photophobia (ocular sensitivity to light), and occasionally visual or other sensory disturbances (known as *aura*). Migraine runs in families and tends to begin in adolescence, although some research indicates that it can begin in early childhood or even in utero.

*Classic migraine* (migraine with aura), involves attacks preceded by the experience of aura. *Common migraine* does not have any indicator of the impending headache. A few (perhaps fortunate) people actually get aura without migraine.

Migraine may be brought on by a number of triggers, from chemicals in the diet or environment, to situational triggers such as seasonal changes, certain weather patterns, menstruation for women, or going hungry. There are a range of drugs can be prescribed, and many long-term sufferers may have developed specific coping methods such as warm baths or relaxation in a dark room which help to bring relief.

### **\*Mistaken identity (+1d/4d)**

The character is continually mistaken for someone else, such as a famous celebrity or an infamous criminal.

At +1d people are at first convinced that the character is a famous face from the TV or movie screen, and may ask for autographs.

At +4d people have the suspicion that the character is a nefarious terrorist or murderer, and are wary of them. The character is generally more conspicuous wherever they go, and may attract potentially hostile attention when amongst strangers.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-15

### **Mortal enemy (+4d)**

Someone from the character's past has sworn to kill them. The enemy will go to any lengths to get his hands on the character and /or his friends and family. This includes sending letter bombs, hiring hit men, tampering with the character's car, ruining their business, etc. The enemy is always beyond the reach of the authorities: either above the law, or regarded as fictional by incredulous police officers. The character is on his own in dealing with the threat.

### **Narcolepsy/Epilepsy (+1d/4d)**

A miswiring of your brain causes you to fall asleep or undergo a seizure at inopportune moments.

Narcolepsy (+1d) causes you to suddenly fall unconscious whenever you get too stressed, scared or excited. The deep sleep comes on suddenly: you may be driving a car or walking down the street when it strikes. Onsets can last from five minutes to several hours. The

character can attempt an Empathy check to control their condition and either resist the episode, or make sure they are at least out of harm's way before they fall unconscious.

Epilepsy seizures are classified *petit mal* or *grand mal*. The first involves the sufferer becoming physically transfixed or immobilised for a short period, but retaining consciousness throughout the seizure. In a *grand mal*, the sufferer experiences violent convulsions and collapses into unconsciousness. Epileptic seizures are often caused by some external stimuli such as fast-blinking lights.

At +1d, an epileptic character suffers only occasional (1d10% chance each day) *petit mal* seizures.

At +4d, the risk is significantly higher, and the condition much more serious (1d10/2)x10% chance each day of some kind of seizure – if the character successfully makes an Empathy + Resist check, the seizure will be *petit mal*. Failure of the roll means the seizure is *grand mal*. Characters with acute epilepsy may have to take barbiturate-like medication, which in turn may cause *Manic-depression*.

### **\*Needy (+1d)**

The character has an inordinate desire for emotional attention, and can be quite overbearing towards anyone they are in a relationship with. They bombard friends with constant phone calls, text messages and e-mails, trying not to be left alone for any length of time. If the character's desire for constant company is strong enough, they may suffer from *Separation anxiety disorder*.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5**

### **\*Nightmares (+1d/3d)**

The character suffers from nightmares (+1d) or night terrors (+3d). A nightmare is a dream of particular intensity with content that the sleeper finds disturbing. They are associated with rapid-eye movement (REM) periods of sleep, and may be accompanied by physical movement (*Sleepwalking*). These dreams may cause the character to wake up in a state of uncontrollable fear and agitation, and may occur as often as every night. Plagued by these dreams, the character may be unable to get a decent amount of sleep and is therefore constantly tired (this does not count as *Insomnia*). Nightmares may stem from other, deeper disorders or from disturbing experiences in the past.

Night terrors are a more serious condition in which the character's dream is so terrifying and realistic that they are unable to differentiate their dream from reality even after they have awoken. Characters with night terrors may have to make Empathy + Mental Balance Modifier checks when experiencing one of these distressing fugues to avoid shock.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-10**

### **\*Oath of revenge (+1d)**

The character has sworn vengeance for some crime or misdeed committed against them. The character spends time contemplating the punishment of those who have wronged him/her. If the opportunity to get back at the character's enemies arises, s/he will find their thirst for revenge irresistible.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5**

### **\*Oedipal (+3d)**

The character is obsessed with their parents, and makes every attempt to impress them (even if they are long dead). Such a condition may stem from being raised in an emotionally cold household, or from too much competitive pressure being placed on the character as a child. As an adult the character is haunted by visions of their disappointed parents and is crippled by

regret for their own perceived lack of achievement. Oedipal people may have accomplished a great deal in their lives to be proud of, yet they stubbornly feel that their own merits are insignificant compared to those of their idealised parents.

This disadvantage may be the root of *Low self-esteem*.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -10**

**\*Panic disorder (+1d/3d/4d)**

*Panic Disorder* is a condition stemming from high stress or another psychological disorder (such as *Anxiety Disorder*), and manifests in the form of panic attacks - periods of intense fear or discomfort, usually lasting no more than 30 minutes. Symptoms of a panic attack include trembling, dizziness, shortness of breath and sensations of choking or smothering, and even dreamlike sensations and distortions of perception.

A character who suffers a panic attack will be struck by a fear that they are dying, going crazy or losing control of their emotions and behaviour (though this does not constitute shock). The experiences also provoke a strong urge to escape or flee the place in which the attack began, and, when associated with chest pains or breathlessness, frequently results in desperately seeking medical attention. Panic attacks are most often experienced by people with anxiety disorders and other psychological conditions involving anxiety, though panic attacks are not always indicative of a mental disorder. Up to 10 percent of otherwise healthy people experience an isolated panic attack each year.

Characters with a +1d panic disorder suffer a 10% chance of suffering a panic attack when stressed out.

At +3d the chance increases to 40%.

At +4d the chance is 80%. The character may resist the attack by making an Empathy + Mental Balance Modifier check with a -1d penalty.

All attributes are lowered by 1d or 2d (1d10 high or low) for the duration of the attack, and the character is unable to properly focus their attention for more than a few seconds at a time. They will be highly distressed and may eventually fall unconscious or even comatose if the situation does not abate.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-10/-15**

**\*Paranoia (+4d)**

You are convinced that the world is aligned against you. 'They' may not admit it to your face, they may go to extraordinary lengths to hide their collusion and intentions, but you cannot shake the feeling that everyone is plotting your demise.

Some might say that, in the modern world, a degree of paranoia is healthy. It only becomes a disadvantage when the character starts to see conspiracies and danger where there is none. This has the effect of making the character's tales less likely to be believed, even when they are true. Paranoid characters often suffer from *Delusions* and have some form of emotional problem, most likely stemming from abandonment issues.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -15**

**\*Persecuted (+1d/3d/4d)**

You belong to a marginalized and oppressed social or economic group. Medical help, welfare and personal rights are hard to come in your situation, and the police may not care about crimes committed against you. People may spit on you in the street or cross the road when they see you coming, forever expecting the worst. You have no hope of advancement in your job, if you even have one.

At +1d the character is part of a large but oppressed group. While life is harder for the character due to the prejudices of the society they live in, there is a wide social group who share their problems and provide support.

At +3d the character is tacitly prejudiced against by the society they live in, and so are de facto second-class citizens (i.e. homosexuals in conservative cultures, the Eta in Japan). The police are rarely on the character's side, and there may be civil laws in place that discriminate against the character and deprive them of rights, such as the right to marry, adopt or find high-level employment.

At +4d, the character's society actively discriminates against them and does not respect any of their human rights (i.e. blacks in Apartheid-era South Africa, homosexuals in Iran). The character is denied the right to vote, to use state services, or to find adequate employment. They may also be subject to curfew and acts of state-sanctioned violence and oppression.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

#### **\*Phobia up to (+5d)**

A phobia is an irrational, neurotic fear of some specific thing, and is the most common form of anxiety disorder, affecting as much as 20% of adults to varying extents. The source of the fear - known as the phobic trigger - can be anything: heights, darkness, animals, spiders, loud noises, large bodies of water, air travel, etc. There are literally thousands of different phobias, though the psychological aspect of the condition does not vary. The point value of a phobia is not determined by how often the character encounters their phobic trigger, but how extreme and debilitating their reaction is when they are confronted by it.

Simple phobias (less than +1d) make the character uncomfortable when confronting their phobic trigger. They will feel repulsed and will be visibly distressed, but no Empathy throw is required in such a situation.

Serious phobias (+1d to +3d) could be classed as mild mental problems, and cause a high level of distress in the character, and in extreme situations may result in disorientation and panic attacks. When encountering their phobic trigger, the character must make an Empathy + Mental Balance Modifier check to stay calm and in control. Failure of the roll means the character runs away, experiences a panic attack or faints.

Very serious phobias (+ 4d to +1d) induce such fear in the character as to cause temporary paralysis, unconsciousness or a state of dissociative fugue. At this stage, the phobic trigger should be considered terrifying, meaning that if the character fails their Empathy + Mental Balance Modifier check when confronted by it, they will go into shock. If the character is confronted by a terrifying event which also triggers their phobia, then their Empathy + Mental Balance Modifier check suffers a penalty equal to the point value of their phobia.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5 to -20

#### **\*Poltergeist (+1d/3d/4d)**

The character is surrounded by an aura of uncontrolled psychokinetic ability. Whenever the character is stressed or scared, this force causes things to move about, explode, catch fire, etc. The force stems from the character's mind and is not an independent entity (that would be *Haunted*). The poltergeist force may help and hinder the character in equal measure, and its power should be determined by the point value: +1d causing small items to be misplaced or re-positioned. +3d causes actual physical damage to the character's surroundings, such as the room shaking or fires suddenly erupting. At +4d, the character's power causes houses to fall down and people's heads to explode.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-20

#### **\*Post-traumatic stress disorder (+3d/4d/5d)**

The character has experienced an event or series of events in their past which has permanently traumatised them. PTSD, previously known as shell shock or combat fatigue, may be experienced following any traumatic or series of experiences that do not allow the victim to fully

recuperate from the effects of stress, and, for example, is fairly common amongst soldiers who have served during wartime.

Symptoms of PTSD include *Insomnia, Aggression, Depression, Nightmares* and *Flashbacks*. As these disadvantages are symptoms of the same condition, they should not be listed separately. Instead, the GM should determine what symptoms the character suffers from according to the list below:

+3d PTSD: distribute +4d between *Depression, Nightmares* and/or *Flashbacks*.

+4d PTSD: distribute +1d between *Aggression, Depression, Nightmares, Flashbacks* or *Panic disorder*.

+5d point PTSD: distribute -30 points between *Insomnia, Aggression, Depression, Nightmares, Flashbacks* or *Panic disorder*.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -10/-15/-20**

#### **\*Pretentious (+1d)**

The character is continually trying to impress those around them by displaying how clever and well read they are. They frequently reference pseudo-intellectual sources which they themselves barely understand. This serves as a terrible annoyance to those trying to have a conversation with the character, as they digress into unnecessarily complex subjects. The character may also be pedantic, correcting people's grammar and pronunciation at every opportunity.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5**

#### **\*Rationalist (+4d)**

You refuse to accept the existence of the supernatural, i.e. any phenomena not readily explainable by the known precepts of modern science and common sense. Everything has a scientific explanation, and anyone who thinks otherwise is a delusional madman or a malicious trickster. Rationalist characters will not acknowledge the reality of magic, the supernatural or religion, firmly believing anything that cannot be explained by science is mere humbug and the machinations of a flawed or uneducated mind.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -15**

#### **\*Reactionary (+3d)**

The character holds outmoded or offensive views and does not mind voicing them. The character may be homophobic, sexist, racist, or in some other way prejudiced against sections of humanity different from themselves. Right-wing reactionaries are anti-progressive, longing for the simplicity and authority of bygone times, where men were men and women were either cooking or pregnant. Conversely, a reactionary character need not be a rightwinger: s/he could hold equally powerful, misconceived and out-dated prejudices as a radical left-wing liberal (believing all governments and multinationals are inherently evil, believing all convicts are nice guys unjustly oppressed, irrationally detesting 'the system').

**Mental Balance Penalty: -10**

#### **\*Rebellious (+1d/3d)**

The character feels an uncontrollable need to differentiate themselves from the rest of society in some or many aspects of their life, and generally tries to be uniquely contrarian in their appearance and/or personality. The core of the problem is that the character refuses to conform to social norms in a grandiose style that causes more trouble than is reasonable: if everyone agrees with an idea, no matter how sensible and rational that idea is, the character purposely adopts the opposite stance, no matter how illogical or extreme. If the character is asked to perform some task, they will outright refuse to do it out of spite for the person 'ordering' them around. Physically, this disadvantage may manifest in small ways such as the character's style

of appearance (perhaps they have outrageous hair or tattoos) or more significant ways (perhaps they refuse to wear clothes altogether). Psychologically, the disadvantage may be more troubling and be a symptom of a deeper problem in the character's psyche.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10

***Rival (+1d/3d/4d)***

The character is locked in a highly competitive rivalry with someone. The rivalry is in no way healthy: sometimes it escalates into a bitter war or attrition where both parties may act illegally and cross any line to get at the other. The player and GM should work out who the rival is and how they figure into play.

***\*Schizophrenia (+3d/4d/5d)***

The character suffers from some form of schizophrenia or dementia, and has difficulty distinguishing the real world from the imaginary or hallucinatory. There are several different classifications of schizophrenia, depending on the various symptoms the sufferer displays, including so-called thought disorder (belief that thoughts can be placed in or taken from the individual's conscious mind by another party), loss of motivation, emotion and even memory, attention deficit, social cognition problems and auditory and visual hallucinations.

Schizophrenic characters may be targeted by the powers that be and placed in lunatic asylums and prisons, coerced into taking mind-numbing drugs to force their senses to conform.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10/-15/-20

***\*Secret (+1d/3d/4d)***

There exists a hidden fact about the character which they would rather keep hidden. The more damaging the fact would be if it got out, the higher the point value of the disadvantage. For example, an embarrassing fact that could diminish a person's credibility or damage their livelihood would be worth +1d.

A potentially arrestable act such as a past crime, which could see the character in jail if it became known, would be worth +3d.

If the secret could cost the character and perhaps others their lives, it is worth +4d.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

***\*Self-injury (+3d/4d)***

As a self-injurer you hurt your body on purpose: usually by cutting your skin, burning, beating, flagellation, etc. You carry the tools of your neurosis - perhaps a few razorblades - wherever you go. There can be many reasons for self-injury; it can be used as a coping method as a consequence of self-loathing, as an extreme attention-seeking mechanism, or as a silent cry for help that you conceal under your sleeves.

Your urge to self-harm may be triggered by specific situations or experiences: feelings of stress or anxiety, loneliness, embarrassment, guilt, anger, even happiness. Other triggering events could be anything that brings repressed or distressing memories (like sexual situations for victims of sex abuse). Whenever a triggering condition is met, you will have to make an Empathy check to resist it, otherwise you will be consumed by the urge to hurt yourself and release the pain.

If you use self-harm only occasionally as a coping method, this disadvantage is worth +1d: you do not need to carry your razorblades everywhere (though you like to have them near), but you have to choose a triggering condition: when it is met, you will make out any excuse, hide and use anything you have at hand to hurt yourself. This disadvantage is worth 4d if you self-injure regularly: you must have many triggering conditions, and you usually cut on a daily basis. Your arms are badly scarred, and you may cover them up with long sleeves even if the temperature is warm. You dread going to swimming pools. You may try to avoid sex as you feel

people will notice your scars. You may feel that cutting is an addiction you cannot stop. This disadvantage should be combined with *Ugly* for scares left in the wake of this disorder.

***Mental Balance Penalty:*** -10/-15

***\*Sexually repressed (+1d/3d/4d)***

The character has not developed a normal, adult sense of sexuality: they may be intimidated by the thought of sex, they might be a closeted homosexual, or they might have some fetish they dare not confess even to themselves. Feelings of sexual arousal cause the character to loathe themselves, and this fear and anger is usually transposed onto those who are able to enjoy sex. The GM should decide the point value of the character's repression based on its repercussions and effects on the character's behavior.

Sexually repressed characters may over-sublimate their passions into "acceptable" forms, such as their work or other pursuits. Or they may veer to the other extreme and become violent and angry at the things that remind them of the carnal possibilities they cannot enjoy.

***Mental Balance Penalty:*** -5/-10/-15

***Sexually tantalising (+3d)***

The character possesses a body that captivates the attention of others. Their infatuation taints their interaction with the character, as every action and comment is geared toward getting the character into bed. The character is viewed as a simple sexual plaything or a piece of meat by those attracted to them; they will rarely listen to what the character has to say. This disadvantage requires the trait *Attractiveness* and cannot be used with the disadvantage *Ugly*.

***\*Sexual neurosis (+1d/3d/4d)***

Characters with this disadvantage may be nymphomaniacs/satyrs, sadomasochists, or possessed of some other psychological aberration that affects their sexual functioning. Perhaps the character is afraid of the opposite sex, is oversexed, or can only enjoy sex under some specific circumstances (i.e. in public places, in the dark, watching porno movies, indulging in rape fantasies, etc.)

***Mental Balance Penalty:*** -5/-10/-15

***Sleepwalker (+1d/3d/4d)***

The character moves about when asleep, perhaps just occasionally waking up a few feet from their bed, or perhaps undertaking complex acts such as driving a car, preparing a meal or murdering someone, all while their brain is totally unconscious. The point value of this disadvantage is dependent upon the frequency of the character's sleepwalking incidents, and the nature of the tasks they perform (if any) during them. At +1d, the character migrates from their bed a few times each week. While annoying and potentially dangerous, the condition is relatively commonplace.

At +3d, the character unconsciously performs tasks about the house, perhaps for many hours during the night. They may wake up having cleaned the bathroom, cooked a meal or completed some other everyday task seemingly on auto-pilot and without any memory of doing so (other than as a dream, perhaps).

At +4d, the character's sleepwalking is more of an unconscious life: they may hold conversations with people, prepare and eat meals, do housework, and undertake complex tasks such as driving their car or operating their computer for many hours. People interacting with the sleepwalker in these periods will have little inkling that they are, in fact, technically asleep, and as such they will hold the person responsible for their actions when they wake. At this stage of the disorder, the condition may become *Multiple personality disorder*.

***Speech impediment (+1d/3d/4d/5d)***

The character is unable to speak clearly due to a lisp, stutter or some other condition. This may cause listeners to misunderstand the character, to laugh or become annoyed, focusing on the errors in their speech rather than the message they are trying to make.

At +1d, the impediment does not affect how people understand the character, but it is noticeable. It is a mere annoyance to listeners.

At +3d the character's speech is hard to understand and listeners must roll for Sense to comprehend the message.

At +4d the character has a major speech impediment and cannot be easily understood by people who are not accustomed to hearing their voice; they must roll Sense -1d to understand anything the character says.

At +5d the character is mute and is unable to speak, and must rely on sign language or written messages to communicate.

### **\*Split personality (+4d)**

Also known as Dissociative Identity Disorder, characters with this condition have two or more separate and differentiated personalities within their mind. Each personality may or may not know of the others, and are frequently arranged in a hierarchy of dominance with the most aggressive or assertive personality at the top. Split personality is a very rare condition, but its cause is usually some traumatic event early in a person's development. New personalities are created as a coping mechanism to avoid guilt or memories of abuse (or dark secrets), and may come to the surface when the original personality feels threatened or stressed. The player and the GM should decide how the personalities fit together with the original personality, and under what conditions they come to the fore.

Additional personalities may believe themselves to be completely different from the original: one may be an aggressive adult male, another may behave as a fearful child, another may believe they are of the opposite sex to the host, all existing within the same individual; the possibilities are wide-ranging, but a reason must exist for the formation of each.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -15**

### **Socially inept (+3d)**

You are totally lost when it comes to fitting in with other groups. All the different types of body language and slang they use just confuses you. When out of your usual social setting your Social skills are at -2d. This disadvantage may be the result of deeper problems, perhaps an *Anxiety disorder*. Alternatively, the character may simply find themselves forever being foolish in social situations, perhaps out of plain bad luck or a misguided sense of social interaction, without there being any deeper disorder to blame.

### **\*Sociopathy (+5d)**

Also known as Antisocial Personality Disorder or psychopathy, sociopaths cannot care about or relate to others. Their own satisfaction is all that matters to them. This condition may stem from emotional neglect or abuse as a child, or may simply be a result of the character's genetic nature. As an adult the character is callous, possessing no conscience or feelings of moral responsibility. They pursue only those relationships which will benefit them in some way, either financially or as relates to their desire to control those around them. Sociopaths are master manipulators and value the thrill of control above all else.

They can conceal their emotional numbness from those around them, and may appear as normal, happy people. However, their condition does not cut them off from society: in fact their total lack of concern for others may aid them in their ambitions. The garden-variety sociopath may be a petty thug, a merciless serial killer, or a Fortune 500 CEO or high-ranking politician. Sociopaths account for approximately 2% of the population.

Characters with this disadvantage are hard to scare and hard to play. They do not suffer the same limitations and sensitivities to horror as normal people. The only horror they can comprehend is that which threatens them directly. They will not be particularly disturbed by seeing another person beaten or tortured (at least not enough to warrant an Empathy + MBM check), even if that person is a family member or supposedly close friend. For this reason, the GM may want to preclude sociopathic PCs from the game if he finds them too troublesome.

This is a good disadvantage for a twisted femme fatale or hitman character. This disadvantage precludes *Empathy*. Sociopaths are often *Cruel* and rarely suffer from *Low self-esteem* or *Socially inept*. They may also have a *Talent* for persuasion and lying, and a high degree of tolerance for fear (*Fearless*).

**Mental Balance Penalty: -20**

#### **\*Stalker (+1d/3d)**

Someone out there likes you... a lot. They send you letters or e-mails every day, leave gifts for you, follow you around and try by any means to get close to you (if you are famous in some way, this disadvantage could also mean you are forever tailed by unscrupulous paparazzi).

At +1d the stalker is a fairly harmless geek with a pathological crush on you. They are an annoyance, but you can manage to screen them out of your life.

At +3d, you feel reason to be afraid of the stalker. They might appear in the strangest of places, gain access to your home despite complex security systems, send you weird or menacing messages, etc.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5/-10**

#### **\*Sterile (+1d)**

The character cannot have children. This may or may not be an issue for the character, depending on their background: if the character is one of a long line of rich bankers expected to produce an heir to the family fortune, for example, this could be a major drawback.

#### **\*Stoic (+1d)**

The character is incapable of expressing emotion and has trouble communicating their feelings to others. They may be viewed as callous or rude by those they meet, and have some difficulty sustaining relationships. Note that this disadvantage does not mean that the character is without emotion, only that they refuse or have difficulty expressing themselves on any level other than the most sober and rational.

**Mental Balance Penalty: -5**

#### **\*Submissive (+3d)**

The character is easily dominated and fears responsibility. They avoid decisions, waiting for others to take charge for them. Submissive characters need authority in their life, and will listen to anyone with a Command score higher than their Empathy score, and may have to make an Empathy + Resist throw of their own in order to do something other than what they are told (unless it is something suicidal or against the character's nature).

**Mental Balance Penalty: -10**

#### **\*Symbiotic link (+3d/4d)**

The character is supernaturally connected to another person or otherworldly being (the character's symbiote). When the symbiote is injured, in pain or kills, the character is overwhelmed by the experience as if seeing it themselves. Intense experiences can cause what seem to be waking nightmares for the character at all hours. They are unable to awaken or shut out the images and sensations. The greater the disadvantage, the more intense and frequent

are the experiences: the character's body may even be wounded when the symbiote is harmed. In extreme cases the symbiote may become aware of the afflicted person and then hunt him or her down. The character's mental balance is also tied to that of the symbiote. When it kills or tortures a victim, the character sees it and is affected by it. The character may need to hunt down and kill the symbiote themselves to avoid going insane.

Such a disadvantage could be linked to *Enhanced awareness*, *Nightmares*, *Schizophrenia*, or *Split personality* to offer up many dramatic possibilities.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -10/-15

### ***Tourette's syndrome (+1d/3d)***

Tourette's Syndrome is a neurological disorder characterised by tics - involuntary, rapid, sudden movements or vocalizations that occur repeatedly in the same way. A Tourette's sufferer may burst out with inappropriate and offensive words, bizarre noises, or constantly repeat the last word that was said to them. Another less frequent symptom of the disorder is the desire to touch any surface within reach, constantly seeking tactile sensation.

Characters with Tourette's must make regular Empathy + Resist checks to resist the tics.

### ***\*Ugly (+1d/3d/4d)***

Characters who are ugly are unappealing to not only the opposite sex, but anyone in general.

At +1d the character may have unattractive scars, moles, acne, or any other minor features.

At +3d the ugly person may have large scars, may be obese or horribly thin, may have hair in all the wrong places scars, etc. Social rolls suffer a -1d penalty.

At +4d the character is the epitome of ugly, they can't go out in public without small children pointing and laughing or adults gasping in shock and horror at the sheer foulness of their appearance. People will cross the street to avoid having to come near them; any social rolls suffer a -1d penalty.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### ***\*Unwilling medium (+4d)***

The character is highly susceptible to possession; everything from angels to demons and every other kind of spirit wants to take up residence in the character's head. The character's resistance to possession is half what it would normally be, making them a beacon to every kind of wayward ethereal entity.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -15

### ***\*Vain (+1d)***

The character is overly concerned with their physical appearance and has an inflated sense of their own attractiveness. They are forever fixing their hair, and only wear the nicest clothes and jewelry. Note that vain characters need not actually look good: they just think they do.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5

### ***Wanted (+1d/3d/4d)***

The character is wanted by the authorities (or some other party) in some part of the world. The GM should decide the point value of this disadvantage depending on the reach and influence of those seeking the character: +1d being wanted for questioning in another state, province, or country, +4d being wanted by the FBI, Europol, or the military.

**Mental Balance Penalty:** -5/-10/-15

### ***Weak immune system (+1d)***

You run twice the risk of normal people in becoming ill. During flu season, you need to get vaccines in order to keep yourself from falling sick. The character's resistance to infection is half the normal level.

**\*Weak-Willed (+2d)**

You don't deal too well under pressure (or torture) and give away secret and/or party plans when asked forcefully.

*Penalty:* All resistance rolls have a difficulty of +2

***Mental Balance Penalty:* -5**

## **Skills**

### **Focus Skills**

Some skills are marked as "Focus" skills. These skills allow characters to specialize in the skill if they wish. A character can purchase a new Focus in a skill for 5 Pips during game play.

During Character Generation, a character can purchase 2 Foci for 1d (these Foci need not be in the same skill if the player wishes).

A Skill that has a Focus grants a bonus +1d to the character's rolls whenever the Focus applies. Thus, a character with a Security Skill of 3d and a Pick Locks focus would roll 4d when picking locks and 3d when doing anything else with the Security Skill.

## Focus and Special Dice

Trump and Expert dice work in much the same way with this modification, except in the case of Skills that are marked as "Focus" skills. Skills so marked cannot have Expert or Trump dice until the character has taken a Focus in the skill. This means that a character with the Athletics skill cannot have Expert or Trump dice until the character has at least one Focus. Once a Skill has a Focus any Expert or Trump dice in the Skill apply only to rolls involving ANY of the Foci in the skill. If the roll being made does not apply to the purchased Foci of the Skill, then the Expert and Trump dice are not rolled.

When purchasing Expert or Trump dice in a Focus skill, the character promotes the +1d bonus die to either an Expert or Trump die rather than any of the character's normal Skill Dice. So, if the aforementioned character with 3d in Security and the Pick Locks Focus wanted an Expert Die, the character would promote the +1d bonus die for Pick Locks and would thus have a Security 3d+1ed Skill, but the Expert die would only apply when picking locks. Meanwhile a character with Ranged Combat 4d+1td with the Foci of Archery and Sniping would get to roll 4d+1td whenever they were sniping or using a bow, but firing a gun in a chaotic firefight would only result in a 4d pool.

Focus Skills can have multiple Expert and Trump dice per the normal rules, but these additional dice never reduce the base Skill's actual level. They do replace the normal dice granted by the Base Skill when rolled, however. A character can never have more special dice than normal dice in the base skill. For example, a Character with Security (Surveillance and Lock Picking) at 3d+1ed that wished to buy a second Expert Die would spend 20 Pips. The character would then have a rating of 3d+2ed. Whenever rolling a general Security check, the player would roll 3d, but when the character attempted something to do with Lock Picking or Surveillance (the Foci of the skill) the player would instead roll 2d+2ed (since the second Expert Die replaces 1d of the base skill).

## Non-Focus Skills

Non-Focus marked skills are treated as presented in the NEMESIS rules.

Skills	Focus Options
<b>Body Skills</b>	
*Athletics	sports, climbing, throwing, swimming
<b>Endurance</b>	
<b>Health</b>	
*Melee Combat	iajutsu, sword and shield, cut and thrust, kendo

<b>*Unarmed Combat</b>	brawling, wrestling, jeet kun do, boxing, kung fu
<b>Command Skills</b>	
<b>Analysis</b>	
<b>Bluff</b>	
<b>Inspiration</b>	
<b>Intimidation</b>	
<b>Leadership</b>	
<b>*Performance</b>	acting, singing, musical instrument
<b>Seduction</b>	
<b>Streetwise</b>	
<b>Coordination Skills</b>	
<b>*Agility</b>	acrobatics, gymnastics, dodge, balance
<b>*Pilot</b>	automobiles, airplanes, sailing, horse riding
<b>*Ranged Combat</b>	firearms, sniping, archery, squad support
<b>Stealth</b>	
<b>*Subterfuge</b>	pick pocketing, sleight of hand, escape artist
<b>Empathy Skills</b>	
<b>Counseling</b>	
<b>Discipline</b>	
<b>*Etiquette</b>	high society, academia, urban, or foreign cultures
<b>Hunch</b>	
<b>Magnetism</b>	
<b>Mediation</b>	
<b>Persuasion</b>	
<b>Mind Skills</b>	
<b>*Education</b>	private high school, college, mean streets
<b>*Engineer</b>	mechanics, electronics, computers, carpentry
<b>*Formal Science</b>	mathematics, logic, statistics, computer science
<b>*Humanities</b>	art, literature, philosophy, history, the classics
<b>*Linguistics</b>	Spanish, German, Old English, Japanese, Mandarin
<b>*Medicine</b>	pharmacology, surgery, psychiatry, emergency aid
<b>*Military Science</b>	military geography, history, technology, strategy, etc
<b>*Natural Science</b>	biology, botany, chemistry, physics
<b>*Occult</b>	psychics, ghosts, undead, demonology, aliens
<b>Mind Skills cont.</b>	
<b>Research</b>	
<b>*Security</b>	lock picking, electronic intrusion, surveillance, cryptography
<b>*Social Science</b>	psychology, anthropology, law, sociology
<b>*Survival</b>	desert, woodlands, arctic, urban
<b>*Technology</b>	computers, hacking, PDAs, networking

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## Sense Skills

**Anticipate**

**Awareness**

**Follow**

**Notice**

**Search**

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\*Focus for Expert Dice

## Body Skills

**Athletics (*Focus*):** Athletics covers the character's general physical prowess and abilities in sports. Athletics covers such things as sports, throwing, climbing, and swimming. Players must select a Focus when taking the Athletics skill.

**Endurance:** A character can utilize Endurance to withstand the physical effects of exhaustion. This skill is a measure of the character's constitution and stamina.

**Health:** A character's hale and heartiness is encapsulated in the Health skill. This skill shows how well the character fights off infection, poison, or disease.

**Melee Combat (*Focus*):** The Melee Combat skill covers the wide and chaotic affair of combat with hand-to-hand weaponry. Just about anything can be used as a weapon, as such, the Melee Combat skill focuses more on the style rather than individual weapons. A character may specialize in such styles as Iaijutsu, Sword and Shield, or Cut and Thrust. Characters must have a Melee Combat Focus specified when they purchase this skill.

**Unarmed Combat (*Focus*):** Where the Melee Combat skill ends, the Unarmed Combat skill begins. This skill grants the character all forms of abilities to defend themselves with nothing but their bare hands. Available foci for this skill are such varied techniques as Brawling, Wrestling, Jeet kun do. Players must select a Focus when they take the Unarmed Combat skill.

## Command Skills

**Analysis:** The Analysis skill covers a character's ability to psychotherapy to help alleviate mental suffering from a close confidante. Analysis requires a strong rapport between the character and patient before the analyst can begin affecting real change in the patient's life. This skill covers the "Psychology" skill as presented in the NEMESIS rules on page 19.

**Bluff:** Convincing lies and deception is the realm of the Bluff skill. Bluff combines lies, blather, and confidence to allow the character to talk their way through most situations. Bluff can be used to gain the confidence of another or to fast-talk someone into letting the character do something they normally couldn't.

**Inspiration:** By giving a rousing speech, the character can help assuage fears and doubts in those who take a few moments to listen. It can also be used to sway the emotions and actions of others by inciting their passions. This skill can be used to rouse someone to action, rile up a mob, or even to help "snap someone out" of a Failed trauma response to a Madness check. To "snap someone out of it" the player must succeed at a roll with a difficulty equal to the Intensity rating of the Failed check. This generally takes 5 – Width in minutes of talking directly to the affected (i.e. the affected must be able to comprehend what the Inspiring character is saying).

**Intimidation:** Through the use of physical, emotional, or psychological threats, the character can use the Intimidation skill to influence the actions of others. Intimidation can be used to cause others to back down or even give in to the character's requests. It can also guarantee someone's silence out of fear of reprisals.

**Leadership:** Leadership allows the character to effectively direct and control others during chaotic or confusing affairs. A character can use Leadership to inform the actions of others that trust the person directing them. Use of this skill grants 5 × Width in temporary pips that can be granted to those following the character (and that are capable of hearing and taking commands). These pips must be used before the end of whatever conflict that warranted the use of the Leadership skill. The leader cannot make use of these Pips.

**Performance (*Focus*):** A character with the Performance skill is well versed in the art of entertaining others. Performance covers stage presence, training, and craft in general, but characters must select a focus in which their performances excel. Performances such as acting, singing, playing an instrument, or even directing can be covered by Performance foci.

**Seduction:** Seduction is the art of gaining the intimate trust of others, be they complete strangers or old friends. Through manipulation, small talk, and charm, characters using Seduction can embolden the romantic passions in others or can find themselves in the deep confidence of their acquaintance.

**Streetwise:** Streetwise covers the swagger, lingo, and presence for a character to have "street cred". It can be used to make contacts on the street, dig up information through "less than reputable" sources, or even find all manner of illegal items or dealings.

### ***Coordination Skills***

**Agility (*Focus*):** While Coordination covers the character's overall motor skills; Agility represents the character's flexibility, nimbleness, and even acrobatic abilities. Agility would be used by a character to perform feats of gymnastic prowess or just simply get out of the way of things. Some example foci for Agility would be acrobatics, gymnastics, dodge, or balance.

**Pilot (*Focus*):** The Pilot skill covers a wide range of operating and controlling simple modes of transportation. It focuses on transportation that is guided by the efforts of a small group of crew.

Examples of foci for Pilot are as varied as automobiles, propeller-driven airplanes, sailing, and riding horses.

**Ranged Combat (*Focus*):** The ability to harm one's opponents at a range has always been seen as a great boon to tacticians throughout history. The Ranged Combat skill represents how effective a character is at utilizing the tools and tactics required to be an effective combatant at range. Characters can choose to focus in various types of fighting styles as firearms, sniper, archery, or squad support.

**Stealth:** Stealth is the ability to remain unseen and quiet when the necessity arises. Characters can use Stealth to sneak and skulk about or even to blend into a crowd if need be. Stealth can even be used to help hide the character or others, if enough time is available.

**Subterfuge (*Focus*):** Sleight of hand, card tricks, palming, and even escaping bonds and handcuffs is the domain of the Subterfuge skill. Characters skilled in Subterfuge are skilled at the arts of using their bodies to misdirect and confuse others. Some examples of Subterfuge foci are Picking Pockets, Sleight of Hand, or Escape Artist.

### ***Empathy Skills***

**Counseling:** A character trained in counseling uses a dialogue to serve as a type of psychological first aid. Counseling is used to help characters cope with traumatic incidents in much the same way as Analysis but its more client-centered approach makes it more effective with day-to-day stresses rather than offsetting deep-seated disorders. The Counseling skill follows the rules presented in the NEMESIS rules on page 18.

**Discipline:** Discipline represents the character's willpower and resilience against mental anguish, intimidation, and coercion. It differs from Equilibrium in that it is used when others try to influence the behavior or opinions of the character while Equilibrium is used to defend against emotional and psychological trauma. Characters would use Discipline to resist others using Command-based skills to influence the character or to represent the character's personal convictions.

**Etiquette (*Focus*):** Knowing how to behave and act in a variety of social and cultural situations is controlled by the Etiquette skill. This skill allows characters to operate in high society without making faux pas or to know the correct slang and behavior to blend in to a deep-South revival. Foci in this skill represent different societal classes such as High Society, Academia, or Urban Poor or can represent the understanding of entirely different cultures like French or Japanese. A character is always assumed to be skilled at the Etiquette of their own default social class and culture, so this skill covers the understanding of other cultures and classes.

**Hunch:** Hunch relies on the character's natural Empathy and understanding to make educated guesses to the behaviors of others. A successful use of the Hunch skill might glean insight to

the behaviors of another person or at least help inform as to why a person may act a certain way.

**Magnetism:** The Magnetism skill represents an unquantifiable quality about the character that draws in others. It is not a matter of looks but of presence and likeability. A character would use their Magnetism skill to put others at ease or to even slightly influence their reaction to the character, making them more amenable to the character's desires. It differs from Seduction or Intimidation in that it is unspoken and often unintentional. Other people just like and are drawn to the character and are more willing to go out of their way to help out.

**Mediation:** Training in Mediation gives the character tools to negotiate and arbitrate disputes and hostilities without resulting to violence or other drastic measures. Provided their audience is willing to listen, a character can use Mediation to diffuse tensions and create feelings of calmness in others. Mediation can also be used to negotiate between two parties unable to reach a compromise on their own. Successful use of this skill might end a conflict before it begins by calming the agitated crowd or could broker a deal that allows for a marriage to be dissolved without a legal battle.

**Persuasion:** Persuasion allows a character to sway the opinions of others through understanding and compassion. It is very similar to Magnetism, but Persuasion is a character actively and intentionally trying to sway the opinions of others. A character using Persuasion will appeal to their audience's more noble side or reason rather than use force of personality or manipulation like is found with Intimidation or Seduction.

### ***Mind Skills***

**Education (*Focus*):** A character's Education demarks the amount of schooling, training, and general knowledge the character has gained through life. The source of the Education will color what kind of facts the character might know. As such, when selecting Education the character should use the Focus to demark the source and level of the education such as Private High School, College, Mean Streets, or "The School of Hard Knocks" for example. This will help characterize what facts and knowledge the character will have at their disposal.

**Engineer (*Focus*):** A character uses the Engineer skill to design, construct, or fix all manner of mechanical, electronic, or otherwise man-made devices. The character can be skilled at such Foci as Mechanics, Electronics, Computers, or even Carpentry.

**Formal Science (*Focus*):** Formal Science covers more abstract forms than the other Sciences. Mathematics, Logic, Statistics, and Computer Science fall into the spheres of influence of the Formal Sciences. Formal Science is a highly conceptual and theoretic world. Characters would utilize this skill for the theoretic expression and concepts contained in its fields of influence rather than more mundane uses like addition or computer operation.

**Humanities (Focus):** The Humanities skill covers specialized training and education in academic fields that are more critical and analytic than empirical. This includes the fields (i.e. Foci) of Art, Literature, Philosophy, History, or even the Classics. In general, Humanities represents the kind of "useless knowledge" that most liberal art schools pursue as an ideal as to building more well-rounded individuals.

**Linguistics (Focus):** Linguistics, as a skill, characterizes two separate, but related fields: the study of Language and the learning of Language. Language study concerns itself with the scientific comparison and historical development of language. Meanwhile, learning a Language grants the character the ability to converse and comprehend languages other than their native tongue. Some specific Foci for Linguistics would be Spanish, German, Old English, or Comparative Linguistics.

**Medicine (Focus):** Medicine is the art of healing damage done to the physical form, be it from disease or trauma. A character skilled in Medicine knows how to mend broken bones, treat disease, and nurse the sick. A character should select a Medicine Focus such as Pharmacology, Surgery, Psychiatry, or Emergency Aid. See page 21 in the NEMESIS rules for more details on the Medicine skill. Also, the Psychiatry Focus allows the character to utilize the Psychiatry rules on page 18 in the NEMESIS rule book.

**Military Science (Focus):**

**Natural Science (Focus):** Natural Science is the structured and empirical study of the universe using rules, laws, and theory. The Natural Sciences grant a great wealth of knowledge in such fields (i.e. Foci) as Biology, Botany, Chemistry, and Physics.

**Occult (Focus):** The Occult skill covers knowledge in the folklore, mythology, and possible practical application of the spiritual and unexplainable realms. Occult knowledge can cover such varied areas (foci) as Psychics, Ghosts, the Undead, or even Eldritch Horrors.

**Research:** Research grants the character the ability to cull knowledge from a variety of disparate data sources such as books, film, interviews, and even environmental clues. Research aids in the investigation by allowing the character to spend time finding facts and evidence to support certain facts or cases. Research deals with compiling and sifting through data for meaningful bits while Search allows for the collection and discovery of said data. A character using the Research skill would be able to spend time to find out certain facts or even to uncover relationships in data that had eluded them in the past.

**Security (Focus):** The Security Skill grants the understanding of physical and electronic precautions, as well as the theories for maximizing and even circumventing said measures. A character can Focus on such diverse elements as Picking Locks, Electronic Intrusion, Surveillance, or Cryptography, as they are just a small portion of the Security skill.

**Social Science (*Focus*):** The Social Science skill represents understanding of the principles and theories underlying the academic discipline concerned with the study of the human species and its effects on the world. The Social Sciences try to use both qualitative and quantitative methodology to shed understanding on the human condition. Various fields of study are contained within the Social Sciences, such as Psychology, Anthropology, Law and Sociology to name a few. The Psychology Focus allows the character access to the Psychology rules found on page 19 of the NEMESIS rule book.

**Survival (*Focus*):** The Survival skill focuses on the character's knowledge on how to endure the elements and nature. It includes knowledge on building emergency shelter, finding food and water, and even rudimentary knowledge of first aid. A character can focus on particular environments such as Desert, Woodlands, Arctic, or even Urban.

**Technology (*Focus*):** A character's familiarity, comfort, and abilities to operate the most modern technological and electronic devices are comprised in the Technology skill. The character would use Technology to operate a computer, set their digital video recorder, or navigate the World Wide Web. Foci for Technology include Computers, Hacking, PDAs, and Networking. Technology focuses on the practical application of technological devices, which separates it from Engineer which concentrates more on the repair, modification, and building of such devices.

### ***Sense Skills***

**Anticipate:** Anticipate can be quite a boon to most characters. It allows them brief flashes of insight based on their sensitivity to their environment. A character can use Anticipate to predict behavior and action in their immediate surroundings. Characters with at least 2d in Anticipate are treated as if their Sense stat was one higher for Declaration purposes in combat.

**Awareness:** Awareness is the character's spatial memory and attentiveness. Awareness is used by the character to keep tabs on their environment and changes in it. A character can use Awareness to stay alert and sensitive to possible threats or danger. Characters with at least 2d in Awareness gain a 1d bonus to Dodge and Cover checks.

**Follow:** The Follow skill marks the character's ability to track, stalk, and follow trails. With Follow a character could shadow someone through a crowded street or track a wounded deer through the woods.

**Notice:** A character's Notice skill represents their ability to pick up on small details and clues without actively paying attention. Notice is generally used passively to see if the character picks up or detects something in their surroundings. Rarely does a character actively use their Notice skill as that generally is the purview of Search.

**Search:** Search is used when a character is making all concerted efforts to find something, whether the searcher is clear on their objective or not. For example a character could be searching for a lost key, a hidden door, or could even just "items of interest".

