

•**LIGHTNING**•

*Tabletop RPG
&
'Solanum' Setting*

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L I G H T N I N G

(Lightning 'Infinity' v1.01)

A tabletop roleplaying system
developed by
A.K. WATSON

Ever since I obtained a d20 die I knew that I had to create a tabletop game system. This is it.

Design Philosophy

The Lightning system was designed over the course of approximately 5 years, and although its many iterations have been rarely similar, the design philosophy has been unerringly consistent: Lightning is a system that strives to emulate the authentic feel of reality in a fantasy world. Consequently, this system emphasizes the mortality of man, the uncertainty of battle, and the importance of skill on both the players and characters ends. Lightning accurately simulates the feel of fantasy without 'game-y' abstraction that forces players to think as if they were playing a game and not just within a simulated reality.

That being said, this system is meant only to create games—it is not meant for collaborative dramatic storytelling, but solely complex games of pretend with winning and losing. This means that before any game mechanics are invoked in order to resolve an intention, the DM must ask himself 'what would actually happen here?' and use his brain to either invoke game mechanics or resolve it with logic. In other words, **every single rule enumerated hereafter is secondary to the logical resolution of an intention via the DM's¹ brain.**

With that being said, let's party.

¹ DM: Dangerous Machinator; the person running the game.

•CORE MECHANICS•

“Your beings are all but nothing”

-The Shadow, The Okretar.

Attributes & Thresholds

The two core mechanics in this system are deeply intertwined: ATTRIBUTES represent measures of function of a thing that rarely change; THRESHOLDS represent noticeable qualitative change that occurs after a certain amount of measurable quantitative change.

ATTRIBUTES are notated as a type of dice based on the number of faces it has, and a non-random modifier². The default attributes associated with humanoids are *Strength*, *Dexterity*, *Intellect*, and *Psyche*. Each attribute can be calculated as an ATTRIBUTE SCORE, which equals the sum attribute's modifier and the number of faces of the attribute's dice³.

THRESHOLDS are equal to an attribute score (sometimes modified by other bonuses) which is related to the effects of a threshold. The two default thresholds associated with humanoids are the *Damage Threshold* (DT) and the *Psi Threshold* (PT). Thresholds have numeric counters which increase and decrease from actions within the game. If a counter becomes higher than or higher than double its corresponding threshold, then the threshold is considered *broken* or *eclipsed* respectively. The effects of breaking or eclipsing a threshold is different depending on the threshold.

Checks

Whenever a player's intention can be reasonably resolved by testing one of their attributes, the DM may ask that player to make a check, on which the numeric value decides the in-game result. When a DM asks for a check, he will tell the player their FAVOR, which represents the situation a check is performed in, and determines how many dice are rolled in a check. A check with neutral favor will always have a favor of two⁴. Unfavorable circumstances correspond to a favor of one, while favorable circumstances can mean a favor of three or sometimes even higher.

Checks are sometimes subject to additional bonuses; see **Specialties** and **Skills**.

DIFFICULTY is the minimum value that must be attained by a check in order for in-game success to occur. It is decided by the DM based on the nature of the check; see **Playing the Game Against Death**. Checks can be *Risky*, meaning that if the check's result is less than half of the difficulty, something very bad happens (such as falling off of a cliff while climbing it; this is notated with an 'X' after the difficulty. In addition, checks can also have skill prerequisites that must be met in order to attempt the check; this is notated in parenthesis next to 'PRQ'.

² Attribute Notation Example: $d6 + 1$ (use six-sided dice and always add 1 to the result; only once, not for each dice).

³ Attribute Score Example: $d6 + 1$; the score of this attribute is equal to $6+1$ or 7.

⁴ Check Example: A check with an attribute of $d6 + 1$ and a favor of 2 (neutral circumstances) means that the result of the check is the result of $2d6 + 1$, or the sum of two six-sided dice and 1.

Specialties

A specialty (or spec) is a bonus that is given to a specific function of an attribute. Each default humanoid attribute has four specs that can be added to appropriate checks using that attribute. Specs, like skills, can not be higher than half of the associated attribute's dice.

Strength	Dexterity	Intellect	Psyche
Leverage	Agility	Lore	Empathy
Power	Coordination	Speech	Instinct
Stamina	Perception	Science	Sanity
Vitality	Reflex	Tact	Will

LEVERAGE. Slow-acting strength; aids in lifting, pushing, and pulling heavy objects. Useful for grappling, climbing, moving furniture, and keeping stable (leverage is the most 'defensive' of Strength's specialties). Low leverage indicates a light or slim build.

POWER. Fast-acting strength; aids in sprinting, melee combat, throwing, and several athletic feats. Useful for knocking teeth out of people, jumping across ravines, outrunning guards, and throwing bricks. Low power indicates a flabby or untuned build.

STAMINA. Physical endurance, the ability to do work for extended periods of time. Aids in staying awake over long periods of time, long runs, and extended combats. Useful for not sleeping, traveling on foot, and generally being unstoppable. Low stamina indicates a tendency to become easily tired and out of breath, even simply by walking up some stairs.

VITALITY. Health, immunity to diseases, resistance to pain, and organ efficiency; aids in resilience and taking damage, whether it be by a sword, spoiled food, or a plague. High vitality grants extraordinary toughness in combat—one might be hit over and over yet never fall down. Low vitality, on the other hand, causes one to be sick and frail; after even just a light punch one will begin to whine and tear up.

AGILITY. Balance and gross motor function; aids in the control of the arms and legs. Useful for sneaking silently, acrobatic feats such as landing safely, dancing, and doing kickflips. Agility is not used when Strength is a greater factor than Dexterity (e.g. climbing).

COORDINATION. Hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills; aids in ranged combat and feats of manual dexterity. Useful for sharpshooting, throwing darts, picking pockets, disabling traps, playing instruments, and an inordinate amount of other things. High coordination grants a steady hand and keen fingers, while a low bonus makes one incompetent and shaky.

PERCEPTION. Passive and active observation of the world through every sense one has; aids in seeing, hearing, feeling, and to a lesser extent tasting/smelling. Useful for seeing camouflaged or hidden things, recognizing scents, and hearing what people say under their breath. Low perception indicates that one is often unaware of their surroundings, leading one to be susceptible against ambushes and hidden traps.

REFLEX. Speed of reaction and thinking; primarily aids in evasion and defense. Useful for dodging attacks, escaping traps, attacking first, and generally reacting to danger before anything bad can happen. Low reflex indicates slowness and absent-mindedness.

LORE. Knowledge of history, culture, religion, art, geography, politics, law, anthropology, economics, philosophy, linguistics, cooking, trivia, and many other more obscure topics. Useful for knowing things, so long as that thing isn't science, math, engineering, or technology. Low lore indicates an ignorance of even where one is and what laws are expected to be followed.

SCIENCE. Knowledge of science, math, engineering, and technology; aids in using technology and applying techniques from physics, chemistry, mathematics, programming, biology, and pharmacology in the real world. Useful for ballistics calculations, diagnosing and treating diseases, synthesizing drugs, writing computer programs, and using technology. Low science indicates an ignorance of basic computer operation, what a 'germ' is, and what a shape a parabola has.

SPEECH. Ability to speak clearly and persuasively; aids voice cadence, vocabulary choice, and vocal formatting of ideas—while this may sound underwhelming, speech is instrumental in many situations. Useful particularly in negotiations, persuasion, telling jokes, entertaining others, rallying or distracting large crowds, and generally tailoring one's words around exactly the kind of reaction that one wants to elicit. Note that while speech makes one more persuasive, it can not take the place of arguments and reasoning; instead, speech must be used in tandem with actually good ideas to be effective. Low speech indicates a tendency to stutter, misspeak, and worst of all—to be completely boring.

TACT. Knowledge of social norms, cues, and niceties; aids in knowing how one should act in social situations, as well as noticing when others are acting strangely. Useful for telling convincing lies, seeing through deception, being polite and liked, as well as general social knowledge. High tact indicates that one is able to 'read' others easily, no matter the context—low tact indicates social awkwardness, lack of hygiene, and a tendency for others to see one as strange or vulgar.

INSTINCT. Ability to intuit seemingly unknowable fate; aids in the activation of a quasi-supernatural 'danger sense'. Useful for avoiding unlucky and instant death, as well as generally negative things. With instinct, one is afforded knowledge that shouldn't normally be obtainable (is this gun loaded? Are there traps present? Will touching this rune cause instant death?).

EMPATHY. Ability to mirror the emotions of others; aids in perceiving and understanding others pain, sadness, happiness, etc. Useful for recognizing feelings of doubt (potentially exposing lies), making friends, and being trusted by one's acquaintances. Low empathy indicates psychopathy, a lack of understanding towards others, and a tendency to display cold or strange outward behavior; additionally, one with low empathy may be incapable of forming emotional attachment towards others, causing manipulative/selfish behavior.

SANITY. Common sense and groundedness; allows one to be in touch with reality and one's goals, to face mental adversity and to continue safely and responsibly. Useful for staying calm under pressure, resisting stress, and generally being cool and collected. Note that sanity does not aid in bravery during perilous times (that is the job of will), but does give one courage to face reality and what one *knows* they ought to do (e.g. public speaking). Low sanity indicates that one is neurotic, anxious in various situations, unrealistic in their judgment of reality, and unable to act reasonably under stress.

WILL. Willpower, motivation, drive, and presence; aids in bravery and impetus. Useful for commanding and leading others, functioning during moments of extreme danger, and to always have control over oneself. High will means that one is motivated and capable of challenging fate, even against all odds. Low will, on the other hand, indicates a tendency towards laziness and cowardice, a lack of mental energy, and a continual wasting of time without a goal in mind.

Skills

A skill is a bonus that represents a specific field of knowledge or collection of techniques. Skills can not be higher than half of one's Intellect attribute dice, and it is impossible to learn or use skills without the Intellect attribute. While the list of specs is fixed, there are theoretically an endless amount of skills to learn, anything from juggling to underwater basket weaving. Regardless, below is a list of what is expected to be the most commonly used skills:

—Academic—

Anthropology
 Business
 Biology
 Botany
 Chemistry
 Economics
 Engineering
 History
 Literature
 Medicine
 Mathematics
 Philosophy
 Physics
 Psychology
 Theology
 Zoology

—Artistic—

Drawing
 Fashion
 Music Theory
 Play (Instrument)
 Riddles
 Singing

—Arcane—

Alchemy
 Arcana
 Demonology
 Spellwriting

—Athletic—

Acrobatics
 Dancing
 Climbing
 Sprinting
 Swimming
 Throwing

—Languages—

Komen (kaw-men)
 Delmish (del-mish)
 Grazian (graw-zee-in)
 Thayen (th-ayy-in)
 Vernic (vur-nik)
 Protic (pro-tik)
 Xenic (zee-nik)

—Naturalism—

Animal Handling
 Farming
 Fishing
 Foraging
 Herbalism
 Navigation
 Tracking
 Trapping

—Practical—

First Aid
 Driving
 DIY
 Streetwise

—Subterfuge—

Bribery
 Impersonation
 Lockpicking
 Lying
 Sneaking
 Stealing

—Vocational—

Appraisal
 Blacksmithing
 Carpentry
 Cartography
 Computers
 Electronics
 Engines
 Machinery
 Metalworking
 Programming
 Tailoring

—Weapons—

Bows
 Brawling
 Clubs
 Handguns
 Knives
 Polearms
 Rifles
 Shields
 Swords

Note, again, that anything that may be learnt and consistently applied may be a skill.

Ambition & Training

Specs, skills, and sometimes even attributes can be improved during a game. During the game, the DM will award players *ambition* based on the success of risky or ambitious actions, which can be used to increase specs and skills through training. To calculate how much ambition it costs to increase a spec or skill, first determine the desired level of the spec/skill and the score of the associated attribute (skills always use Intellect). Multiply the desired level by 100 and then divide by the score; this number rounded up is the amount of required ambition it costs to attain that level (**the table below shows pre-calculated values for required ambition when leveling specs/skills**). Note that levels must be bought individually; to buy +3 in a bonus, you must first have +2, which itself requires +1; also recall that the level in a spec/skill can never be higher than half of its associated attribute's dice. Attributes themselves may not be improved with ambition.

Score	+0 to +1	+1 to +2	+2 to +3	+3 to +4	+4 to +5	+5 to +6
1	100	200	300	400	500	600
2	50	100	150	200	250	300
3	33	67	100	133	167	200
4	25	50	75	100	125	150
5	20	40	60	80	100	120
6	17	33	50	67	83	100
7	14	29	43	57	71	86
8	13	25	38	50	63	75
9	11	22	33	44	56	67
10	10	20	30	40	50	60
11	9	18	27	36	45	55
12	8	17	25	33	42	50

TRAINING must be done in order to spend ambition and buy levels in specs or skills. One hour of in-game training spends one ambition, until enough is spent to level the bonus⁵. While the nature of training is vague, it may include listening to lectures, learning under a mentor, reading books on the subject, or simply physical practice. Time spent adventuring may also sometimes be counted as time spent training for the right skill or spec.

⁵ Whether or not you believe in the '10,000 hour rule', this rule seems like a massive underestimate of training time. This is for gameplay purposes. If you find this to be too unrealistic and immersion-breaking, consider increasing the number of hours required to spend ambition, or simply relax. Additionally note that what many consider mastery in a single skill might actually be mastery in several skills.

Luck as a Six-Sided Die

When common sense is uncertain as to the outcome, but a check seems unnecessary, the DM will sometimes choose to make a luck roll which determines the outcome of an intention. A luck roll is a simple roll of one six-sided dice (1d6) which determines something that is primarily random. A 1 indicates an undeniably bad result, and a 6 indicates an undeniably good result; the numbers in between act as a spectrum of bad to good. Good DMs will make often use of luck rolls, sometimes even more often than checks.

A list of possible things that a luck roll might determine:

- ❖ Whether or not an old trap activates.
- ❖ Whether encounters occur, or if they do, how dangerous they are.
- ❖ Whether or not a small detail is true that is favorable to the players (Is he facing away? Is he wearing a hat? Is he drinking something? Are his pockets large enough for me to put this bomb in?).
- ❖ Whether or not something breaks when accidentally dropped or slashed.
- ❖ Whether or not someone hits an armored or unarmored part of someone.

Rend the Game Asunder

Each player begins with a single rend point, which can be used to do one of two things. Firstly, a rend point can be spent to fix any dice roll as the player wishes. Secondly, a rend point can be used to break the game in any way that the DM agrees to. A rend point is an offering to the players to control the narrative, and the DM should respect its power. That being said, if the DM thinks a player's offer is too game-breaking, he should counter with another offer rather than outright refuse.

A list of possible things a rend point can do, if the DM is willing:

- ❖ Spawn a large amount of treasure that the players 'just happen' to discover.
- ❖ Cause a massive mistake on the part of an enemy boss, like dropping his sword or slipping and falling.
- ❖ Reveal that a character who was thought dead actually survived.
- ❖ Remove an enemy from the game as if they never existed.
- ❖ Create the opportunity to go on a quest for a specific magic item the player wants.
- ❖ Attract the attention of an arcane patron.
- ❖ Instantly gain a level (or levels) in a skill or spec.
- ❖ Retcon something.
- ❖ Revert time back a few minutes, going before a massive mistake was made.
- ❖ Pretend as if something that just killed the entire party didn't actually happen.

Rend points are awarded to players by the DM whenever they change the world in a significant and meaningful way, and are usually only given to a single player since they are incredibly powerful and inherently game-breaking.

•GENERAL MECHANICS•

"Think in the future, live in the future!"

-Lino Raita, The Adventures of Lino Raita

Playing the Game Against Death

A table of difficulties for DMs to use:

In-Game Difficulty	Difficulty
Very Easy; likely for a complete amateur to succeed.	6
Easy; likely for someone even somewhat experienced to succeed.	8
Involved; difficult for amateurs, likely for someone experienced to succeed.	10
Challenging; a good bit of talent is required for good odds of success.	12
Difficult; hard even for the experienced.	14
Nigh Impossible; only theoretically possible for the best.	16+

While the division between each attribute is usually clear depending on the intention of the player, a number of in-game actions may confuse DMs and players as to which specs are applicable. The following section lists possible intentions and their applicable attributes/specs (in addition to a spec bonus, any applicable skill can also be added). Note that combat-related intentions have been excluded from this section, as they are located in a later section.

ACTING QUICKLY in any situation is Dexterity-reflex.

ANALYSIS of evidence or plans of action is not done by characters, only the players, and thus no checks can be made to do so. Analysis of a piece of art from a cultural standpoint, though, is done with Intellect-lore.

APPRAISAL of goods and services in order to determine an accurate market value is Intellect-lore.

BARTERING with merchants for lower or higher prices while buying or selling uses Intellect-speech.

BREAKING down a door or similar uses Strength-power.

CATCHING thrown items uses Dexterity-coordination.

CHARISMA see MAKING FRIENDS or PERSUASION.

CONFIDENCE in a high-pressure interview, during a speech to a large crowd, during interrogation, or even when talking to a girl uses Psyche-sanity.

CLIMBING up a sheer surface is Strength-leverage.

DANCING in a way that is impressive and stylish uses Dexterity-agility, although knowing when to dance and which dances to use is all about Intellect-tact.

DETECTING ARCANA can not be done directly—only spells allow one to detect arcana—however one may

inspect an item for relevant clues such as runes or engravings with Dexterity-perception.

DETECTING LIES that people say uses Intellect-tact; using Psyche-empathy will detect hidden emotions that might lead one into realizing someone is lying, but never explicitly state that the person is lying.

DIAGNOSIS of an illness is done with Intellect-science.

ESCAPING most traps can be done with Dexterity-reflex; escaping from being grappled can be done with Dexterity-reflex or Strength-leverage.

ENTERTAINING an individual or crowd with witty comedy or speeches is done with Intellect-speech, although if one is entertaining using a talent, then the attribute associated with that talent is used (for example, Dexterity-coordination is used for playing musical instruments).

FIRST AID using bandages, casts, and tourniquets to prevent someone from dying after taking critical damage uses Intellect-science.

FORAGING for plants in a natural environment can be done with either Intellect-lore or Intellect-science.

GRAPPLING someone by physically restraining them, attempting a choke hold, or similar physical dominance is done with Strength-leverage.

HACKING a computer is done with Intellect-science.

HEALING someone via surgery, prescription of correct medicine, or other mundane ways uses Intellect-science.

HOLDING BREATH for an extended period of time without falling unconscious and perhaps dying is done with Strength-stamina.

INTIMIDATION is done with Psyche-will.

JUMPING straight upwards into the air or across a horizontal stretch uses Strength-power.

KNOWING HISTORY or historical figures is done with Intellect-lore, although the DM should automatically tell players if they know a piece of history or lore by either rolling a check for them or using their score.

KNOWING THE UNKNOWABLE uses Psyche-instinct.

KNOWING WEAKNESSES of Nightlanders or other arcane creatures uses Intellect-lore.

LEAPING see JUMPING.

LOCKPICKING either an actual lock or a combination lock uses Dexterity-perception, although most of these checks have skill prerequisites for lockpicking.

LOOTING a body or similar uses Dexterity-perception.

LYING convincingly is done with Intellect-tact.

MAKING FRIENDS naturally with a stranger usually uses Intellect-tact or sometimes Psyche-empathy, depending on the approach.

NOTICING footsteps in a nearby room, hidden doors, traps, and hidden people uses Dexterity-perception.

PERSUASION of someone to do something will take into account arguments made by the player, social leverage, and mindset of the person, but checks made for this use Intellect-speech.

PICKING POCKETS by putting things in or out of them without someone noticing uses Dexterity-coordination.

PUSHING/PULLING something heavy slowly (e.g. a sword out of a stone) uses Strength-leverage, although if

it is not quite heavy and done quickly (such as pushing a person off a cliff) use Strength-power.

QUICKDRAW situations in which two people attempt to do something at the exact same time are resolved with Dexterity-reflex checks.

REPAIRING a broken vehicle, device, or really anything at all uses Intellect-science.

RESISTING DISEASE, or immunity, is Strength-vitality.

RESISTING DRUGS/ADDICTION uses Psyche-sanity.

RESISTING TORTURE uses Psyche-will.

RUNNING as quickly as possible for a small amount of time uses Strength-power, although running for a long amount of time at an even pace uses Strength-stamina.

SEARCHING for traps or hidden doors uses Dexterity-perception, but characters must make clear exactly where they are searching; one can not 'search a room', but one can search the cabinets in a piece of furniture or inspect a wall for hidden switches.

SELF AWARENESS that one is unsightly, needs to bathe, or is acting like a creep comes from Intellect-tact.

SNEAKING around quietly and without being overly exposed uses Dexterity-agility.

STAYING AWAKE for long periods of time uses Strength-stamina.

SWIMMING as quickly as possible for a small amount of time uses Strength-power, although swimming for a long amount of time to stay alive in a body of water uses Strength-stamina.

THROWING something prioritizing how far it goes is Strength-power, although if the priority is the accuracy of the throw (like in darts, for example) then Dexterity-coordination is used.

TRAP SETTING is done with Intellect-science.

UNDERSTANDING NON-VERBAL communication uses Intellect-tact; Psyche-empathy can also be used but feelings will be revealed instead of specific ideas.

WRESTLING see GRAPPLING.

ZEALOUSNESS and stubbornness is Psyche-will.

Character Creation

New player characters choose three packages—an origin, age group, and disposition—that determine their starting circumstances. A character's ATTRIBUTE MODIFIER SUM starts at zero, and may increase or decrease depending on their decided character packages; all attributes (Strength, Dexterity, Intellect, and Psyche) are d6s unless otherwise noted. Players may choose their starting modifiers to these attributes, as long as they equal their attribute modifier sum⁶ **AND** that the absolute value of an attribute's modifier may never be greater than half of the attribute dice⁷.

Any money that is gained during character creation may be spent on items (with a price normal to their nation of origin) to have on-hand at character creation. Additionally, ambition gained during creation may be spent to increase specs or skills (which all start at zero, unless otherwise noted) without training, but only during character creation. Note that a human character's language of origin corresponds to their nation of origin's official language, as laid out in the **Map of Solanum**. All characters whose language of origin is not Komen automatically gain +1 in the language, or +2 if that character is a Greenlander or Godlander.

Origin Packages	Extra Bonuses
Human (choose nation of origin)	+3 in language of origin, Attributes d6, d6, d6, d6
Blacklander (choose nation of origin)	+3 in language of origin, Attributes d6, d6, d6, d8 (choose which), +6 PT
Nightlander	+3 in Xenic, Attributes d4, d6, d6, d8 (choose which), x2 PT
Vome (choose nation of origin)	+3 in language of origin, Attributes d4, d6, d8, d10 (choose which)

Age Group Packages	Bonuses
Young	+2 attribute modifier sum, +100 ambition, +100đ
Youthful	+1 attribute modifier sum, +200 ambition, +500đ
Mature	+0 attribute modifier sum, +300 ambition, +2,000đ
Old	-1 attribute modifier sum, +400 ambition, +6,000đ
Senior	-2 attribute modifier sum, +500 ambition, +12,000đ

Disposition Packages	Bonuses
Industrious	x3 starting đ OR use next higher age group đ (choose either)
Competent	+100 Starting ambition
Healthy	+1 attribute modifier sum

⁶ A character with a starting attribute modifier sum of zero could have the following attributes: d6+1, d6-1. d6+2, d6-2 (this is because the modifiers all sum to zero).

⁷ A d6 attribute can never have a modifier less than -3 or greater than 3 (e.g. d6-4 and d6+5 are not allowed).

•COMBAT MECHANICS•

“One fights because one knows evil.”

-The Garatom

Rhythm of Combat

Combat begins when an attack is made, and is resolved by each side planning and executing their actions individually until there is no intention of fighting on all sides. This means that for each round of combat, each side will take a turn in which they plan and execute all of the actions for each member on that side, and then the next side will do the same until all sides have gone that round. For each round, the order that the sides go in are constant.

Fighting Melee

MELEE combat begins when a character intends to attack another either unarmed or with a melee weapon. Strength-power is used for determining a *hit check*, although if the attacker is using a melee weapon with a primary damage type of *Edge*, then they may use Dexterity-coordination instead (weapons skills are also added to any combat-related checks). Once a character has made clear the intention to attack a target in melee, the target may choose to clash, guard, or yield. Most of the time, the target will CLASH—this means that the target also makes a melee attack, and the combatant with the higher value will land a melee attack on the other. To GUARD means that the target makes either a Strength-power or Dexterity-reflex check, which allows them to parry or dodge the attack respectively if higher than or equal to the attacker's check (a target may only guard with Strength-power if he has a suitable weapon to parry with). This is rarely done as it doesn't allow the target the opportunity to counter attack, but can be beneficial for pacifists or for stalling time. Finally, to YIELD means that the target surrenders; upon yielding, the attacker may choose to either automatically score an attack on the target or to spare them.

When rolling to-hit a target, the same favor rules apply as with non-combat checks, but below is a list of helpful factors to take into account when determining the favor of a melee attack:

- ❖ If one has a weapon range advantage (+1 Favor).
- ❖ If one has already been the target of an attack this side's turn (-1 Favor, cumulative).
- ❖ If one's enemy is blinded or unaware of the attack (+1 Favor).
- ❖ If one is targeting a portion of the enemy, such as the head or limb (-1 Favor).

DAMAGE done by a melee attack, after it has been determined to hit, is calculated by a *damage check*. To make a damage check, use the favor indicated by the weapon's primary damage type in an attribute check with the same attribute and bonuses of the hit check, then calculate any bonuses from the weapon's secondary damage types, if applicable⁸. If a secondary damage type is indicated with a '+', then that weapon deals a flat additional amount of damage; if indicated with a 'x', then the weapon deals additional damage equal to the product of the damage done by the primary damage type and the number indicated after the 'x'. In addition, melee attacks can sometimes *crit* (see **Injury and the Reaper**).

⁸ Weapon Example: (Impulse 1, Edge x2); this weapon uses a single dice with Strength-power to make a damage check; additional damage equal to double that damage is also done as Edge damage.

Fighting from Afar

RANGED combat is similar to melee combat except that it uses an *aim check* instead of a hit check. Aim checks use Dexterity-coordination, and if the target attempts to avoid the attack, their Dexterity-reflex check is subtracted from the aim check; if the resulting value is higher than or equal to the ranged weapon's difficulty, the attack hits.

DAMAGE done by the ranged weapon usually depends solely on the weapon, unless it is tied to the Strength of the user, such as with a thrown weapon (for simplicity, these types of weapons deal the same amount of damage as if they were used in melee). Mostly, though, the ranged weapon will have a primary damage type that indicates the number of dice used, as well as a dice type to roll. While the number of dice used is usually constant, a weapon's FIRERATE can affect this; for firearms, a single bullet equals one die, a semi-automatic burst equals two dice, and automatic fire equals three dice. The number indicated by a firearms primary damage type (Burst) is the maximum possible fire rate of the weapon, although characters may choose to fire less ammunition and deal less damage. In addition, ranged attacks can sometimes *crit* (see **Injury and the Reaper**).

RANGE of a weapon affects the favor of the aim check. If the target is right next to the attacker (point blank), then the aim check gains +1 favor; if it is beyond what the weapon would realistically be able to hit, the aim check is rolled at -1 favor, or more depending on the extremeness of the range. Choosing to hit a smaller target (such as the head or a limb) also results in -1 favor to the aim check.

The Heat of Battle

Performing anything that is not an attack within combat will usually incur some sort of time constraint. Note that a turn is not a set amount of time, but will usually be less than 10 seconds. For the record, the average person can walk about one meter per second, jog two, and sprint four or higher.

A list of things that generally take a turn to do (it would be quite difficult to do this *and* attack someone):

- ❖ Chug a drink.
- ❖ Catch something.
- ❖ Throw something.
- ❖ Search a piece of furniture or someone's clothes/pockets.
- ❖ Swap weapon magazines.
- ❖ Cast a spell or activate arcana.
- ❖ Attempt to grapple someone.
- ❖ Render first aid (this will likely take multiple turns).

When determining what is or isn't possible in a turn, use common sense. Checks and luck rolls are often used whenever things seem uncertain in combat, even if they have nothing to do with fighting.

Injury and the Reaper

DAMAGE taken increases one's Damage Threshold (DT) counter (note that the spec *vitality* increases one's DT). If one's DT breaks, the part of their body that took the threshold-breaking attack gains a semi-permanent and disabling injury. If one's DT eclipses, the part of their body that took the threshold-eclipsing attack gains a permanent and often fatal injury. See the table below:

Body Part	DT Break	DT Eclipse
Head/Crit	Unconsciousness/Brain Damage	Instant Death
Torso	Major Bleeding/Non-fatal Organ Damage	Death
Limb	Major Bleeding/Broken Bones	Amputated/Permanently Unusable

In addition to this table, note that structures and vehicles may also be DTs, with similar break/eclipse consequences.

CRITS or *critical* attacks are determined by the same luck roll that checks if worn armor is applicable or not. A result of 6 on this luck roll means that a crit (or an attack to the head) occurs, and damage is doubled after going through armor (if armor protects the crit area). This luck roll must be made every time damage is dealt—even if the target is not wearing armor—in order to see if the attack was a crit.

DEATH occurs if damage goes untreated or if one's Damage Threshold is eclipsed anywhere but their limbs. While resurrection is technically possible, those who undergo the arcane process often suffer from debilitating complications such as paralysis and dementia—as a general rule, the more in-tact one's nervous system is as they are being resurrected, the less complications are likely to arise. For example, if one is resurrected after dying of blood loss, there will be little to no difference from their prior self—on the other hand, if one is being resurrected after their head was crushed, they will likely be completely paralyzed and/or barely responsive to stimulus. Temporal resurrection (bringing an alive version of the deceased from the past) does not bear this limitation.

Curing Wounds & Entropy

RESTING naturally decreases one's Damage Counter, provided that proper time and nourishment is afforded. After six hours of rest, one may decrease their Damage Counter by one. More permanent injuries such as broken bones and organ damage usually require surgery to fix, and many days of recuperation in order to fully heal; in the meantime, physically taxing activities (especially those that involve the use of the injured area) are done with less Favor or are outright impossible.

ENTROPY does not require one to rest in order to decrease; instead, every thirty minutes one may decrease their Entropy by one. This may be done even if one is unconscious, malnourished, or otherwise—it is a quantum process that is practically impossible to prevent.

Protection via Armor

Armor decreases specific damage types either completely or by a flat amount⁹. Whenever an attack is made upon a person, a luck roll is made to determine if the attack hit armor or an unarmored part of the person. If the luck roll is equal to or less than coverage of the armor (notated as 'X/6', where 'X' is the coverage), then the armor covered the attack; moreover, if the armor covers the crit/head area (notated as 'Crit'), then rolls of 6 (or crits) are also protected by the armor. Note that crit damage is doubled only after taking into account armor.

SHIELDS have a coverage stat that may be allocated in any reasonable position (e.g. 'I keep the shield at my torso'). The damage reduction of a shield is stacked on top of any overlapping applicable armor.

Cover & Concealment

COVER is a structure one places themselves behind in order to absorb damage. Mechanically, cover acts as armor with a coverage appropriate to the situation (being behind full cover grants 6/6 coverage, half of one's body being exposed grants 3/6 coverage, etc—the maximum possible coverage while making ranged attacks is generally 4/6). CONCEALMENT, on the other hand, obscures one's visual position but does not absorb damage. In this case, an additional luck roll is made to determine if the attack hits (on top of all the other regular factors), with an appropriate result depending on the size of the concealment and the target.

Dirty Tricks & Maneuvers

There are a number of tricks in combat that sometimes work and sometimes don't. These tricks may be employed at various levels of Favor depending on the circumstances of the combat, but generally impressive maneuvers (such as disarmament) are done unfavorably by the initiating party. Below is a list of combat tricks:

- ❖ Grappling the enemy (Strength-leverage VS Strength-leverage or Dexterity-reflex).
- ❖ Sweeping the enemy's legs (Strength-power VS Strength-leverage or Dexterity-reflex).
- ❖ Disarming the enemy (Strength-power VS Strength-power or Dexterity-reflex).
- ❖ Using a staggering kick against the enemy (Strength-power VS Strength-leverage or Dexterity-reflex).
- ❖ Tackling/pushing the enemy (Strength-power VS Strength-power or Dexterity-reflex).
- ❖ Throwing sand at the enemy's eyes (Dexterity-coordination VS Dexterity-reflex).
- ❖ Throwing a grenade back at the enemy (Dexterity-reflex).
- ❖ Commanding the enemy to surrender (Psyche-will VS Psyche-will).
- ❖ "Look over there!" (Intellect-tact VS Intellect-tact).

⁹ Armor Example: Edge Ignore, Impulse -2 (2/6, Crit); this armor protects the user on a 2-in-6 luck roll, which is successful, ignores all Edge damage and decreases Impulse damage by 2, to a minimum of zero. The armor also covers the head or 'Crit' area, and so critical hits (rolls of 6 on a luck roll) are also protected by this armor.

·**ARCANE MECHANICS**·

“For those who wish to meddle in forces beyond human domain, read further.”

-Pytheus Igris, The Okretar

The Arts of the Dark Beyond

ARCANA is the study of applied arcane forces, and anything arcane or anomalous can be referred to as a piece of arcana. Note that this section does not cover *why* arcana works, only *how* in terms of in-game mechanics; for in-universe lore on this subject, see **Metaphysics**.

SPELLS are arcane thoughts that, when activated via a nervous system interface, create anomalous effects. Every spell has a level which generally ranges from 0-9 (such that OSR/D&D type spells are explicitly compatible). LEARNING A SPELL is done with two steps: firstly understanding the spell's symbol (if the spell is in Xenic, either the learner must know Xenic or a Xenic translator must be on-hand), and secondly physically contacting the spell's symbol. Upon the spell successfully transferring into one's nervous system, a small arc of lightning will be visible for a fraction of a second between the symbol and the learner. ACTIVATING A SPELL one knows requires a level in the arcana skill equal to or higher than the level of the spell. There is no limit of spells one can know simultaneously, learning/gaining a spell is usually instant, and those untrained in arcana may use cantrips (0 level spells). Experienced spellwriters are often able to siphon a freshly dead wizard's spells, given their nervous system is in-tact.

ENTROPY is a measure of quantum anomalous activity which increases when casting spells or activating certain arcana. Entropy increases the Psi Threshold's (PT) counter (note that the spec *will* increases one's PT). In addition to humans, many item-based arcana have a Psi Threshold which limits how often they can use their arcane powers. See the chart below for the effects of high entropy in both humans and arcana:

For...	PT Break	PT Eclipse
Living Beings	All additional entropy is taken as damage	Dissolution from reality or possession (character loss)
Arcana	Power becomes unreliable and dangerous	Arcana malfunctions & may be permanently broken

Casting a spell increases entropy equal to 1d6 for each level of the spell. Note that for humans, the most complex spell one could naturally learn is a 3rd level spell (due to humanity's d6 Intellect). Arcane PATRONS may increase one's skill in arcana beyond human limits, as well as increasing one's Psi Threshold so that those powerful spells are able to be safely wielded. In fact, some of the most highly sought-after arcana are CHARMS, which increase one's PT.

Will Buy Jib

The corpses of Nightlanders have been found to contain arcane properties that, when refined and combined, become extremely versatile and powerful. These materials have many names—jib, demon meat, nasties, viscera, ort stock—but regardless they are demanded virtually universally. It is the primary way that beastmen and the O.N.O. make money, as jib is not only utilized by alchemists and arcana-enthusiasts, but also by the industrial sector. Conveniently, though, many raw Nightlander parts have useful arcane effects even with minimal preparation (though unrefined jib will generally cause entropy gain). A basic list of these effects can be found on page 47.

SOLANUM

An RPG setting that runs on the blood of demons.

Design Philosophy

Solanum is a setting that exists to demonstrate the extensive capabilities of the Lightning RPG system, as well as act as the basis for essentially any story that one wishes to tell. Primarily, Solanum is a post-collapse dieselpunk setting, but there's room for so much more in it. The Nightland is a dark lovecraftian playground filled to the brim with strange and horrifying entities. The Wastes are a gonzo horror nightmare plagued by occasional bombing runs. Due to the third collapse and the aptly named 'Great Death', Solanum is filled with large stretches of largely uninhabited wilderness, primitive as well as industrial ruins, dungeons, and demon nests. Firearms exist, but are counterbalanced by ballistic armor and considerably cheaper melee alternatives—not to mention magic! In fact, Solanum's magic system treats the arcane more as treasure than knowledge; spells are physical, anyone can use cantrips, and most powerful magic (at least beyond 3rd level) is gatekept not by knowledge but by powerful artifacts or patrons. Additionally, magic is much more dangerous than in most settings; any basic wizard can accidentally (and fatally) burn their internal organs, or be dissolved from reality by simply casting a spell.

With that being said, arguably the most unforgettable and foundational aspect of a setting is its technological period. Solanum is stuck between an enlightenment and an industrial age that bridges the gap with magic. There is an unwieldy 'cassette futurism' version of the internet that operates off of radios known as 'the Wave'. Cars are manufactured and used, but are rare and resemble carriages with wheels more than modern sedans (see the Vauxhall D-type for inspiration). Everything is a little rustic and bulky. Leather is in, and polymer is out. Homes are filled with glass bottles, wooden furniture, handmade or hand-printed books, metal appliances. Most people have electricity, but it is relatively expensive; in use are bolt-action rifles, revolvers, brass knuckles, straight razors, gas masks, VFD and LCD displays, cassettes, charcoal, diesel, fountain pens, branded matchbooks, and secret societies.

Solanum exists in an age of rebuilding—arcana, industry, and instability. Cheers!

Introduction

“Demon blood makes the world go ‘round.’”

As the moon-faced boy writhes on the ground, Dalric fumbles with his sheathe. A thin blade glimmers in the moonlight. Dalric drops to his knees before the Vogoroth’s corpse. Whimpering, coupled with the occasional sound of choking, quicken Dalric’s movements. Unbeknownst to him, the boy was staring intently at his back; Dalric’s coat was covered in stains, several dangling bronze medallions shaped like stars and eyes, and one big stitched outline of a wolf’s growling head. The blade punctured the Vogoroth’s gut. Deep red blood began to spill as the dagger waded through intestines and strange alien organs. Licking his lips, Dalric caught a glimpse of his goal—a long, red organ behind the intestines. Two swift incisions were made, and the beastman stood up. The boy was losing consciousness as Dalric dropped small chunks of the organ into the boy’s gaping mouth.

“Demon liver. It’s gonna feel like you’re on fire, but it’ll save your life...”

A man walks quietly under the night sky of a sunless plane. His armor, grey and black, is adorned with Xenic runes that just barely glow against the darkness. Against his hip is an empty revolver. Once shiny and thick with the smell of a factory, his BK4000 is now dull; scratched, sporting only the faint odor of rust and blood. In his hands is his ‘plan B’, a one-handed sword meant for use when one has run out of ammunition. Heavy sighs fall from inside his dark helmet. The man stops, suddenly aware of a slithering noise behind him. Before he can react, his leg is seized, clamped down by something’s teeth. He moves to strike it, finding that his motions have become sluggish. He struggles further to hold himself up as yet another demon bites onto his leg. His fingers are going numb, and his mouth tastes of copper. The sword drops to the dry sand beneath him. The man is eerily quiet; to scream would be to bring more attention to himself. His vision dims.

Heavy footsteps begin to approach him from out of sight. He whispers a prayer, wrestling his helmet from his head and biting into a soft capsule fixed to his gauntlet. A foul-tasting liquid seeps into his mouth, which he promptly swallows. Instantly, his heart stops beating. The demons surrounding his corpse let go of him, cursing at him in Xenic for ruining their fun...

“V-2 to O-1, Sixteen quadrupedal targets confirmed, C-1 authorized nine-nines. Over.” Yuto sat up, awake. Placing one hand on his controls and one on his radio, he responds.

“Roger, O-1. Losing nine-nines. Over” Flicking a few switches, a visual appears on screen of a small crowd of dog-like demons. Both hands now grip the controls. An LCD display to Yuto’s left shows ‘99mm’ selected. The crosshair is moved to the crowd, and in a moment they are reduced to a fine red mist...

In a dusty abandoned basement, a wiry man wearing a colorful robe is hunched over a box. It is spiked, no larger than his head, and decorated with bits of Xenic poetry.

“Rocker, I think I got something,” the wizard whispers into a small electronic device. The LCD displays a Wave address and username: ‘ROCKOR-53-XX1’. A crackling voice comes through, asking the wizard to ‘test it’. Gritting his teeth, he mentally voices a spell. His skin feels on fire for a moment, until his vision fades into darkness, with only small bits of grey static flowing through the air. He beholds the box; it is glowing bright white.

“Yeah. I got something.” The wizard says as a grin forms on his face...

A Brief History of Humanity

Sentient creatures, humanoids with opposable thumbs that evolved from primates, were once the dominant species on the peaceful plane of Solanum. They developed cultures, government, technology—bronze, iron, steel. This humanity's progress was abruptly stopped during their age of reason—it was the first collapse, the *Grancosse*. Humanity had been telling themselves tales of evil, elusive creatures for millenia. They believed in elves, demons; things that withered crops and caused plagues. The Grancosse (in 2511) made these suspicions become undeniable truth. Intelligent, strange-looking creatures invaded Solanum from the north, brutalizing city after city, killing millions. For centuries these lands were fought for, becoming known as *the Wastes*. In this time, the invaders became known as demons, and spread covertly to every corner of Solanum. Despite the destruction and slaughter of the Grancosse, it allowed humanity to take hold of an art that would change the path of history forever: *arcana*.

The corpses of demons seemed able to evoke supernatural effects, and the demons themselves wielded unnatural and strange power. Humanity studied this power, learning the art of alchemy—creating arcane items from the corpses of demons—and the art of spellcasting, allowing them to wield the power of demons. Through *arcana*, humanity was able to deactivate the great stone portal that caused the Grancosse. Slowly but surely, humanity utilized *arcana* to better themselves. A second age of reason, long after the first, brought industrialization and the modern economy. The second collapse occurred in 3849; a powerful unknown mage brought forth a demon the size of a mountain upon Solanum. Although still hundreds of thousands lost their lives, this *Marcosse* was quickly dealt with, which inspired humanity in triumph over the demons. Humanity continued to progress. Nations and culture prospered in the age of telecommunications, and the camaraderie amongst humans was unbreakable. Aviation allowed humans to deal with threats in the Wastes without the loss of human life; modern weaponry and *arcana* made demons a present yet weak force against humanity. In fact, demons became central to many aspects of modern life. The fuel that everyone put into their cars is hyper-efficient due to being mixed with demon blood. *Arcana* empowered humanity beyond what anyone thought was possible. Humanity seemed unstoppable.

Then, in the flame 4321, an unknown being enveloped Solanum's sky, causing all those to directly view it to enter a permanent trance-like state. Those affected were known as 'wanderers'; they were capable of being fed but otherwise wandered aimlessly as their bodies deteriorated. Dimmed sunlight, presumably obscured by the being (which began to be known as the 'Void Moon') caused decline in agriculture and subsequent famine. 48 flames passed until the Void Moon abruptly disappeared (marking the end of what came to be known as the 'Great Death' or the 'third collapse'), at which point the human population of Solanum had decreased by 93%; by this time, humanity had regressed into feudal states, clinging to *arcana*, technology, and constantly dwindling levels of hope. When the first bright sun since 4321 rose in 4369, humanity began an era of rebuilding and prosperity. The current flame is 4652. Territorial 'sod wars' are fought to reclaim Solanum against demons (a threat that persisted during the Great Death), and thus humanity has only just begun to take hold of their once-great cities. Still, technology and *arcana* are rare, and the ability to produce either is only slowly being recovered by humanity.

•GEOGRAPHY & NATIONS•

"You live in an age without serfdom. Thank your Kings."

-Karo Akuini

Map of Solanum



Nation Name	Location (Realm)	Official Language	Largest Religion	Mineral Richness	Land Fertility	Economic Strength	Martial Strength	Cultural Richness	Nationalist Feelings	Demon Population
Ketheros	Greenlands	Komen	Yeomanism	III	III	VI	VI	III	V	IV
Corisia	Greenlands	Delmish	Yeomanism	III	IV	III	IV	IV	IV	II
Ocrua	Greenlands	Komen	Tarchism	II	III	IV	V	III	VI	V
Sathia	Greenlands	Delmish	Yeomanism	IV	III	V	I	I	III	III
Argolia	Greenlands	Delmish	Yeomanism	I	IV	I	II	II	III	I
Luritov	Greenlands	Thayen	Istavism	V	II	III	III	IV	II	IV
Gerdun	Godlands	Vernic	Aetherism	II	VI	V	IV	V	IV	III
Vizia	Godlands	Vernic	Aetherism	III	V	IV	III	VI	IV	IV
Dreya	Godlands	Vernic	Aetherism	III	V	III	V	IV	V	IV
Warbes	Redlands	Komen	Yeomanism	VI	II	IV	IV	II	II	III
Norvance	Whitelands	Grazian	Istavism	III	II	II	III	V	IV	V
The Wastes	Blacklands	-	-	III	I	-	-	-	-	VI
Belestol	Bluelands	Komen	Aetherism	V	III	III	III	III	I	III
Oari Islands	Bluelands	Komen	Yeomanism	IV	III	II	II	III	III	II

The Greenlands

The majority of habitable land on Solanum exists in the Greenlands, the largest and most central realm in the plane. Although not as dense in natural resources as the verdant Godlands or the metal-rich Redlands, its centrality to the world means that it has necessarily dominated international relations. Nevertheless, the Greenlands are populated by several nations and cultures—in fact, so many nations exist in the Greenlands that ‘North Greenland’ and ‘South Greenland’ are sometimes treated as separate realms.

KETHEROS is easily the most powerful nation on Solanum. Before the third collapse, Ketheros had an immensely strong military force, particularly their aircraft-based Sky Corps. The majority of Sky Corp members survived the initial appearance of the Void Moon, and they quickly secured control over the current capital of Ketheros, as well as the surrounding cities. Ketheros is known currently for its industrial and military power, massive cities, and unique governmental system which has been used for thousands of flames (Ketheros has a secular canon which the government upholds; there is a life-serving monarch with limited power that a large republican-style council elects, which also holds limited power; representatives of various military branches in Ketheros also hold significant power). Ketheros’ dominance has led to Ketheric standards being adopted everywhere. The Ketheric ducat is accepted internationally, the Ketheric Polonian calendar is used by every nation, the most commonly spoken language in the world is Komen, and the most sought-after machinery and electronics are made by Ketheric companies.

OCRUA and LURITOV are two nations in the northwest Greenlands. Their proximity to Ketheros has led to large amounts of cultural interchange with Ketheros, although they are no doubt very different nations. Ocruans are known to be fiercely patriotic and traditional, and often distrustful of travelers due to Ocrua sharing a border with the Wastes. The official language of Ocrua is Komen, and the government is closely tied to the official monotheistic religion, Tarchism—as a result, arcana is extremely difficult to buy or sell in Ocrua. Luritov, on the other hand, speaks Thayen (a unique language that is spoken essentially nowhere else). In addition to their language, Luris are also known for their oft-misunderstood polytheistic religion which includes dozens of patron-gods, as well as their strict regulation of arcana.

SATHIA, CORISIA, and ARGOLIA are three adjacent nations in South Greenland; all three’s official language is Delmish, but many know Komen as their second language. These three are primarily Yeoman, although many Ezolans live in Sathia due to their lax governmental restrictions on arcana and arcane research. Sathia itself is an interesting specimen of a nation; for thousands of flames the land has been a vassal state to Ketheros, and many Sathians consider themselves to be Ketherans. Corisians, on the other hand, are known for their pride in resisting Ketheric influence, and Corisia itself is considered a naturally beautiful nation with a long and revered history. Finally, Argolia is likely the worst of the three to live in, being almost universally mocked for their ‘unique’ government (the only one in Solanum to feature a monarch that is not held to a constitution) in addition to being one of the poorest nations in all of Solanum. Fortunately, though, Argolia is geographically quite removed from the Wastes, and so Nightlanders are very rare on the island country.

The Godlands

Thought to be the most fertile realm in Solanum, the Godlands have cradled humanity ever since the Bronze age. Godlanders are proud people who value reason, progress, and social mobility far more than their adjacent realms. Although Ketheric industrial goods are prized far more than their Godlander counterparts, Godlander artisans are the most sought after in the world. The majority of the world's popular music, art, and cultural movements originate in the Godlands. Godlanders were also the first to adopt secular-style governments, leading many prominent nations (including Ketheros) to do the same.

VIZIA in particular is known for its cultural legacy, both before and after the third collapse. In fact, Vizian art is not only highly regarded, but also thought to be *cool* by most nations. Vizia leads the way in fashion, music, and similar endeavors, so many companies abroad look to Vizia to imitate trends occurring in the country. GERDUN, an adjacent nation, is also highly influential but a slightly richer country due to its proximity to the Greenlands and Ketheros. Gerdun in particular leads the way in social reform, and is known to give humanitarian aid abroad in sod wars or other demonic conflicts.

DREYA is the black sheep of the Godlands. While still influential, Dreya has resisted much of the influence that other nations have on it. Its social structure is much more traditionally structured than Vizia or Gerdun, and many in Dreya seem to prefer it that way. Dreya has also had a somewhat controversial past with their treatment of foreigners, particularly non-Godlanders, and some worry about the Dreyan government's insistence on military might.

The Whitelands

The Whitelands are known for their vast stretches of unexplored wilderness, cold weather, simplistic living arrangements, and technological stagnation compared to other nations (especially its southern neighbor, Ketheros). Firearms, vehicles, and computers are quite rare in the Whitelands, as are modernized cities. Instead, most Whitelanders live in self-sufficient villages, feudal communities, nomadic societies, or small undeveloped city-states. Most of the realm (specifically, the nation of NORVANCE) is governed by a council representing leaders from these communities, in a directed oligarchy. With that being said, a small portion of the Whitelands is owned by Ketheros, and thus ruled as a canocracy under the Ketheric government.

Norvic people, although generalized by most of the world as being strong yet uncultured simpletons, are actually highly diverse in their social practices and beliefs. Even the language that is taught to communicate with Whitelanders, Grazian, is a simplification and amalgamation of many Norvic languages that most Whitelanders can piece together meaning from. Goods from the Whitelands, although not as high in quality as industrial goods, are often prized due to their rarity and uniqueness compared to the rest of the cultural landscape. Additionally, many arcane materials are harvested in the Whitelands due to its high Nightlander population.

The Blacklands

Sharing a border with the Greenlands, the Blacklands are a dangerous and feared realm. The majority of the Blacklands are known as *the Wastes*, a massive burned-out stretch of land that has been bombed by the Ketheric Sky Corps for hundreds of flames. The Wastes were the site of the Grancosse (the first collapse) which caused the Nightlanders to enter Solanum. Despite the Great Stone portal being closed, Nightlanders have persisted living in the Wastes via smaller temporary portals, underground respites, and reproduction. The borders of the Wastes are strictly guarded, but Nightlanders still flood out of the Wastes occasionally in search of new lands.

Humans generally don't attempt to live in the Blacklands permanently, except for a few short-lived Ezolan communities. Instead, *beastmen* (those whose job it is to slay Nightlanders) or those less experienced venture into the Blacklands to hunt and bring back the corpses of Nightlanders (commonly called 'jib') to be made into arcana. Many amateur beastmen have lost their lives in the Blacklands, and some are made into Blacklanders.

BLACKLANDERS are human-Nightlander hybrids, made either through natural reproduction or arcane rituals. Some cultures, especially those in northern Solanum, are distrustful of Blacklanders. Note that any human-Nightlander hybrid is considered a Blacklander, not just those from the Blacklands.

The Redlands

The Redlands are the most rich in minerals and valuable metals of any plane in Solanum; in fact, its name is derived from the iron-rich red soil common throughout the realm. Although most Redlanders were once Ketherans colonizing somewhat barren lands devoid of human life, Redlanders have a strong and complex cultural identity. *WARBES* and a few small surrounding islands make up the Redlands; despite a strong national economy, the Redlands have some of the worst crime of any realm due to several competing organized crime families that rose to power during the Great Death. These criminal organizations are a part of many Redlander's daily lives, and many immigrants to the Redlands find it difficult to adjust to this. Consequently, Redlanders are often distrusted or misunderstood by other parts of the world as all being criminals or thieves. In contrast, Redlanders see themselves as being more hardworking, tougher, and happier than most of the world.

The Bluelands

The Bluelands were colonized even later than the Redlands, though they are also rich in minerals and contain solid farmland. This realm is made up of several small islands of varying size, the largest being its own nation of *BELESTOL*. Belestol has a very temperate and comfortable climate, and is a fine place to live. Many people visit Belestol and the surrounding *OARI ISLANDS* because of this. In fact, much of Belestol's goods, culture, and ideas about government were borrowed from earlier successful nations—as a result, Belestol is the most globalized country of any other. The Oari Islands are less populated than Belestol, being smaller and harder to settle in, but they are also less dependent on imports compared to Belestol.

The Nightland

The Nightland is a plane that is linked with Solanum, and has been ever since the Grancosse. No large amount of humans ever tried to live in, colonize, or even map out any significant amount of the Nightland. It is inhabited by Nightlanders, which are more commonly known as *demons*. This plane is completely inhospitable to humans regardless of the presence of the Nightlanders, which elevates the plane to outright hostility. Captured humans are subject to being eaten, enslaved, or tortured for the entertainment of Nightlanders. Only a very brave few ever enter the Nightland in order to secure valuable arcana—they are known as Nightmen, the largest order of which being the *O.N.O.*, that are specially trained to sneak and hunt Nightlanders without being killed or captured. While the Nightlands is universally reviled by humanity, arcana would not exist in Solanum without it, and so many accept it as a necessary evil.

The Shadow

The Lord of Demons, the Progenitor, the Devil, the Dark One—it goes by many names, but most know it as The Shadow. Essentially, the Nightlands and its natural inhabitants were created artificially by a god-like omnipotent being. Since then, this being has observed its creations and their interactions with other planes, one of which being Solanum. The Shadow is very elusive, even difficult to prove whether it truly exists, but man has done it. In fact, men have even spoken to it. The Holy Book of the Ezolans, the Okretar, is a series of dialogues between the famous wizard Pytheus Igris and the Shadow. In it, many things are revealed about the Shadow. Firstly, that it has complete power and knowledge over everything, but that it must expend effort to demonstrate them. Additionally, the Nightlanders were made artificially by the Shadow to populate a world of its creation. The Shadow says that it does not hate humans, nor would it ever hurt one directly; that being said, it would never go out its way to protect one, and to the Shadow the life of one Nightlander is worth more than the collective lives of every human in Solanum. Again, though, the Shadow never goes out of its way to interfere with the conflicts between humans and Nightlanders. Beyond being the creator of the Nightlanders, the Shadow is also known as the source of all arcana's power. Once, all arcana originated as a gift from the Shadow to the Nightlanders. Spells, natural powers, arcane items—all are possible only because the Shadow gifted a tiny fraction of its power to the Nightlanders. Humans often kill Nightlanders to steal these powers; while the Shadow hates when its creations die, it does not necessarily mind the usage of arcana by humans

The Great Beyond

Without speaking too much of cosmology, the Great Beyond is a “place” that exists outside of Solanum or any other plane like it. The Shadow originated in the Great Beyond, and says that it is not a place in the way that a human might picture it. It shares no mechanics with Solanum—it does not have spatial, temporal, or planar dimensions. It does not have electrons, quarks, or gravity. It is completely different in any way; no human could ever enter the Great Beyond because his form would be simply incompatible. It would be like trying to ‘transport a thought into reality.’

•**HUMANITY**•

*“And He did know us to be Him, and Him to be us.”
-The Aquillite*

Daily Life

Following the third collapse and its consequent massive depopulation, daily life and living circumstances have changed drastically for humanity. Scholars have estimated that from 4321 to 4369, the population of Solanum decreased from approximately 1.9 billion to just 140 million, and in the current flame of 4652 the world contains just about 320 million people. Many live in cities protected by large beastmen guilds, and Ketherans in particular enjoy safety against Nightlanders because of the Sky Corps. Those living in smaller settlements have to contend with the constant threat of Nightlanders, though, and it is generally considered unsafe to travel large distances without a sturdy car or team of hired guns. In addition to Nightlanders, banditry and theft are common in the vast distances between settlements. The massive depopulation of people means that there are thousands of former towns and even small cities that are essentially deserted. Scavengers sometimes brave these ruins in search of cash, valuable technology, or arcana. Beastmen also explore these ruins in search of Nightlanders, hoping to sell their corpses (commonly known as 'jib') to professional alchemists, companies, or private clients.

Industrialization is slowly advancing towards levels from before the Great Death, but as of now there simply aren't enough people on earth to reach that standard. So many towns and cities are deserted or essentially death traps due to bandits and Nightlanders that food, water, fuel, and other necessities are expensive at best and non-existent at worst. With that being said, things are getting better—mainly due to arcana and technology. Arcana is quite expensive, especially arcana that can be used by untrained people. On the other hand, technology such as vehicles and firearms are more common but still expensive. It is somewhat rare to see someone with either unless their means of living depends on having one.

The Wave is an international telecommunications infrastructure that has been restored to working order for over 100 flames now. Through computers and radios, people are able to connect to 'wavesites', research public databases (such as the Lodge's canon), talk to people across the globe, and potentially share video and audio via writing to rewritable magnetic filaments, although this process is slow and really only used for popular art. The Wave is undoubtedly an important piece of Solanum's cultural landscape, but there is no shortage of malicious actors on the Wave polluting the system with malicious software, scams, and data holes.

The average human on Solanum has a life expectancy of 90 flames, attends 15 years of schooling, and generates wealth equivalent to 1200 cats per flame. 40% of people work in agriculture, 90% are literate in their native language, and 60% have access to the Wave in some form or another.

Government & Law

Government in Solanum likely conforms at least somewhat to one's expectations, but has unique systems and aspects that must be explained. The following is a list of governmental systems and which nations use them.

CANOCRACY is an extremely old governmental system which Ketheros has been using and updating for thousands of flames. At the heart of canocracy is the Canon of Humanity, a Ketheran-made document which outlines the basis for canocracy. Three branches of government exist: a monarch with limited power, serving for life, that decides where to allocate money gained from taxes; representatives elected by citizens that decide non-fiscal laws and procedures; a council of military higher-ups that decide foreign and international policy, of which entry is permitted through recognition of military service. These three branches are much more nuanced in their limitations of power, as well as their checks of power, but the information provided is essentially the most any layman knows about canocracy. Ketheros obviously holds this form of government, as well as Sathia.

REPUBLICANISM is a form of government in which citizens elect government officials who make decisions. Often, there are requirements to participate in elections such as land ownership, wealth, being male, or being born in the nation (or in extreme cases, one's parents or grandparents being born in the nation). Belestol, Gerdun, Vizia, and Dreya all practice this form of government, but Dreya's requirements to participate in republicanism are easily the most nationalist and strict of them.

DIRECTED OLIGARCHY is a common form of oligarchy in which the most influential land owners of a nation (known as lords) rule their own lands, but convene in a council to make decisions that affect more than one lordship or the nation as a whole. The 'directed' part of directed oligarchy comes from the practice of these lords electing a Lord Director, who is counted as several votes and can call votes to force a lord to change how they govern their own lordship. Norvance, Luritov, and Corisia all practice directed oligarchy.

TARCHIC THEOCRACY is essentially a Directed Oligarchy, except instead of a Lord Director that is chosen by the lord's council, the head of the Tarchic religion (the Treatise) is given that role. New Treatises are chosen by the Tarchic church whenever one dies to serve in this position. While many past nations have been Tarchic theocracies, the only currently operating one is Ocrua.

ABSOLUTE MONARCHY exists when a monarch holds absolute power in a nation; this monarch is replaced by a candidate of their choice whenever they retire or die. Currently, only Argolia uses this governmental system.

ERUDOCRACY is a relatively new type of government in which a society of scholars convene into a 'College of Governing' and rule the nation from there. A nation's College of Governing will typically have a nuanced and constantly changing hierarchy that is kept somewhat secret to the general public. Warbes and the Oari islands utilize this governmental system.

ANARCHY exists perpetually in the Wastes, kept that way purposely by Ketheros—this is partly due to the fact that the danger that lawlessness creates prevents many from entering the Wastes, and partly because the region does not need a government, as very few humans live there to begin with.

DECOMPLUSION: conveniently, massive amounts of petty crime are prevented through the arcane practice of ‘decompulsion’, in which one’s mind is altered to become resistant to certain hyper addictive psychoactive drugs. On a much smaller scale, this also occurs with compulsions and tendencies of violent urges (again, though, this is rare).

DOG MARKING: most nations (not all) have foregone the death penalty or lifelong imprisonment in favor of an extreme version of decompulsion. For certain terrible crimes, convicted criminals will have their psyches permanently replaced by artificial arcane ones. With their memories and tendencies completely erased, they are marked in some way and exiled from the nation. While the official name of these people vary from place to place, most know them as ‘dogs’ (Gerdun, the first nation to employ this practice, brands these criminals with a mark that resembles a canine).

IMPRISONMENT: often, convicts are imprisoned for their crimes. Unfortunately for many criminals, several governments neglect or abuse their prisoners via arcane means—sometimes through highly unethical arcana-induced hallucinations, sometimes with hellish pocket dimensions.

SERVITUDE: lesser crimes that do not warrant decompulsion often lead to the convicted becoming state-obligated servants. They are sold to individuals and businesses by the government, and may be privately traded afterwards. The official law regarding how one may treat these servants vary from nation to nation, but often regardless of the law servants are mistreated by their owners. Additionally, many nations (like those in the Godlands) do not allow this practice or only allow servants to work in the government—and are currently working to eliminate this practice throughout Solanum.

COURTS: in most nations (not all) apologists—professional arguers who study law and rhetoric—defend the accused in court against a judge and sometimes a jury. While this practice is somewhat common, very few nations are considered to have ‘fair’ courts; Gerdun, Vizia, and Belestol are considered the most fair.

TAXES: every nation taxes their citizens in one way or another; most modern nations instill a flat tax (a fixed percentage of a citizen’s income either in currency or goods of equivalent value), though Vizia and Gerdun have recently implemented a progressive tax system.

POLICE: in certain nations, such as those governed by a directed oligarchy, citizens are policed by civil military employed by local lords. Other nations have dedicated departments of government which handle policing and justice. In Ketheros and Sathia (canocracies), the police are a branch of the military known as the civil corps.

Ideologies, Philosophies, & Religions

Solanum is home to thousands of far-reaching factions which affect millions of people; they are based in political ideologies, philosophical or theological frameworks, common mundane interests, and sometimes base pleasure. The following are some of the most popular across Solanum, in no particular order.

YEOMANS (pronounced yo-menz) belong to the dominant religion across Solanum; it originated approximately within 3660s, as a branch of Tarchism. While Tarchism necessitates a church that controls aspects of a government, Yeomanism emphasizes an individual's spiritual journey and place within a community. Yeomans believe that there is a God that created humanity, hiding Himself from them while still manipulating their lives for the better. Yeomans believe that God reveals Himself to a person when they have reached True humanity, and that God will reveal Himself to all whenever humanity as a whole has done the same. Yeomans believe that it is God's will, above all, to honor humanity. Violence and torturous acts against other humans are abominations to Him. It is unambiguously against Yeomanism to dishonor another human, no matter what they have done. While most Yeomans revile slavery or inhumane imprisonment, many believe that a non-disrespectful execution does not dishonor someone. Yeomans also believe that using arcana is fine, but to learn Xenic or spells is to dishonor God. Yeomanism follows *The Aquillite* as its holy book.

TARCHICS (pronounced tar-kicks) follow an older form of Yeomanism that has a defined power structure and considers arcana evil. Before the Ketheric revolution, Tarchism used to be the official religion of the former Holy Ketheric Empire. Now, Yeomanism has replaced Tarchism for most of the Greenlands. With that being said, Tarchism is still the official (and majority) religion of Ocrua, and many non-Ocruans follow the faith from afar. In practice, what separates modern Tarchism and Yeomanism is their attitudes toward using arcana. Hardcore Tarchics believe that to use any arcana is evil, even arcana used to kill demons (the exception is arcana that dispels other arcana). Tarchics attend rigid religious services, and when a Tarchic reaches the age of 28 flames, they must travel to Ocrua and witness a service by the Holy Treatise (the most divine priest in the Tarchic hierarchy). Tarchism follows *The Garatom* as its holy book. Also, Tarchics hate Nightlanders, the Shadow, vomes, and especially warlocks; not all of them even tolerate Ezolans.

AETHERITES (pronounced ayy-thir-ite) believe that there is no god of Solanum, which is something that the Shadow has said. Despite this, Aetherites do not revere or necessarily like the Shadow, only accept that it doesn't lie. Aetherites do not believe that one lives on in any way after death, and they don't believe that arcana is inherently evil. Most Godlanders are Aetherites, as well as a large chunk of Greenlanders, especially in Ketheros. Beyond this, not much about Aetherism is concrete—there is no power structure, holy book, or accepted canon of morals or philosophy.

ISTAVITES believe that within each human there is a weak and dormant god, which is strengthened through sacrifice and awakened when one dies to watch over Solanum. Certain Istavites become so renowned for their suffering and goodwill that they become the patrons of live Istavites, along with their departed family members. The world 'atop' Solanum in which these gods reside is known as 'the Istavi'. This religion originated in Luritov and is most popular in the North, though most in the South are ignorant about Istavism due to its lack of proselytizing.

EZOLANS officially began their legacy in the 3100s, when Pytheus Igris communed with the Shadow to write a series of dialogues later published as *The Okretar*. This book contains many insights on cosmology, arcana, as well as the philosophical position of Pytheus and the Shadow. Several small cults had already been worshiping arcana, though they knew little about its source. The Okretar united these cults under reverence of the Shadow and arcana itself. Ezolans believe that the most noble pursuit one can have is in the mastery of arcana and spellcasting. Consequently, their temples offer services such as identification of arcana, arcane healing, arcane instruction, etc. While not all Ezolans worship the Shadow or tolerate Nightlanders, many do.

THE DETERMINANTS OF WILL believe that a god of Solanum once existed, creating humans and the plane, but either perished or abandoned his creations. Determinants insist that the purpose of humanity, and the only way to find true happiness, is to overcome burdens that help one's self and others. Some even go as far as to scar or disfigure their body to create a burden that they may overcome—the most extreme among them removing their own limbs, eyes, or other important faculties. The most common way Determinants create a burden to overcome is to isolate themselves from others or to take on impossible amounts of work or debt.

THE FOLLOWERS OF VALEKOR see the third collapse completely differently than most; they believe the Void Moon (whom they know as Valekor) was a benevolent god that saved the souls of those who witnessed it. A key aspect with the Followers is the destruction of the self until a permanent dissociative state is reached known as 'True Independence', in which one finds complete happiness within the self, being fulfilled forever without caring about or even acknowledging the outside world ever again. The Followers believe that this state transcends death.

THE STRATUS ORDER subscribes to the idea that the most powerful and noble emotion one can feel is the fear of authority, and that humans are innately meant to be happy within a hierarchy. Many members also believe that nature is a chaotic force that must be overcome by humanity, presumably through the ordering of all living things and even nature itself. Essentially, Stratus believes humanity to be a kind of divine sorting algorithm, which their god Nosgalanth created to order the alien chaos of nature.

THE PSYGENIC SOCIETY sees reality as a direct and literal reflection of the feelings of humans. They believe that suffering only exists in the world because humans experience suffering, not the other way around. To Psygens, if everyone were truly happy, then reality would literally shape itself into a perfect heavenly state. While to many this worldview seems counterproductive and harmful, Psygens are generally known for their tendency to do goodwill.

IRONBREAKERS belong to a long-lasting philosophy which teaches that Solanum as we know it is a false world, and that everything that will ever happen in Solanum is fated to occur *except* for the actions of one's self. The ultimate goal of an Ironbreaker is to disrupt the world into realizing the 'Great Illusion', and then destroying it (at which point, and only at this point, will the individual be free). To Ironbreakers, nobody is conscious or alive in the way that they are. Only one true individual exists, and it is 'you'. They believe simultaneously that nobody is truly conscious except for them, and that their peers are only tools to free themselves via the dispelling of Solanum (yet their peers believe the same).

THE PRINCIPLE LODGE asserts that there is a real, objective version of everything—that anything which ostensibly seems mystical or unknowable is inherently knowable. The work of the Lodge is to create a canon of everything which is completely correct. Many Lodge contributors are scientists, historians, and scholars, and one can access public sections of the Lodge's canon with the Wave.

THE GRACED believe that the god of Solanum has merged with the actual plane of Solanum—that the soil, the air, and themselves are pieces of a god. Despite this, the Graced believes humanity to be special in that they are the only form of the Current (their name for the god-plane, which they use female pronouns for) that can experience Herself, and that they are obligated to experience as much as they can to repay Her for creating Solanum and humanity.

XOTIANS (z-oh-shinz) wish to accelerate arcana and technology, assimilating their consciousnesses into better versions of themselves. The goal of most Xotians is to increase their power and domain over the world using any means necessary; this pursuit often leads to Xotians becoming warlocks, vomes, or living arcana. Extremists in Xotia believe that Nightlanders are superior to humans, and that it is the natural order of reality for Nightlanders to destroy and overtake humanity—thus they wish to betray humanity and integrate the Shadow into themselves.

THE CIRCLE OF INTRAPHUS do not believe in an objective reality, nor that one should pursue the documentation of reality for its own sake. To members of the circle, only two tenants are followed: firstly, that one should seek a state of mental being that most aligns with their own unique preferences and comforts. Secondly, that in this pursuit one should not 'make waves' in the Intraphus (this is what Intraphites call everything we experience, what might be called reality by others), which can harm others in ways perhaps only knowable to them. Extreme Intraphites believe that animals, plants, wind, and even the tides of the ocean should not be disturbed for the same reason one should not harm a human.

THE QUARUS ETERNUS do not believe that death is the end of consciousness, but instead that all conscious beings are caught in an infinite descending spiral of planes, known as 'lifelands'. When one dies, they are born in the next lifeland in circumstances that reflect how well they played their role in the last. Due to this, believers often try to create goodwill and maintain strong morals not primarily because they care about people, but because they are better off cosmically if they do. Some believers also think that their role in life is to extinguish goodwill and create destruction; though these are few in number they bring down the reputation of the Quarus Eternus quite a bit.

DREAMERS claim that Solanum is simply a figment of the Shadow's imagination, and that nothing anyone does truly matters since everyone could be phased out of existence at any moment. Many Dreamers find meaningless pleasure in decadent and base pursuits, doing it only because it's better than doing nothing while waiting for Solanum's inevitable and imminent demise.

AVKAVARTHALONIANS (or Bleeders, as they are more often referred to as) are almost universally distrusted except within their own ranks. They believe that suffering is caused only by one's expectations of suffering—not by pain, loss, or emotions. Following this, many Bleeders undergo primitive surgeries to blunt their intelligence or cause madness, which they believe frees the mind of suffering. In addition to attempts at destroying their own intellect or psyche, Bleeders study a cursed text known as the Avkavarthalonicon, written by a mysterious figure known as Avkavarthalonius; the book is essentially gibberish to most people, but to some it becomes the basis of their lives and the impetus to incur madness onto themselves and others.

WAVERS are enthusiasts of the Wave, an international radio communication infrastructure that allows people to share text and audio from all across Solanum. Often, wavers have at least a functioning understanding of computers and radio technology, and many are capable of programming malicious software that they distribute across the Wave. For this reason, many dislike Wavers who are too 'in the air', or who spend too much time on the Wave.

WARLOCKS are humans who have made pacts with Nightlanders, doing their bidding in exchange for arcane power. Unfortunately for warlocks, Yeomans and especially Tarchics hate them; they are often lynched if found out, and their only possible allies are Ezolans. Despite this, there are quite a few wizards who wish to become warlocks, due to the many powerful spells that the human mind can not comprehend to cast without the help of a Nightlander.

BEASTMEN are those who have been trained to hunt Nightlanders hiding in Solanum. The profession has been around for as long as the Grancosse, and thousands of beastmen guilds have sprung up over time all over Solanum. These guilds are often fraternal, working closely with Ezolan temples to sell the jib they collect. There is usually at least one beastmen guild per large settlement in most realms.

NIGHTMEN, or members of the O.N.O. (the Ordo Noctis Onteus), are highly trained and organized beastmen who specialize in the acquisition of arcana via expeditions into the Nightland. The O.N.O. only allows males to join, subjecting them to several painful tests of will and hazing before allowing them to travel into the Nightland; Nightmen are often very resilient, and highly valued for protection missions. Nightmen have a distinct look and armor style that makes them highly recognizable; additionally, all are required to always carry a vial of instant death should they be captured in the Nightland (Nightlanders hate the O.N.O. more than anything).

Logistics

THE KETHERIC POLONIAN CALENDAR contains 205-day increments called FLAMES. A single flame contains a complete rotation of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. A flame contains 10 moons,¹⁰ each 20 days; every even numbered moon has a HALT, which is an extra day (a 21st day) with a specific name and holiday associated with it.

Moon #	Moon Name	Halt?	Season
1	Waylus	No	Spring
2	Duelus	Gance's	Spring
3	Therus	No	Spring until 3.10 (Summer)
4	Phreyus	Stone's	Summer
5	Fylus	No	Summer until 5.20 (Autumn)
6	Sigus	Eine's	Autumn
7	Setilus	No	Autumn
8	Aelus	Alodd's	Autumn until 8.10 (Winter)
9	Naulus	No	Winter
10	Terus	Thack's	Winter until next flame (Spring)

Additionally, days are grouped into five-length segments called BLOCKS. A unique name is given to each block, and any same day between two different flames will always be the same block day. For reference, the first day of the flame (1st of Waylus) is always a Belsday.

Day #	Day Name
1	Belsday
2	Lansday
3	Oarday
4	Calday
5	Almsday

DUCATS are the most commonly exchanged currency in Solanum. Often shortened to just 'cats', this kind of money is minted in Ketheros as coins of various types. Cats used to also come as bills, but after the third collapse the Ketheric government announced that it would no longer back cats in the form of bills, but would buy them back at a diminished value.

Denomination	Symbol	Value (d)	Metal	Weight (g)	Approximate Value
Bit	b	1/100	Copper	4	A piece of candy.
Ducat	d	1	Silver	6.66	A kilo of beef chuck.
Guilder	G	100	Gold	40	A semi-automatic 9mm pistol.

¹⁰ Each moon has a name that vaguely corresponds to its number through ten.

The Market & Technology

The most commonly accepted currency throughout Solanum is the Ketheric ducat (pronounced duh-kit). While other currencies exist, all prices will be in ducats (đ) and other Ketheric denominations (see **Logistics** for further info on the Ketheric ducat). With that being said, the following are conversion rates for other currencies:

Currency	Nation of Origin	Description	Equivalent Value of ONE Ducat
Ducat	Ketheros	Silver coin; famous for having a cat on it.	1
Ganir	Gerdun	A.K.A. 'gan'. Steel coins with tiny platinum disks inside.	5
Talent	Ocrua	Steel alloy coins backed by the Tarchic Treatise.	6
Auro	Vizia	Small golden coins with mountains on them.	1/2
Skib	Norvance	A.K.A. a 'trade chunk'. Made of inscribed gems.	3/5
Aim	Corisia	Small silver coins that are strangely thick.	15

FIXED COST: the following goods are priced at an international standard, and are relatively invariable depending on the kind of economy they are being sold in. While there are minor differences depending on supply and demand, the prices for these goods are essentially similar no matter where one is in Solanum.

Melee Weapon	Primary Damage	Bonus Damage	Price (đ)
Unarmed	Impulse 1	-	-
Bludgeon	Impulse 2	-	2.50
Maul	Impulse 3	-	5.00
Dagger	Edge 1	-	10.00
Saber	Edge 2	-	30.00
Spear	Edge 3	-	15.00
Arming Sword	Impulse 1	Edge x1	20.00
Bastard Sword	Impulse 1	Edge x2	30.00
Great Sword	Impulse 1	Edge x3	40.00
Morning Star	Impulse 2	Edge x1	25.00
Hand Axe	Impulse 2	Edge x2	15.00
Halberd	Impulse 2	Edge x3	30.00
Poleaxe	Impulse 3	Edge x2	20.00

Melee weapons are relatively straightforward; they are forged, sold, and bought in relatively high quantities across Solanum. While firearms beat out melee weapons in most scenarios testing combat effectiveness, the convenience, reliability, and relative low cost of melee weapons make them popular with most.

When selecting a melee weapon, it is important to note one's enemy. A highly armored enemy will be beaten most effectively with a bludgeon or maul—no matter how strong one's armor is, a sledgehammer hurts. Daggers and sabers are essentially useless against armored opponents unless unarmored portions of the enemies are targeted, and swords, while not entirely ineffective, are still weak in comparison to simple blunt force. Additionally, while spears and polearms grant favor at long ranges, they are unfavorable up close.

Note that weapons with Edge as their primary damage type may be utilized with Dexterity-coordination instead of Strength-power, and that bonus damage is calculated with primary damage and dealt in addition to it.

Firearm	Type	Damage (Max RoF)	Firepower	Difficulty	Capacity	Reserve Type	Range	Price (đ)
Bosch PK 9mm	HG	Single — Burst 1	d6 (9mm)	1	1	Fixed	Short	25.00
Dall U3	HG	Revolver — Burst 2	d6 (9mm)	1	6	Fixed	Short	75.00
VSH 11	HG	Triple — Burst 2	d10 (11 Heaven)	1	3	Fixed	Medium	85.00
Anzu	HG	Semi — Burst 2	d6 (9mm)	0	12	Magazine	Short	100
Fitz RKP	HG	Revolver — Burst 2	d8 (6.3 Fitz)	2	6	Fixed	Medium	100
VSH 11	HG	Triple — Burst 2	d10 (11 Heaven)	1	3	Fixed	Medium	85.00
BK4000	HG	Revolver — Burst 2	d10 (11 Heaven)	2	5	Fixed	Medium	125
Fitz ALP	HG	Semi — Burst 2	d8 (6.3 Fitz)	0	10	Magazine	Medium	200
Bailey 200	SG	Double — Burst 2	d12 (10 Gauge)	0	2	Fixed	Short	75.00
Bosch AG 10g	SG	Pump — Burst 2	d12 (10 Gauge)	1	9	Fixed	Short	200
Blok VK	RF	Bolt — Burst 1	d10 (6mm KT)	2	10	Magazine	Long	125
Roelstok	RF	Bolt — Burst 1	d12 (7.92 Rivus)	2	8	Fixed	Long	150
Galok	RF	Semi — Burst 2	d10 (6mm KT)	0	30	Magazine	Long	250
Graz Rivus	RF	Semi — Burst 2	d12 (7.92 Rivus)	1	20	Magazine	Long	300
Manso Nox	RF	Bolt — Burst 1	d20 (11 Nox)	3	5	Magazine	Very Long	1,000
Blok SP	SMG	Auto — Burst 3	d6 (9mm)	1	25	Magazine	Short	150
Ontoff	MG	Auto — Burst 3	d10 (6mm KT)	1	90	Magazine	Long	600
Masser	MG	Auto — Burst 3	d12 (7.92 Rivus)	1	80	Magazine	Long	900
Fenris 35	EX	Shrapnel — Burst 2	d20 (35mm)	1	3	Fixed	Medium	250
DPZ Nox	EM	Auto — Burst 3	d20 (11 Nox)	1	120	Magazine	Very Long	3,000

Ammunition	Specifications	Firepower	Unit Cnt.	Unit Price (đ)
9mm	9x22	d6	25	2.50
6.3 Fitz (AP)	6.3x26	d8	25	5.00
11 Heaven	11x27	d10	10	2.50
6mm KT	6x46	d10	25	4.00
7.92 Rivus	7.92x52	d12	25	6.00
10 Gauge	19.7x70	d12	10	2.00
11 Nox	11x99	d20	10	5.00
35mm Grenade	35x43	d20	1	12.00
Arrow/Bolt	Broadhead	-	1	0.50

Firearms are extremely effective against unarmored targets; in addition to this, armor that is effective against firearms is expensive and rare. If one can afford it, a firearm is a very useful weapon.

Armor piercing rounds (that ignore half of the absorption of ballistic armor) can be found for triple the price of normal rounds (all 6.3 Fitz ammo is like this). Enchanted bullets can be found or made for about 10 times normal market prices.

Bow	Damage	Firepower	Difficulty	Range	Price (đ)
Short Bow	Edge 2	d6 (20kg)	2	Medium	25.00
Longbow	Edge 2	d10 (60kg)	3	Long	50.00
Crossbow	Edge 2	d8 (40 kg)	1	Medium	40.00
Hand Crossbow	Edge 2	d4 (10kg)	0	Short	20.00

Bows are a niche item—much cheaper and easier to maintain than a firearm, but generally more difficult to use. Note that the weights listed next to the Firepower attribute of each bow is the bow's pullback weight.

Explosive	Damage	Firepower	Price (đ)
Plastic Explosive	Impulse 2	d20 (1kg)	5.00
Frag Grenade	Burst 2	d20 (1kg)	10.00
Incendiary Grenade	Flame 2	d10 (Fire)	12.00
Lethal Gas Grenade	Decay 2	d12 (Lethal Gas)	20.00
Non-Lethal Gas Grenade	-	-	5.00
Smoke Grenade	-	-	4.00
Flashbang Grenade	-	-	2.50

Explosives are the ultimate equalizer. Unstoppable gunman? Master duelist? Godlike wizard? Throw a grenade at them. Set a trap or tripwire. Explosives are supremely deadly to anyone and everyone. Keep in mind that the Damage attribute for each explosive is at point-blank range; this attribute may be rolled with less favor (dice) at longer ranges, making the explosive less fatal.

Vehicles in Solanum are somewhat rare, but still an important part of life. Ketheros is the primary producer of both vehicles and firearms, and so many available automobiles are of Ketheran make. Automobiles, while sporting hefty prices, are very convenient and easy to maintain—fuel (R-diesel, or more often just called 'R') is relatively cheap and surprisingly effective due to its arcane properties, being about 6.5% Nightlander blood. Vehicles have fuel capacity in liters, fuel economy in kilometers per liter, and max speed in meters per second (additionally, the time required for the vehicle to reach maximum speed—"Time to Max"—is noted in parentheses in the same column as 'Max Speed').

Street Vehicles	Type	Seats	Fuel Capacity	Fuel Economy	Max Speed (TtM)	DT (Structure)	Price (G)
Bullway Sedan	CAR	5	20	750	60 (13)	40 (d40)	50.00
Marquet	CAR	5	25	600	50 (15)	60 (d60)	60.00
Knight Calico	CAR	4	10	900	80 (12)	30 (d20+10)	100
Bosma M2	TRK	2	30	400	50 (17)	60 (d60)	60.00
Kisling Champ	TRK	4	25	500	60 (18)	80 (d80)	80.00
Bullway Van	VAN	8	30	500	40 (12)	50 (d50)	60.00
Bodmer Cipro	VAN	12	40	400	40 (15)	40 (d40)	80.00
Rossum Ace 300	MTC	2	15	1600	90 (10)	10 (d10)	10.00
Rossum Hound 800	MTC	2	20	1200	80 (8)	20 (d20)	15.00
Ekkels Alpha	MTC	2	10	1500	100 (8)	15 (d10+5)	20.00

Aerocrafts are massively expensive compared to traditional street vehicles, but they are undeniably effective and inarguably cool. For aerocrafts, fuel capacity is in tonnes (1000 kg), fuel economy in kilometers per tonne, and max speed in meters per second/kilometers per hour (the time the aerocraft takes to reach maximum speed is not noted). Note that the price of aerocraft fuel (S-Diesel) is relatively stable across Solanum, which is why it is in this section. Street vehicle grade fuel, (R-Diesel) is found in the variable cost market section (page 46).

Aerocraft	Type	Inhabitants	Fuel Capacity	Fuel Economy	Max Speed	DT	Price (G)
Zelia M2E	LT	3	10	20,000	150/540	60 (d60)	5,000
Bouza Ki-6	LT	5	12	16,000	135/486	80 (d80)	10,000
Salgado R. 3	LT	10	16	12,000	115/414	100 (d100)	30,000
Anno C-19	MD	30	20	10,000	95/342	200 (d200)	50,000
DZK 600	MD	60	24	8,000	75/270	300 (d300)	100,000
Alders Atol-1	MD	90	30	6,000	65/234	400 (d400)	200,000
DCR 1230	HV	150	75	4,000	50/180	600 (d600)	500,000
Kaerce 723	HV	300	150	2,000	40/144	800 (d800)	1,000,000
Albani Colossus	HV	600	450	500	25/90	1000 (d1000)	3,000,000
Aerocraft Fuel			Price (G/tonne)				
S-Diesel			150				

Aerocrafts are capable of using high caliber weaponry, detailed below. These weapon systems are presented in much the same way as normal firearms, except they all have a range of 'Very Long', have no fixed capacity, and have a 'Type' that indicates the smallest type of aerocraft it can be installed in (e.g. a weapon system with the Type 'MD' can not be mounted on light (LT) vehicles, and heavy (HV) weapon systems can only be mounted on heavy aeros).

Weapon System	Type	Damage (Max RoF)	Firepower	Difficulty	Price (G)
DPZ Nox	LT	Auto — Burst 3	d20 (11 Nox)	1	30.00
BT Akolay	LT	Plus Auto — Burst 4	d20 (35mm)	4	50.00
GK55X	LT	Plus Auto — Burst 4	d40 (55mm)	3	100
Vereftor-99	MD	Auto - Burst 3	d60 (99mm)	2	200
YB-115	MD	Semi — Burst 2	d80 (115mm)	1	600
Gallo-165A	MD	Auto - Burst 3	d100 (165mm)	2	1,000
M33-99	HV	Single — Burst 1	d125 (199mm)	0	2,000
Colvisseau-235	HV	Plus Auto — Burst 4	d150 (235mm)	3	10,000

Note that weapon systems can not be used without an aerocraft unless it is connected to a proper power source and firing apparatus. These typically cost anywhere from half to the full value of the weapon system.

Armor	Absorption	Coverage	Range of Motion	Price (đ)
T4 'Barrel'	Burst 6, Edge Ignore, Impulse 2	2/6	-1	250
T5 'Lobster'	Burst 8, Edge Ignore, Impulse 2	2/6, Crit	-1	500
T7 'Campaigner'	Burst 8, Edge Ignore, Impulse 2	3/6, Crit	-2	1,000
T8 'Paladin'	Burst 10, Edge Ignore, Impulse 4	4/6, Crit	-3	1,500
T10 'Slab'	Burst 8, Edge Ignore, Impulse 2	2/6	-1	500
T11 'Waistcoat'	Burst 6	2/6	0	400
CZAR Ballistic System	Burst 8, Edge Ignore, Impulse 2	4/6, Crit	-1	3,000
Primitive Ballistic	Burst 6, Edge Ignore	2/6, Crit	-3	50.00
Plate	Edge Ignore, Impulse 4	4/6, Crit	-1	150.00
Maille	Edge Ignore, Impulse 2	4/6, Crit	-1	50.00
Gambeson	Edge 8, Impulse 2	4/6	0	25.00
Heater Shield	Edge Ignore, Impulse 10	2/6	0	20.00
Tower Shield	Edge Ignore, Impulse 10	3/6	-1	30.00
T9 Ballistic Shield	Burst 16, Edge Ignore, Impulse 10	4/6	-2	600

Armor is extremely useful against certain weapons, but can be cumbersome or highly situational. Most armor is generally in one of two categories: Ketheran surplus (most are "T-line" armors—they are made of Nightlander-infused ballistic steel and still issued in the Ketheran Ground Corps), and traditional non-ballistic armor. The CZAR ballistic system is a highly prized suit of armor created for special Sky Corps operations, and has since been copied by the O.N.O. to be used in the Nightland. Primitive ballistic armor is basic steel bent into roughly the shape of a human. Shields generally cover arms, torsos, and sometimes one's face—as long as one is content in not seeing their enemy (except for the T9 ballistic shield, which has a ballistic glass viewing pane).

Electronic/Accessory	Description	Price (đ)
Cever	Hand-held self-contained computer radio unit. Weak but convenient.	50.00
Deck	Large-book-sized self-contained computer radio unit. Better than a cever.	100
Tower	Box-sized computer radio unit. Requires at least 1 STO display. Powerful.	150
Filament Drive	Holds data that can be read/written by a computer.	1.00
STO Display	Standard LCD display, compatible with Wave-based software architecture.	20.00
Film Display	Allows moving photograph and audio viewing with filament drives.	15.00
EP Interface	Arcane electron-psyche interface—can be connected to any computer unit.	50.00

The prices of electronics are relatively invariable across Solanum, and so a few important pieces of computing and radio technology are included above. Note that the portable electronics listed above run on V-batteries (page 46).

Material	Amount	Price (đ)
Iron Ore	kilogram	0.01
Steel Rebar	kilogram	0.05
Aluminum	kilogram	0.20
Lead	kilogram	0.20
Copper	kilogram	0.40
Bronze	kilogram	0.65
Nickel	kilogram	2.00
Tin	kilogram	2.50
Zinc	kilogram	2.50
Stone	brick	0.20
Lumber	dm ³	3.00

Jewel	Price (đ)
Common Gems	1.00
Amethyst	5.00
Opal	10.00
Emerald	80.00
Sapphire	100
Ruby	400
Diamond	600

Obviously, precious jewels will be appraised depending on their size, quality of cut, and other factors—these prices represent a jewel of average price. Jewels incorporated into art or jewelry can easily be worth double or more depending on the craftsmanship.

ARCANA is an important aspect of the international Solanum market, but the massive amount of possible kinds of arcana makes pricing them difficult. Arcana is generally sold as a spell (in its learnable, symbolic form), a consumable (discrete arcana), or a traditional (trigger-effect) arcana. Spells are priced depending on their level, but can vary from their market averages due to effectiveness, usefulness, etc. One-use arcana is priced in the same way. Normal arcana are priced by their PT, which is then added to their basic material value and equivalent spell value¹¹.

Arcana	Price (đ)
Spell (x=level)	$100 \cdot 2^x$
Consumable (x=level, y=number of uses)	$50y \cdot 2^x$
Arcana PT (x=PT)	$10 \cdot \frac{x^2+x}{2}$

Note that the prices above are rough guides, as arcana may be much less or much more expensive depending on several factors, as was mentioned earlier. Not every single 1st level spell costs the same, but the price listed above is a good basis for an average value. CHARMS which increase PT may also be bought, going for an average price of 1,000đ per point of PT increase. Finally, the price of producing a vome is highly variable—perhaps more so than any other kind of arcana—but a median figure would be around 4,000đ. Additionally, although vomes can be created artificially, most nations (especially ones in the Godlands) grant vomes the same rights as humans, with the caveat that if a vome is created to want to serve humans as a slave and thus ‘wishes’ to, it may.

¹¹ For example, if a gold ring has a PT of 6 and can cast a 1st level spell, its price will be equal to the gold ring’s base price, plus the price of the spell, plus the price of the 6 PT as outlined above.

VARIABLE COST: given that certain nations are wealthier than others, some items or services will cost more in one region than in another region (e.g. a meal in a poor country will cost less than a similar meal in a wealthy country). These 'variable' cost goods are generally cheaper than fixed cost goods (e.g. the price of a stick of gum might be massively different depending on where you buy it, yet a specific car or firearm will generally be sold for its market price no matter where in Solanum the transaction occurs).

The prices of variable cost items are relative to each nation's 'Economic Strength' statistic, as outlined on page 26. For example, variable cost goods in nations with Economic Strength I are a third of the price as those same goods in a nation with Economic Strength III. All prices outlined in the variable cost section are adjusted to a nation with Economic Strength III. If one were to find their prices in Ketheros (a nation with Economic Strength VI), simply multiply each price by two.

Animals

BIRD, COMMON such as a pigeon (3.00đ).

BIRD OF PREY e.g. a hawk (60.00đ).

CAT one might keep as a pet (2.00đ).

CATTLE including dairy cows (120đ), castrated males or oxen (90.00đ), and uncastrated males or bulls (600đ).

DOG such a mutt (3.00đ), pet-breed (6.00đ), or trained hound capable of combat and hunting (300đ).

DONKEY being a horse-like animal (60.00đ).

GOAT for rearing or perhaps sacrifice (15.00đ).

HORSE as an old nag (20.00đ), pack horse (50.00đ), farm labor or riding (150đ), or combat as a war horse (300đ).

RABBIT that is tasty and reproduces quickly (1.00đ).

SHEEP for meat and wool (10.00đ).

SWINE that are tasty and good at body disposal (20.00đ).

Clothing¹²

BAGS from a small pouch (0.20đ), satchel (1.00đ), backpack (2.00đ), and large backpack (4.00đ).

BOOTS, LEATHER suitable for heavy use (8.00đ).

CLOAK for cold or rainy weather (6.00đ).

COAT similar to a cloak but with sleeves (10.00đ).

DRAWERS come in six pairs (0.75đ).

DRESS plain (2.50đ) or more glamorous (10.00đ).

GLOVES for warming and protecting the hands (0.50đ).

HAT that is reasonably fashionable and useful (0.75đ).

JACKET that is suitable for breezy weather (4.00đ).

PANTS for protecting the legs (2.00đ).

SHIRT such as a T-shirt (1.00đ), or dress shirt (1.50đ).

SHOES either leather (4.00đ), or canvas (1.00đ).

SKIRT that covers the thighs/legs (1.50đ).

SOCKS come in six pairs (0.75đ).

Common Goods

BATTERY of type V (1.00đ), cost of recharge (0.50đ).

BOOKS on subjects very common or trivial (0.50đ), serious (1.50đ), or rare/prized books (5.00đ).

CT or 'commercial tape' with a movie or game; lame ones (0.20đ), good ones (2.00đ), and ultra-rare (20.00đ).

FUEL per liter, known as R-diesel (1.00đ).

MATERIAL, CLOTHING per meter: cotton (0.50đ), wool (1.00đ), silk (2.00đ), and leather (3.00đ).

SURVIVAL GEAR; rope by the meter (0.10đ), tent by person capacity (1.00đ), sleeping bag (5.00đ).

TOOLS, HAND such as spades or hammers (2.50đ), or larger tools like shovels or pickaxes (5.00đ).

TOOLS, SOPHISTICATED such as thermometers (1.50đ), clocks (2.00đ), binoculars or telescopes (6.00đ).

TOOLS, SPECIALIZED such as a lockpicking kit (1.50đ), doctor's surgery bag (3.00đ), repair kit (3.00đ).

¹² Clothing is priced as cotton; multiply relative costs of specific clothing materials for wool, silk, or leather.

Foodstuffs

BEEF per kilogram: ground or chuck (0.50đ), sirloin (1.00đ), ribeye (1.50đ), tenderloin (2.00đ).

BEER coming in a standard 400ml bottle (0.15đ).

BREAD per loaf of flour flesh (0.25đ).

BUTTER per kilogram of churned cream (0.25đ).

CIGARETTES per pack of twenty (0.25đ).

CHEESE per kilogram of dried milk fat (0.50đ).

EGGS per 10 of chicken (0.25đ).

FLOUR per kilogram (0.10đ).

FRUIT per kilogram of sugar flesh (0.25đ).

ICE CREAM per liter of deliciousness (0.25đ).

LIQUOR; shot at a bar (0.25đ), or a 1 liter bottle (2.00đ).

MEAL either homemade or at a cheap restaurant (0.50đ), at a classy joint (1.00đ), fine dining (10.00đ).

MILK per liter, unpasteurized as God intended (0.10đ).

NUTS per kilogram (0.50đ) of crunchy flesh.

PORK per kilogram: chops or ham (0.45đ), bacon (0.60đ).

POTATOES per kilogram of spud (0.20đ).

POULTRY per kilogram of chicken (0.30đ).

RICE per kilogram of dried grains (0.20đ).

VEGETABLES per kilogram of green (0.25đ).

Jib¹³

ADRENAL GLAND causes temporary extrasensory and enhanced perception upon consumption (50.00đ).

BLOOD per liter: very versatile in alchemy, and strangely flammable. Consumption leads to feelings of energy and awakens, but can also cause dangerous levels of entropy. Nightlanders have ~5 liters of blood (5.00đ).

BONE per 100mg: often powdered, and very useful. The average Nightlander has about 4 kg of bones (1.00đ).

BRAIN causes weak telepathy when consumed (40.00đ). Highly valued by alchemists for its alchemical versatility.

CORPSE, a completely in-tact Nightlander corpse (400đ).

EAR, most Nightlanders have two (3.00đ).

¹³ Slang for the corpses of Nightlanders.

EYE is used in light-based arcana. The ashes of a Nightlander's eye, when applied to one's eye, allows one to see the invisible (6.00đ).

HAIR per lock: highly toxic and often fatal if consumed. Most Nightlanders have ~10 good locks of hair (2.00đ).

HEART is very useful and strangely flammable (25.00đ).

HIDE, or a Nightlander's pelt/skin (15.00đ).

INTESTINES are not incredibly useful (5.00đ).

KIDNEY can be used as a water filter, if urban legend is to be believed. Nightlanders have at least two (15.00đ).

LIVER is vital to healing concoctions; accelerates healing slightly even without refinement (35.00đ).

PANCREAS is useful for charm-type arcana. Eating a sweetened one puts one in an agreeable state (25.00đ).

STOMACH is useful for dimensional arcana. Drinking the stomach acid may displace one in time or space (25.00đ).

THYMUS GLAND is useful for creating protection arcana. Consuming an aged one gives on slight damage resistance (30.00đ).

TONGUE is strangely versatile. Consumption leads to a greatly enhanced sense of smell (15.00đ).

Labor¹⁴

MENIAL work as a clerk or similar (4.00đ).

MANUAL unskilled physical labor (8.00đ).

SKILLED work done by an apprentice equivalent (5.00đ), journeyman (10.00đ), or master of the craft (20.00đ).

SECURITY done by a rookie (7.50đ), experienced fighter (10.00đ), or a badass (15.00đ).

SCHOLARLY work by a college graduate (12.00đ).

Landholdings¹⁵

LAND per hectare: undeveloped plot far from civilization (100đ), town plot (1,000đ), urban real estate (10,000đ).

BUILDING per room or equivalent: low quality (250đ), average quality (500đ), high quality (1,000đ).

¹⁴ Priced per eight-hour workday.

¹⁵ Land and building values are calculated separately and added for determining the value of a property.

Services

ADVERTISING with a few fliers (10.00đ), a town-wide campaign (500đ), a city-wide movement (10,000đ).

ARCADE CABINET credit (0.05đ).

APOLOGISTS, law experts that argue for the good of their client, charge hourly (10.00đ).

APPRAISAL of a valuable item (1.00đ), or of an arcane item (20.00đ).

BOARDING per night: bed in a boarding house (0.50đ), room at an inn (2.50đ), room in an urban hotel (5.00đ), presidential suite in a metropolitan area (100đ).

CEREMONY per guest: decorated and catered (0.50đ), truly excessive (5.00đ).

COLLEGE per four-moon semester: trade school (25.00đ), local university (100đ), regional university (400đ).

DELIVERY per cubic meter per kilometer (0.20đ).

FUNERAL including a ceremony (250đ) plus either cremation (50.00đ) or burial (150đ).

HOSPITAL VISIT for the night (5.00đ), may include light surgery (15.00đ) or serious surgery (30.00đ).

MANAGEMENT of anything—entertainment gigs, hits, heists, demon hunting—comes with ~15% finder's fee.

MOVIE, a single ticket (0.50đ).

RENT per moon, per room: low quality (2.50đ), average quality (5.00đ), high quality (10.00đ).

REPAIR of torn or damaged goods cost, on average, one-half of the original item's price.

THEATER, a single ticket (1.00đ).

TRAINING under a tutor or mentor, per hour (1.50đ).

TRAVEL per kilometer: train/plane (0.01đ), taxi (0.05đ).

USAGE OF SPELL from a decent wizard generally costs one-tenth the price of the spell.

BUYING AND SELLING is done via local shops, markets, traveling caravans, artisan guilds, pawns, private clients, and dozens of other circumstances. While most common goods can be found everywhere, certain items are sold only by specially connected or skilled persons. For instance, arcana is usually only sold by colleges, alchemists, private collectors, or in certain factions such as Ezolan temples, Xotian collectives, or O.N.O. chapters. Amphetamines and opiates are highly controlled in several nations and might only be purchased through illegal means. Munitions, especially explosives, are also sometimes highly controlled by governments. With that being said, most nations allow citizens to buy and sell common firearms without licenses.

PRICING for variable goods, as was mentioned earlier, is proportional to the nation's Economic Strength statistic as outlined on page 26, but beyond that all goods have a little bartering lee-way on their prices. These prices, variable or otherwise, represent averages—and sometimes actual prices are more or less than what their market price actually is. For example, goods made in a nation with Economic Strength I might be traded to a country with Economic Strength III; these goods may be of less quality or renown, and thus be sold as prices correspondent with an Economic Strength of I or II rather than the actual nation's Economic Strength of III. This would be seen as a 'cheap' version of the stuff made in the nation. On the other hand, importing items from nations of a higher Economic Strength might be seen as higher quality or more luxurious, and thus fetch higher prices.

To put it simply, the market is complex and not always consistent. The prices listed are guides rather than absolute metrics, and it is common for local events/conditions to greatly skew the average. As a general guide, though, note that profit margins of 10% are considered to be normal and 20% are considered to be profitable.

Arcana

Ever since the Grancosse, humanity has studied the secrets of the Nightland in order to better themselves. Due to this, many philosophies and institutions have been influenced by the existence of arcana and its implications. Modern academia, for example, exists primarily because of arcana—countless cats are spent every flame for arcane education, products, and services. Scholars estimate that there are almost one million beastmen operating all across Solanum in order to protect humanity from Nightlanders. Around 3 million people can understand Xenic, a language created by the Shadow that all Nightlanders are born knowing how to speak—Xenic is used primarily to translate spells and to speak with Nightlanders, and has pronunciation and grammar structure unlike any natural human languages.

Much of humanity's most impressive technology is partly composed of arcane components; aerocrafts employ several arcane-industrial pieces of technology, and the fuel that vehicles run on (S-diesel for aerocrafts, R-diesel for ground vehicles) are partially composed of Nightlander blood. Arcane Wave receivers are sometimes employed in undeveloped settlements, granting otherwise impossible access to the Wave. Many of the munitions that are dropped onto the Wastes in order to cull the Nightlander population are, ironically, arcane in nature. In fact, the most destructive weapon manufactured by humans, the Ipomalix, is an arcane-nuclear hybrid weapon capable of dissolving a continent.

Conflict

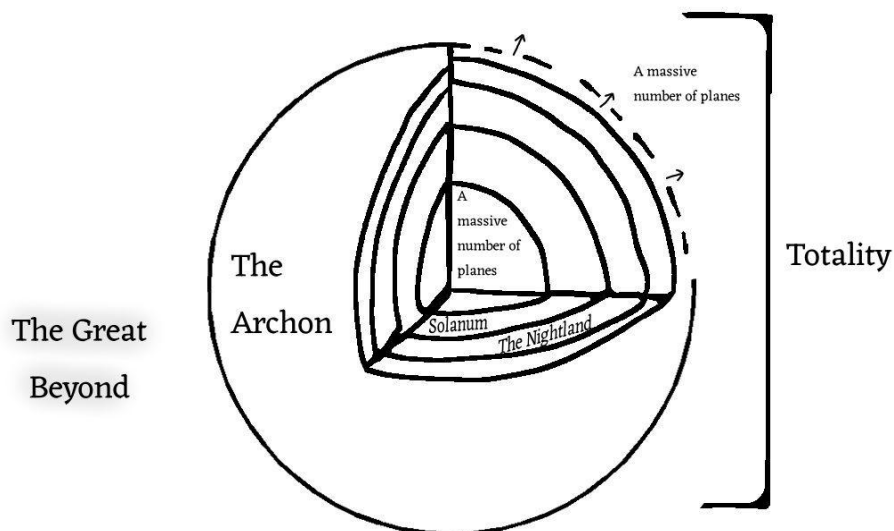
Although humanity is just beginning to enter another modern industrial age following the Void Moon, there is still quite a lot of violence and conflict in Solanum. Despite the constant bombing of the Wastes, down-on-their-luck individuals (primarily young men with little family) will travel into the Wastes in search of arcana and fortune; this usually ends in death. As it happens, the Wastes are bitter and inhospitable lands. Twisted by Sky Corps weapons and Nightlanders, the Wastes are full of spatial and temporal arcane anomalies; some compare it to a hell, an inescapable perilous land of demons which humanity must section off. Others see it differently, as a place to prove their mettle, and gain power and wealth—a greater hell exists as the Nightland, and although this uncharted plane is thought to be significantly more lucrative for treasure, usually only members of the O.N.O. will travel into the Nightlands.

Beastmen, on the other hand, either wander across Solanum or form stationary guilds in order to protect a single settlement. Nightlanders living in Solanum will usually keep to themselves, unless they're the carnivorous kind. Beastmen specialize in the hunting of Nightlanders, rogue alchemists, warlocks, and arcane trainees who sometimes form cults in order to gain arcane powers—kidnapping and sacrificing settlers for their Nightlander patron. In fact, the conflict against other humans almost rivals that of the Nightlanders. The Imbenai (a massive stretch of ocean between the Redlands and the Godlands) is plagued with pirates who slaughter and pillage trade boats. Much of the Redlands is plagued with organized crime, and banditry is common across Solanum's vast and largely unexplored wilderness and ruins from before the third collapse. What little law enforcement exists outside of human settlements is faced with constant peril, and rural land (especially as one travels north) is considered very dangerous to traverse.

•METAPHYSICS•

"Bladda vew oley; canney doket abrahake?"
-Avkavarthalonius, The Avkavarthalonicon

Cosmology



Solanum as it is known exists in a five-dimensional reality known as Totality; of these five dimensions, three are spatial (leading to a reality with length, width, and height), one is temporal (creating a linear time continuum), and one is planar. The planar dimension encompasses hundreds of millions of unique, overlapping realities that can usually only be traversed via arcane means. Solanum is but one of these planes in Totality, though planar travel is exceedingly rare except with the Nightland as a destination. Interestingly, what humans call ‘Totality’ is not all that is known to exist; rather, Totality encompasses all that is known to exist using common mechanics such as mass, gravity, electromagnetism, etc. Totality itself (and the mechanics which govern it) is constructed and maintained by an entity known as ‘the Archon’, which exists in a region known as the ‘Great Beyond’. The Great Beyond and the Archon itself do not conform to common mechanics; to call them ‘places’ is even somewhat inaccurate as they do not conform to space in the way that humans know. Travel between Totality and the Great Beyond is as feasible as thought traveling into physical reality—a complete impossibility.

Intelligent forms of life exist in the Great Beyond which most humans call ‘gods’. When a god enters the Archon, it fuses with the Archon’s conscious interfacing system known as the Archonic engine, which grants the god complete control over Totality. While gods are extremely powerful and can essentially do anything, to command the Archonic engine is in some way taxing to them (it is unknown in what way, but metaphysicians assume that some modicum of effortful thought must be done).

While some religions insist that powerful entities exist that could fit the description of a god from the Great Beyond, the only god that unquestionably exists rules over the Nightland, and is known as the Shadow. Due to this, the following sections on metaphysics all refer to the Shadow when referencing the powers of gods, but in theory any god could perform the same duties in place of the Shadow—in practice, though, none do.

Arcana Casting

All arcana, in some way or another, are linked with the Shadow through a connection known as a CAST. While on the macroscopic level it appears that casts are formed onto items, in reality casts only form on the electrons of arcana. When a cast forms on electrons, they become 'aimed' at the next highest arcana in the cast, leading to a sort of chain that always leads, at the very top, to the Shadow. Additionally, whenever cast-bound electrons transfer due to the learning of a spell, alchemy, or other arcane means, arcs of electricity form—this is why wizards thought for hundreds of flames that electricity and lightning is a pure form of arcana, but in reality it is simply that electrons are the only particles that can be truly be arcane.

Entropy

The primary practical issue with using arcana results from the 1st Pythic Law, which states that 'the magnitude of current required to call an arcane cast is proportional to the average positive increase in entropy of the current'. In layman's terms: powerful arcana need more electricity, which creates more entropy. ARCANE ENTROPY is a sub-atomic property of electrons that corresponds to the electron's certainty in space and time. As entropy increases, each electron's physical position becomes increasingly random and difficult to measure. Entropy decreases over time, but heat is generated as it does. This heat is potentially quite dangerous for humans to endure, and is colloquially known as 'spellburn' due to the burning sensation that it causes throughout one's nervous system.

Interestingly, wizards have believed since the inception of arcana that spellburn is taken semi-voluntarily. Wizards believe that on some subconscious level, the acceptance that spellburn is dangerous causes spellburn to be worse. In the words of the famous mage Nalgom Ciznec: "A practitioner may delude himself into believing that he is indestructible, that the immutable laws of arcana do not apply to him, yet still his body knows the danger of arcana in the same way that it knows the danger of pain itself. Only those with true, foundational resolve can resist". While the specifications of spellburn resistance is largely unknown, most believe that confidence and willpower increases one's resistance. Though unsubstantiated by evidence, some physicians theorize that the locus of spellburn resistance is the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, a region in the brain associated with decision making and self-control.

Nightlander Pacts

Arcane casts are created initially by the Shadow in the form of beings known as Nightlanders. These Nightlanders have inborn arcane power, and in turn the Shadow has constructed their anatomy in a way that properly disperses entropy and spellburn (far better than humans do). Through a variety of means, the casts between individual Nightlanders and the Shadow are extended to humans, allowing humanity to wield arcane power. The simplest means of this is through a PACT—a Nightlander bestows arcane power to a human, allowing the human to activate the cast. The issue with pacts is that the cast involves the Nightlander, and should it die, the cast would break and prevent the human from using the power.

Spellcasting

A spell is an arcane thought that allows one to call a cast through cast-bound electrons inside their nervous system. While humans are able to modify and integrate spells into their nervous system (what mages call ‘learning’ a spell), humans can not create spells from nothing. Instead, certain species of Nightlanders are capable of creating spells (unfortunately, they are always in Xenic, as are runes). With spells, it is crucial to understand that they may be symbolic or integrated. A symbolic spell exists as a dormant piece of physical arcana—usually as pieces of writing or images, though potentially anything can be a spell in its symbolic form, even an item or living being.

In order to learn or integrate the spell, one must simply mentally acknowledge the spell’s symbol as they are physically contacting it. Once the cast-bound electrons have been transferred from the physical symbol to their nervous system, the spell is considered to be in its ‘integrated’ form. At this point, the spell may be activated via a variety of physical and mental arcane techniques, at the cost of increased entropy. Also in this form, an experienced spellwriter may modify the spell by combining and transmuting it with other spells integrated into their nerves. It should be noted that any spell integrated into one’s body can also be transferred out of one’s body via the construction of a new symbol to hold it. This process is instantaneous and easy to initiate.

Alchemy

Alchemy, as opposed to the mental activity of spellwriting, is the physical process of combining and transmuting existing arcana into new forms of arcana. It is crucial to note that alchemists can not create arcana without some amount of pre-existing arcana—this usually comes from the corpses of Nightlanders (known as jib), Nightlander plants, or other arcane items; this type of ingredient (known as Ort) must be combined with three more broad ideas of properties of substances in order to create arcana from recipes. These four kinds of properties ingredients can have are known as the ‘Moricean elements’, and are detailed below.

Moricean Element	Nature	Example
Ort	Arcane items	Jib
Vis	Strength/density	Rock
Eft	Conductivity	Metal
Ist	Patterns/data	Crystal

Most arcana act as items with a trigger and effect; whenever the trigger occurs (e.g. speak a command word) the cast-bound electrons call the cast and the effect occurs (e.g. shoot a fireball). On the other hand, there is a certain kind of arcana that is technically not cast-bound, known as DISCRETE ARCANA. This type of arcana acts as the lingering ‘effects’ of other arcana; they are often either temporary in nature or one-use consumables. A potion or human target of a spell such as ‘fly’ or ‘haste’ are examples of discrete arcana; they are not part of the arcane cast and thus do not gain entropy, but are still affected by anomalous arcane mechanics.

•Materials•

"You sold your soul for a bit, and I for a guilder!"

-Gore-a-ton Rotblood

Lightning Character Sheet

Rend

PC Name _____ Player Name _____

Attributes

Strength ()

Dexterity ()

Intellect ()

Psyche ()

Thresholds

Damage Counter

Psi Counter

Character Info

Notions (Beliefs, Goals, Ideas, etc.)

Specialties

Skills

Character Info

Melee Roll:

Ambition:

Inventory
