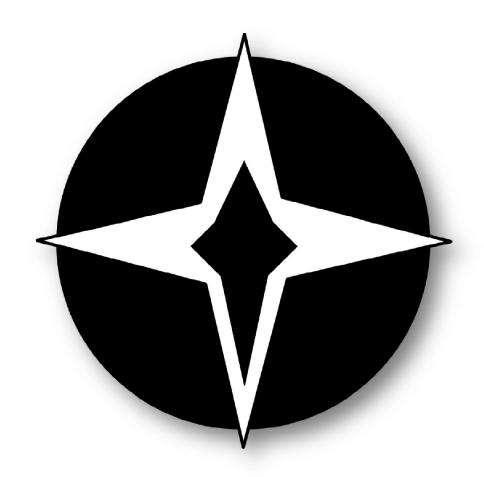
Spark RPG Open Beta



Written by Jason Pitre for Genesis of Legend Publishing

Please send all comments, actual play reports, recordings, or other feedback to genesisoflegend@gmail.com. Please include "beta" in the subject line.

11 Table of Contents

12 13	Here is a breakdown of each of the chapters including what you need to play a game.
14 15	Chapter 1 - Introduction. What is Spark? What are the roles and what do you need to play?
16 17	Chapter 2 - Setting: In the first session, you need to create a new setting or customize one of the published ones. This chapter will guide you through that process.
18 19	Chapter 3 – Characters: This explains how the players create their characters, step by step. This is also used in the first session of the game.
20 21	Chapter 4 – Gameplay: This is where you can find all of the rules and procedures of play. If you are looking for a rule during play, it's probably in here.
22 23	Chapter 5 – Guidance: This chapter is full of tools, advice and guidance for telling stories with Spark. If you want the game to shine, be sure to read this.
24 25 26	Chapter 6 - Examples: This chapters has multiple, detailed running examples of gameplay. If you are confused about a rule, feel free to look at the examples in here. (SIMPLIFED IN BETA)
27 28	Chapter 7 – NeoNippon: This is the first published setting in the book. NeoNippon is a science-fiction setting inspired by the works of Kurosawa.
29 30 31	Chapter 8 - Old, Cold, City: This is the second of three settings in the book. Old, Cold, City is a modern police procedural setting in an old city with even older secrets. (NOT IN BETA)
32 33	Chapter 9- The Republic of the Elements: This is third setting in the book. Stoicheion is a fantasy republic under siege by elemental passions and monsters. (NOT IN BETA)
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36 37 38	The end of the book has a series of appendixes including various templates, sheets, a glossary of terms and an index. There is also a full credits sheet for those fine contributors to the play testing and the Kickstarter Campaign.
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

What is Spark?

Spark is a roleplaying, storytelling game. You play important characters in a fictional world. You cooperate to tell a story about heroic deeds and personal struggles. Explore the ideas that matter to you.

- Create fictional characters and portray them as they explore a rich setting.
- Collaborate with your friends to tell a dynamic story.
- Through fiction, explore the themes and issues that move you.

Challenge your Beliefs.

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliette is a tale of two youths torn between family loyalty and romantic love. Moby Dick, by Herman Melville, focuses on the cost of vengeance. The Spark RPG is designed to help you tell those kinds of stories. It's about examining your character's motivations, convictions, and perspectives.

You tell a story about a group of individuals with their own firmly held convictions. These characters struggle with each other and with the world to uphold their Beliefs.

The more you challenge your Beliefs, the more Fate supports your characters during play. By changing yourself, you can change the world.

It is a game about self-reflection and personal growth. A game that helps you explore real life issues and learn a little bit more about yourself.

Choosing Roles

The Game Moderator

One member of your group needs to take the job of Game Moderator (GM) who will lead the game and control the Setting. The Game Moderator has several different duties.

- The GM portrays most of the minor, Non-Protagonist characters (NPC's) that fill the world.
- She creates the agendas of the major Factions.
- She expresses the character of society, based on the setting Beliefs.
- She describes how the setting changes during play, controlling the natural environment.
 - She interprets the rules of the game and makes judgements when appropriate.
 - She organizes where and when your group will meet up to play the game.

The GM guides the players into telling dynamic, character-focussed stories. Think of a game of Spark as a blockbuster movie; the GM is the director, producer, and most of the extras. Don't worry; it's easier than it sounds! The text will always refer to the GM with the feminine pronouns (she/her) to make the examples more clear, but a GM may be of any gender.

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- The Game Moderator needs to follow four principles during the game:
- 1. Keep the story moving.
 - 2. Say yes or roll the dice.
 - Ask them questions.
- 4. Challenge their Beliefs.

The advice chapter is full of techniques and advice to help her follow these principles.

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The Players

Everyone else in the game plays a Protagonist Character (PC). Each player will create their character with their own Beliefs, histories, personalities and capabilities. They use the character to interact with the other characters and their setting. Each player has a number of different duties.

- He creates a character and their three Beliefs that drive the game.
- He has nearly total creative control over their characters history.
- He portrays his character, deciding what they say and how they behave.
- In certain circumstances, he may portray minor Non-Protagonist Characters.
 - He collaborates to build scenes and affect the world.
 - He enters into conflicts to challenge Beliefs.

The players are the backbone of the game, keeping the game moving forward and bringing the drama to the table. If Spark as a blockbuster, each player is actor and screenwriter. The text will always refer to the player with the masculine pronouns (he/his) to make the examples more clear, but players may be of any gender.

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- Each of the players need to follow four principles during the game:
- 1. Share your energy and creativity
- 112 2. Take risks and escalate conflicts
- 113 3. Take a principled position
- 114 4. Challenge their Beliefs
- The Advice Chapter is full of techniques and advice to help them follow those principles.

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System Overview

120 On Time

In the game, you get to play through a series of Scenes. Each scene takes place in a set place and time called the *Platform*. Each scene deals with some kind of event or situation called the *Tilt*. Lastly, each scene focuses on answering a Question. You can find more information about scenes in the framing section of Chapter 4.

Every time your group gets together to play the game is called as Session. Each session will typically take 2-5 hours to play, consisting of a series of scenes. Think of a session as one episode of a television series.

A story refers to one or more sessions that focus on a major plot element or narrative arc. It's like a season of a television series and will usually take 2-5 sessions to complete.

A campaign refers to the total collection of stories that you wish to tell together.
Usually a campaign will focus on the same characters and the same setting, although both of those are prone to change over the long period.

Scenes and Conflicts

The players and the GM roll dice to frame the scene, creating a Platform, Tilt and Question. Everyone in the scene cooperates to tell the story, making bold declarations of what happens next. If someone disagrees with a declaration, they can challenge it and pull out the dice for a conflict.

In a conflict, you look at the Attributes, Conditions, and Traits written on your character sheet. People in the conflict get to pick sides, either to support the declaration or interfere with it. Everyone in the conflict rolls their dice, ads their bonus and compares the totals. The person with the highest number wins the conflict and can pick resolutions.

When everyone is satisfied that you have answered the scene's Question, you can end the scene and start framing the next one. The group continues to tell scene after scene, collaborating and entering into conflicts. Chapter 4 explains the entire process in detail.

- 148 Dice
- There are six different kinds of dice used in Spark. When people enter into conflicts,
- each will roll a single die. If a PC is directly involved in a conflict, they will roll a die
- based on their Body, Heart or Mind Attributes. Otherwise, they will roll a proxy die based
- on their Spark Attribute.
- 153 D20: A twenty-sided die is Epic, representing superhuman capabilities or obstacles.
- 154 D12: A twelve-sided die is Excellent, representing maximum human capabilities or
- 155 obstacles.
- 156 D10: An eight-sided die is Great, well above average capabilities or obstacles.
- D8: An eight-sided die is Good, slightly above average capabilities or obstacles.
- 158 D6: A six-sided die is Poor, slightly below average capabilities or obstacles.
- 159 D4: A four-sided die is Terrible, representing minimal capabilities or obstacles.

160	A Safe Play Environment
161	Spark can deal with some very sensitive subjects. Uncomfortable topics or triggering
162	content can really cause pain and make the game less fun for everyone. Make sure

content can really cause pain and make the game less fun for everyone. Make sure you are aware of everyone's boundaries and respect them.

If something is not identified as a Line, Veil, or Threshold, then you can likely assume that the group is comfortable dealing with it during play. Write these down on the GM Sheet so she can keep track of them.

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Lines

Lines are subjects that are absolutely off limits. When someone declares something is a Line, it's absolutely off limits. Don't deal with it directly or indirectly during play. Broken lines tend to lead to broken friendships.

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173 Veils

Veils are subjects that are discouraged. When someone declares a Veil, it can't be directly addressed in play. Feel free to imply that the sensitive subject occurred, but don't show it during any scene. The most common way of dealing with veils is by "fading to black", implying something happened without focusing attention on it.

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Thresholds

Thresholds are topics that are sensitive, but could be addressed during play. When someone declares something is Threshold, they are asking you to handle it with care.

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Common Boundaries

Here are some of the most common and severe boundaries that I have run into during my experiences. Your group should check which of these are Lines, Veils, or Thresholds.

- Consensual Sex
- Graphic Violence
- Torture
- Slavery

- Sexual Assault (Rape)
- Child Abuse
- Ethnic Cleansing
- Forced Religious Conversion

Starting a Game

People

You need between three and six people interested in the game. One person fills the role of the Game Moderator, while the others will be Players.

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You need to schedule some time when your group would be available. Discuss what day of the week you will be playing on and how frequently you plan on meeting. Try to determine when you plan on starting and finishing each session as well; I prefer 3-4 hour long sessions.

Every group has its own expectations on attendance at games. Some people can reliably block off game night, while others may have personal responsibilities or erratic work schedules. The system can accommodate players who only participate infrequently but it's up to you to figure out what's comfortable for your group.

Play Space

You need fixed and dependable space to play the game. It could be the home of one of the players, the GM's apartment, a gaming club, or even an online environment. Discuss what the best play space might be for the group. If you are playing in someone else's space, be polite and help clean up after the game.

207 Physical Components

You need a few things in order to play the Spark RPG. You can find sheets on our website (www.genesisoflegend.com) or you can photocopy the ones found in the back of the book.

- The GM will need a GM Sheet, a Faction Sheet, a Belief Sheet and a Setting Worksheet.
- All of the players will need their own Character Sheets.
 - A pack of index cards, a few pieces of paper, a pen and a few pencils with erasers.
 - Tokens such as poker chips, glass beads or coins. Aim to have at least 50 of them.
 - Everyone in the game should have a set of polyhedral dice. You can usually find these at local hobby stores or comic book shops.

Food and Drink

I find it helpful to talk about food and drink before I start playing a game. Try to discuss any meal arrangements, snack foods, allergies, or beverage preferences.

221 Games are much more enjoyable on a full stomach!

Chapter 2 - Setting

The Role of Setting

The Game Moderator uses the Setting to challenge the PC's Beliefs. She needs to guide the major factions that influence society. She needs to describe the history of the world and portray whole nations of living, breathing people. She portrays dozens of minor characters (NPCs) who interact with the characters. Her efforts help the players immerse themselves in the fictional world.

Sources

If the group wants to create their own setting from scratch, this chapter will show you the way. Building a setting is an easy, collaborative, and creative process. It usually takes a bit over an hour of the first session.

This chapter also explains a quick process to start playing with one of the existing, published settings. You can find three settings near the end of the book; the science-fiction "NeoNippon", the modern procedural "Old, Cold City" or the ancient fantasy "Republic of the Elements". You can also find a variety of other published settings on our website (www.genesisoflegend.com).

Components of a Setting

Every setting requires three Beliefs that define the world. Whenever the GM confirms or refutes one of these setting Beliefs during a conflict, she is rewarded with Fate. She records the Setting Beliefs on the GM Sheet and the Belief Sheet.

Factions represent the major organizations and groups that influence the setting. Each Faction was founded to uphold a particular mandate, based from the setting's Beliefs. At the beginning of each session, Factions have a chance to accomplish certain short-term agendas. During play, new ties will be established or changed between Factions. The GM has a separate sheet for the Factions.

Many settings will also have lists of suggested Talents and Conditions that can be useful when creating player characters. You can find any discussion of supernatural powers, such as magic or psionics, in this section.

Published settings might also have additional content to inspire play. They might include short written histories, maps, illustrations, lists of potential threats, lists of names or other story hooks.

255	Creating Custom Settings
256 257 258 259 260	Step 1: Gather Inspirations Go around the table, and ask each person to name one of their favourite pieces of media. This could be a book, a movie, video game, comic, poem, or a song. Write these down on the Setting worksheet or on a blank piece of paper under the heading of "Media".
261 262 263 264	Go around the table again, giving everyone a chance to explain what they like the most about their choice. Write these down in a numbered list on the Setting worksheet under the heading of "Inspirations." Each person can add more inspirations to the list if they want.
265	
266	<u>Examples</u>
267	Media
268	Bleach (Manga)
269	Deep Space Nine (TV Show)
270	Star Wars (Movie)
271	Every Day Is Exactly the Same (by Nine Inch Nails)
272	
273	Inspirations
274	[1] Profoundly clear character distinctions
275	[2] Moral ambiguity
276	[3] Mystic orders
277	[4] "I can feel the eyes are watching, in case I lose myself again."
278	[5] Dream-like Symbolism
279	[6] Drugs
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283 At this step, the game group should work together to find the strongest associations 284 between the different inspirations. Anyone can suggest connecting inspirations by 285 explaining why they are related. Once you have at least one association between 286 each of the inspirations, some common themes should emerge. Write these down on 287 the setting worksheet under the heading of "Associations." 288 289 **Examples** 290 Inspirations 291 [1] Profoundly clear character distinctions 292 [2] Moral ambiguity 293 [3] Mystic orders 294 [4] "I can feel the eyes are watching in case I lose myself again." 295 [5] Dream-like Symbolism 296 [6] Drugs 297 298 Associations 299 [1-3] While all of the Oracles wear the same garb, each of them carry different divine blessings. 300 301 [2-4] The common people are constantly watched for heresy against the gods. 302 [3-5] The Prophesy of the Iron Eagle brings portents of doom. 303 [3-6] The drugs of communion are forbidden to all but the Oracles. 304 [4-6] The Maenads roam the eastern hills with the raving ecstasy of the Dionysus 305 [5-6] The Lotus grows frequently at the site of atrocities, soothing the suffering. 306 307

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Step 2: Make Associations

308 Step 3: Title and Tag-line 309 310 Look at your associations and try to discover the common thread between all of 311 them. Suggest 1-3 word titles for the game and select the best of those. If you can, try 312 to produce a follow up tag line that elaborate on the motifs and the mood of the 313 setting. 314 315 **Examples** 316 Proposed Titles: 317 Watchers of Apollo 318 Visions of Darkness 319 Eyes of the Mountain 320 Oracles of Olympus 321 The Call 322 323 Potential Taglines: 324 A world of Shadows 325 The Price of Prophesy 326 The Eagle Rises 327 Eyes of the Gods 328 329 Chosen: 330 Oracles of Olympus: The Price of Prophesy 331 332

333 334 335 336	Step 4: Create Setting Beliefs Games can help us explore and understand ideas in meaningful ways. Beliefs announce which concepts, opinions, and dramatic themes we want to explore during play. Setting Beliefs need to follow the following principles:	
337 338 339 340	 It should be a simple declarative state It should be subjective and preferably are obviously and objectively true or solutions. It should be controversial to a signification. 	philosophical. Avoid creating Beliefs that false.
341 342 343 344	Go around the table twice, proposing Beliefs based on the setting title, tag line and associations. As Beliefs are proposed, the other participants ensure that they follow all the principles and don't cross any Lines or Veils. Write these candidate Beliefs on the setting worksheet.	
345 346 347	The GM picks her three preferred Beliefs, writing them on the GM Sheet and the Belief Sheet. Any Player can use leftover Beliefs during Character Creation if any of them are suitable.	
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349	<u>Examples</u>	
350	Proposed Beliefs	
	The drugs impart divinity.	Reason is greater than Passion
	The Assembly is always right.	The Iron Eagle Rises.
	The barbarians will destroy civilization.	The lotus must be shared to soothe our
	Privacy is blasphemy.	suffering.
351		
352	Chosen Beliefs	
353	The Assembly is always right.	
354	Reason is greater than Passion	
355	The Iron Eagle Rises.	
356		
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358 359 360 361	Step 5: Create Factions This step is where you collaboratively create one Faction for each participant in the game. Do this by going around the table twice. Each person gets to create either a name or a mandate for one of the Factions. Write these down on the Faction Sheet.
362 363 364 365	The Faction Name will inspire the rest of the faction and will become an integral portion of the experience. Consider the setting associations and any motif that you want to reinforce. Make the name as evocative and flavourful as you can. Try to use names like "The Black Hand, The League of Nations, or Freemasons Incorporated".
366 367 368	Every Faction has a mandate that describes their common purpose; why they exist and what they hope to achieve. Mandates are written as broad mission statements which confirm or refute part of a setting Belief.
369 370 371	For instance, if the setting's Belief was "The aliens seek to destroy our society", some good mandates might be "To capture and study the aliens" or "To assimilate the aliens into our society".
372	
373	Examples:
374	Setting Beliefs (Belief Sheet)
375	The Assembly is always right.
376	Reason is greater than Passion
377	The Iron Eagle Rises.
378	
379	Factions (Faction Sheet)
380	The Great Assembly - To control the great seas.
381	The Stoic Philosophers - To quench the passions of the people.
382	The Lotus Eaters - To spread the drugs of divine passion.
383	Outer Colonies - To stop the invading barbarians.
384	

385 Step 6: Create Ties 386 Factions interact with each other as they pursue their agendas. Ties represent the relationship between any two Factions. history between Factions are tracked on the 387 388 Faction Sheet. Ties may be reciprocal (Close allies, bitter enemies) or skewed 389 (Client/Patron, Supporter/Usurper). These ties affect the choice of agendas and the 390 perspectives of the faction's Faces. Each faction pair may only have a single tie linking 391 them. At this point, each player creates one relationship between two different factions. 392 393 There's no set list of ties, so try to make up something specific and appropriate for the 394 situation. 395 396 **Example** 397 Factions (Faction Sheet) 398 The Great Assembly - To control the great seas. 399 The Stoic Philosophers - To quench the passions of the people. 400 The Lotus Eaters - To spread the drugs of divine passion. 401 Outer Colonies - To stop the invading barbarians. 402 403 Ties (Faction Sheet) 404 The Great Assembly are <u>Dismissive</u> of the <u>Desperate</u> Outer Colonies 405 The Stoic Philosophers are Bitter Enemies with The Lotus Eaters 406 The Lotus Eaters are Unreliable Allies of the Outer Colonies 407 408 409 410 411

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413 414 415 416 417 418	Step 7: Create Agendas Now that you know the long-term goals of the Factions and their ties, it's time to come up with their agendas. Agendas are one-sentence statements of intent, describing a major but short-term goal they hope to achieve. They must be based the Faction's mandate and their ties. No two agendas can be mutually exclusive. Write these down on the Faction Sheet in pencil, since you will rewrite agendas each session.
419 420 421	Once this is complete, move on to Character Creation in the next chapter. At the beginning of each session, the group will have a chance to decide which Agendas are accomplished and which ones fail.
422	
423	Example:
424	The Great Assembly - To control the great seas.
425	Agenda: Explore the Far West with trading vessels
426	
427	The Stoic Philosophers - To quench the passions of the people.
428	Agenda: Make the Assembly proclaim that possession of Lotus is a crime.
429	
430	The Lotus Eaters - To spread the drugs of divine passion.
431	Agenda: Supply the Outer Colonies with Dionysian drugs.
432	
433	Outer Colonies - To stop the invading barbarians.
434	Agenda: Infiltrate the barbarian cities with clever diplomats.
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439 440	Completed Sample Setting Worksheet Media
441	Bleach (Manga)
442	Deep Space Nine (TV Show)
443	Star Wars (Movie)
444	Every Day Is Exactly the Same (by Nine Inch Nails)
445	
446	Inspirations
447	[1] Profoundly clear character distinctions
448	[2] Moral ambiguity
449	[3] Mystic orders
450	[4] "I can feel the eyes are watching, in case I lose myself again."
451	[5] Dream-like Symbolism
452	[6] Drugs
453	
454	Associations
455 456	[1-3] While all of the Oracles wear the same garb, each of them carry different divine blessings.
457	[2-4] The common people are constantly watched for heresy against the gods.
458	[3-5] The Prophesy of the Iron Eagle brings portents of doom.
459	[3-6] The drugs of communion are forbidden to all but the Oracles.
460	[4-6] The Maenads roam the eastern hills with the raving ecstasy of the Dionysus
461	[5-6] The Lotus grows frequently at the site of atrocities, soothing the suffering.
462	

463 464	Completed Sample GM Sheet, Belief Sheet Setting Beliefs
465	The Assembly is always right.
466	Reason is greater than Passion
467	The Iron Eagle Rises.
468	
469 470	Completed Sample Faction Sheet
471	The Great Assembly - To control the great seas.
472	Agenda: Explore the Far West with trading vessels
473	
474	The Stoic Philosophers - To quench the passions of the people
475	Agenda: Make the Assembly proclaim that possession of Lotus is a crime.
476	
477	The Lotus Eaters - To spread the drugs of divine passion.
478	Agenda: Supply the Outer Colonies with Dionysian drugs.
479	
480	Outer Colonies - To stop the invading barbarians.
481	Agenda: Infiltrate the barbarian cities with clever diplomats.
482	
483	Ties (Faction Sheet)
484	The Great Assembly are Dismissive of the Desperate Outer Colonies
485	The Stoic Philosophers are Bitter Enemies with The Lotus Eaters
486	The Lotus Eaters are Unreliable Allies of Outer Colonies

Using Published Settings 487 488 Step 1: Describe the Initial Setting 489 Each published setting will have a short description of the setting's history and 490 current events. Ensure that everyone is aware of this information, either by reading it 491 aloud or by sharing the text ahead of time. This small amount of text provides context to 492 help guide players while making their characters. 493 Step 2: Select the Setting Variant 494 495 Each of the published Settings has four potential Beliefs. You will need to pick any 496 three of them for your particular game, so that you can focus gameplay on what you 497 find most interesting. They are organized as "Variants" in the text, so that you can easily 498 pick between the different interpretations of the Setting. Copy these Beliefs down on 499 the GM sheet and the Belief sheet. 500 501 Example: 502 The Republic of Elements Beliefs 503 The Elements will corrupt humanity 504 The Elements will steal our land 505 The Elements will sow chaos and destruction 506 The Elements will infiltrate society 507 508 Chosen Variant #2: Invasion of the Republic 509 The Elements will steal our land 510 The Elements will sow chaos and destruction 511 The Elements will infiltrate society 512

513 514 515 516 517	Step 3: Select your Factions The Setting will have a dozen different Factions, each of which is associated with a particular Belief. You will need to select one Faction for every person in the game. Note that you can only select from the nine Factions that are associated with the Beliefs you chose.	
518	Example:	
519	Beliefs	
520	The Elements will steal our land	
521	The Elements will sow chaos and c	destruction
522	The Elements will infiltrate society	
523		
524	Factions Associated with the Belie	fs
	The Resilient Order	The Charred Ones
	The Mountain-herders	The Refugees
	The Provinces	The Whispering Order
	The Imperial Court	The Tempting Winds
	The Radiant Order	The Assembly of Citizens
525		
526	Chosen Factions	
527	The Resilient Order	
528	The Mountain-herders	
529	The Provinces	
530	The Refugees	
531		

532 533 534 535 536 537	Step 4: Create Ties Factions interact with each other as they pursue their agendas. Formal diplomatic ties and informal history between Factions are tracked on the Faction Sheet. Ties may be reciprocal (Close allies, bitter enemies) or skewed (Client/Patron, Supporter/Usurper). These ties affect the choice of agendas and the perspectives of the faction's Faces. Each faction pair may only have a single tie linking them.
538 539 540	At this point, each player creates one relationship between two different factions. There's no set list of ties, so try to make up something specific and appropriate for the situation.
541	
542	<u>Example</u>
543	Factions (Faction Sheet)
544	The Resilient Order
545	The Mountain-herders
546	The Provinces
547	The Refugees
548	
549	Relationships (Faction Sheet)
550	The Resilient Order is at <u>War</u> with the Mountain Herders
551	The Resilient Order is <u>Recruiting</u> the Refugees
552	The Provinces <u>Reject</u> the Refugees
553	The Provinces are <u>Patrons</u> of the Resilient Order
554	

555 Step 5: Create Initial Agendas 556 Now that you know the long-term goals of the Factions and their ties, it's time to 557 come up with their agendas. Agendas are one-sentence statements of intent, 558 describing a major but short-term goal they could reasonably hope to achieve. They 559 must be based the Faction's mandate and their ties. No two agendas can be mutually 560 exclusive. Write these down on the Faction Sheet in pencil, since you will rewrite 561 agendas each session. 562 Choose between one of the three sample Agendas for each of the Factions and 563 write these down on the Faction Sheet in pencil. Move on to Character Creation in the 564 next chapter. At the beginning of each session, the group will a chance to decide 565 which agendas are accomplished and which ones fail. 566 567 Example: 568 The Resilient Order - Delve into the mountains and stop their spread. 569 Agenda: Draft a cohort of refugees for military service. 570 571 The Mountain-herders - Expand the mountain range and absorb human lands. 572 Agenda: Raise the next mountain in the range, Aegis Paetras 573 574 The Provinces - Protect the outer reaches from inhuman threats. 575 Agenda: Convince the Resilient Order to reinforce the Ashen Wall. 576 577 The Refugees - Unite families and build new homes for them. 578 Agenda: Establish a shanty village outside the walls of Aescopolis

580 581	Extra Content in Published Settings Published settings may also have additional material that can be helpful.
582 583 584	Sample Talents and Conditions; Settings will often have lists of genre-appropriate Talents and Conditions. These may describe at how races, cultures, professions, or supernatural abilities act in the setting.
585 586 587	Faces: Each Faction will have at least one premade NPC's who could represent them. These include names, descriptions and an indication of their capabilities in conflicts.
588 589	Threats: The setting may describe certain threats that may affect the society on a whole and bring chaos into the world.
590 591	Illustrations: The setting may have illustrations or art about the world and those beings within it, so you can get a better sense of what the setting looks like.
592 593	Maps: They often provide a geographic map, showing the locations of significant settlements and major landmarks.
594	Fiction: Some settings may also have poems or short fiction.
595	
596 597 598 599	The Finishing Touches The GM sheet will have a few more things on it, beyond the Setting details. As the players create their PC's in the next chapter, record all of their character Beliefs on the GM sheet.
600	She starts with one Fate for every player in the game.
601 602 603	The GM starts with a Spark Attribute at D20. This means that the GM has the ability to roll her Spark while framing scenes; she can create proxies and can decline resolutions by taking damage. More on this in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 - Characters

The Basics of Character Creation

Once you have a setting, each player needs to create a Protagonist Character (PC). As a player, you speak for your PC and describe their actions. They will be motivated to challenge their Beliefs during play. When pursuing their goals, the PC's might enter into a conflict with other PC's or with the GM. You resolve those conflicts by rolling dice based on their Attributes, considering their respective Conditions and adding in a bonus based on their Talents.

Grab a Character Sheet to keep track of your PC's Beliefs, Attributes, Conditions, and Talents. You can find a copy of the character sheet at the end of the book or on the website. In this chapter, we explain what each of the different traits represent and help you create your characters.

Initial Concepts

Focus on our common Agenda

All of you should look at the faction map and figure out which Faction's agenda you find most interesting. Circle that agenda and Faction on the map. When you pick character concepts, make sure that all of your PC's have some reason to interact with either that agenda or Faction.

Maybe they want to stop the agenda, or interfere with the Faction's efforts. Maybe they are working for the Faction and want to support the agenda. The only thing that matters is that the characters care about it. This helps bind the characters together and works as a kind of group template.

Character Concepts

Every character starts with a concept, a quick sentence that describes them. It might help to consider some of these questions.

- Is your character defined by their profession?
- Is your character defined by their relationships?
- Is your character defined by a particular personality trait?
- Is your character defined by challenging a particular setting Belief?

If you are having a tough time, consider adapting a character from another piece of media. Modern fiction, ancient epics, television shows, movies, video games, and even music can offer interesting characters. Imagine what one of the existing characters would be like if they grew up in your setting.

Once you have a concept, tell it to the group. Write it down on the top of the character sheet before you move onto to the next step.

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Beliefs

644 What are Beliefs?

Games can help us explore issues that matter to us. Beliefs announce which perspectives, opinions, and dramatic themes we want to examine during play. This is the core of the Spark RPG, to "Challenge your Beliefs".

Every PC needs three Beliefs. Each Belief is a statement that the character agrees with, and that the player wants to explore.

When you enter into Conflicts that directly confirm or refute a Belief, you might gain Fate. You will be able to spend this to succeed in other conflicts or to exert more influence over the story. During the course of the plat, these beliefs will evolve and change.

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Creating Good Beliefs

When you are creating character Beliefs, follow these three principles:

- 1. It should be a simple declarative statement.
 - 2. It should be subjective and preferably philosophical. Avoid creating Beliefs that are obviously and objectively true or false.
 - 3. It should be controversial to a significant number of people.

Go around the table twice, proposing Beliefs based on the setting title, tag line and associations. As Beliefs are proposed, the other participants ensure that they follow all the principles and don't cross any Lines or Veils. Write these candidate Beliefs on the setting worksheet.

Remember that your Beliefs should be the three most important ideas, questions, or themes that motivate your characters. By creating a Belief, you are telling the GM that you would like to see it challenged during play.

Beliefs at Character Creation

You need to work together to create your Beliefs. A player states the Belief aloud, so other people at the table can give feedback. Work together to ensure that the principles are being followed and that the Belief does not cross any Lines or Veils. Try to keep the Beliefs strong and snappy!

Sometimes it's better to ask someone else to examine a subject on your behalf. The other players around the table are usually happy to courteously explore a given idea, subject or theme with their Beliefs.

When you are happy with the Belief you chose, write it down on your Character Sheet and on the Belief sheet. The GM also writes this down on her own sheet at the same time, so she can keep track of all of the different Beliefs. Go around the table clockwise three times, repeating the process. When everyone has three Beliefs chosen, the Belief sheet will be complete.

Attributes

What are Attributes?

Attributes represent character's natural capabilities. Each of the four types of Attributes (Body, Heart, Mind, and Spark) applies in different situations. Characters with higher attributes are more likely to succeed and can withstand more harm.

Each Attribute is ranked at a certain level and associated with a size of die. Every Attribute starts at level 1 and can be raised up to a maximum of level 5.

- 690 D20: A twenty-sided die is Epic, representing superhuman capabilities.
- D12: A twelve-sided die is Excellent, representing maximum human capability.
- 692 D10: An eight-sided die is Great, well above average capability.
- 693 D8: An eight-sided die is Good, slightly above average capability.
- D6: A six-sided die is Poor, slightly below average capability.
- D4: A four-sided die is Terrible, representing minimal capability.

A level 6 (D20) Attribute is epic, superhuman in scale. PC's can't buy any Attributes at level 6, though Conditions can allow you to roll them. The GM will have a Spark Attribute at this level.

700 What does the Body do? 701 The Body represents you in all physical conflicts. Any acts of strength, 702 dexterity, or constitution will normally use the Body Attribute. Harm to the 703 Body attribute is usually in the form of physical injuries or wounds. If a PC's 704 Body attribute suffers enough harm to be reduced to zero, they will die 705 and be retired from play. 706 What does the Heart do? 707 708 The Heart represents you in all social and emotional conflicts. Any acts of 709 presence, manipulation, or composure will use the Heart Attribute. When 710 a character suffers emotional abuse or commits social blunders, they 711 mark harm on their Heart Attribute. If a character's Heart suffers enough 712 damage to be reduced to zero, they will go insane and be retired from 713 play. 714 What does the Mind do? 715 716 The Mind represents you in all mental and perceptual conflicts. Any acts 717 of intelligence, wit, or perception will use the Mind Attribute. When the 718 character suffers confusion or mental strain, they usually mark harm to 719 their Minds. Sufficient harm to the Mind will drive the character comatose 720 and retire them from play. 721 722 What does the Spark do? 723 The Spark attribute represents you in dramatic conflicts. It represents the indescribable powers of luck, destiny, and greatness of vision. It's not 724 725 used directly in Conflicts, but it has a host of other effects. 726 It is a measure of the character's importance to the story, allowing the 727 player to influence the types of scenes that occur. 728 The Spark Attribute is used to represent proxies; NPC's that a player 729 can use in conflict. The greater the Spark, the more potent those proxies will be during 730 game.

During conflicts, you can choose to suffer harm to your Spark instead of one of your

other attributes. Be careful of using this option though, since losing your last die of Spark

will make your character lose their agency and retire.

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Harming Attributes

When you suffer harm to an attribute, locate the largest die of that attribute without a damage mark. Place a harm mark within that circle, indicating that die is unavailable. If the D4 level in an attribute is marked in this way, the character will retire from play.

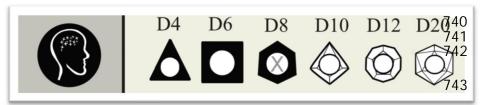


Figure 1: Example of one harm to a D8 Mind Attribute

Choosing your Attributes well

When you are choosing your Attributes, I recommend that your first consideration be how much you care about narrative control. If you adore the idea of shaping how scenes develop and taking control over your character's fortune, allocate several points to the character's Spark. High Spark means that your proxy characters will be more effective.

If you want a simpler and more traditional play experience, limit yourself to a Spark of D4 or D6. Lower Spark means you get to spend those other points on other attributes. Athletic characters should have high Body Attributes, Social characters should have high Heart, and scholars should have high Mind Attributes.

Attributes at Character Creation.

Every Attribute begins at a D4, which is why the Die outline is filled in on the character sheet. You get seven points to improve your attributes. When you do so, fill in the outline of the next larger die in that track. Leave the circle in the middle blank, since that is reserved for marking harm. For example, if you spend your first point on improving your character's Body, fill in the outline of the D6 with pen.

No Attribute can be larger than a D12 and you can't save any Attribute levels for later.

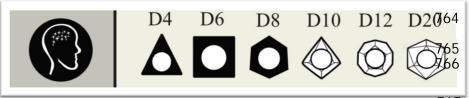


Figure 2: An example of a D8 Mind Attribute

Conditions

What are Conditions?

Conditions represent external factors that help or hinder a character. They can represent items (My Father's Sword), places (The Vanjar Hills), events (Jarna Rebellion), or people (My Wife, Marja). These conditions change the size of the dice you will roll during conflicts. Conditions are prone to changing during play; An item can be lost, a person angered, a place made distant, or an event forgotten.

What does a Rise Condition do?

Rise Conditions are situations that are favourable toward your character. Rises are represented on the character sheet by an upward pointing triangle. When a Rise applies to a PC's actions during a conflict, increase the size of Attribute die being rolled by one step. If multiple Rises apply, you can increase the size of die multiple times.



Note that a Rise increases the size of a D12 to a D20, the largest possible die.

What do Fall Conditions do?

Fall Conditions are situations that are unfavourable for your character. Falls are represented on the character sheet by a downward pointing triangle. When a Fall applies to a PC's actions during a conflict, decrease the size of attribute die being rolled by one step. If multiple Falls apply, you can decrease the size of die multiple times.



Note that a Fall can decrease the size of a D6 to a D4, the smallest possible die.

798 799 800	The best Conditions are proper nouns, such as the capitalized name of a person, geographic feature, or historical event. The Varnja Wastes or my wife Mila are examples of proper nouns as conditions.
801 802 803	The other way to make a good Condition is to describe a class of person, place, or thing with an adjective. "My father's sword" or "Drunken samurai" are also quite acceptable.
804 805 806	Avoid any duplicate Conditions by making them as distinct as possible. Consider adding an extra adjective, allowing things like "My loyal husband Milo" or "My mother's oaken crossbow"
807	
808 809 810 811	Conditions at Character Creation At character creation, each PC begins with two Rises and one Fall on their character sheet. Characters can have a maximum of six different Conditions at any time, divided between Rises and Falls.
812	
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814	Talents
815 816 817 818	What are Talents? Talents represent skills and abilities that a character has gained during their life. These can include specific fields of knowledge or particular types of tasks. Talents are internal to the character and permanent.
819	
820 821	What do Talents do? Talents add a bonus to a character's die during a conflict:
822 823 824	 If a Broad Talent (T1) applies to the conflict, add 1 to the result of your roll. If a Common Talent (T2) applies to the conflict, add 2 to the result of your roll. If a Deep Talent (T3) applies to the conflict, add 3 to the result of the roll.
825 826	This means that the bonus from talents will vary from +0 (if no Talents apply) to +6 (If one Broad Talent, one Common Talent and one Deep Talent apply).

Creating good Conditions

827 828 829 830	Broad Talents (T1) Broad Talents represent general understanding of a wide-ranging topic. Someone might acquire these talents through book learning or general life experience.	T
831 832 833	Examples of Broad Talents: *English, Science, Politics, Law, Engineering, Melee, Thaumaturgy*	
834 835 836 837 838	Common Talents (T2) Common Talents represent a focus on a particular subject matter. A common Talent is usually enough to make a living in that field. Acquiring this normally requires either formal training or years of practical experience.	I
839 840 841	Examples of Common Talents: *Literature, Biology, Elections, Civil Law, Infrastru Swords, Conjuration*	ctures,
842 843 844 845 846	Deep Talents (T3) Deep Talents represent a specialization on a particular sub-discipline or application of skill. Usually unique and limited in scope, they provide significant advantages. They require a high level of formal training or specialized experience.	II
847 848 849	Examples of Common Talents: *Golden Age Science Fiction, Genetic Analysis, Voter Suppression, Small Claims Court, Bridge Repair, Scimitars, Drakkar Imps*	_
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857 858 859 860	There is no set list of Talents, though some published settings will provide recommendations. Players propose Talents that fit their characters and the GM will judge if they are broad, common or deep in scope.
861	Here is a quick way to picking Talents:
862 863 864 865 866 867	 What specific action is your character best at? Choose one broad talent, one common talent and one deep talent that would help you. What is your character's fallback option? Choose one common talent and one deep talent that would help you. What is the character's hobby or personal interest? Choose one broad talent and one common talent to help you.
868	This will lead to characters having 2 broad, 3 common and 2 deep talents.
869	
870 871 872	Talents at Character Creation At character creation, each PC begins with any 7 talents. The first time playing, try to pick 2 broad, 3 common and 2 deep talents.
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876	Finishing Touches
877 878 879 880	Naming Create an evocative name for your character. Consider what culture your character comes from. Try to use a name that reflects your character concept. Some published settings will have lists of names in them for your use. Have fun with it!
881 882 883	Fate Each player will start the game with one Fate per personal history question they answer, to a maximum of 5 Fate.
884 885	

886 Personal History 887 Your character has ties to the other characters and factions that make up the 888 setting. Answer at least one question from each of the two lists and tell the group: 889 PC History 890 • How did a PC hurt you? 891 Why do you trust a PC with your life? 892 • Why do you hate another PC? 893 Why are you afraid of another PC? 894 Why do you disagree with another PC's Belief? 895 How did a specific PC inspire you to take up one of your Beliefs? 896 • What favour did another PC do for you? 897 898 **Faction History** 899 Why do you hate a Faction? 900 Why do you trust a Faction with your life? 901 Why do you unfailingly obey a Faction? 902 Why have you vowed to destroy a Faction? 903 Why are you afraid of a Faction? 904 • Why are you passionate about a Faction's mandate? 905 How did a Faction inspire you to take up one of your Beliefs? 906 907 908 Prologue 909 The last step in character creation is the prologue. Each player narrates a short 910 scene for their PC's. The GM will provide the group with a single catalyst; a particular 911 person, place, event or object that will be the focus of the action. During the prologue, 912 each player creates a reason why the character would try to interact with the catalyst. 913 Each player gets to use this time to show off their character's expertise without dice 914 getting involved. The GM may portray NPC's, but the player has full narrative control. 915 Try to make brief action sequences, quickly expressing the character's capabilities and 916 personality. 917 After you finish all of these scenes, the GM recaps everything that was established 918 during the prologues. If you have time left in the session, you can move directly into 919 framing your first scene.

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Chapter 4 - Gameplay

The Structure of the Game

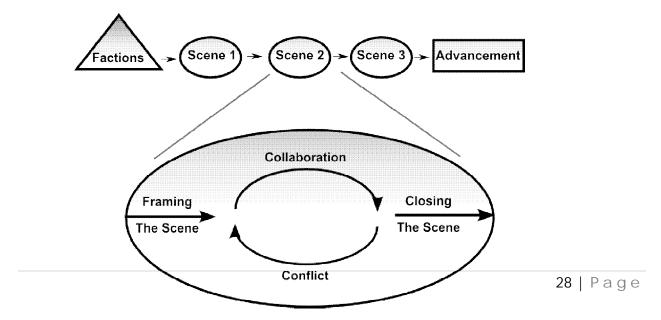
Start each game session with the Factions. They will have their own agendas and goals that they're trying to accomplish. Each player influences which agendas are fulfilled, before the first scene. This step helps drive play, since the PC's need to react to these major events. You should skip this step in a one-shot or in the first game session.

From then on, you will collectively play through a series of scenes. The group continues to tell scene after scene, collaborating and entering into conflicts.

The first step in a scene is Framing, determining how the scene starts and what it will be about. Next is Collaboration, where everyone cooperates to tell the story by making bold declarations of what happens next. In some scenes, a participant may disagree with declarations. If that happens, they pull out the dice to resolve their conflict. Conflict is where you have to pull out your character sheets. Participants pick sides, rolls their dice, add bonuses, and compare results to determine the outcome.

When the question of the scene has been answered, you Close the Scene. During this phase, characters can heal, retire, or be rewarded with Fate for addressing their beliefs. Once the scene is closed, either frame another scene or move to Advancement.

When you finish your last scene, you move to Advancement. This is when players can change a Belief, purchase an Attribute level, buy a new Talent or alter a condition by spending Fate.



The Factions Phase

The Faction map describes the most significant major organizations in the Setting. Each Faction has an evocative name and exists to fulfill their mandate. Factions can also have diplomatic or historical ties with each other. Each session, Factions will attempt to achieve short-term goals known as agendas.

At the start of the session, all of the participants look at the Faction Map. Go around the table clockwise, with each player choosing one of these three options:

 • Block: Prevent a Faction from fulfilling their agenda. You get to describe how the attempt fails.

• Claim: Claim the right to choose a Faction's next agenda between sessions.

• Tie: Create a new tie between two Factions, or alter an existing one.

 Every agenda that isn't blocked is accomplished. The GM quickly narrates how each of those Factions succeeds. When a player blocks an Agenda, they get the opportunity to describe how that effort fails. Write down all of the successful agendas on the back of the Faction Map; it will work like a historical record of the major events in your game.

The GM will normally create all of the agendas for the factions between sessions. If a player claims one of the factions, they get to create the agenda instead. Agendas are one-sentence statements of intent, describing what major but realistic goal they wish to achieve over the near term. Any new agendas must respect the Faction's mandate and ties. Ensure that no two agendas are mutually exclusive.

Framing Phase

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The first step of any Scene is to create the initial situation. The group will start by generating a Platform, describing where, and when the scene is taking place. Next up, the Tilt will define some event or action that will force the characters into action. Third, determine what Question you wish to answer with the scene.

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This is the process:

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1. Roll your Spark dice and compare, rolling off if necessary.

The highest roll gets to choose between the Platform, Tilt, or Question. The second
 highest gets the next pick one of the two remaining options. The third highest roll
 gets the option the left over option.

- 990 3. Someone may state, "I would seize the Platform/Tilt/Question". Give one Fate to the 991 person who held it, and frame that instead. Once someone has seized a right, it 992 cannot be seized again this scene.
- 993 4. The Person framing *The Platform* describes where and when a scene takes place in 2-3 sentences.
- 5. The person framing *The Tilt* uses 2-3 sentences to describe what event or action forces PC's to interact with the scene. The Tilt needs to be logical and consistent with the Platform.
- 6. The third person states a one-sentence *Question* that you are trying to answer with the scene. This scene is important to the story because you answered this specific question. The best Questions are ones that challenge many different Beliefs. The question must be related to the Tilt.
- 7. Every player declares if his or her PC is present or absent from the scene. Even if your PC is absent, you can still make declarations, elaborate declarations, and enter into conflicts using proxies.
- 1005 8. Move to Collaboration.

1007	Collaboration Phase
1008 1009 1010 1011 1012	Most of gameplay consists of collaboration, where the group works together to narrate what happens in the story. This is where freeform role-playing occurs, speaking in character and declaring actions.
1012 1013 1014 1015 1016	People can declare what their character (PC or NPC) tries to accomplish in the scene. You can establish new facts or details about the setting, the environment, or past events as part of these declarations. If no one opposes what you announce, it occurs.
1017 1018	If you want to add extra details about someone else's declaration, say, "Yes, and" then elaborate. This counts as a separate declaration, for the purposes of conflicts.
1019 1020	If you want to prevent someone else's declaration, say, "We are in conflict." and move to the Conflict Phase.
1021 1022	If the Question of the scene has been answered, you may say, "And we move on." to move to the Closing Phase.
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1026 Conflict Phase

When someone in the game wishes to block someone else's declaration, they enter into the Conflict phase. You start by gathering the dice, then you analyze who won the conflict and end by choosing resolutions.

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Gather

- 1033 1. Everyone picks sides in the conflict.
- Everyone who supports the declaration says "yay". Say if your PC or a proxy is involved.
 - Everyone who wants to block the declaration says "nay" Say if your PC or a proxy is involved.
 - Everyone else just watch from the sidelines.
- 1039 2. If you are using a PC, select the Attribute die and modify it based on any Conditions that would apply.
- 1041 3. Determine the Bonus added to the roll, either based on which Talents are used (for PC's)
- You can create a proxy, an NPC representing your interests in a conflict, by spending one Fate. Each proxy is associated to a size of die and has a set die bonus. An excellent proxy would use a D12 and gain a +5 bonus, while a poor proxy would only use a D6+2. You can create a proxy equal to your Spark Attribute by spending one Fate. Any proxy dice can be split into two more proxy dice that are a step smaller. Likewise, any two equal proxy dice can be merged into a single, larger proxy.
- 1050 5. If you are using a proxy, spend one of your proxy dice and use it up in the conflict.
- 1051 6. Roll the dice!

1053 1054	Analyze 7. Look at the dice, identifying any 1's.
1055 1056 1057	8. You may say, "This confirms/Refutes of my Belief" If everyone agrees your PC is involved and challenging their Belief, spend one Fate to set the die you already rolled to its maximum possible result.
1058	9. Each person adds their bonus to the number on their die to get their score.
1059 1060 1061	10. The person on each side with the highest score leads that side. The leader with the highest score wins the conflict for their side. If the winning side supported the original declaration, it occurs. Otherwise, that declaration is blocked.
1062 1063	11. The Leaders earn a number of game effects, known as resolutions, based on the differences between their two scores.
1064 1065 1066 1067 1068 1069 1070 1071 1072 1073 1074	Difference of 0-1: Each of the leaders choose 1 resolution Difference of 2-3: The winning leader chooses 1 resolution Difference of 4-5: The winning leader chooses 2 resolutions Difference of 6-7: The winning leader chooses 3 resolutions Difference of 8-9: The winning leader chooses 4 resolutions Difference of 10-11: The winning leader chooses 5 resolutions Difference of 12+: The winning leader chooses 6 resolutions Every die that shows a value of 1 gives the opposing side's leader another resolution.
1075 1076	Choose Resolutions
1077 1078	12. Beginning with the leader of the winning side, the leaders choose resolutions in alternating order.
1079 1080 1081	13. Anyone with a PC in a conflict may say, "I push for a resolution." Spend one Fate to choose a resolution to apply in this conflict. You can do this while the leaders are choosing their resolutions, or after the fact.
1082 1083 1084	14. When choosing a resolution, state the name of the resolution then narrate what happens. The target chooses if they will accept the resolution or not. Each resolution describes what happens when you accept or reject it.
1085 1086	15. Discard any proxy dice you used for the conflict and move back over to the Collaboration Phase.

1087	Resolutions
1088 1089	Harm: Add a harm marker to a relevant Attribute. You can normally assume that harm goes to the Attribute the victor was using in the conflict.
1090 1091 1092 1093	If you do not want your PC or Proxy to suffer harm to their Body, Heart or Mind, you can always allocate harm to your Spark attribute instead. Any harm to an NPC or proxy will destroy them, so sometimes the GM will harm her own Spark to preserve an important NPC.
1094	
1095 1096 1097	Query: Force a participant to answer a question. Note that a "Query" affects the participant, not the characters. Be sure to answer it honestly and in good faith. The character might answer directly (with dialogue) or indirectly (with action).
1098 1099	If you reject this Resolution, say the ritual phrase, "I would rather suffer harm," and add a harm to your relevant Attribute instead.
1100	
1101 1102	Compel: Force a participant to perform an action. You can also use a "Compel" on the GM to make a particular fact true in the setting.
1103 1104	If you reject this Resolution, say the ritual phrase, "I would rather suffer harm," and add a harm to your relevant Attribute instead.
1105	
1106 1107	Bolster: Add a Rise Condition or remove a Fall Condition from a character, costing 4 Fate. Anyone in the conflict on that side can contribute Fate.
1108 1109	If you reject this Resolution, say the ritual phrase, "I would rather not," and they will query you instead.
1110	
1111 1112	Hinder: Add a Fall Condition or remove a Rise Condition from a character for no cost.
1113 1114	If you reject this Resolution, say the ritual phrase, "I would rather suffer harm," and add a harm to your relevant attribute instead.
1115	
1116 1117 1118 1119 1120	Inspire: Propose a new Belief to replace one of the target's existing ones. When you do this, offer them an amount of Fate equal to the number of sides on their Spark Die. If they have a Spark of D8, you need to give them exactly 8 Fate if they accept your proposed Belief. Anyone in the conflict on that side can contribute Fate.
1121 1122 1123	If you reject this Resolution, say the ritual phrase, "I would rather not," and they will query you instead.

Closing Phase

When someone says "And we move on" during collaboration, you stop making declarations.

Examine each of the Beliefs of the people who were in the conflict. Go through each of the Setting Beliefs on the Belief Sheet and ask if the GM has directly challenged them during the scene. If everyone is confident, that is the case, give the GM the Fate off that entry on the sheet. Repeat the process for each of the players and their character Beliefs.

You will usually challenge your Beliefs by entering into conflicts that support or refute them. That said, sometimes they will be examined during collaboration and this can count, if the group agrees.

Whenever a participant takes the last Fate from their section of the Belief sheet, everyone in the conflict takes one additional Fate from the supply. At that point, refill their portion of the Belief Sheet with Fate.

When PC's suffer harm, they temporarily reduce their attributes. When the D4 level of any Attribute is filled with harm, they will be retired at the end of the scene. If your character is faced with retirement, you get to narrate exactly how they leave play during the closing say. Here are some general guidelines on how characters retire.

Losing your Body Attribute means your character dies or irreparably crippled.

Losing your Heart Attribute means your character has gone mad or into

permanent exile.

Losing your Mind Attribute means your character is comatose or brain-dead.

Losing your Spark Attribute means your character has surrendered their destiny

Every character who does not retire removes one level of harm from an Attributes. The GM also removes a level of harm from her Spark Attribute if she has any. This is the only way to remove harm from a PC.

and have given up their agency. They gave up being a hero.

1157	Advancement Phase
1158	When you finish your last scene of the session, move to the Advancement Phase.
1159	Each player has a chance to do one of the following things during their Advancement
1160	Phase.
1161	
1162	A. You can spend 4 Fate to remove a Fall Condition from your character.
1163	B. You can spend 4 Fate to add new a Rise Condition to your character.
1164	C. You can spend 8 Fate to add a new Talent to your character.
1165	D. You can spend 20 Fate to gain another level in an Attribute.
1166	E. You can choose to change one of your own Beliefs at no cost. You will be able
1167	to see it take action in the next session!
1168	

1169 1170	Key Phrases
1171	Framing Phase
1172 1173	You may say, "I would seize the Platform/Tilt/Question." Give someone one Fate and take the right to create the Platform, Tilt or Question from them.
1174	
1175	Collaboration Phase
1176 1177	You may say, "Yes, and" You elaborate on someone else's declaration with one of your own.
1178 1179	You may say, "We are in conflict." Attempt to block someone else's declaration by moving into the Conflict phase.
1180 1181	You may say, "And we move on." If you think the Question of the scene has been answered, move to the Closing phase.
1182	
1183	Conflict Phase
1184 1185	You may say, "I would rather suffer harm." Change a query, compel, or hinder resolution into a harm resolution.
1186 1187	You may say, "I would rather not." Change a Bolster or Inspire resolution into a query resolution.
1188 1189 1190	Once per conflict, you may say "I push for a resolution." Spend one Fate to choose a resolution to apply in this conflict. When you narrate, try to describe a dramatic action, training montage, or a flashback.
1191 1192 1193	You may say, "This confirms/refutes of my Belief" If everyone agrees your PC is involved and challenging their Belief, spend one Fate to set the die you already rolled to its maximum possible result.

Chapter 5 - Advice

Why Guidance Matters

 Roleplaying games are complicated. Chapter 4 was written as a step-by-step process for playing the game. This chapter gives you the tools, techniques, and advice you need to make the game really shine. This isn't just for the GM either; there's plenty of advice for players as well.

The Four Laws

These are the four fundamental rules that govern playing Spark. If this is the only guidance you follow, it will serve you well.

Tiebreaker: When you are stuck and need to resolve something quickly, roll off with your Spark Attributes and the highest number wins.

Consensus: If everyone in the group agrees that something happens, it does. The rules are a framework for a good story and if the best story would involve breaking the framework, please do so!

Bound by the Dice: All of the dice are rolled in public and you are bound by the result. If you get too many Resolutions, spend them on Compels and Queries. You never need to alter a die roll, because you can always choose how to interpret or change it.

Communicate: The game depends on communicating your expectations. Ensure everyone has the same understanding of the game setting and the rules system. Keep everyone advised on the genre conventions, mood, and themes. Negotiate and agree to which types of behaviours and characters are appropriate to your game. When in doubt, talk it out.

Player Advice and Guidance

Be Decisive: It doesn't matter if it's good or bad, just make a decision. The worst-case scenario is that you challenge your Beliefs and get Fate out of it.

Be Vulnerable: Try to let your guard down and push your boundaries. The story will be more personally meaningful that way and it can help you grow as a person.

Be Bold: Play chicken with the other participants and dare them to accept your declarations. Play your Beliefs to the hilt.

Be Persuasive: Find the two other Beliefs around the table that your character would despise. Confront them and try to change them.

Be Open: Share your plots and keep open secrets. The reason why secrets are so interesting is that they are discovered during play. Help the other players reveal their secrets and trigger their plots.

Be Defining: If you find an unnamed NPC that you like, give them a name! This is a cue to the GM that the NPC is interesting and you would like to see more of them.

Be Indirect: Out of all of the resolutions, Harm is the least effective one. If a target rejects a Compel, Query, or Hinder, they will take Harm anyway. It's even better is to use a Bolster to encourage a target to act in your favour. Don't forget how useful the Inspire Resolution is!

Be Inspiring: Share your ideas. They are not a limited commodity and the more you share, the more you will come up with. Trust me.

Be Attentive: It's very easy to get distracted by electronics, books, or side-conversations. Avoid this temptation and stay engaged for the sake of your fellow players. If your PC isn't available, try to portray an unnamed background NPC to stay engaged.

Improvisation and Creativity

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Don't Plan: No plan survives contact with the players, so avoid creating complex plans, or premade solutions to problems. Be ready for stuff to happen that you weren't prepared for and try to roll with it as much as you can.

You could prepare a handful of pre-determined events between NPC's, without

accounting for actions PC actions. "Joe and Bob are fighting. What do you do?"

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Leave Gaps: By leaving a few questions unresolved and hinting at nebulous threats, you give yourself more ingredients for your improvisation. Try to set up potential Platforms, Tilts and Questions for future scenes.

Say yes, or roll the dice: The default assumption is that players can do what they would like during play. Only pull out a conflict if you believe the confrontation would help further the story or develop the characters. Likewise, try to use your proxy dice wisely. You only have a limited supply of the things, so try using smaller proxy dice in conflicts.

Ask Them Why: Players will often act in ways that seem to be illogical or inconsistent with their Beliefs. Whenever a player acts in a way that you don't expect or understand, ask them why they are doing so. Don't block them, but feel free to enquire on their intent, reasoning, and motivations. You might want to ask a question in this format: "Why are you doing X, given that Y?"

Ask Them Leading Questions: Consider asking PC's questions that imply facts about their characters. Asking them "Why did you abandon the church?" might give them the room to interpret their past history.

Detail. Focus on explaining small details realistically and people will assume that broad massive things are equally detailed. Tell them the origin of the silk cloth and how much a desert trader would charge for it. It's a small detail, but it implies a large interconnected world, full of rich detail.

Reincorporate: Actively consider what other facts or details have been previously introduced and see if you can bring anything back.

Yes, And: The rule on Elaboration is especially appropriate for the GM's declarations. When you react, build on their ideas by saying, "Yes, and..."

Yes, for a Price: Consider offering them what they want for some cost. Keep the price high enough that it's a real choice to accept or reject the offer.

Show, don't tell. Context is critical. Elaborate how the environment reaches each of their senses. Describe exactly how the characters are expressing their emotions with body language. Show, don't tell.

Think Offstage: Think about what is happening in the background and the consequences of the Player's actions. That mugger they killed last session probably has a family looking for justice.

Focus and Pacing

The Love letter: Look at the Beliefs of each of the player Characters to learn what kinds of conflicts they are interested in. Look at their Conditions to see what situations would benefit or hinder them. Look at their Talents to see what kinds of tasks they are capable of performing.

Framing Focus: By influencing the scene framing, you can guide the scene effectively.

- Platform: Control the pace of play, allowing for changes in space of time. Define Where.
- Tilt: Control the types of actions. Define How.
- Question: Control the motivations of the players. Define Why.

Guest Star: If players aren't doing anything for more than five minutes, draw them in again by offering them minor NPC's to play. Just because their character isn't there, doesn't mean the player should be bored!

In late, out early: When framing, cut right into the action and try to end scenes as quickly as possible. This keeps the scenes short and snappy by cutting out the boring bits.

Listen: Follow the player's leads, as much as you can. You can listen to the player's theories and explanations and pick your favourite one which matches the evidence.

Stock Questions: As a GM, you can always fall back on certain standard questions:

- 1352 Stock Questions: As a Gl1353 So what do you do?
 - So how does that make you feel?
 - What do you think about that?

Spotlight: Try to give each of the players about the same amount of attention. Be aware of the amount of time each person is influencing the story. In the same way, try to give players some time to relax and recover after particularly intense scenes or conflicts so they can recover.

Focused Gaze: Try to focus the attention at the table by looking visibly at particular people. Humans are social animals and will subconsciously follow your gaze. Use this especially on the quiet players who might normally be overlooked.

Then Ninjas Attack!: When things slow down too much for your liking, blow things up. It doesn't have to be physical; an emotional outburst, men with machine guns or impossible evidence can get people moving. Sometimes you do need the pace to slow. For everything else, there's ninjas!

Beliefs and Proxies

 A good Belief should be a simple, declarative statement. Assume that the Belief is the kind of thing that someone could blurt out in a heated argument.

A good Belief should be subjective, philosophical, and/or non-falsifiable. The basic assumption of the game is that overwhelming evidence is enough to convince someone to change their Beliefs. Things that are obviously true or false don't make for good Beliefs.

A good Belief should have meaning and be controversial to a significant number of people. Players should be able to influence society on a whole, and Beliefs that others care about helps.

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Bad examples of Beliefs in Spark might be:

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My faith is ironclad; I will overthrow the king and seize his throne for my own purposes.

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(Not a simple, declarative and subjective statement; goals are not Beliefs)

1397 1398

Puppies are cute.

(While it's a simple subjective statement, it's not meaningful or controversial)

1399 1400 1401

The world is flat.

1402 1403 (While a declarative and potentially controversial at times, this is objectively incorrect.)

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Good examples of Beliefs in Spark might be:

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God is Dead

Proxies:

- The Ends justify the Means
- You can only depend on yourself

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Picking of Beliefs at Character Creation:

dole them out as appropriate to the situation.

Here is a good way to pick Character Beliefs in the first session. If you are stuck, consider following this list:

- Pick one character belief that will challenge a setting Belief. 1.
- 2. Pick one character belief that will challenge another character's Belief.
- Pick one character belief that will challenge one of your other character Beliefs. 3.

During conflicts, anyone can trade one Fate for a proxy die equal to their Fate dice.

As a GM, you can normally throw D20+6 conflicts at the players simply by spending one

Fate. Since not all challenges are that difficult, you can always exchange dice for two

others, one-step smaller. Each D20+6 proxy die is equal to two D12+5, four D10+4, eight

D8+3, sixteen D6+2, or thirty-two D4+1 proxy dice. You can store up your proxy dice and

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Challenge their Beliefs: The best way to spend your Proxies in a game is when it supports or refutes a player's Beliefs. Not only does this make the conflict more meaningful for the player, but it also can lead to a reward in Fate. If a conflict doesn't challenge anyone's Beliefs, you can only spend a D6+2 or D4+1 Proxy.

Non-Protagonist Characters

The Hierarchy of NPCs: Non-Protagonist characters come in three levels of importance; Blanks, Names and Faces. None of these distinctions has mechanical weight, but it's a handy way to organize NPCs.

Most new NPCs, when first encountered, are referred to as Blanks. Blanks don't get names, only unique descriptions. Consider the wiry and jittery cop versus the proper police officer with fine muttonchops.

Players can name Blanks, turning them into Names, significant and reoccurring NPCs. Write down the basic information about the Names, such as a description, hook and common abilities on the GM Sheet.

The third type of NPC are Faces who represent a given Faction. The GM usually creates the NPC or chooses them during setting creation, though it's possible that the story will lead you to promote a Name into a Face. Each of the published factions has premade Faces to represent them. If you are making a personal setting, you might want to create a name, description and the sample actions on your own.

Facial Profiling:

Faces are Non-Protagonist characters who belong to a Faction and represent their their Faction. They are the people you can interact with during play. Here is how I write up Faces on my setting sheet.

Example:

Larry Berlin: A tall, wiry man with a missing ear.

1460 Representing the Silver Council of Magi

1461 Excellent at lightning evocations (D12+5) | Poor at traditional etiquette (D6+2)

The Law of Conservation of NPC's: Before you invent a new NPC, ask yourself if there is an existing character that could fulfil that role. Minimize the number of characters that you use, so that you can establish stronger connections with a smaller number.

NPC's in the Middle: If you need to create a character on the fly, try to imagine an NPC who would be defined by the clash of two different character beliefs.

Body Language: Try to sit back straight for important or arrogant characters. You can lower your shoulders and avoid eye contact for shy or submissive ones. It's surprisingly effective.

Relationship Map: Consider creating a relationship map for all of your NPC's so you can keep track of their opinions of the other characters. You don't need to bring it to the table, but it can help you establish their motivations and perspectives.

1479	The Cast
1480 1481	Angela is the Game Moderator, portraying the setting of NeoNippon. She chose variant 1: The War of Writhing Blossoms.
1482	Setting Belief 1: We nothing without our traditions.
1483	Setting Belief 2: The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan.
1484 1485	Setting Belief 3: The secrets of this world will destroy us.
1486	She has three players, so there are four factions in total. She selected the following:
1487 1488 1489 1490	 The Village of Kanata The Henomin Merchantile Guild Shiraine Colony The Hostile Natives
1491	
1492	Brian is the first player, portraying Shimura; The Ronin Cursed with Love.
1493	Belief 1: We are nothing without our honour.
1494	Belief 2: Emotion is a sign of weakness.
1495 1496	Belief 3: Suki, my love, is worth any sacrifice.
1497	Attributes: Body D10, Heart D6, Mind D6, Spark D8.
1498	Conditions: My Father's Daisho (Rise), Helpless Peasants (Rise), Clan Sesei Traitor (Fall)
1499	Talents (Broad): Military, Literature
1500	Talents (Common): Swords, Reconnaissance, Environmental Suits
1501	Talents (Deep): Daisho (Katana & Wakizashi), Haiku
1502	

Chapter 6 - Example (Simplified for Beta)

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1503 Chris is the second player, portraying Gisaku; The Henomin Village Headsman. Belief 1: My people deserve respect. 1504 1505 Belief 2: Men will never hurt my little sister Suki again. 1506 Belief 3: Danger always strikes when everything seems fine. 1507 1508 Attributes: Body D6, Heart D10, Mind D10, Spark D4. 1509 Conditions: Acid-tolerant skin (Rise), The villagers of Kanata (Rise), Clan Embei Nobles 1510 (Fall) 1511 Talents (Broad): Trade, Villages 1512 Talents (Common): Storms, Leadership, Improvised Weapons. 1513 Talents (Deep): Wilderness-Exploration, Confidence-building. 1514 1515 Dave is the third player, portraying Ando; The Shinto Android. 1516 Belief 1: Emotions are more important than facts. 1517 Belief 2: The Kami must be honoured. 1518 Belief 3: Respect must be earned. 1519 1520 Attributes: Body D8, Heart D6, Mind D6, Spark 10. 1521 Conditions: Evasion Algorithms (Rise), The Shinto Trail (Rise), The Three Laws (Fall) 1522 Talents (Broad): Observation, Athletics 1523 Talents (Common): Emotions, Running, Aikido 1524 Talents (Deep): People-watching, Shinto Shrines

1525	Factions and Agendas
1526 1527	Angela the GM pulls the Faction Map, including the four new agendas, presenting them to the group.
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1529	The Factions
1530	The Village of Kanata
1531	Mandate: To survive at any cost.
1532	Agenda: Repel Saika bandit attacks.
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1534	The Hostile Natives
1535	Mandate: Destroy the Invading Two-legs.
1536	Agenda: A unit of Clan Sesei troops is found dead, missing the tops of their skulls.
1537	
1538	The Henomin Mercantile Guild
1539	Mandate: Ensure the henōmin are granted equal rights to true human.
1540	Agenda: Create an impartial trade tribunal for guild-colony negotiations.
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1542	Shiraine Colony
1543	Mandate: To maintain a peaceful state of human civilization.
1544 1545	Agenda: The Planetary Board of Directors passes a motion declaring the Saika mercenaries to be enemy combatants in the eyes of the law.
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1548 Decisions

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- Brian chooses to block the Henomin Mercantile Guild's agenda. He would rather
 not deal with trade tribunals at this point.
 - Chris looks at the options and decides to claim The Hostile Native's next agenda.
 - Dave decides that he would like to create a tie between the Henomin Merchant Guild and the Village of Kanata. The Merchantile Guild becomes be patrons of their client state of Kanata.

Narration

Angela describes that the village of Kanata sends out a few peasants to Matsue Colony, begging for aid. A young samurai, Shimura, and his companion, Ando, agree to travel with the peasant and they fend off the Saika bandit attack.

Angela tells the group that a group of Sesei troops stopped reporting after a particularly nasty acid storm struck their encampment. When a recovery team was dispatched, they found the troops brutally murdered with their skulls partially removed.

Brian takes the change to explain why the Mercantile Guild agenda fails. He decides that the Planetary Board of Directors is too busy dealing with the slaughter of Sesei troops do deal with lowlands affairs.

Lastly, Angela describes the Planetary Board of Directors blaming the murders on the Saika. On the urging of Sesei, the mercenaries are declared enemy combatants in the eyes of the law. Sesei quickly declares a bounty of 200 credits per Saika returned alive to their custody.

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History Log

- 1571 Angela writes down the following on the History log on the back of the faction sheet.
 - Kanata manages to repel a series of Saika bandit attacks with the aid of a Ronin and an Android.
 - A unit of Clan Sesei troops is found dead, missing the tops of their skulls.
 - The Planetary Board of Directors passes a motion declaring the Saika mercenaries to be enemy combatants in the eyes of the law, blaming them for the murders of the Sesei troops.

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1579	Framing the First Scene
1580 1581	Now the group is ready to start their first Scene. Everyone rolls their Spark Attributes, and they have the following results.
1582 1583 1584 1585	 Angela rolls her D20 and gets a value of 14. Brian rolls his D8 and gets a 6 Chris rolls his D4 and gets a 2 Dave rolls his D10 and gets a 9
1586	
1587 1588	Angela has the highest number, so she gets the first choice between Platform, Tilt, and Question. She claims the Platform.
1589 1590	Dave has the second highest number, so he chooses between the Tilt and the Question. He doesn't have a good idea yet, so he decides to claim the Question.
1591	Brian has the third highest score, so he gets the Tilt.
1592 1593	Chris has a great idea, so he gives Brian a single Fate while saying, "I would seize the Tilt".
1594 1595	Angela says, "The scene is set in the rubble of Koru Village, at dusk. Its three days after you repelled the Saika attack."
1596 1597	Chris smiles. "And in the distance, you see a corrosive storm that threatens to destroy the village and any clues in the rubble."
1598	Dave says, "The Question; Who is responsible for the destruction of Koru Village?".
1599 1600 1601	Brian, Chris, and Dave each declare that their PC's are present in the scene. They move onto collaboration.

1602	Collaboration
1603 1604 1605 1606	Angela: Looking at Chris; "Gisaku, you are the first to notice the threat, thanks to your genetic adaptations and your Common Talent with the storms, you are the first to notice. You smell the acid on the wind, see the darkening mountains to the east, and feel the change in the winds."
1607 1608	Chris: "Ando, could you please search the rubble as fast as you can, looking for tracks?"
1609	<u>Dave</u> : "Certainly, Headsman."
1610 1611 1612	Chris: "Lord Shimura-san, could I beg your favour and ask for your tactical expertise to try to figure what caused this destruction? Your noble weapons are beyond my humble knowledge."
1613 1614	Brian: In an out-of-character voice, "Chris, are you planning on telling our characters about the storm? Not all of us are acid proof!"
1615	Chris: Also, out-of-character. "Nope, don't want to worry you yet."
1616 1617 1618	Brian: In the voice of Shimura. "Why should we waste the time Gisaku? We know it's the Saika that did this foul deed. I will help find the tracks with the android, so we can track down and end those dishonourable dogs."
1619	Angela: "Does Gisaku want to allow Shimura to do this?"
1620 1621 1622	<u>Chris</u> : "No he doesn't. I don't want to assume that these are mere bandits. We are in Conflict."

1623	Basic conflict
1624 1625 1626 1627	Declare Sides Shimura (the PC) is defending his original declaration by saying "yay". Gisaku (The PC) is trying to block the declaration, so he says "Nay". Ando and the GM are observing from the sidelines.
1628	
1629	Determine Attributes
1630 1631	Shimura uses his Heart Attribute of D6 to maneuver socially. This increases to a D8 as he uses the intimidating Rise Condition of My Father's Daisho.
1632 1633	Gisaku is also using his Heart Attribute, though his is D10. He doesn't have any relevant Conditions.
1634	
1635	Determine Talent Bonus
1636 1637	Shimura uses his Military Broad Talent $(+1)$ and his Reconnaissance Common Talent $(+2)$ on the roll, for a total of $+3$.
1638 1639	Gisaku uses his Villages Broad Talent (+1), Leadership Common Talent (+2) and his Confidence-Building Deep Talent (+3) for a total of +6.
1640	
1641	Roll the Dice
1642	Shimura rolls his D8 and gets a 4 and adds his bonus for a total score of 7.
1643	Gisaku rolls his D10 and gets a 7, adding in his bonus for a total score of 13.
1644	
1645	Compare Scores
1646 1647	Gisaku's score of 13 beats Shimura's score by a margin of 6 points. Gisaku wins the conflict on behalf of his side and gets to choose three Resolutions.
1648	

1649	Choose Resolutions
1650 1651	<u>Chris</u> : "Question. Shimura, why don't you want to investigate more closely into the villager's destruction?"
1652 1653	<u>Brian</u> : "Shimura looks down the Sesei insignia on his environmental suit, with an expression of guilt."
1654	Chris: Spending 4 Fate. "Bolster. I am offering a new Rise of Destroyed Villages."
1655	Brian: Nods and writes in the new Rise Condition on his Character Sheet.
1656 1657 1658	<u>Chris</u> : "Compel. Shimura, I know you have the skills necessary to find the truth. I am certain that there is more behind this than mere bandit attacks. I am confident you will do the right thing."
1659 1660 1661	<u>Brian:</u> Spending 1 Fate. "I push for a Compel resolution. You make good points, but your disrespect for me and for my station is unbecoming. I await your sincere and abject apology for your impertinence."
1662 1663	Chris: "I would rather suffer harm." Marks down an X in the circle on the D10 die on his Heart Attribute. He will use a D8 for future Heart tests.
1664	End the Conflict, back to Collaboration.

Chapter 7 - NeoNippon (Sample Setting 1)



Overview

The Japanese colonization ship landed on the extra-solar planet of Shi Tateyama in 2236. The planet seemed a paradise from the remote surveys. It had abundant water, signs of native life, and a temperature in the habitable range. Once the colonists awoke from their cryo-freeze, they found it was far less pleasant than expected. It was a planet of extreme mountains, nearly boiling sea-level temperatures and harsh corrosive tempests. The rain corroded most metal and unusual electromagnetic characteristics at sea-level fried most electronics. The Colonial Board of Directors made the decision to settle on the cooler, dryer, and safer mountain peaks, with each corporation founding their own colony.

The planet was poor in metals, with the rain dissolving most of the natural ore deposits. Earth-born livestock couldn't survive and the only arable land was in the harsh lowlands. The scientists got to work, producing genetically engineered humans called Henōmin to labour for the colonies. These henōmin were sent down to the lowlands to grow rice, extract protein from the seas, and grow iron-hard black bamboo. They were taught their roles of feudal peasants, modelled after the idealized imagery and stories of Japan on old earth. Wandering, devout androids delivered messages between village, shrine, and great colony.

The Colonies are modern cities built into the cool and dry mountain peaks, where the humans can live safely. Each of the four colonies is led by one of the biggest corporations from earth with shares in the initial expedition. Each corporation holds dominion over a swath of territory and rule over dozens of smaller settlements, outposts and henomin villages. The henomin consider the corporations as noble families or clans.

The Lowlands are nearly inhospitable for humanity. The average temperatures and humidity levels are equal to the most oppressive tropical jungles on old Earth. Worse still, acid storms ravage the landscape on a frequent basis. The local life forms, being bizarre fungal-animal hybrids, are toxic without extreme chemical processing.

Clan Embei designed the henōmin to overcome each of these challenges. They were engineered to be comfortable in the 45C temperatures, to resist the acidic rain and to digest the local flora. Dozens of henōmin villages have been founded in the lowlands to support the colonies demands.

Independent Outposts are scattered across the landscape. They are diverse and widespread; smaller human corporate laboratories, Shinto shrines, Buddhist monasteries, secluded dojos and trading posts.

1721 INSERT MAP 1: Colonies 1722 INSERT MAP 2: Lowlands

1723	Setting Beliefs
1724 1725	Belief 1: Technology will tame this world.
1725	Moto Bio-Engineering Incorporated (Clan Embei)
1727	Shakura Environmental Systems Incorporated (Clan Sesei)
1728	The Dreamers
1729	The breamers
1730	Belief 2: We are nothing without our traditions.
1731	The Village of Kanata
1732	The Kensei
1733	The Shrine Tenders
1734	me diffine renders
1735	Belief 3: The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan.
1736	The Village of Otawa
1737	The Henomin Merchant Guild
1738	Tateyama Colony (Clan Tateyama)
1739	
1740	Belief 4: The secrets of this world will destroy us.
1741	Nakumura Sensors (Clan Nakumura)
1742	The Saika Mercenaries
1743	The Hostile Natives
1744	
1745	Setting Variants
1746	Variant 1: The War of Writhing Blossoms
1747	We are nothing without our traditions.
1748	The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan.
1749	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	The secrets of this world will destroy us.
1750	The secrets of this world will destroy us.
1750 1751	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace
1751 1752 1753	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan.
1751 1752	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world.
1751 1752 1753	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan.
1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan.
1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756 1757	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Lost Colony Technology will tame this world.
1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756 1757 1758	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Lost Colony Technology will tame this world. We are nothing without our traditions.
1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756 1757 1758 1759	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Lost Colony Technology will tame this world.
1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756 1757 1758 1759 1760	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Lost Colony Technology will tame this world. We are nothing without our traditions. The secrets of this world will destroy us.
1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756 1757 1758 1759 1760 1761	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Lost Colony Technology will tame this world. We are nothing without our traditions. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Silicon Shogunate
1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756 1757 1758 1759 1760 1761 1762	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Lost Colony Technology will tame this world. We are nothing without our traditions. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Silicon Shogunate Technology will tame this world.
1751 1752 1753 1754 1755 1756 1757 1758 1759 1760 1761	Variant 2: Our Last, Best Chance for Peace Technology will tame this world. The greatest honour is to be of service to your clan. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Lost Colony Technology will tame this world. We are nothing without our traditions. The secrets of this world will destroy us. Variant 3: The Silicon Shogunate

1765 1766	Sample Factions
1767 1768	Moto Bio-Engineering Incorporated (EMBEI)
1769	Mandate: To Terraform Shi-Tateyama via genetic engineering.
1770 1771 1772 1773	Brief: Moto Bio-Engineering Incorporated based out of Fukuoka Colony, specializes in genetic engineering and the biological sciences. They are responsible for the creation of the henōmin servants, the iron-hard black bamboo, and the cultured rice necessary for human survival on Tateyama-4.
1774	Sample Agendas:
1775	Create the first vat-bred henomin with additional improvements.
1776	 Engineer new servitor race, the Kappa, to better fish the seas.
1777	Send an expedition to gather new samples of indigenous life forms for study.
1778	
1779	Face: Embei Yukiko Mikisama
1780	Description: A bitter and cynical scientist, trying desperately to feed Fukuoka.
1781	Actions: Indigenous Botany (D12+5), Henōmin Negotiations (D6+2)
1782	

1783 1784	Shakura Environmental Suits Incorporated (SESI)
1785	Mandate: To enable human access to the inhospitable lowlands.
1786 1787 1788	Brief: Shakura Environmental Systems Incorporated, based out of Matsue Colony, specializes in fabricating environmental suits and vehicles capable of surviving the storms.
1789	Sample Agendas:
1790	Initiate peaceful trade deals with the Henōmin Merchantile Guild.
1791	Seize the prosperous Baku hills from Clan Embei.
1792	Protect the village of Kanata from attack, for a price.
1793	
1794	Face: Shakura Commander Kurosan
1795 1796	Description: A weathered, scarred solder clad in an ornate prototype environmental suit.
1797	Actions: Conquering Territory (D12+5), Resisting Bait (D6+2)
1798	

1799 1800	The Dreamers
1801	Mandate: To help synthetic life in their search for enlightenment.
1802 1803 1804 1805	Brief: A quirk of the artificial intelligence process has resulted in faith being instilled in all artificial intelligences as they gain sentience. The majority embrace the Shinto faith, identifying as Kami embodied in android forms. A strong minority remain as disconnected AI systems following the noble eight-fold path of Buddhism.
1806	Sample Agendas:
1807	To soothe the angered Kami of Mt. Fujan.
1808	Convert the faithless citizens of Matsue Colony to the Shinto faith.
1809	Improve the legal standing of artificial intelligences in the colonies.
1810	
1811	Face: Rinzei531 Bodhisattva
1812 1813	Description: A disembodied intelligence, re-purposing communication technologies to speak in a soothing yet rational tone.
1814	Actions: Insightful Philosophy (D12+6), Tangible and concrete solutions (D6+2)
1815	

1816 1817	The Village of Kanata
1818	Mandate: To survive at any cost.
1819 1820 1821	Brief: The henomin village of Kanata is the primary source of the genetically modified iron-hard black bamboo for Embei Prefecture. As one of the few sources of building materials capable of surviving the lowland storms.
1822	Sample Agendas:
1823	Acquire desperately needed medical supplies from Fukuoka.
1824	Repel Saika bandit attacks.
1825 1826	 Barter a portion of the lumber to the Henomin Mercantile Guild for legal representation.
1827	
1828	Face: Headsman Gisaku
1829 1830	Description: A weary yet defiant henomin leader, driven by duty to his village and family.
1831	Actions: Leading Villagers (D12+5), Standing up to Clan Embei. (D6+2)
1832	

1833 1834	The Kensei
1835	Mandate: To wield the honourable sword in service.
1836 1837 1838 1839 1840 1841	Brief: The Kensei were originally the policing forces for the early colonies, whose duties included enforcement of laws in the lowlands. Unfortunately, harsh corrosive rain tended to degrade firearms and another alternative was sought. They took up swords, fashioned from dwindling supplies of exotic Terran alloys. They took up bushido and have to this day served with honour. They are equally respected and feared by the henōmin.
1842	Sample Agendas:
1843	Hunt down the warlord Koryna and bring her to justice.
1844	Exact ruinous taxes from the village of Otawa.
1845	Investigate the destroyed village of Yakirana
1846	
1847	Face: Kensei Shimura
1848	Description: A stoic ronin cursed with love for a village headwoman.
1849	Actions: Honourable Duels (D12+5), Political manoeuvring (D6+2)
1850	

1851 1852	The Shrine Tenders
1853	Mandate: To maintain the roads and shrines for travellers.
1854 1855 1856 1857 1858	Brief: A network of roadside Shinto shrines dot the countryside where travellers might pay respects to the Kami. The caretakers, known as the Shrine Tenders, maintain and expand this network to bring good fortune to human colonist, android, and henōmin alike. The Shrine Tenders double as a mail service, connecting the lowlands to the colonies through couriers.
1859	Sample Agendas:
1860	Build a new grand shrine in the ruins of a disused communications tower.
1861	Forge diplomatic letters between two different clans.
1862	Pass along secret, coded messages between henomin villages.
1863	
1864	Face: Ando1573
1865 1866	Description: One of many messenger-androids, seeking wisdom on the roads between villages.
1867	Actions: Observing human emotions (D12+6), Shedding human blood (D6+2)
1868	

1869 1870	The Hen ō min Mercantile Guild
1871	Mandate: Ensure the henōmin are granted equal rights to true humans.
1872 1873 1874 1875 1876	Brief: The first henomin merchant cooperative was formed twenty years ago in response to a particularly intense famine. Since that time, it has grown into a social safety net for the disenfranchised villagers. Recently established as a formal guild, they have begun to wield their little economic power to support equality and respect for the peoples of the lowlands.
1877	Sample Agendas:
1878	Create an impartial trade tribunal for guild-colony negotiations.
1879	Establish a Black Market.
1880	Convince the colonists that torturing henomin is dishonourable.
1881	
1882	Face: Speaker Sakhalin
1883	Description: Sakhalin is a henōmin grandmother, pleasantly plump with wise eyes.
1884	Actions: Subtle persuasion (D12+6), Social Intimidation (D6+2)
1885	

1886 1887	The Village of Otawa
1888	Mandate: Become respected and invaluable to the colonies.
1889 1890 1891 1892	Brief: Otawa is a coastal village, with the women tending the rice and the men fishing the wild seas. The Council of Otawa has pronounced that they need to curry favour with each of the noble Clans. They seek the approval, attention, and affection of the various colonies so they might improve their lives.
1893	Sample Agendas:
1894	 Increase farming yields through some risky experiments.
1895	Domesticate the local wildlife to help in fishing efforts.
1896	• Uncover a conspiracy of dishonourable henomin on the colonies behalf.
1897	
1898	Face: Headwoman Suki
1899 1900	Description: Suki is a henōmin woman with defiance shining in her eyes and scars marring her once-beautiful face.
1901	Actions: Gain sympathy (D12+6), Resist colony demands (D6+2).
1902	

1886

1903 1904	Shirane Colony (Clan Shirane)
1905	Mandate: To maintain a peaceful state of human civilization.
1906 1907 1908 1909	Brief: Shirane Colony was the first to be founded, resting on the summit of the highest mountain. It was made to be the capital of the new civilization, a bastion of education, of culture and of law. Shirane Colony care for the Great Library, the Archive, the Planetary Board of Directors and the Supreme Court. As a result, Shirane has also become a hotbed for political intrigue and corporate espionage.
1911	Sample Agendas:
1912 1913	 The Supreme Court rules against Clan Nakumura for theft of Clan Sesei schematics.
1914 1915	 An obscure text from great library hints that earth knew about the inhospitable nature of Shi-Tateyama prior to sending the colony ship.
1916 1917	 The Planetary Board of Directors passes a motion declaring the Saika mercenaries to be enemy combatants in the eyes of the law.
1918	
1919	Face: Chuganji Ryoko, Chief Negotiator
1920 1921	Description: A middle-aged woman with shocking blue hair, multiple facial piercings, a Nakumura X 31-Cybereye implant, and a soothing voice.
1922	Actions: Trade political favours (D12+6), Intentional provocation (D6+2).
1923	

1924 1925	Nakumura Sensors (Clan Nakumura)
1926	Mandate: To establish open communications and information gathering.
1927 1928 1929 1930 1931	Brief: The Nakumura Sensors Corporation was originally a telecommunications start- up on old earth which diversified to computer systems and remote sensing technologies. They manage the massive communication relay and satellite systems necessary to interact with old Earth. They are the eyes and ears of the colonies and use their expertise to try to see through the storms.
1932	Sample Agendas:
1933	Forges fake messages from earth when the real ones cease.
1934	• Establish a relay in the unexplored territories to found new henomin villages.
1935	Determine the precise source of the anomalous electromagnetic interference.
1936	
1937	Face: Nakumura Atsushi, Sensor Technician
1938 1939	Description: A short and heavyset human male, with a dozen different kinds of electronic devices strapped to him.
1940	Actions: Modify a sensor system (D12+5), Resist lowlands storms (D6+2)
1941	

1943	
1944	Mandate: Achieve complete military dominance of the planet.
1945 1946 1947 1948	Brief: Some call them mercenaries. Others call them bandits, killers, and criminals. In any case, the Saika are spread across the lowlands with tendrils of influence extending into the colonies. For those with credits or in need of a scapegoat, they are just what you need.
1949	Sample Agendas:
1950	Seize control of several mining villages.
1951	Commit an atrocity on a village that refused to pay the protection money.
1952	Defend a village from an attack, in exchange for new recruits.
1953	
1954	Face: Kikuchiyo the Cruel
1955 1956 1957	Description: Exactly what you would expect from a half-starved boy, raised by blackmailers, who got his hands on a pulse cannon. Kikuchiyo is a lean hedonist with several cybernetic augmentations.
1958	Actions: Ambush with overwhelming force (D12+5), Long-term planning (D6+2)
1959	

The Saika Mercenaries

1942

1960 1961	The Hostile Natives
1962	andate: Destroy the Invading Two-legs.
1963 1964 1965	Brief: These sentient beings are native to Shi Tateyama and are fighting back against the two-pillar "alien invaders". Fortunately, for them, they are unknown to the human population.
1966	Sample Agendas:
1967	A village is destroyed, with acidic burns left on the rubble.
1968	A unit of Clan Sesei troops is found dead, missing the tops of their skulls.
1969 1970	 A shrine-tender has located a bizarre purple artifact, seemingly shaped out of some entirely unknown material.
1971	
1972	Face: The Alien
1973	Description: A swarm of tentacles, bound together like tumbleweed.
1974	Actions: Slaughter a human or henōmin (D12+6), Communicate (D6+2)
1975	
1976	
1977	
1978	
1979	
1980	
1981	
1982	
1983	
1984	

1985 1986	Sample Talents
1987 1988 1989 1990	Human Colonist (Broad): Science, Politics, Military, Engineering, Computers, Law, Observation, Economics, Arts, Philosophy, Persuasion
1991 1992 1993 1994 1995	Hen ō min Villagers (Broad): Farming, Fishing, Logging, Village, Wilderness, Weather, Trade, Evasion, Religion, Athletics
1996 1997 1998 1999	Human Colonist (Common): Stealth, Biology, Swords, Reconnaissance, Rhetoric, Electronics, Implants, Energy Weapons, Aikido, Sensors, Tactics, Medicine, Henōmin, Education
2000 2001 2002 2003 2004	Hen ō min Villagers (Common): Oratory, History, Emotions, Construction, Storms, Shrines, Brawling, Leadership, Carpentry, Herbalism, Improvised weapons, Humans, Barter
2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010	Human Colonist (Deep): Native Ecosystems, Resource Scarcity, Daisho, Plasma Pistol, Wrist-locks, Cybernetic Prototypes, Human Genecrafting, Henōmin Genetic Tailoring, Sensor Engineering, Communications Relays, Hover Transports, Dueling Etiquette, Trade Logistics, Policy Analysis, Al Systems
2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016	Hen ō min Villagers (Deep): Wilderness Exploration, Confidence-Building, People-watching, Shino Purification Rituals Amulet-Crafting, Listening to Kami, House Construction, Moral Instruction, Storm Shelters Dirty fighting, Poisons, Appraising Goods, Historical Rebellions
2017 2018	

Sample Conditions 2019 2020 Rise: 2021 2022 Defiant Henomin 2023 Shirane Librarian • 2024 Omamori Protection Amulet, 2025 Dorei Bells of Good Fortune • 2026 My Father's Daisho • The Green Sea 2027 ullet2028 • The Oni's Tooth 2029 The Memory of my daughter, Miki Wired Reflexes 2030 • 2031 Alloyed bones Henomin gills 2032 2033 Acid-tolerant skin 2034 IR Cybereye ullet2035 Cortical Implant The Village of Kanata 2036 • 2037 Fall: 2038 Corrosive Storms 2039 2040 Clan Sesei Traitor • 2041 Clan Embei Experiment Clan Shirane Scapegoat 2042 Clan Nakumura Spy 2043 • 2044 Saika Collaborator • 2045 • Shed human blood 2046 Malfunctioning cyberarm ullet2047 My missing hand The vengeful Kami Horon 2048 2049 The seductive Kami Kiko 2050 Agoraphobia Technophobia 2051 2052 Artificial life 2053 Slave collar implant ullet2054 The Village of Kanata 2055 The Whispering Shores ullet2056 The First Shrine 2057 The Mountain Witch

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