

TALES OF MAR DE ORO

NATIVE RULES

Player and Game Master Rulebook

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PHYSICAL-FIELD FORTERA • LETHAL FIREARMS
ONE ENGINE FROM A PISTOL SHOT TO A FLEET ACTION



Credible danger. Meaningful agency. Predictable stakes.
Consequences that follow the fiction.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1 - The Basics:	3
What the game is, who does what, how a session moves, and what you need.	
Chapter 2 - Resolution:	7
The conversation, 2d6 + Capability, Risk, Effect, clocks, teamwork, and scene timing.	
Chapter 3 - Characters:	14
Character creation, Skills, Strengths, ready-made and custom Callings, ready-to-play builds, Techniques, and advancement.	
Chapter 4 - Equipment:	36
Load, weapons, armour, protection, kits, access, and supplies.	
Chapter 5 - Fortera:	41
Practice, Workings, practical limits, Capacity, Overdraw, Embedding, decay, and specialist control.	
Chapter 6 - Personal Combat:	53
Initiative, facing, reactions, range, firearms, Harm, Grapple, and decisive violence.	
Chapter 7 - Battlefield Scale:	65
Formations, Cohesion, command, artillery, ships, and airships.	
Chapter 8 - Threats and Bestiary:	69
NPCs, Major Threats, Source Beasts, and the twelve canon creature and phenomenon entries.	
Chapter 9 - Playing Mar de Oro:	80
The table procedure, choosing Risk and Effect, clocks, teamwork, and worked play examples.	
Chapter 10 - Game Master Guide:	83
Adjudication, danger, consequences, encounter construction, and beginning a campaign.	
Appendix - Quick Reference:	89
The rules most often needed during play.	
Appendix - Rules Finder:	93
Fast chapter and section lookup.	
Appendix - Character Record:	94
Print-friendly character sheet.	

CHAPTER I - THE BASICS

The Game

Tales of Mar de Oro is a roleplaying game for dangerous expeditions, investigation, political pressure, industrial warfare, firearms, airships, and Fortera phenomena. The rules are built around one question: what is the character trying to accomplish, and what can go wrong here?

The core conversation is light. When exact facing, firearms, Fortera engineering, or formations matter, the game deliberately becomes more detailed. Mar de Oro is best understood as mid-weight tactical play built on one narrative resolution engine. You are not expected to use every subsystem in every session.

FORTERA IN 30 SECONDS

Fortera is a physical field, not a supernatural spell system. A practitioner with Fortera Practice uses one of eight Workings through the same 2d6 + Fortera engine as every other action. Before a Working, answer three questions: Can the target respond? Can the intended change physically happen? Can the practitioner safely push it that far? Capacity is the safe ceiling. Overdraw can exceed it, but the price is known before the roll. Fortera only works through a credible physical pathway.

If You Have Never Played a Roleplaying Game

A roleplaying game is a conversation about an imagined situation. You do not choose from a fixed menu of moves. You describe what your character tries to do. The Game Master describes the world and the people in it. Dice are used only when the outcome is uncertain and the result matters.

Most of the time, play is simply talking. The GM says what is happening. A player says what their character does. The GM answers. When a risky or uncertain moment appears, everyone pauses long enough to state the stakes and roll. Then the result changes the situation and the conversation continues.

The character sheet tells you what your character is especially good at. It is not a list of everything you are allowed to attempt. If an action is plausible in the situation, you can try it.

Basic Words

Word	Plain meaning
Player	A real person at the table. Each player usually controls one main character.
Character / PC	The fictional person controlled by a player. PC means player character.
Game Master / GM	The person who describes the world, portrays everyone else, and applies the rules when outcomes are uncertain.
NPC	A non-player character. The GM portrays them.
Scene	One continuous situation, such as questioning a witness, crossing a ravine, or fighting on a deck.
Roll	Rolling dice because the outcome is uncertain and a meaningful consequence is possible.
d6	One ordinary six-sided die. 2d6 means roll two six-sided dice.

Word	Plain meaning
Modifier	A number added to a roll. A Trained Skill gives +1, for example.
Activation	One character's opportunity to act during tactical combat.
Reaction	A limited response used outside your own Activation when a rule allows it.
Space	One square on the tactical grid, about 2 metres or a few paces.
Fiction	The imagined situation everyone agrees is currently happening.

What Play Sounds Like

GM: "The courier is running across the rain-slick roof. There is a three-metre gap to the next building."

Player: "I sprint after him and jump the gap."

GM: "That is uncertain and the fall matters. Use Athletics. You are Trained, so that is +1. Serious Risk, Standard Effect. If things go badly, you can go over the edge."

Player: "I roll 2d6 and add 1. The dice are 3 and 4, so 7, plus 1 is 8."

GM: "An 8 is a 7-9 result. You succeed, but there is a consequence. You clear the gap and catch the courier at the chimney, but your pistol slips from your coat and falls into the alley."

That exchange is the basic game. The player chose the goal. The GM made the danger and likely result clear. One roll answered the uncertain question. The situation changed, and play continues from there.

What to Read Before Your First Session

Do not try to memorise this book. Read only what you need for the character and situation in front of you.

- As a first-time player: read The Basics, Resolution, and your chosen Calling. Read Equipment when choosing gear. Read Personal Combat if a fight is likely. Read Fortera only if your character has Fortera Practice.
- As the GM: read The Basics, Resolution, Playing Mar de Oro, and the Game Master Guide. Read the specialist chapters when they are about to matter.
- You can ignore Battlefield Scale, vessels, Source Beasts, and other specialist procedures until they actually appear in play.

The Setting

Mar de Oro is an industrialising age of sail and shot. Firearms are lethal. Personal armour helps but is not bulletproof. Airships, artillery, ships, engineering, medicine, institutions, and logistics matter. Fortera is a physical field that can be sensed and manipulated through training and apparatus. It is not divine or supernatural magic.



The Players

Each player controls one capable but mortal character. Say what your character wants and what they actually do. Use the environment, other people, equipment, preparation, and teamwork. The rules do not expect a single correct Skill or combat solution.

The Characters

Characters begin from a ready-made Calling or create their own. The ready-made Callings are Soldier, Officer, Diplomat, Scout, Field Investigator, Operative, Engineer, and Physician. A Calling is a starting focus, not a class. Background says who you are. Strengths say what you have mastered. Techniques say what unusual permissions you possess. Any character may learn any Technique when the fiction supports it.

The Game Master

The GM presents the world, portrays NPCs and opposition, establishes Risk and Effect when uncertainty matters, and follows consequences honestly. The GM does not need to protect a plot or manufacture a particular outcome.

Playing a Session

Play moves naturally between conversation, focused scenes, combat, investigation, travel, recovery, and large-scale conflict. These are changes of focus, not rigid phases. When detail matters, zoom in. When individual actions stop being useful, zoom out to clocks, formations, vessels, or narrative resolution.

Before You Start

Agree on the campaign premise, starting situation, and expected level of danger. Make characters together. If a player wants to start immediately, choose one Calling and copy the Initial Build printed inside that Calling. Change anything later that the normal creation budget allows.

What You Need

- One GM and one or more players.
- At least three six-sided dice per player.
- Character notes or sheets, pencils, and a way to track Harm and clocks.
- A square grid or simple position sketch when exact facing and threatened spaces matter. It is optional outside tactical combat.

How the Rules Fit Together

Everything uses the same basic roll. Equipment, Fortera, combat, formations, and Major Threats change what you can attempt, how dangerous it is, and what success can accomplish. They do not give you a different dice system to learn.

Layer	Function
Basic Roll	2d6 + Capability; Risk and Effect; 10+ / 7-9 / 6-.
Character Build	Calling, Skills, Strengths, Techniques, Background, Bond, Burden.
Mastery	Strengths add the Specialist Die: 3d6, keep the highest two. Maximum one Specialist Die.
Equipment	Creates permissions, range, protection, area effects, and action-economy constraints. No damage-dice layer.

Layer	Function
Fortera	Eight Workings use the same engine; Capacity is the safe ceiling; Overdraw exceeds it at a cost.
Personal Combat	Move + Action + Reaction; Facing, threatened spaces, range, armour, Harm, area attacks.
Battlefield Scale	Formations use <u>Quality</u> , Cohesion, objectives, and Scale Clocks.
Threats	NPC <u>Quality</u> and Major Threat Activations keep opposition compact.

CHAPTER 2 - RESOLUTION

How Play Works

Play is a conversation. The GM describes the situation. Players describe goals and actions. The group establishes what is possible in the fiction. When uncertainty matters and failure would change the situation, use the rules. The result changes the fiction, which creates the next decision.

Who Decides What

Players decide what their characters attempt and how. The GM establishes Risk, Effect, and consequences from the situation. Everyone may question an assumption before the roll so the stakes are understood. Once the roll is made, follow the established stakes and the result.

When to Roll

Do not roll for routine competence or when nothing meaningful is at stake. Roll when the outcome is uncertain and failure, delay, exposure, Harm, loss, or another consequence would matter.

Rolling the Dice

When an action is uncertain and failure matters, roll:

2d6 + Capability

Result	Outcome
10+	Success at the established Effect.
7-9	Success at the established Effect, with a consequence appropriate to the established Risk.
6-	The situation changes against the character. Existing progress is not automatically erased.

Your First Roll, Step by Step

1. Say what you want to achieve. “I want to jump the gap and catch the courier.”
2. Say how you do it. The method tells you which Skill fits. Jumping the gap uses Athletics.
3. Find the Skill rating. Trained means +1, so write down +1 for this roll.
4. Before anyone rolls, the GM states Risk, Effect, and the important consequence. Example: Serious Risk, Standard Effect; a bad result could send you over the edge.
5. Roll two six-sided dice, add them together, then add the Capability modifier. If the dice show 3 and 4, that is 7. Add +1 for Trained Athletics: total 8.
6. Read the result once. A total of 8 is 7-9, so the character succeeds at the stated goal and also suffers a consequence that fits the stated Risk.

You do not normally make a second roll for defence, armour, damage, or “how well” the success worked. One meaningful roll should answer one meaningful question unless a specific rule says otherwise.

No universal Overextend exists. Extra attacks, unusual movement, protection, specialist actions, and other exceptions require explicit Techniques or other permissions.

Capability

Capability measures broad competence and is the modifier added to the resolution roll.

Rating	Modifier	Meaning
Familiar	+0	Basic exposure, common knowledge, or enough practical understanding to attempt ordinary uses of the Skill. Familiar does not grant professional expertise; a specialised procedure may have No Effect until the method gains credible know-how or permission.
Trained	+1	Reliable professional competence.
Expert	+2	High-level specialist competence.
Master	+3	Exceptional mastery in the setting.

FAMILIARITY AND NO EFFECT Familiar (+0) covers ordinary uses of a Skill; it is not an open licence for specialist procedures. If the attempted method depends on technical knowledge or training the character does not credibly possess, treat that method as No Effect rather than applying a hidden penalty or arbitrary veto. Tell the player what is missing and what could make the attempt possible, such as instruction, a reference, suitable specialist equipment, a relevant Background, direct expert assistance, or better preparation. Do not use No Effect merely because a Skill is Familiar when the described use is ordinary and plausible. **Examples:** Ordinary: dress a wound, oil a mechanism, haul a line, read a common language. Specialised: surgery, unfamiliar Éterlumin system work, dead languages, or handling a damaged vessel in severe conditions.

Example: if Firearms is Expert, its Capability is +2. When you make a Firearms roll, roll 2d6 and add 2. Capability is not a separate attribute to calculate; it is simply the modifier shown by the Skill rating you are using.

REMEMBER. Modifiers show broad competence. Techniques change what a character can do. Specialist Dice mark narrow mastery. These jobs stay separate so bonus stacking stays small.

Risk and Effect

Before a meaningful roll, establish Risk and Effect.

DEFAULT CALL: LOW / STANDARD / ONE CONSEQUENCE

Most meaningful rolls begin at Low Risk and Standard Effect. Change either only when a concrete fact in the fiction demands it. Name one likely consequence before the roll. On a 7–9, use that named consequence; do not invent a second twist just because the dice landed in the mixed band. If you cannot name a meaningful consequence, do not roll.

Risk

Risk	What failure can cost
Low	A limited consequence: delay, noise, suspicion, lost position, minor expenditure, brief exposure, or Strained Harm when a minor physical danger is actually present. Low Risk should not normally cause Wounded or Broken Harm.
Serious	A major consequence that materially changes the scene: Wounded Harm, loss of important equipment, separation, arrest or exposure, serious tactical disadvantage, a major alarm, or a dangerous system failure.
Deadly	A severe or potentially irreversible consequence: Broken Harm, death where clearly established, catastrophic machinery or Fortera failure, destruction of a critical objective, or capture in circumstances where the stakes are immediately extreme.

Risk Examples

- Low: picking a simple lock before a patrol returns; climbing a sound ladder in bad weather; questioning a nervous clerk when the likely cost is suspicion or delay.
- Serious: leaping between roofs; repairing a live pressure system; crossing a room while someone is shooting; lying to an official who can arrest you.
- Deadly: crossing open ground under prepared musket fire; entering a collapsing lift chamber; handling a catastrophic Fortera failure at immediate personal range.

How the GM Sets Risk

Risk measures the severity of the credible consequence if the action goes wrong. It does not measure how difficult the task is. Ask what can happen now, from this position, with these tools and dangers. Use the most important immediate consequence that is actually established in the fiction, not the worst chain of events you can imagine. Then use the Fast Risk Escalation below.

Fast Risk Escalation

1. First ask whether a roll is needed. If failure would not meaningfully change anything, do not roll.
2. If a roll is needed, start at Low Risk. Low covers delay, noise, suspicion, minor expenditure, temporary bad position, brief exposure, or at most Strained Harm from a minor hazard.
3. Escalate to Serious only when active opposition or another established hazard creates a credible major consequence, such as Wounded Harm, loss of important equipment, separation, arrest or serious exposure, major tactical disadvantage, or significant escalation.
4. Escalate to Deadly only when severe or potentially irreversible danger is already clearly present, such as Broken Harm, death, catastrophic system failure, or destruction of a critical objective. If you are genuinely between two Risk levels, use the lower one unless a concrete danger clearly establishes the higher level.

Risk Is Not Difficulty

A difficult action can still be Low Risk if failure is inconvenient rather than dangerous. A simple action can be Deadly Risk if it must be performed under lethal conditions. If a method cannot accomplish the goal, reduce Effect or give No Effect. If the task needs several successful steps, use a Progress Clock. Do not raise Risk merely because an

obstacle is skilled, complicated, or hard to understand unless that difficulty also makes failure more dangerous.

Position Can Change Risk

Cover, preparation, leverage, surprise, distance, safety equipment, allies, and a better route can lower Risk when they genuinely remove or reduce the danger before the roll. They do not lower Risk automatically. A protection rule that only reduces Harm after a 7-9 may leave the original Risk unchanged.

Example: You rise from behind a stone wall to shoot an exposed guard. If the guard can only answer on their own Activation, the danger of your shot comes from what can happen during your action: your exact firing position may be revealed, your Cover may be compromised, or you may be left exposed. If you are firing through a protected loophole and the guard cannot effectively threaten you during the action, the Risk may be Low. If you step into open ground against several prepared muskets, the Risk is Deadly. An immediate return shot occurs only through a valid Reaction, Readied Action, or specific rule.

Do Not Escalate Past the Established Danger

A 7-9 consequence should fit the stated Risk. A 6- may realise the danger more fully or leave the character in a worse situation, but it should not turn a Low-Risk action into sudden death unless the fiction changed and that new danger was already apparent. If circumstances become more dangerous after a roll, state the new Risk before the next meaningful action.

Effect

Effect	What success accomplishes
Limited	The action helps but does not fully achieve the objective.
Standard	The action achieves what would normally be expected.
Great	The action achieves substantially more than normal.
No Effect	The attempted action cannot meaningfully accomplish the objective without first changing the situation.

Start at Standard Effect. Move to Limited, Great, or No Effect only when something clear in the fiction changes what success can accomplish.

Effect Examples

- Limited: you make progress but do not finish the job. You force the door partly open, identify one useful clue, or drive an opponent back without fully controlling the position.
- Standard: you achieve the normal goal. The door opens, the clue answers the question, the repair restores function, or the attack causes the expected Harm.
- Great: you achieve more than expected. You open and secure the door, reveal extra information, restore the system with an additional advantage, or decisively change the position.
- No Effect: the method cannot achieve the goal yet. A pocket knife cannot cut through an armoured bulkhead. Change the situation, tool, scale, or approach first.

Before the Dice: Say the Stakes Out Loud

For speed, begin with Low Risk and Standard Effect. Graduate Risk to Serious or Deadly only when established danger warrants it; move Effect away from Standard only when

the fiction clearly changes what success can accomplish. For a first-time table, use this sentence before every important roll: “You are trying to [GOAL]. Use [SKILL + MODIFIER]. This is [RISK] Risk and [EFFECT] Effect. If things go badly, [LIKELY CONSEQUENCE].”

Example: “You are trying to shut the pressure valve. Use Engineering +1. Serious Risk, Standard Effect. If things go badly, the line ruptures beside you.” The player now knows what they are choosing before touching the dice. **Fast form:** “Engineering +1. If it goes wrong, the line ruptures beside you.” If the defaults are understood, omit the labels.

Worked Risk and Effect Calls

These are baseline calls, not new exceptions. Reuse them when the fiction is materially similar; change the call only when the situation changes.

Situation	Call	Why
Pick a simple lock before a patrol returns	Low / Standard	Failure costs time, noise, or suspicion; ordinary success opens the lock.
Leap between rain-slick roofs	Serious / Standard	A failed leap can create a major physical consequence; success clears the gap.
Fire from a protected loophole at an exposed guard who cannot immediately threaten you	Low / Standard	The likely cost is revealing or compromising the firing position, not a free return shot.
Step into open ground against several prepared muskets	Deadly / Standard	Severe bodily danger is already established by the position.
Repair a live pressure line	Serious / Standard	Failure can Wound or cause a dangerous system failure.
Use a pocket knife to cut an armoured bulkhead	No Effect	The method cannot achieve the goal. Change the tool, scale, or approach before rolling.
Attempt specialist surgery without credible specialist know-how or support	No Effect	Familiarity does not grant specialist permission. Gain instruction, reference, equipment, or expert help first.
Question a nervous clerk when the real cost is suspicion or delay	Low / Standard	Social difficulty alone does not create Serious Risk.
Contain a catastrophic Fortera failure at immediate range	Deadly / Standard	Catastrophic field danger is already present; change Effect only if scale or method changes.
Solve a difficult multi-step research problem in a safe archive	Low / Standard; use a Clock if needed	Difficulty is not Risk. Use a Progress Clock when several meaningful steps are required.
Shoot through smoke at a moving target from a protected position	Low / Limited	The method is safe enough to keep Risk Low, but smoke and movement reduce what a successful shot can reliably accomplish.
Drive a blade into a Pinned target you control at Contact	Low / Great	The target is already physically controlled and exposed; the position makes a successful strike substantially more decisive than normal.
Pick a lock with improvised tools before a patrol returns	Low / Limited	The danger is still time, noise, or suspicion, but poor tools reduce what one successful attempt can accomplish.

On a 7-9: Effect and Consequence Are Separate

Effect is what the acting character accomplishes. Consequence is the cost, danger, or worsening situation that comes with the mixed success. On a 7-9, apply both. Do not count the target suffering the successful Effect as the attacker's consequence, and do not use the consequence to erase the success.

Example: From stone Cover, Isabel fires at an exposed guard at Serious Risk and Standard Effect. She rolls 8. Her Standard Effect Wounds the guard. The consequence is that her muzzle flash and firing angle reveal the exact slit, giving the opposition a clean line to cover on their next Activation. Her success stands; the consequence changes the tactical situation without granting a free enemy attack.

Effect Changes and Stacking

Apply every relevant Effect increase and reduction before the roll. Opposing steps cancel one another. Great is the highest Effect; below Limited is No Effect. A rule that ignores a source of protection removes that source rather than adding another Effect step.

Example: a Standard firearm attack beyond Normal Range is reduced to Limited. If a relevant rule then grants +1 Effect, the attack returns to Standard. Protection from armour, Guard, or cover is resolved after the roll and does not change this Effect calculation.

Scenes, Combats, and Refresh

Some Techniques have limited uses. The rules use three timing terms.

Once per Combat

The ability may be used once during one armed confrontation. It refreshes when active fighting has clearly ended. A brief pause, repositioning inside the same battlefield, or immediate pursuit of the same opposition does not start a new combat.

Once per Scene

The ability may be used once during one continuous dramatic situation focused on the same immediate objective, interaction, location, or problem. A negotiation becoming a fight can still be the same Scene.

Once per Session

The ability may be used once during the entire play session. It refreshes at the start of the next session.

Progress Clocks

Use a Progress Clock when one goal needs several meaningful actions but exact turn-by-turn detail would add little. Use 4 segments for a straightforward but pressured objective, 6 for a contested objective, 8 for a heavily defended, difficult, or multi-stage objective, and 10+ for a major operational or long-running objective. If the goal is genuinely unopposed and time or uncertainty do not matter, do not create a Clock.

On a successful action, mark progress by Effect: Limited 1 segment, Standard 2, Great 3. Consequences change the situation, consume time or resources, create danger, or advance an opposing pressure; they do not automatically erase earned progress unless the fiction specifically reverses it.

Clocks can represent chases, investigations, infiltration, repairs, negotiations, rituals, pursuits, escapes, engineering work, or any other extended objective. If a single action would realistically settle the matter, do not create a Clock.

Teamwork and Setup

Any character may use their Action to create an immediate advantage for an ally. Describe how you are helping and roll only when that help is itself uncertain and consequential. On a successful Setup, choose one: the ally gains +1 Effect on their next directly supported action, or the Risk of that action is reduced by one step. The supported action must occur before the end of the ally's next Activation or before the immediate opportunity passes.

Multiple Setup actions do not stack on the same action. If the help is automatic and requires no meaningful roll, simply establish the improved fictional position and let Risk and Effect reflect it normally.

NEW SCENE? Ask whether the previous immediate situation has genuinely ended. A substantial change of location, objective, opposition, time, or dramatic focus usually starts a new Scene. Do not split continuous action merely to refresh abilities.

CHAPTER 3 - CHARACTERS

Start with a ready-made Calling or create your own, then make it yours. Callings make the first choices easy. They do not restrict later advancement, equipment, Strengths, Techniques, or Fortera.

Character Creation

A character is built from a Calling, Skills, Strengths, Techniques, Background, Bond, and Burden. A Calling may be one of the ready-made options or one you create yourself. It is not a class or profession. It describes the kind of problems the character is practiced at handling under pressure.

Choose	Starting budget
Calling	1 ready-made or custom Calling.
Calling Skills	Ready-made: 2 fixed Skills plus 2 chosen from that Calling's flexible list. Custom: choose 4 Calling Skills from the full Skill list. In either case, choose 1 of the four at Expert (+2); the other 3 begin Trained (+1).
Chosen Skills	2 additional Skills chosen by the player; both begin Trained (+1).
Strengths	2 narrow areas of mastery.
Techniques	2 Techniques. Fortera Practice uses one Technique choice.
Background	Where the character came from or what shaped their earlier life.
Bond	A person, group, place, duty, or relationship the character is tied to.
Burden	A pressure, obligation, weakness, debt, fear, or unresolved problem.

Background, Bond, and Burden are narrative anchors, not bonus sources. They grant no automatic dice or modifiers. When one materially changes what is possible, dangerous, or effective, use the normal permission, Risk, and Effect rules. A Bond or Burden that drives meaningful play may also support a Growth Token award when the campaign's advancement procedure calls for one.

Fast Start: Make a Character in Five Minutes

If this is your first character, do not begin by reading every Technique. Use the Initial Build printed under any ready-made Calling below and copy its starting choices, write a Background, Bond, and Burden, choose a name, and start playing. You can change any non-fixed choice later before play begins.

Building from scratch is also simple:

1. Choose a ready-made Calling, or create your own using Make Your Own Calling. A ready-made Calling gives two fixed Skills and a list from which you choose two more.
2. Choose one of those four Calling Skills to be Expert (+2). The other three are Trained (+1).
3. Choose two additional Skills from the full Skill list. Both are Trained (+1).
4. Choose two Strengths and two Techniques from any group. Nothing is locked to your Calling.

5. Write a Background, Bond, and Burden. These establish identity and fictional permissions, not numerical bonuses.
6. Choose starting equipment that fits the Calling direction and campaign. If unsure, copy an Initial Build.

First-time rule: If a choice makes you stop and search the book for ten minutes, copy the nearest Initial Build and play. If you already know the kind of character you want, Make Your Own Calling is equally legal. Initial Builds are complete characters, not simplified tutorial characters.

Starting Skill Ratings

Every Skill not selected during character creation begins Familiar (+○). A starting character therefore has one Expert Skill, five Trained Skills, and all remaining Skills at Familiar unless a Technique explicitly changes that. Familiar is baseline exposure. If a specialised procedure depends on knowledge the character lacks, the current method has No Effect until the character gains a credible route to perform it; see Familiarity and No Effect in Chapter 2.

Skill List

Skill	Covers
Athletics	Strength, climbing, swimming, forcing movement, grappling, and other exertion.
Mobility	Balance, acrobatics, controlled falls, evasive movement, and difficult physical positioning.
Close Combat	Melee weapons, close fighting, weapon control, and trained combat manoeuvres.
Firearms	Aiming, firing, handling, and using personal firearms under pressure.
Observation	Noticing immediate details, watching movement, detecting obvious threats, and keeping lookout.
Fieldcraft	Tracking, scouting, survival, camouflage, terrain, and field living.
Stealth	Moving unseen, concealment, quiet entry, and avoiding observation.
Command	Orders, morale, coordination, discipline, and directing people under pressure.
Influence	Persuasion, negotiation, mediation, etiquette, and open social pressure.
Deception	Lies, disguise, cover identities, misdirection, and concealed intent.
Investigation	Searching, evidence, reconstruction, inconsistencies, and physical inquiry.
Scholarship	Formal knowledge, history, languages, research, theory, and learned interpretation.
Engineering	Machinery, repairs, mechanisms, pressure systems, and Éterlumin equipment.
Medicine	Diagnosis, stabilisation, treatment, surgery, and recovery.
Navigation	Charts, route-finding, position, weather reading, and overland or maritime navigation.
Seamanship	Rigging, deck work, ship handling, small craft, and ordinary vessel hazards.

Skill	Covers
Fortera	Deliberate Fortera analysis and Workings. Performing Workings still requires Fortera Practice.

Strengths and the Specialist Die

A Strength is narrow mastery. When a Strength directly applies, roll:

3d6, keep the highest two, then add Capability

Only one Specialist Die can apply to a roll, even if several Strengths overlap. Strengths do not add another numerical modifier.

STRENGTH TEST A Strength applies only when its named mastery is decisive to how the character is solving the problem. It does not apply merely because the associated Skill is being rolled. Before adding the Specialist Die, identify the concrete part of the approach that makes the mastery central. If removing the Strength from the description would not materially change the approach, roll normally. A Strength describes a condition inside a Skill; if it would apply to most rolls with that Skill, it is too broad. When unclear, the GM decides before the roll.

How the Specialist Die Works

Normally you roll 2d6. When a relevant Strength directly applies, roll 3d6 instead, discard the lowest die, add the two highest dice together, then add Capability. Example: you roll 2, 4, and 6. Discard the 2. The dice total is 10; then add the Skill modifier.

You never gain two extra dice because two Strengths overlap. At most one Specialist Die applies to a roll.

THE D6 LAYER Capability remains the stable +0 to +3 modifier. Narrow mastery adds a die instead of another +1 or +2 stack.

Current Strength Catalogue

Strength	Applies when...
Marksman	Called shots, target discrimination, narrow openings, or an identified firearm weak point is decisive. Ordinary shots do not qualify.
Veteran Fighter	Holding a chokepoint, protecting an ally, or controlling several close threats is decisive. Ordinary one-on-one attacks do not qualify.
Duelist	In one-on-one melee, measure, feints, weapon control, or a duelling opening is decisive.
Skirmisher	Crossing threatened ground, disengaging, pursuit through difficult terrain, or flanking movement is decisive.
Commander	Synchronising 3+ people, restoring a disrupted group, or making orders work through noise or panic is decisive.
Sailor	Dangerous rigging, heavy weather, confined-water handling, or emergency seamanship is decisive.
Navigator	Dead reckoning, incomplete or conflicting observations, adverse weather or current, or altered terrain is decisive.
Engineer	Interacting faults, live repair, or modifying machinery beyond intended use under constraints is decisive.
Gunsmith	Non-obvious faults, precision repair or tuning, or firearm modification beyond routine maintenance is decisive.

Strength	Applies when...
Physician	Stabilising Wounded, Broken, or Unstable patients, surgery, or ambiguous diagnosis is decisive.
Investigator	Reconstructing from multiple traces, testing explanations, or separating planted or misleading evidence is decisive.
Infiltrator	Active security, watched-space movement, or restricted access without raising an alarm is decisive.
Operator	A cover identity under scrutiny, multi-part operational deception, or clandestine procedure while observed is decisive.
Diplomat	Formal protocol, 3+ competing parties, or institutional obligations and leverage are decisive.
Scholar	Choose one field. Specialist interpretation or source work inside that field is decisive; general knowledge does not qualify.
Resonance Reader	Overlapping patterns, subtle residue, weak Source links, or ambiguous resonance are decisive. Does not grant Workings.

MAKE YOUR OWN CALLING

The ready-made Callings are examples, not the only legal choices. If none fits how you want to operate under pressure, create your own. A custom Calling uses the same starting budget and grants no extra benefit.

1. Name the Calling. Describe the kind of problems this character is practiced at handling under pressure.
2. Choose four Calling Skills from the full Skill list. The four should form a coherent approach rather than four unrelated best picks.
3. Choose one of those four Skills to be Expert (+2). The other three are Trained (+1).
4. Choose two additional Skills from the full Skill list. Both are Trained (+1).
5. Choose two Strengths and two Techniques from any group, then write Background, Bond, Burden, and starting equipment normally.

Custom Callings are not new classes. Their name and Skill mix describe a starting focus only. They do not create exclusive Techniques, equipment, Fortera access, advancement paths, or special permissions.

Example: SHIPMASTER. Calling Skills: Command, Seamanship, Navigation, Observation. Choose one Expert and the other three Trained, then choose two additional Trained Skills normally. The Calling tells the table what the character is practiced at, not what they are allowed to become.

READY-MADE CALLINGS

Pick the Calling that sounds closest to how you want to operate under pressure. Then use its Initial Build or change the choices. The Initial Build is a complete legal starting character, not a class package or optimisation path.

SOLDIER

Play a Soldier if you want weapons, discipline, and pressure to be part of your answer - without giving up investigation, command, engineering, or Fortera.

Calling Focus

Fixed Skills: Close Combat and Firearms.

Choose two more Calling Skills: Choose two: Athletics, Fieldcraft, Observation, Command, Mobility.

Could represent: Musketeer, marine, mercenary, guard, duelist, veteran sailor, military Fortera trainee.

Starting Build: FORTERA MUSKETEER

Background example: Military resonance trainee, artillery assistant, or veteran exposed to Fortera work.

Skills: Firearms Expert (+2). Close Combat, Observation, Fieldcraft, Fortera, and Engineering Trained (+1). All other Skills Familiar (+0).

Strengths: Marksman; Resonance Reader.

Techniques: Fortera Practice; Deadeye.

Fortera Workings: Sense; Redirect.

Starting gear: Musket or carbine, sidearm or sabre, Fortera apparatus, field gear.

Rules You Need for This Build

- **Marksman (Strength):** Use the Specialist Die for called shots, target discrimination, narrow openings, or an identified weak point; not ordinary shots.
- **Resonance Reader (Strength):** Use the Specialist Die for overlapping patterns, subtle residue, weak Source links, or ambiguous resonance. Obvious detection does not qualify. This is separate from biological Responsiveness.
- **Fortera Practice (Technique):** Gain permission to deliberately perform Workings, safe Capacity 2, and two known Workings. Fortera uses your existing Fortera Skill rating.
- **Deadeye (Technique):** Spend your Move to Aim before a firearm attack. On success, ignore Rigid Armour if you can see or identify an exposed weak point. Complete cover cannot be bypassed.
- **Sense (Fortera Working):** Detect Fortera, Sources, Éterlumin, resonance, and disturbances.
- **Redirect (Fortera Working):** Change an existing path of force, pressure, vibration, linked flow, or resonance.

Fortera roll reminder: choose the Working, agree on Risk, Effect, and required Capacity, then roll 2d6 + Fortera. If the intended scale exceeds safe Capacity, the Overdraw price is known before the roll.

What You Do in Play

At distance, shoot like a trained soldier. Against rigid armour, spend your Move to Aim with Deadeye when you can identify a weak point. When the real danger is resonance, pressure, or a Fortera failure, use Sense or Redirect instead of treating every problem as a target.

Example in Play

A breastplated guard blocks a corridor while an unstable Fortera conduit spits arcs across the deck. The musketeer could Aim and fire, but the conduit is about to rupture beside two allies. The player uses Sense first. On a 10+, the GM confirms where the field is feeding back. On the next Activation, Redirect bleeds the pattern into a grounded fitting. The same character could have solved the situation differently with the musket.

Make It Yours

Swap any chosen Skill, Strength, Technique, Working, or item while preserving the normal starting budget. Nothing printed on this Calling is exclusive to it.

OFFICER

Play an Officer if you want to lead, coordinate, negotiate authority, and make other people more effective.

Calling Focus

Fixed Skills: Command and Influence.

Choose two more Calling Skills: Choose two: Observation, Firearms, Investigation, Scholarship, Fieldcraft.

Could represent: Army or naval officer, expedition leader, ship captain, quartermaster, chaplain, missionary leader.

Starting Build: EXPEDITION CHAPLAIN

Background example:

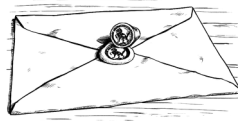
Solarian chaplain, missionary leader, or ordained scholar attached to an expedition.

Skills: Command Expert (+2). Influence, Observation, Scholarship, Medicine, and Fieldcraft Trained (+1). All other Skills Familiar (+0). Strengths: Commander; Scholar (Solarian doctrine and church history).

Techniques: Rally; Terms of the Deal.

Fortera Workings: None.

Starting gear: Pistol or sword, field-command kit, clerical texts, travel gear.



Rules You Need for This Build

- Commander (Strength): Use the Specialist Die to synchronise 3+ people, restore a disrupted group, or make orders work through noise or panic; not routine one-person orders.
- Scholar (Solarian doctrine and church history): Use the Specialist Die for specialist interpretation or source work inside this field; not general knowledge.

- **Rally (Technique):** Use your Action to restore order to an ally or small group suffering fear, confusion, or loss of cohesion. Roll Command only when uncertainty matters.
- **Terms of the Deal (Technique):** Once per Scene, after establishing what a counterpart genuinely needs, fears, or wants hidden, reduce Risk by one step on your next Influence action with them if you can credibly offer, protect, expose, or threaten something relevant. Does not stack with Setup.

What You Do in Play

Keep frightened people functioning, interpret institutions and doctrine, and negotiate from real authority or leverage. Being a priest comes from Background. There is no divine spell list.

Example in Play

Dockworkers panic when a Source event starts inside a warehouse. The chaplain uses Rally to stop the crowd from crushing through the only exit. Later, a harbour official refuses access to sealed records. After learning that the official fears blame, the chaplain offers a credible way to keep them out of the report. Terms of the Deal lowers the Risk of the next Influence action because the leverage is real.

Make It Yours

Swap any chosen Skill, Strength, Technique, Working, or item while preserving the normal starting budget. Nothing printed on this Calling is exclusive to it.

DIPLOMAT

Play a Diplomat if you want institutions, negotiation, reputation, leverage, and access to shape how problems are solved.

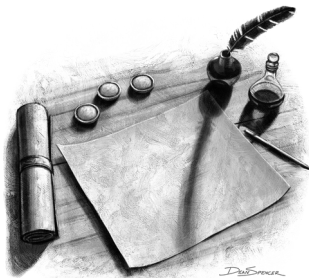
Calling Focus

Fixed Skills: Influence and Observation.

Choose two more Calling Skills: Choose two: Deception, Command, Scholarship, Investigation, Navigation.

Could represent: Embassy secretary, court envoy, treaty negotiator, merchant factor, noble intermediary, church representative, or colonial liaison.

Starting Build: TREATY ENVOY



Background example: Career envoy attached to a treaty mission, embassy, trading company, church delegation, or colonial administration.

Skills: Influence Expert (+2). Command, Observation, Scholarship, Deception, and Investigation Trained (+1). All other Skills Familiar (+0).

Strengths: Diplomat; Scholar (treaty law and diplomatic history).

Techniques: Terms of the Deal; Network.

Fortera Workings: None.

Starting gear: Formal or travelling clothes appropriate to status, papers and seals, pistol or sword, writing case, ordinary travel gear.

Rules You Need for This Build

Diplomat (Strength): Use the Specialist Die when formal protocol, 3+ competing parties, or institutional obligations and leverage are decisive; not routine persuasion.

Scholar (treaty law and diplomatic history): Use the Specialist Die for specialist interpretation or source work inside this field; not general knowledge.

Terms of the Deal (Technique): Once per Scene, after establishing what a counterpart genuinely needs, fears, or wants hidden, reduce Risk by one step on your next Influence action with them if you can credibly offer, protect, expose, or threaten something relevant. This does not stack with Setup.

Network (Technique): Once per Session, establish a plausible minor contact in one chosen sphere. The contact has their own interests and is not automatically loyal.

What You Do in Play

Find the person who can actually say yes, learn what the negotiation is really about, and convert relationships into access. Your battlefield is a council room, dock office, embassy, church house, treaty table, or company board.

Example in Play

A harbour authority refuses to release an impounded launch. The diplomat first establishes that the official is less concerned with the law than with being blamed if the vessel disappears again. Terms of the Deal lowers the Risk of the next Influence action because the diplomat offers written custody under their own name. Later, Network establishes a minor customs clerk who can explain which seal is actually required.

Make It Yours

Swap any chosen Skill, Strength, Technique, Working, or item while preserving the normal starting budget. Nothing printed on this Calling is exclusive to it.

SCOUT

Play a Scout if you want terrain, observation, navigation, pursuit, and field knowledge to shape the group's choices.

Calling Focus

Fixed Skills: Fieldcraft and Observation.

Choose two more Calling Skills: Choose two: Firearms, Mobility, Navigation, Investigation, Athletics, Stealth.

Could represent: Guide, naturalist, surveyor, hunter, explorer, navigator, field scientist.

Starting Build: EXPEDITION NATURALIST

Background example: Royal Academy natural philosopher, surveyor, botanist, geologist, or expedition scientist.

Skills: Observation Expert (+2). Fieldcraft, Investigation, Navigation, Scholarship, and Medicine Trained (+1). All other Skills Familiar (+0).

Strengths: Scholar (natural philosophy); Navigator.

Techniques: Wayfinder; Specialist's Eye.

Fortera Workings: None.

Starting gear: Carbine or rifle, knife, navigation or investigation kit, journals and specimen gear.

Rules You Need for This Build

- Scholar (natural philosophy): Use the Specialist Die for specialist interpretation or source work inside this field; not general knowledge.
- Navigator (Strength): Use the Specialist Die for dead reckoning, incomplete or conflicting observations, adverse weather or current, or altered terrain; not routine chart-following.
- Wayfinder (Technique): When you have adequate landmarks, charts, or prior route knowledge and no active obstruction, ordinary navigation succeeds without a roll. Roll when the route itself is uncertain, dangerous, altered, or contested.
- Specialist's Eye (Technique): When inspecting an object directly related to a Strength, receive one immediately obvious professional fact without a roll.

What You Do in Play

Lead the party through terrain, notice meaningful details, and interpret natural or scientific evidence. The rifle is useful, but the build is strongest when observation changes what the group understands.

Example in Play

The expedition reaches a ravine after heavy rain. Because landmarks and charts still match, Wayfinder means no navigation roll is needed. At the bottom, the naturalist examines glassy mineral deposits tied to their scientific Strength. Specialist's Eye establishes that the material was heat-altered rather than naturally weathered. The group now knows the site was changed.

Make It Yours

Swap any chosen Skill, Strength, Technique, Working, or item while preserving the normal starting budget. Nothing printed on this Calling is exclusive to it.

FIELD INVESTIGATOR

Play a Field Investigator if you want physical evidence, witness patterns, terrain, and reconstruction to drive the group's decisions.

Calling Focus

Fixed Skills: Investigation and Observation.

Choose two more Calling Skills: Choose two: Fieldcraft, Scholarship, Influence, Mobility, Medicine, Navigation, Firearms.

Could represent: Field investigator, survey inspector, magistrate's examiner, archaeological investigator, forensic natural philosopher, expedition examiner.

Starting Build: EXPEDITION EXAMINER

Background example: Royal Academy examiner, colonial magistrate's investigator, archaeological surveyor, or independent natural philosopher.

Skills: Investigation Expert (+2). Fieldcraft, Observation, Mobility, Scholarship, and Influence Trained (+1). All other Skills Familiar (+0).

Strengths: Investigator; Scholar (archaeology and material history).

Techniques: Spot the Contradiction; Trail Sense.

Fortera Workings: None.

Starting gear: Investigation kit, carbine or pistol, field notebook, measuring tools, ordinary expedition gear.

Rules You Need for This Build

Investigator (Strength): When reconstructing a physical event from multiple traces, connecting evidence, or separating a misleading trace from a useful one is decisive, use the Specialist Die.

Scholar (archaeology and material history): Use the Specialist Die for specialist interpretation or source work inside this field; not general knowledge.

Spot the Contradiction (Technique): When examining testimony, records, or physical evidence, ask what does not fit the current explanation. The GM identifies an observable contradiction, not its cause.

Trail Sense (Technique): When you have time to inspect terrain where physical traces exist, establish whether meaningful passage occurred recently and its broad direction without a roll. Finer details, age, numbers, or identity may still require Fieldcraft or Investigation.

What You Do in Play

Reconstruct what happened, connect physical evidence to people and places, and turn terrain into information. This build can investigate a murder, a ruined laboratory, a battlefield, a vanished expedition, or an anomalous trail without needing to be a spy.

Example in Play

The party finds an abandoned cart beside a jungle road. Trail Sense establishes that several people left the road on foot and moved east. The investigator then examines the axle and uses Spot the Contradiction. The GM points out that the wheel broke after the cart stopped, not while it was moving. The group now knows the apparent accident was staged.

Make It Yours

Swap any chosen Skill, Strength, Technique, Working, or item while preserving the normal starting budget. Nothing printed on this Calling is exclusive to it.

OPERATIVE

Play an Operative if you want infiltration, deception, investigation, covert access, and concealed violence to be available.

Calling Focus

Fixed Skills: Deception and Stealth.

Choose two more Calling Skills: Choose two: Investigation, Observation, Influence, Firearms, Close Combat, Scholarship.

Could represent: Spy, thief, intelligence agent, private investigator, church agent, smuggler, infiltrator.

Starting Build: INTELLIGENCE INVESTIGATOR



Background example: Intelligence service officer, magistrate's agent, private investigator, church investigator, or political courier.

Skills: Investigation Expert (+2). Deception, Stealth, Observation, Firearms, and Influence Trained (+1). All other Skills Familiar (+0).

Strengths: Investigator; Infiltrator.

Techniques: Prepared Identity; Read the Room.

Fortera Workings: None.

Starting gear: Pistol, disguise or investigation kit, cover papers, ordinary civilian gear.

Rules You Need for This Build

- **Investigator (Strength):** When reconstructing a physical event from multiple traces, connecting evidence, or separating a misleading trace from a useful one is decisive, use the Specialist Die.
- **Infiltrator (Strength):** Use the Specialist Die against active security, while crossing watched space, or gaining restricted access without raising an alarm.
- **Prepared Identity (Technique):** With reasonable preparation, establish a credible false identity with ordinary supporting details and documentation.
- **Read the Room (Technique):** Once per Scene after brief observation, ask who has most influence, who is most afraid, who watches whom, who does not belong, or what subject is being avoided.

What You Do in Play

Get into places you should not be, work out who matters, and find contradictions before reaching for violence. In combat you are competent; your larger advantage is deciding what the conflict is actually about.

Example in Play

At a governor's reception the operative enters as a shipping clerk using Prepared Identity. Read the Room reveals that the quiet naval secretary, not the loud councillor, controls access to the governor. The player changes approach and targets the secretary.

The Technique did not add a bonus. It changed the information available and therefore the next decision.

Make It Yours

Swap any chosen Skill, Strength, Technique, Working, or item while preserving the normal starting budget. Nothing printed on this Calling is exclusive to it.

ENGINEER

Play an Engineer if you want machines, pressure systems, weapons, structures, Éterlumin equipment, and technical failure to be playable problems.

Calling Focus

Fixed Skills: Engineering and Investigation.

Choose two more Calling Skills: Choose two: Observation, Scholarship, Fortera, Firearms, Fieldcraft, Close Combat.

Could represent: Shipwright, gunsmith, airship engineer, chemist, inventor, Éterlumin specialist, Fortera researcher.

Starting Build: BOARDING ENGINEER

Background example: Naval engineer, dockyard specialist, shipwright, gunsmith, or airship systems technician.

Skills: Engineering Expert (+2). Investigation, Close Combat, Firearms, Athletics, and Fieldcraft Trained (+1). All other Skills Familiar (+0).

Strengths: Engineer; Veteran Fighter.

Techniques: Emergency Isolation; Breacher.

Fortera Workings: None.

Starting gear: Engineer kit, carbine or boarding gun, cutlass or tool-weapon, shipboard gear.

Rules You Need for This Build

- **Engineer (Strength):** Use the Specialist Die for interacting faults, live repair, or machinery modified beyond intended use under constraints; not routine maintenance.
- **Veteran Fighter (Strength):** When controlling space in a confused melee, protecting another combatant, holding position, or managing several close threats is decisive, use the Specialist Die.
- **Emergency Isolation (Technique):** Spend your Reaction, with physical access to controls, to prevent a machinery failure from immediately spreading to one connected system.
- **Breacher (Technique):** Increase Effect by one step when using an appropriate weapon, charge, or tool specifically to break a door, hatch, light barrier, or similar obstacle.

What You Do in Play

Fix systems while everyone else is fighting, then fight when the system itself is not the problem. Emergency Isolation prevents cascades; Breacher makes doors and light barriers tactical objectives.

Example in Play

During boarding, a shot ruptures a pressure line beside the lift controls. The engineer spends a Reaction on Emergency Isolation and shuts the damaged branch away from the control system. On the next Activation the enemy seals a light hatch. The engineer uses a breaching tool with +1 Effect because Breacher directly applies.

Make It Yours

Swap any chosen Skill, Strength, Technique, Working, or item while preserving the normal starting budget. Nothing printed on this Calling is exclusive to it.

PHYSICIAN

Play a Physician if you want injury, diagnosis, biology, care, and keeping people alive under pressure to matter.

Calling Focus

Fixed Skills: Medicine and Observation.

Choose two more Calling Skills: Choose two: Investigation, Influence, Fieldcraft, Fortera, Firearms, Close Combat, Scholarship.

Could represent: Surgeon, anatomist, apothecary, expedition doctor, missionary healer, medical researcher.

Starting Build: FIELD SURGEON

Background example: Naval surgeon, military doctor, expedition physician, anatomist, or missionary healer.

Skills: Medicine Expert (+2). Observation, Investigation, Firearms, Influence, and Fieldcraft Trained (+1). All other Skills Familiar (+0).

Strengths: Physician; Investigator.

Techniques: Field Stabilisation; Keep Them Moving.

Fortera Workings: None.

Starting gear: Medical kit, pistol or carbine, professional instruments, field gear.

Rules You Need for This Build

- **Physician (Strength):** Use the Specialist Die for emergency stabilisation of Wounded, Broken, or Unstable patients, surgery, or ambiguous diagnosis; not routine care.
- **Investigator (Strength):** When reconstructing a physical event from multiple traces, connecting evidence, or separating a misleading trace from a useful one is decisive, use the Specialist Die.
- **Field Stabilisation (Technique):** Using a Medical Kit, you may attempt emergency stabilisation during active combat or another immediately dangerous scene without first needing extended treatment or a safe position. Use Medicine normally;

difficult conditions still affect Risk and Effect. Stabilisation removes Unstable, not Broken.

- **Keep Them Moving (Technique):** Once per Scene per patient, after a successful Medicine action using a Medical Kit on a Wounded character, that character may ignore one immediate physical limitation caused solely by the wound until the end of their next Activation. Harm remains and further Harm escalates normally.

What You Do in Play

Recognise who is about to die, stabilise them under pressure, and keep wounded allies functional long enough to escape or finish the objective. You can still fight and investigate wounds or disease.

Example in Play

An ally is Broken and Unstable behind a wagon while shots continue overhead. The surgeon uses Field Stabilisation with a Medical Kit despite the active danger. Success removes Unstable, but the ally remains Broken. Later, Keep Them Moving lets a treated Wounded scout ignore one immediate physical limitation through their next Activation. The wound is still there.

Make It Yours

Swap any chosen Skill, Strength, Technique, Working, or item while preserving the normal starting budget. Nothing printed on this Calling is exclusive to it.

TECHNIQUES

Techniques are permissions, not class powers. Any character may choose any Technique if the fiction supports it. They are grouped below by the problem they solve so a player can find what they want without reading the whole catalogue.

How to choose a Technique

- Want to shoot, reload, breach, or fight with weapons? Read Weapon and Firearm Techniques.
- Want to hold a doorway, parry, control space, or survive several melee attackers? Read Melee Defence and Control.
- Want to reposition, flank, withdraw, or cross difficult ground? Read Mobility and Position.
- Want to lead allies or formations? Read Command and Teamwork.
- Want to repair machinery or keep systems running? Read Engineering and Technical.
- Want to treat injuries? Read Medicine and Care.
- Want to find clues or interpret evidence? Read Investigation and Analysis.
- Want to negotiate, infiltrate, or operate under a false identity? Read Social and Infiltration.
- Want to navigate, track, or work in the field? Read Fieldcraft and Exploration.
- Want general toughness or preparedness? Read General Techniques.
- Want deliberate Fortera manipulation? Read Fortera Techniques.

Weapon and Firearm Techniques



Use these when you want weapons to behave differently in your hands, not simply to gain a larger attack bonus.

Technique	Rule
Quick Draw	Once during your Activation, draw or ready a one-handed weapon without spending your Action.
Deadeye	Spend your Move to Aim before a firearm attack. On success, ignore Rigid Armour if you can see or identify an exposed weak point. Complete cover cannot be bypassed.
Bayonet Drill	A bayoneted musket or carbine functions as a proper Reach melee weapon. Switching between firearm and bayonet use costs no Action.
Two-Pistol Drill	Once per Combat, after firing one Loaded pistol with your Action, immediately fire a second Loaded pistol you already hold or have prepared. Resolve separately.

Technique	Rule
Rapid Assault	Once per Combat, after a successful attack, immediately make one additional attack against a different nearby target with a usable prepared weapon. Cannot trigger itself.
Close-Quarters Shooter	Do not reduce Effect for firing a carbine while Engaged. Pistols remain usable while Engaged unless the enemy physically controls the weapon.
Scatter Specialist	On a 7-9 area attack with a Scatter weapon, choose two targets to suffer normal Effect instead of one. Everyone else in the area suffers Limited Effect.
Breacher	Increase Effect by one step when using an appropriate weapon, charge, or tool specifically to break a door, hatch, light barrier, or similar obstacle.

Bonus Attack Limit

A character can gain no more than one additional attack during an Activation from Techniques or equipment unless a rule explicitly says otherwise. Two-Pistol Drill and Rapid Assault therefore cannot combine to create a third attack.

Melee Defence and Control

Use these to hold space and manage attackers. They do not protect you from a distant firearm unless a rule explicitly says so.

Technique	Rule
Guarded Stance	With a Defensive melee weapon, spend your Move to hold ground. Before your next Activation, the first Guard you use does not consume your Reaction. Voluntary movement ends the stance. Guarded Stance gives no protection against ranged attacks.
Hold the Line	Requires Guarded Stance. When an enemy tries to enter, leave, or pass through one of your threatened spaces, you may spend a defensive Reaction to stop them in the first threatened space. They may use an Action and a Combat Manoeuvre to force through. Fighting Withdrawal does not bypass Hold the Line.
Against Many	Requires Guarded Stance. Gain one additional Reaction each round, usable only for Guard, Turn, or Hold the Line against an enemy in a space you threaten. It cannot make a Reaction Strike.
Master Guard	Requires Guarded Stance. Once per round, change Facing without ending the stance, including when an enemy moves and before their attack resolves.
Riposte	When your Guard Reaction reduces bodily Harm or reduces a Combat Manoeuvre's Effect, force that attacker to withdraw one space or remain Engaged. If they remain Engaged, your next melee attack against them before the end of your next Activation gains +1 Effect. No extra attack is granted.
Press the Opening	After Great Effect in melee, immediately change Facing or move one space into the space the opponent abandoned, if plausible. This does not consume your Move.

Mobility and Position

Use these to change how you cross threatened space, terrain, and flanking geometry.

Technique	Rule
Skirmish Step	Once during your Activation, after resolving your Action, you may change Facing once without spending your Reaction.
Fighting Withdrawal	Reduce your movement by 1 space to leave an ordinary threatened space carefully and avoid a Reaction Strike. Fighting Withdrawal does not bypass Hold the Line or another rule that explicitly stops movement.
Slip the Line	You may move through a hostile threatened space when there is physically enough space. It remains dangerous; establish Risk before the roll.
Flanker	Once per Activation, when you move around an Engaged enemy to occupy the space directly opposite an ally who is also Engaging that enemy, the enemy cannot use Turn Reaction against your final step into that flanking space. The normal flank begins only if you end in the exact opposite space.
Sure-Footed	Ordinary difficult terrain does not increase your movement cost. Severe terrain still functions normally.

Command and Teamwork

Use these when your strength comes from coordinating other people rather than acting alone.

Technique	Rule
Protective Order	Spend your Reaction when a nearby ally who can receive your signal is about to suffer a positional consequence. Direct them one space to an immediately available safe space.
Rally	Use your Action to restore order to an ally or small group suffering fear, confusion, or loss of cohesion. Roll Command only when uncertainty matters.
Controlled Volley	When you personally direct a prepared group of shooters, coordinated fire gains +1 Effect against the declared target or occupied area.
Hold Formation	At Battlefield Scale, ignore the first Cohesion loss each round caused purely by movement, pressure, or enemy manoeuvre. Cohesion loss caused directly by enemy fire, assault, artillery, or casualties still applies.
Tactical Reposition	Once per round, use your Action to direct up to three nearby willing allies to change Facing if they can receive your order.

Engineering and Technical

Use these to keep machines, pressure systems, weapons, and Éterlumin equipment functioning under pressure.

Technique	Rule
Field Repair	With proper tools, perform emergency repairs during a scene rather than extended downtime. Restores function, not consumed resources.
Emergency Isolation	Spend your Reaction, with physical access to controls, to prevent a machinery failure from immediately spreading to one connected system.
Improvised Tooling	Attempt plausible technical work without the proper Kit when usable materials are available. Reduced Effect may still apply.

Technique	Rule
Pressure Sense	When operating a pressurised, mechanical, or Éterlumin system, the GM warns you of an obvious dangerous operating state before an irreversible commitment.
Jury-Rig	Restore a Broken machine or system to temporary function for the scene or until heavily stressed.

Medicine and Care

Use these to diagnose, stabilise, and keep injured people functioning. Harm is not erased just because someone receives treatment.

Technique	Rule
Field Stabilisation	Using a Medical Kit, you may attempt emergency stabilisation during active combat or another immediately dangerous scene without first needing extended treatment or a safe position. Use Medicine normally; difficult conditions still affect Risk and Effect. Stabilisation removes Unstable, not Broken.
Combat Medic	Move to an injured adjacent ally and begin treatment as the same Action.
Triage	After a quick examination, identify who is in immediate danger, who can wait, and who needs extraordinary intervention. No roll if observable.
Keep Them Moving	Once per Scene per patient, after a successful Medicine action using a Medical Kit on a Wounded character, that character may ignore one immediate physical limitation caused solely by the wound until the end of their next Activation. Harm remains and further Harm escalates normally.

Investigation and Analysis

Use these to establish useful facts from people, evidence, and professional observation.

Technique	Rule
Read the Room	Once per Scene after brief observation, ask who has most influence, who is most afraid, who watches whom, who does not belong, or what subject is being avoided.
Spot the Contradiction	When examining testimony, records, or physical evidence, ask what does not fit the current explanation. The GM identifies an observable contradiction, not its cause.
Specialist's Eye	When inspecting an object directly related to a Strength, receive one immediately obvious professional fact without a roll.

Social and Infiltration

Use these to gain access, create identities, exploit leverage, and navigate social situations.

Technique	Rule
Leverage	When you possess something a person genuinely needs, fears, or wants hidden, establish it before negotiation. On success, increase Effect by one step.
Prepared Identity	With reasonable preparation, establish a credible false identity with ordinary supporting details and documentation.
Network	Once per Session, establish a plausible minor contact in one chosen sphere. The contact has their own interests and is not automatically loyal.

Technique	Rule
Terms of the Deal	Once per Scene, after establishing what a counterpart genuinely needs, fears, or wants hidden, reduce Risk by one step on your next Influence action with them if you can credibly offer, protect, expose, or threaten something relevant. Does not stack with Setup.
Blend In	With plausible clothes, conduct, and a credible role, ordinary observers accept your presence without a roll until you are directly challenged, closely inspected, or act outside the role.

Fieldcraft and Exploration

Use these for routes, traces, terrain, and expedition work.

Technique	Rule
Wayfinder	When you have adequate landmarks, charts, or prior route knowledge and no active obstruction, ordinary navigation succeeds without a roll. Roll when the route itself is uncertain, dangerous, altered, or contested.
Trail Sense	When you have time to inspect terrain where physical traces exist, establish whether meaningful passage occurred recently and its broad direction without a roll. Finer details, age, numbers, or identity may still require Fieldcraft or Investigation.

General Techniques

These are broad survival and preparedness tools. They are useful to many character concepts.

Technique	Rule
Prepared	Once per Session, establish that you brought one ordinary item you could reasonably have anticipated needing.
Hard to Kill	Once per Combat, when Harm would escalate you from Wounded to Broken, remain Wounded instead. The fiction still reflects the hit. This is exceptional resilience, not a baseline requirement for fighting characters.
Iron Nerves	Ordinary fear, intimidation, and battlefield shock cannot prevent you from acting, though other consequences can still apply.
Fast Hands	Once per Activation, one simple equipment interaction does not consume your Action. Does not reload firearms.

Fortera Techniques

Fortera Practice grants access. The other Techniques define how a practitioner controls scale, risk, and unusual applications.

Technique	Rule
Fortera Practice	Gain permission to deliberately perform Workings, safe Capacity 2, and two known Workings. Fortera uses your existing Fortera Skill rating.
Deep Reserve	Requires Fortera Practice. Increase safe Capacity from 2 to 3.
Controlled Overdraw	Requires Fortera Practice. Reduce one immediate personal Overdraw consequence by one step. Any field consequence that would normally occur is unchanged.

Technique	Rule
Ground the Working	Requires Fortera Practice. Abandon an unstable Working before completion to prevent one step of additional field escalation caused by it. Grounding does not remove the personal Overdraw consequence already incurred by reaching beyond safe Capacity.
Efficient Pattern	Choose one known Working. Within Capacity and controlled conditions, minor environmental complications alone do not force Overdraw.
Resonant Specialist	Choose a Fortera domain. When a known Working directly concerns it, gain the Specialist Die if no other Strength already provides one.
Fine Control	Requires Fortera Practice. When a Working is at least one Capacity below your safe Capacity and the local field is not already unstable, a 7-9 consequence cannot consist only of accidental Fortera disturbance or collateral resonance. Choose another consequence that fits the situation.
Counter-Resonance	Requires Fortera Practice and Read, Tune, or Redirect as a known Working. When you can perceive an active Fortera pattern, use an Action to dampen, distort, interrupt, or stabilise it with a normal Fortera roll. Effect determines how much of the pattern you alter and for how long.
Remote Patterning	Requires Fortera Practice. Through a calibrated apparatus physically connected or resonantly linked to a system, you may perform a known Working through that apparatus without direct hand contact or line of sight. Distance alone does not reduce Effect while the established link remains intact.

Ability design principle: Techniques should grant permission, alter action economy, change position, or change Effect in a narrow circumstance. Avoid permanent bonus stacks and extra damage rolls.

TECHNIQUE SCOPE A Technique that removes a routine roll, such as Blend In or Wayfinder, works only while its stated conditions remain true. It does not bypass active opposition, direct challenge, dangerous uncertainty, or a changed situation. Techniques that grant extra attacks, free Reactions, Harm prevention, or similar tactical exceptions work only as written and should not be broadened by analogy.

Technique groups are navigation only. They are not trees, classes, or prerequisites unless a Technique explicitly says otherwise. A Soldier can learn medicine. A Physician can learn Deadeye. An Engineer can take Rally. An Officer can practice Fortera.

ADVANCEMENT

Characters do not have levels. They earn Growth Tokens during play and spend those tokens directly on the advances they want. Your Calling never limits what you may learn. Unspent Growth Tokens are saved until you spend them.

Advance	Growth Tokens
Raise one Skill: Familiar (+0) -> Trained (+1)	2
Raise one Skill: Trained (+1) -> Expert (+2)	4
New Technique	3
New Strength	4
New Fortera Working	4
Significant Asset	4-6
+1 Fortera Capacity	6
Raise one Skill: Expert (+2) -> Master (+3)	6

Earning Growth Tokens

At the end of every session, resolve Growth in the same order. A character can earn a maximum of 3 Growth Tokens from that session. Do not award extra Growth for kills, high rolls, winning fights, or choosing a particular Calling.

Token	When it is earned	Who receives it
Session Token: +1	The character meaningfully participated in the session.	That character.
Character Token: +1	The character's Background, Bond, or Burden materially changed a decision, consequence, relationship, objective, or problem. Mentioning it without impact is not enough.	That character. Maximum one Character Token per session.
Milestone Token: +1	The group reaches or resolves a major campaign milestone: an important expedition objective, decisive battle, major discovery, faction resolution, completed act, or another lasting campaign change. Success is not required; irreversible failure can also be a milestone.	Every participating character.

End-of-Session Procedure

1. Give 1 Session Token to every character who meaningfully participated.
2. Each player states, in one sentence, whether their Background, Bond, or Burden materially affected play. If yes, that character gains 1 Character Token.
3. Decide whether the session reached or resolved a major campaign milestone. If yes, every participating character gains 1 Milestone Token.
4. Add the tokens to each character's saved total. A character can receive no more than 3 Growth Tokens from one session.
5. Spend Growth only between sessions or during genuine downtime, never in the middle of a Scene or Combat.

What Counts as Material Character Play?

The Background, Bond, or Burden must change what happens. A priestly Background that grants access to a church archive can qualify. A Bond that makes you abandon a safe escape to rescue someone can qualify. A Burden that forces you to confront a debt, duty, fear, or rival can qualify. Simply reminding the table that your character is a priest, has a sibling, or owes money does not qualify by itself.

What Does Not Earn Growth

Do not award Growth for body count, damage dealt, 10+ results, surviving a fight, finding treasure, being the loudest player, or following a preferred solution. Growth rewards participation, character-driven play, and campaign development rather than tactical optimisation.

Spending Growth Tokens

Growth Tokens are not lost if they are not spent. Save them for later. When you buy an advance, briefly explain how the character learned, practised, discovered, acquired, or developed it. Ordinary advances need only a plausible explanation. Master (+3), major Assets, increased Fortera Capacity, and similarly exceptional advances should have clear support in the fiction.

Example: An Ordinary Session

The group spends the evening travelling through jungle ruins and surviving an ambush. Everyone meaningfully participates, so every character gains 1 Session Token. Lucía's Background, Bond, and Burden never materially change the session, and no major objective is resolved. Lucía earns 1 Growth Token.

Example: Character-Driven Play

Mateo earns the normal Session Token. During the escape, his Bond to Captain Ortega makes him stay behind and hold a doorway while the others withdraw. That decision changes the danger and the group's plan, so Mateo also earns the Character Token. He earns 2 Growth Tokens for the session.

Example: Milestone and Purchase

The expedition recovers the missing Receiver records, completing a major campaign objective. Every participating character gains the Session Token and the Milestone Token. Isabel also confronted her Burden during play, so she earns all 3 possible Growth Tokens. She already had 1 saved, giving her 4. Between sessions she spends 3 on Deadeye and keeps 1 for later.

Example: Raising a Skill

Sofia has 2 Growth Tokens saved. She repeatedly helped the expedition physician treat casualties, and the fiction supports the development. Between sessions she spends 2 Growth to raise Medicine from Familiar (+0) to Trained (+1). Her Calling does not matter; any character can buy that advance.

Master is exceptional. Raising a Skill from Expert (+2) to Master (+3) costs 6 Growth Tokens and should represent substantial training, experience, discovery, or another major development in the fiction. Master applies across the whole Skill; a Strength costs less because its Specialist Die applies only when its narrow trigger is decisive. If a Strength would apply to most rolls with that Skill, narrow the Strength rather than treating it as a cheaper substitute for Master.

CHAPTER 4 - EQUIPMENT

Equipment Principle

Equipment changes what a character can plausibly do. Weapons do not use damage dice. Armour does not create Armour Class. Tools normally provide permissions rather than permanent numerical bonuses.

- establish fictional permission
- set range or threatened distance
- change Effect in defined circumstances
- provide protection
- alter action economy
- enable specialised actions
- carry limited supplies

Equipment Access and Cost

The rules do not use a wealth score. Coins, bank notes, wages, debts, cargo, and prices remain real parts of the setting and may be tracked literally when they matter. Do not balance equipment by abstract character level.

Availability determines whether an item can simply be bought: Common items are normally available in an appropriate settlement; Professional items require the relevant trade, supplier, or market; Restricted items require licence, military access, criminal sourcing, patronage, or another credible route; Rare/Prototype items exist only where the fiction establishes them.

If money is not a meaningful obstacle, do not roll to buy ordinary gear. If acquisition is uncertain because of scarcity, legality, secrecy, timing, or price, resolve that obstacle through Influence, Deception, Investigation, a contact, or a Progress Clock.

Load

Characters can comfortably carry 6 Load of adventuring equipment. Normal clothing, papers, a purse, and trivial personal items do not count. Exceeding 6 Load makes the character Encumbered when the fiction makes weight matter.

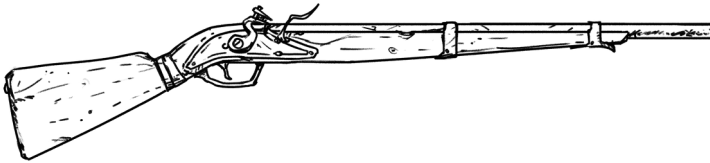
Item size	Load
Tiny or worn item	0
Normal weapon or useful item	1
Long weapon or substantial kit	2
Very bulky equipment	3+

Weapon Tags

Tag	Meaning
Concealable	Can reasonably be hidden beneath ordinary clothing or among personal belongings.

Tag	Meaning
Reach	Threatens the three adjacent front spaces plus the five spaces immediately beyond them, forming the normal widening front arc out to 2 spaces.
Precise	Supports deliberate placement and Techniques such as Deadeye when the fiction permits.
Breaching	Increase Effect by one step against appropriate doors, light barriers, fittings, or structures.
Scatter	May attack the three adjacent front spaces as an area attack.
Quiet	Does not create the unmistakable report of a firearm.
Slow Reload	Reloading requires two Actions rather than one.
Repeating	Does not enter the normal Fired state after every shot; follows its own ammunition mechanism.
One-Handed	Normally usable with one hand.
Two-Handed	Normally requires both hands for effective use.
Cumbersome	May lose Effect in confined spaces, while climbing, or when physically entangled.
Non-Lethal	Especially suitable for incapacitating without deliberately inflicting lethal injury. Violence is never completely safe.

Personal Firearms



Weapon	Normal	Extended	Load	Tags
Pistol	5	15	1	One-Handed
Dueling Pistol	6	18	1	One-Handed, Precise
Boarding Gun / Blunderbuss	3	9	2	Two-Handed, Scatter, Breaching
Carbine	10	30	2	Two-Handed
Musket	12	36	2	Two-Handed, Cumbersome
Early Rifle	24	90	2	Two-Handed, Precise, Slow Reload
Kalthoff Repeater	12	40	2	Two-Handed, Repeating, Restricted

Approximately 1 space = 2 metres. Normal and Extended are tactical encounter bands, not historical effective ranges or theoretical ballistic maxima.

Kalthoff Repeater

The Kalthoff carries approximately 30 prepared shots. Firing does not make it Fired after every shot, but normal Action limits still apply. Replenishing and servicing the mechanism takes time outside ordinary combat. Access is controlled by the fiction.

Melee and Quiet Weapons



Weapon	Range	Load	Tags
Unarmed	Adjacent	0	Non-Lethal
Knife / Dagger	Adjacent	0	Concealable
Club / Cudgel	Adjacent	1	Non-Lethal
Axe / Hatchet	Adjacent	1	Forceful
Sword / Cutlass	Adjacent	1	Defensive
Sabre	Adjacent	1	Defensive
Rapier	Adjacent	1	Defensive, Precise
Heavy Axe	Adjacent	2	Two-Handed, Forceful
Spear	2 spaces	2	Reach
Polearm	2 spaces	2	Reach, Cumbersome
Bayoneted Musket	2 spaces	-	Reach
Thrown Knife	2 / 4	0	Concealable, Quiet
Hunting Bow	8 / 24	2	Two-Handed, Quiet
Crossbow	10 / 30	2	Two-Handed, Quiet, Slow Reload

Armour and Protection

Armour makes injury less likely to become serious when it plausibly covers the hit. Ordinary protection works on mixed-success attacks rather than making the wearer harder to hit: on a 7-9, applicable armour may reduce bodily Harm by one step. A clean 10+ penetrates, bypasses, or overwhelms ordinary protection unless a specific rule says otherwise.



Protection	Load	Use
Protective clothing	0 worn	Minor cuts, abrasion, debris, heat, and environmental exposure. No direct firearm protection.

Buff coat /light armour	1 worn	Against an appropriate blade, fragment, or similar melee threat that rolls 7-9, reduce bodily Harm by one step when the armour covers the hit. No normal protection from direct firearm hits.
Rigid armour /breastplate	2 worn	Against an appropriate melee attack that rolls 7-9, reduce bodily Harm by one step when the armour covers the hit. Against firearms, use the fast Rigid Armour rule in Personal Combat.
Helmet	0 worn	Protects the covered head when the fiction makes it relevant.
Shield	1	Counts as Defensive. When actively interposed against an attack crossing your front arc, it may provide Cover. Ordinary hand shields do not normally protect against direct firearm hits; genuinely heavy or ballistic shields can.

ARMOUR PRINCIPLE Protection reduces bodily Harm on a 7-9 when it plausibly applies. A clean 10+ gets through ordinary protection. Guard, armour, Cover, and Going Low never stack to reduce the same attack more than once. No armour save or penetration roll is added.

Melee Protection

Against an appropriate melee attack that rolls 7-9, armour may reduce bodily Harm by one step when it plausibly covers the struck area. Buff coats protect mainly against cuts, fragments, and similar threats. Rigid Armour protects against a broader range of cuts, thrusts, and impacts. Armour does not reduce Grapples, Shoves, attacks clearly directed at an exposed area, or consequences it cannot physically prevent.

Protection does not stack. On one attack, Guard, worn armour, Cover, or Going Low can reduce bodily Harm at most once. If more than one applies, choose one. This prevents several defensive layers from turning ordinary attacks into automatic No Effect results.

Shields and Facing

A wielded shield protects only where it can actually be interposed. Against an attack crossing the wielder's front arc, a substantial shield may count as Cover and use the normal Cover protection rule. An ordinary hand shield does not normally protect against a direct firearm hit. Only genuinely heavy or ballistic protection capable of resisting shot can count as Cover against a firearm. Side and rear attacks ignore the shield unless the wielder turns in time.

Kits and Supplies

Kit	Load	Use
Medical Kit	1	Stabilisation, surgery, field treatment.
Engineer's Kit	2	Machinery, repairs, Éterlumin systems.
Gunsmith's Kit	1	Firearm maintenance and repair.
Navigator's Kit	1	Navigation, chart work, measurement.
Climbing Kit	1	Ropes, hooks, climbing equipment.
Locksmith's Tools	0	Locks and delicate mechanisms.
Disguise Kit	1	Appearance and identity work.

Kit	Load	Use
Investigation Kit	1	Measurement, evidence collection, examination.
Fortera Apparatus	1	Controlled measurement and specialised Workings.
Signal Kit	1	Flags, lamps, prepared signalling.
Field Command Kit	1	Maps, markers, glass, signals, written orders.

Ordinary ammunition is assumed while properly supplied. Track an Ammunition Supply only when isolation, loss, weather, siege, or extended consumption makes it strategically meaningful: 3 -> 2 -> 1 -> Empty. Do not mark it for every attack.

ENGINEERING PRINCIPLE Damage -> repair. Depletion -> resupply. Miscalibration -> tune. These are different problems and should not substitute for one another.

CHAPTER 5 - FORTERA

What Fortera Is

Fortera is a physical system, not supernatural power. At the rules level it behaves as energy-state, nano-scale field machinery able to detect patterns and act on matter, force, living processes, and other physical systems. Most people in the setting do not understand that underlying mechanism. They encounter Fortera as fields, resonance, Sources, Éterlumin behaviour, and repeatable physical effects.

RULES TRUTH Fortera never grants a result merely because it resembles a familiar magical effect. The player describes the physical result they want, identifies a Working that can produce it, and uses an existing pathway, material, force, biological response, or prepared structure. Capacity, time, expertise, and Risk determine how far the attempt can go.

Fortera Practice

Fortera is the underlying physical field of Mar de Oro. It is not a spell list and does not create unrestricted magic. Traditions differ in method, language, instruments, ritual, and interpretation; they do not receive separate laws of physics.

Fortera Practice is a Technique. It grants permission to deliberately perform Workings, safe Capacity 2, and two known Workings. Fortera actions use the character's existing Fortera Skill rating and the same 2d6 + Capability resolution roll as every other uncertain action.

Fortera Workings

Working	Function
Sense	Detect Fortera, Sources, Éterlumin, resonance, disturbances, and physically detectable field responses.
Read	Interpret patterns, residue, or relationships present in an existing field or system. It does not reveal information that is not physically encoded there.
Tune	Restore agreement, rhythm, or calibration in an existing system. It may support living processes, but it does not recreate destroyed tissue or missing structure.
Redirect	Change an existing path of force, pressure, vibration, linked flow, or resonance.
Impel	Apply controlled force or motion to matter or a system.
Pattern	Impose temporary structured behaviour, timing, or response into existing matter, machinery, or living systems. Complex autonomous behaviour requires preparation or an extended Project.
Alter	Modify a bounded physical property, relationship, or living structure in something that already exists. Major anatomical reconfiguration is an extended Project or Source-scale effect, not a single improvised Working.
Echo	Reproduce or sustain a known physical pattern, signal, or behavioural trace when the fiction and available structure support it. It does not duplicate matter, knowledge, memory, or consciousness.

SIMPLE RULE Can it respond? Can it physically happen? Can you safely push it that far? Objects are usually simple. Living systems are complex. Overdraw supplies power, not miracles.

What Fortera Can Do

Fortera is broad enough for creative problem solving, but it is not an unrestricted spell list. At the table, use the three-question Fortera Test below. If the answers support the attempt, set Risk and Effect normally and keep play moving.

Fortera Test	Question
1. Can it respond?	Can this target be affected by the proposed Working in this way? Non-living materials and objects usually can. Ordinary biological processes usually can when the proposed change follows normal physiology. For an unusual biological response, Sense may be needed to learn whether that pathway is Responsive.
2. Can it physically happen?	Is there a real physical pathway, enough matter and energy, and a result the target can actually support? Fortera can rearrange, regulate, accelerate, or redirect. It does not create missing mass, knowledge, anatomy, or a mechanism from nothing.
3. Can you safely push it this far?	Judge scale, speed, intensity, duration, precision, and complexity. If the result exceeds safe Capacity, use Overdraw. If it needs more time, material, specialist knowledge, apparatus, or several stages, make it Technical or a Project instead of adding another difficulty system.

Using Fortera at the Table

A practitioner does not need to search the chapter for a special procedure each time. Use the same short loop for every new Fortera action.

PLAYER LOOP 1. Choose a Working. 2. Describe the physical result you want. 3. Ask the three Fortera Test questions. 4. Compare the required scale, speed, intensity, duration, precision, and complexity with safe Capacity; declare any Overdraw before the roll. 5. If the outcome is uncertain and consequential, roll once using the Skill that answers the immediate question, then continue play.

Do not make a Fortera roll and then a second Engineering, Medicine, Influence, or other roll to answer the same question. If specialist knowledge is the real uncertainty, use that Skill and let the Working provide permission or Setup. If Fortera control is the uncertainty, roll Fortera.

Worked Fortera Calls

These examples show the ruling pattern. Risk and Effect still come from the immediate situation.

Attempt	Fast ruling
Redirect a ruptured pressure line	Use Redirect. A physical path already exists. Set Risk from the pressure and position. If the required scale exceeds safe Capacity, declare Overdraw before rolling.
Detect Source residue	Use Sense. If residue is physically present and detection is uncertain, roll Fortera. Sense reveals only what the field can physically carry.
Stabilise heavy bleeding	Use Tune to support ordinary clotting and circulation. If diagnosis is the real uncertainty, roll Medicine instead of making two rolls for the same injury.

Attempt	Fast ruling
Jam an accessible firearm mechanism	Use Alter or Impel according to the method. The object is simple matter. Precise repair or redesign may make Gunsmith or Engineering the immediate Skill instead.
Repeat a known signal	Use Echo. Reproduce a physically known signal, vibration, or pattern. Echo cannot invent information the practitioner never possessed or detected.
Calm a panicked person	Use Tune on ordinary stress physiology. The person may become calmer or more attentive. Fortera does not write trust, loyalty, commands, memories, or consent.
Drive a mass beyond safe Capacity	Use Impel. The result may be physically possible, but exceeding safe Capacity requires declared Overdraw. More power does not supply missing matter or structure.
Turn iron into gold	No Effect as a direct Working. Fortera does not permit arbitrary transmutation simply because more power is applied.
Regrow a missing arm immediately	No Effect as a direct Working. Normal adult physiology lacks that pathway. A long biological Project could require supplied matter, a scaffold, specialist knowledge, and repeated intervention.
Build an autonomous cadaver construct	Treat it as a Project. Pattern can provide instructions, Impel can drive movement, and other Workings can preserve usable structure. It is not resurrection and does not restore the original consciousness.

Practical Boundaries

Fortera manipulates physical systems and relationships. It can sense and interpret fields, apply or redirect force, tune existing systems, alter bounded physical properties and living structures, impose patterns, reproduce signals or behavioural traces, support living processes, and bind fixed effects into prepared objects. At rules level, this can reach microscopic biological and material structure. It still obeys physical limits: matter and energy must come from somewhere, complex design requires knowledge, and Overdraw supplies power rather than a missing mechanism.

Fortera can	Fortera does not normally
Sense or interpret physically present patterns and residue.	Read thoughts, predict the future, or reveal information that leaves no physical trace.
Apply, redirect, damp, or shape force, pressure, vibration, motion, flow, and resonance.	Teleport, ignore distance, or produce any desired effect without a physical mechanism.
Tune or alter an existing machine, material, environment, or living process.	Rebuild destroyed structure, freely transmute substances, or conjure arbitrary matter.
Create temporary behaviour, triggers, repeated signals, fixed embedded effects, and prepared control patterns in machines or living systems.	Create true sentience, restore a dead person's consciousness, or create permanent autonomous magic. Programmed behaviour and reproduced traces are not a returned person.

Fortera can	Fortera does not normally
Support stabilisation, wound treatment, natural healing, prosthetic integration, and long-term biological growth or restructuring when the body has a real physical pathway and enough material.	Resurrect the dead, conjure missing biological mass, regrow a major missing structure as an ordinary Working, or produce major whole-body transformation in a single action.
Influence a living person through physical states such as fear, calm, arousal, pain, attention, reflex, familiarity, or stress regulation when the relevant biology can respond.	Directly command a mind, create loyalty, write beliefs or memories, override consent, or make a person accept a claim as true.

Source phenomena may exceed these limits. A Source Beast, runaway correction, or other Source-scale anomaly doing something extraordinary does not automatically make the same feat available to a practitioner.

Biological Response

A biological pathway is either Responsive to the relevant Fortera interaction or it is not. This is not a general Fortera resistance score. A body may respond to one kind of manipulation and not another, and prolonged exposure can change what responds.

Use common sense first. Ordinary physiology such as bleeding, breathing, circulation, pain, muscle contraction, nerve activity, and natural wound repair can normally be treated as Responsive when the proposed manipulation follows what the body already does. Do not roll to rediscover ordinary biology. Use Sense only when the proposed biological response is unusual, unknown, and important to the action. Do not make a separate response roll.

Step	What it establishes
Common sense	If the effect follows ordinary physiology, treat the pathway as Responsive and act. No response roll is needed.
Sense	Use Sense only when an unusual biological response is genuinely unknown and matters. If learning it is uncertain and consequential, use the normal 2d6 Fortera roll. On success, the GM states whether the pathway is Responsive and any immediately useful limitation or opportunity. A 7-9 still reveals the answer but carries the established consequence. Do not roll a separate response die.
Read	Use Read only when understanding the mechanism itself matters. It may distinguish a stress response from a motor, metabolic, sensory, endocrine, healing, or growth response.
Manipulate	Use the fitting Working. Tune may regulate, Impel may drive a physical response, Alter may change structure or development, and Pattern may establish repeatable behaviour when preparation permits.
Exposure	Strong or prolonged Fortera field exposure can make a previously unresponsive biological pathway Responsive over time. This is one route by which Moon-Affected changes can develop.

Materials, Objects, and Living Systems

Non-living matter is usually simple for Fortera. Metal, stone, wood, glass, rope, mechanisms, and similar objects normally respond when the Working has a clear physical route. Do not make a response roll for ordinary objects. Their limits come from mass, material properties, available energy, precision, scale, and whether the desired design is understood.

Living systems are complex because many processes must remain coordinated at once. Local regulation or ordinary healing may be direct. Major growth, anatomical restructuring, artificial organs, or other lasting biological changes usually require time, material, Medicine or another relevant expertise, and often a Project.

Overdraw can push scale, speed, intensity, or duration beyond safe Capacity. It cannot create missing matter, supply technical knowledge, or make an impossible physical pathway possible.

Emotion, Behaviour, and Charm-Like Effects

Example: A practitioner wants to make a hostile guard unnaturally calm. Mild calming follows ordinary stress physiology and can be attempted directly. If the practitioner wants a much stronger, unusual response and does not know whether this guard can respond that way, Sense can answer that question. If the pathway is Responsive, Tune or another fitting Working changes the guard's physical state. It still does not decide what the guard believes or chooses.

Fortera can create charm-like effects by changing physical states involved in fear, calm, arousal, pain, attention, reflex, familiarity, or stress. The stronger or faster the manipulation, the more Capacity it may require. Overdraw can push that intensity beyond the practitioner's safe ceiling when the physical pathway exists.

Fortera does not directly write thoughts, beliefs, memories, loyalty, commands, or consent. A guard who feels unexpectedly calm or safe may be easier to persuade, but persuasion is still persuasion. If the character then negotiates, deceives, intimidates, or asks the target to act, use the relevant social Skill; the Fortera change may provide Setup, improve Effect, or change Risk when the fiction supports it.

Complexity and Preparation

Complexity tells you how the effect is performed. It does not add another modifier or another roll. Use the simplest procedure that fits the fiction.

Class	What it means	Use at the table
Direct	One known Working acting on an immediate physical problem.	Resolve with the normal action or Fortera roll. Examples: Sense a disturbance, Impel an object, Redirect pressure, Tune a failing rhythm.
Technical	A Working plus tools or specialist knowledge.	Use one roll for the actual uncertainty. Medicine, Engineering, or another Skill may provide Setup or be the roll if that is the real question. Examples: stabilise a wound, tune a receiver, prepare a simple trigger.
Project	A complex effect that combines several physical systems, Workings, or stages.	Requires time, suitable material, tools, and relevant expertise. Use a Progress Clock only when uncertainty or pressure matters. Examples: artificial organs, cadaver constructs, sophisticated weapons, engineered biological transformation.

Class	What it means	Use at the table
Source-scale	A phenomenon operating beyond routine practitioner complexity or safe personal scale.	Treat it as a threat, environment, or campaign problem. Observing it does not grant the same capability. Source Beast correction and other extreme anomalies belong here. Moon-Affected is a prolonged environmental biological condition, not a single practitioner effect.

Medicine, Wounds, and Healing

Living bodies are physical systems, so Fortera can assist medicine. It is not healing magic. Use common sense: Fortera can support or accelerate processes the body already has, but biology is complex and medical knowledge still matters when diagnosis or treatment judgment matters.

- Sense or Read can locate abnormal pressure, disrupted circulation, a foreign object, unusual resonance, or another detectable physical problem. Medicine may still be needed to understand what the finding means.
- Tune or Redirect can steady a failing rhythm, reduce or redirect bleeding or pressure, support breathing or circulation, or keep a damaged system stable long enough for treatment. If the Working directly addresses the established cause of Unstable and achieves Standard Effect, it may remove Unstable. The character remains Broken.
- Tune or Alter used during care can support alignment, circulation, clotting, tissue closure, or another plausible healing process. Closing or stabilising a stomach wound is possible because the body already has those processes. Forcing the same repair almost instantly may require greater Capacity or Overdraw because the practitioner is pushing speed and intensity far beyond normal biology. Harm does not vanish automatically just because the wound is stabilised.
- Fortera cannot casually give the body a biological capability it does not possess. An ordinary adult human does not have a normal whole-limb regeneration pathway, so a severed arm cannot simply be regrown by adding more Overdraw. Rebuilding major missing structure would require an exceptional engineered process, supplied material, specialist knowledge, time, and normally a Project.

Biological Change Takes Time and Material

Fortera can redirect or accelerate biological processes, including growth and tissue remodelling, when the relevant pathway can respond. It does not conjure biological mass. New tissue requires real material: food, water, minerals, oxygen, stored body reserves, grafts, or another physical source. The larger or faster the structural change, the more material, energy, biological coordination, and Capacity it requires.

Biological change	Typical timescale	Examples
Immediate regulation	Seconds to minutes	Nerve or muscle stimulation, breathing, circulation, stress response, pain response, clotting support.
Emergency stabilisation	Minutes	Control a responsive physiological process, remove Unstable when the Working directly addresses the cause.
Healing support	Hours to days	Support circulation, closure, alignment, inflammation control, or recovery. Harm does not vanish instantly.

Biological change	Typical timescale	Examples
Developmental change	Days to weeks	Alter metabolism, endocrine activity, pigmentation, hair, minor tissue structure, or sustained sensory adaptation.
Major growth or restructuring	Weeks to months or longer	Substantial muscle, bone, sensory, or anatomical change. Added mass must come from real biological intake or supplied material.
Moon-Affected scale	Prolonged exposure	Prolonged field exposure can make previously unresponsive pathways Responsive and then drive extensive biological change over time. This is not instant shapeshifting and is not a routine practitioner Working.

Weapons, Explosives, and Devices



Fortera can be used to make dangerous weapons, breaching charges, traps, ammunition, and industrial devices. The effect must still be physically defined. An inert object does not become an unlimited bomb merely because Fortera is involved.

- Impel can release a controlled burst of force. Redirect can shape or divert an existing pressure, shock, vibration, or flow. At sufficient Capacity these effects can injure people, breach material, or damage machinery.
- Pattern or Embedding can provide timing, an impact trigger, a pressure trigger, a repeated response, or another fixed behaviour.
- Tune or Alter can calibrate, couple, destabilise, or change the behaviour of an existing explosive, Éterlumin system, pressure vessel, resonant component, or similar physical device when the Working actually fits.
- A large blast needs the Capacity to produce that scale, a suitable stored-energy or pressure source, or both. Exceeding safe Capacity uses normal Overdraw. Apparatus and prepared structures can make effects possible that a practitioner could not safely produce unaided.
- A violent one-use embedding is normally consumed when it releases. Its blast does not refresh because the object still has useful life remaining.
- Engineering governs whether a complex device is physically sound. Fortera governs the field behaviour. When uncertainty matters, roll the Skill that answers the immediate question and use the other as Setup when appropriate.

Examples include an impact-triggered concussive charge, a pressure-burst breaching device, a Fortera trigger for an Éterlumin charge, ammunition carrying a fixed Redirect or Impel effect, or a resonant sabotage device that destabilises a specific machine.

Resolve the resulting attack or hazard with the normal Risk, Effect, Harm, Cover, and scale rules rather than a separate Fortera damage system.

Other Common Uses

Goal	Typical Working	Guideline
Move, brace, pull, or shove	Impel	Capacity follows mass, resistance, distance, and duration.
Damp recoil, vibration, pressure, or flow	Redirect	There must be an existing force or path to redirect.

Goal	Typical Working	Guideline
Repair calibration or stabilise a system	Tune	Restores agreement; it does not replace missing parts.
Change friction, tension, conductivity, coupling, elasticity, or another bounded property	Alter	Change an existing relationship. Do not treat Alter as free transmutation.
Create a trigger, sequence, repeating response, or temporary behaviour	Pattern	Requires an existing object or system to carry the pattern.
Repeat a signal, vibration, sound pattern, or known field state	Echo	Copies a known pattern, not the object or knowledge that produced it.
Investigate residue, Sources, or hidden field relationships	Sense / Read	Information must be physically present or leave a detectable trace.
Stabilise bleeding, breathing, or circulation	Tune / Redirect	Ordinary physiology. Treat the pathway as Responsive unless the fiction gives a reason not to. Medicine still governs diagnosis. Standard Effect may remove Unstable when the Working directly addresses its cause; Harm remains.
Support wound recovery	Tune / Alter	Uses normal healing pathways. Faster or more intense repair may require greater Capacity or Overdraw. It does not automatically clear Wounded or Broken Harm.
Integrate a prosthesis or artificial organ	Tune / Pattern / Alter	Project. The physical prosthesis, graft, or replacement must exist. Fortera integrates, regulates, or coordinates it rather than conjuring missing matter.
Build a triggered concussive or breaching device	Pattern + Impel / Redirect	Technical or Project. Requires Engineering, a suitable physical device, and enough stored energy, pressure, or Capacity. Violent one-use effects are normally consumed.
Animate a cadaver as a controlled construct	Pattern + Impel + Alter / Tune	Project. Requires a body, time, apparatus, and relevant biological or engineering expertise. It can create programmed movement or responses; it does not resurrect the person.
Guide long-term biological growth or restructuring	Alter + Tune / Pattern	Project. Requires a real responsive pathway, suitable expertise, nutrition or supplied material, and enough time for growth or remodelling. Major anatomical change takes weeks, months, or longer rather than one action.
Understand or intervene in Moon-Affected change	Sense / Read, then a fitting Working	Moon-Affected develops when prolonged Fortera field exposure makes relevant biological pathways Responsive and then drives them over time. It is poorly understood, not transmitted by bites or contact, and does not cause instant transformation. Added mass comes from real growth.

Goal	Typical Working	Guideline
Calm, agitate, focus, or create another charm-like physiological state	Sense, then Tune / Impel / Alter as appropriate	Use ordinary physiology directly for ordinary effects. If a stronger unusual response is genuinely unknown, Sense can determine whether the pathway is Responsive. Fortera changes physical state, not beliefs, memory, loyalty, commands, or consent.

Adjudicating a New Use

Ask three questions: Can it respond? Can it physically happen? Can you safely push it that far? If yes, resolve the action normally. If the target cannot respond or the physical mechanism does not exist, use No Effect and explain what is missing. If the scale, speed, intensity, or duration exceeds safe Capacity, use Overdraw. If the result needs specialist knowledge, apparatus, supplied material, prolonged restructuring, or several stages, make it Technical or a Project. Do not add a separate difficulty scale.

Capacity

Capacity is the highest effect, scale, speed, intensity, or duration the practitioner can safely achieve. It is a ceiling, not a pool and not a number of casts per day. Using a Working within Capacity does not spend Capacity. Overdraw exceeds that safe ceiling; it does not create missing matter, knowledge, or a physical mechanism.

Practice	Safe Capacity
Fortera Practice	2
Deep Reserve	3

Capacity Scale

Capacity is a safe ceiling, not a pool of points. A Working determines what kind of interaction is possible; Capacity determines the scale and intensity that can be attempted safely. Context, resistance, preparation, and available structure can shift a requirement by one step.

Capacity	Typical safe scale	Examples
1	Delicate / local	Sense a nearby disturbance; tune a small device; redirect a small existing force; Impel a light object; make a minor local Alteration.
2	Human / room	Influence a person-sized system; Impel or restrain roughly human-scale mass briefly; tune a complex subsystem; redirect strong local pressure or vibration; Pattern a room-scale signal.
3	Heavy / local structure	Affect several people or a heavy mechanism; brace or shift a heavy door or machinery component; tune a major Eterlumin subsystem; redirect a substantial environmental or mechanical flow.
4	Vehicle / structure	Affect a large machine, vehicle subsystem, or significant part of a structure. Normally requires Overdraw, specialised apparatus, or prepared conditions for a Capacity-3 practitioner.

Capacity	Typical safe scale	Examples
5+	Major structure / Source scale	Ship-scale, major structural, or Source-linked changes. Normally team, apparatus, Source conditions, or catastrophic Overdraw territory rather than routine personal use.

The examples are scale guides rather than a lifting chart. A Working still cannot do something outside its function merely because the character has sufficient Capacity.

Overdraw

Overdraw is voluntary. The player chooses to exceed safe Capacity because the desired effect, scale, or intensity is greater than the character can safely produce.

Tiers over Capacity	Consequence
+1	Mark Strained.
+2	Mark Wounded and create a local Fortera disturbance or instability.
+3	Risk Broken Harm and a Dead Zone or similarly serious field consequence.
+4 or more	Catastrophic field consequence. The exact result follows established fiction and scale.

Possible responses include Accept Strain, Ground the Working, Vent into an external system or resource when physically possible, or Break the Pattern when an established counter-rhythm, cutoff, or grounding method exists. Grounding changes field escalation; it does not remove whatever personal Overdraw consequence remains after mitigation. The automatic field consequence begins at +2 Overdraw: +1 marks Strained only; +2 marks Wounded and creates a local disturbance; +3 risks Broken and a Dead Zone; +4 or more is catastrophic. Deep Reserve and Controlled Overdraw may be combined as an intentional specialist investment; Controlled Overdraw changes only the personal consequence, not any field consequence that would otherwise occur.

Embedding Fortera into Items

Embedding binds one known Fortera Working into a physical object so the effect can be released or sustained later. It is a slow technical procedure, not a way to create unrestricted permanent magic items.

Who Can Embed

A character must have Fortera Practice and must know the Working being embedded. Embedding does not grant an unknown Working. Pattern can create temporary structured behaviour during ordinary play, but you do not need to know Pattern separately to perform the longer Embedding procedure.

Choose the Embedded Effect

Before work begins, state the exact Working, intended effect, trigger or activation method, physical target, and scale. The embedded effect is fixed at creation. An embedded Redirect cannot later become Impel, and an item built to redirect pressure cannot freely redirect light, heat, or another unrelated relationship unless the original Working and construction support it.

Depth

Depth controls how long the embedding naturally remains usable. It does not increase power. Creation time equals Depth in days. Once creation is complete, the embedding has the same number of days of natural useful life before decay makes it unusable.

Fortera Skill	Maximum routine Depth
Familiar (+0)	1
Trained (+1)	3
Expert (+2)	6
Master (+3)	10

Depth above 10 is an industrial, institutional, or campaign-scale project rather than routine personal work. It normally requires a team, specialised facility, Significant Asset, or equivalent fictional support.

Power and Capacity

The power of the embedded Working is determined by the effect being bound and the Capacity required to create it, not by Depth. A practitioner may create an embedding above safe Capacity only by accepting normal Overdraw at completion. Overdraw is resolved once when the embedding is completed, not once per day of construction and not each time the finished item is handled.

Creating the Embedding

The object must be physically suitable for the intended effect. A pressure valve can hold a pressure-related Tune or Redirect far more plausibly than a paper token. A prepared projectile can carry a discrete effect, but its physical impact and embedded Fortera effect remain separate parts of the fiction.

Spend the required number of days working with the object. Interruptions extend the schedule; they do not erase completed days unless the object or pattern is damaged. In a stable workshop, within safe Capacity, and without meaningful uncertainty, no roll is required merely to finish routine work. Roll Fortera when the work is rushed, improvised, unstable, contested, performed in poor conditions, or otherwise uncertain. Engineering may be used as Setup when the physical integration itself is difficult.

Using an Embedded Item

The creator does not need to be present after completion. Anyone who can physically operate the item and understands its trigger may use it unless the item was deliberately designed to require a specific operator, keyed signal, or other condition. The user does not gain general access to the Working. They can only produce the fixed embedded effect.

If activation is automatic and its trigger is clearly met, no Fortera roll is required. If using the item is itself uncertain, roll the Skill that actually resolves the uncertainty. Firearms may govern an embedded shot, Engineering may govern a device under pressure, and Fortera is used only when the operator is actively reading, tuning, redirecting, or modifying the embedded pattern.

Consumed and Ongoing Effects

A discrete embedded effect is consumed when it activates unless its design explicitly establishes an ongoing effect. Consumed effects do not return merely because useful life

remains. An ongoing embedding continues only while its physical system, remaining useful life, and required conditions remain intact.

Embedded Ammunition

Resolve the projectile and the Fortera effect separately. The shot must still be aimed, fired, and physically reach whatever trigger the embedding requires. A missed shot does not become a Fortera hit merely because the ammunition was embedded. If the effect is designed to trigger on impact, it occurs where the projectile actually impacts when the trigger is met.

Decay and Preserve Embedding

No embedding is intrinsically permanent. When its natural useful life reaches zero, the pattern has decayed and cannot simply be switched back on. Long-lived artefacts and industrial items are maintained, stabilised, repeatedly tuned, or supported by larger systems.

A practitioner who knows Tune may Preserve Embedding. Touch one active embedded object and spend at least 10 minutes bringing it back into agreement. If the procedure is routine and controlled, no roll is required. If it is uncertain or dangerous, resolve Tune normally. On completion, the embedding's remaining useful life stops decreasing for a number of days equal to its Depth, then resumes exactly where it paused. A new preservation replaces the previous pause; durations do not stack.

Preserve Embedding cannot restore an expired embedding, recreate a consumed effect, replenish charges, repair physical damage, or restore depleted fuel or ammunition. Repeated maintenance can preserve an active embedding indefinitely as long as someone continues to spend the time and access needed to maintain it.

Embedding Examples

Pressure latch: An Engineer with Fortera Practice embeds Tune into a prepared pressure latch at Depth 3. It takes 3 days to create and then has 3 days of natural useful life. The latch is designed to correct one specific pressure mismatch when its mechanical trigger is pulled. Anyone who can operate the latch can activate that fixed effect.

Embedded round: A practitioner embeds Redirect into a prepared projectile. The shooter still rolls Firearms for the shot. On impact, the projectile behaves physically as ammunition and the fixed Redirect effect triggers separately if its stated conditions are met.

Preserved instrument: A field instrument has 2 days of useful life remaining at Depth 4. A practitioner successfully uses Tune to Preserve Embedding. For the next 4 days its remaining life stays at 2 days. When preservation ends, decay resumes from 2 days; it does not reset to 4.

CHAPTER 6 - PERSONAL COMBAT

Combat in 30 Seconds

Combat uses the same rules you already know. The difference is that exact order, movement, facing, and reactions matter, so the table takes turns.

- At the start of combat, determine which side acts first. Then the sides alternate one character at a time.
- Every relevant combatant acts individually. One PC gets one Activation. One guard gets one Activation. Do not combine several NPCs into one shared attack or Activation while using Personal Combat.
- When there are too many combatants for individual Activations to remain useful, change to Battlefield Scale instead of creating a middle group-combat layer.
- On your Activation, you normally get one Move and one Action. You also have one Reaction each round for rules that trigger outside your Activation.
- A normal Move is 4 spaces. Your Action can attack, reload, grapple, help, repair, use a Working, Sprint, or do anything else that is plausible.
- An attack is still a normal resolution roll. State the Skill, Risk, and Effect, roll once, then apply Harm or the stated objective. There is no separate damage roll.
- If exact position does not matter, you do not need a grid. Use the grid when facing, range, threatened spaces, Cover, or movement actually matters.

Combat Words

Word	Meaning at the table
Activation	Your turn to act during a combat round.
Move	Your normal movement for the Activation, usually 4 spaces.
Action	Your main act: attack, reload, manoeuvre, use a Working, treat a wound, and so on.
Reaction	One response per round used when a rule gives a trigger, such as Guard, Turn, or Reaction Strike.
Engaged	Adjacent to an enemy.
Facing	The direction your token points. It determines which melee spaces you threaten.
Threatened space	A space in front of you that your melee weapon controls.
Cover	Physical protection between a shooter and target.
Contact	Actual body-to-body or weapon-to-body control. Adjacent on the grid is not automatically Contact.

Combat Round

Combat uses side-based initiative and alternating activations. Determine which side acts first once at the beginning of the combat, then alternate one combatant at a time.

Initiative and Surprise

If one side clearly has the tactical advantage - for example a prepared ambush, established firing position, or obvious readiness while the opposition is caught unprepared - that side chooses the first Activation. Otherwise, each side rolls 1d6 and the

higher result chooses which side activates first. On a tie, reroll. Initiative is rolled once per combat, not every round.

After the first Activation, sides alternate one combatant at a time until everyone entitled to act has activated once. If one side has more combatants, its remaining combatants act after the other side runs out. At the start of the next round, the side that did not make the final Activation of the previous round activates first. This prevents a larger side from ending one round with several actions and immediately opening the next round again.

If one side begins genuinely surprised, it cannot use Reactions until after its first combatant has completed an Activation. Surprise does not grant a whole free round and does not automatically make anyone Helpless.

Per normal Activation	Allowance
Move	1
Action	1
Reaction	1 per round

Ready / Hold

Spend your Action to Ready one specific Action and name a clear trigger you can perceive, such as “when someone enters the doorway, I fire.” Before your next Activation, when that trigger occurs, spend your Reaction to resolve the Readied Action immediately. If the trigger never occurs, or you have no Reaction available when it does, the Readied Action is lost.

Some Major Threats may have more than one Activation. An Activation is a meaningful opportunity to act inside a fast exchange, not a fixed-duration slice of time.

Move and Act

On a normal Activation, take your Move and Action in either order. You may Move then attack, attack then Move, Move then reload, or remain in place and act. A normal Move covers up to 4 spaces. Unless a rule says otherwise, do not split one Move around the Action.

Sprint spends the Action to move up to another 4 spaces. A character who Sprints therefore cannot normally attack, reload, Ready, or take another Action in the same Activation. Take Cover uses the Move. If suitable cover is within normal movement, a combatant may move into or settle behind that cover and still use the Action to fire, reload, Ready, or do something else.

If a character already occupies substantial Cover, briefly leaning, rising, or exposing enough of the weapon to fire does not by itself remove that Cover. A consequence, enemy manoeuvre, damaged protection, or voluntary movement can change the position.

No Free Attacks from Consequences

In Personal Combat, attacks are normally made with Actions, Reactions, or Readied Actions. A 7-9 on someone else's attack does not grant an opponent an additional free attack. If return fire is the danger, the mixed result may reveal the attacker's position, expose them, damage Cover, force a worse position, or establish a clean opportunity for

the opponent's next Action. An immediate return shot occurs only when the opponent spends a valid Reaction or Readied Action, or when a specific rule explicitly allows it.

Movement, Facing, and Threatened Spaces

1 space is approximately 2 metres or a few paces. A normal Move covers 4 spaces. Spend the Action to Sprint up to another 4. Difficult terrain normally costs 2 spaces of movement for each 1 crossed.

Occupied Spaces and Contact

A combatant normally occupies one space. You may move through a willing ally if there is room, but you cannot normally end your movement in another combatant's space. A hostile occupied space blocks movement; forcing through, exchanging places, or pushing past requires a Combat Manoeuvre or another rule that permits it.

Contact is a fictional state, not simply "adjacent on the grid." Contact means the weapon, hand, or body is actually pressed into or controlled against the target at immediate physical distance. It is normally established through a Grapple, Pin, Helpless target, deliberate submission, or other fiction that removes ordinary spacing. An adjacent pistol shot is close range, but it is not automatically Contact.

Beginner reminder: two miniatures in neighbouring squares are merely adjacent. "Contact" needs an actual hold, pin, helpless target, submission, or another situation that removes normal defensive spacing.

Mounted Movement

A rider and mount share one Activation. Use the mount's movement instead of the rider's normal Move; the rider keeps their normal Action and Reaction. Mounting or dismounting normally uses the rider's Move. A mount does not create a second independent Action economy unless its profile explicitly says otherwise.

Use Mobility when riding under pressure is genuinely uncertain: controlling a frightened mount, crossing dangerous ground at speed, remaining mounted after an impact, jumping an obstacle, or similar situations. Ordinary riding in safe conditions needs no roll.

Mounted combat otherwise uses the normal rules for Facing, threatened spaces, range, Risk, and Effect. Large or trained war mounts may have their own footprint or permissions when a specific profile requires them.

Facing

Every combatant has a Facing. Point the miniature or token toward one of the eight neighbouring spaces. If you use your Move, you may turn freely during that movement. If you remain in place, you may spend your Move to set any Facing. When your Move ends, Facing remains fixed until changed by a rule, Reaction, or later Move. Diagonal movement costs 1 space, the same as orthogonal movement.

Threatened Spaces

With an ordinary melee weapon, you threaten the three adjacent spaces directly in front of your Facing. Side and rear spaces are not threatened. A Reach weapon threatens those three adjacent front spaces plus the five spaces immediately beyond them, forming a widening forward arc out to 2 spaces.

Ordinary Melee Threat

T	T	T
.	YOU	.
.	.	.

Facing is upward. T = a space you threaten. Enemies at your side or rear are not threatened unless you turn.

Reach Weapon Threat

T	T	T	T	T
.	T	T	T	.
.	.	YOU	.	.

Facing is upward. Reach controls the same three front spaces plus the five spaces immediately beyond them.

GEOMETRY RULE Facing defines the arc. The weapon defines the distance. Walls and impassable terrain remove approach spaces naturally; they do not grant a separate corner bonus.

Ranged attacks do not use the melee threatened arc. A shooter may turn toward a visible target as part of making the ranged attack unless their Facing has been fixed by another commitment. If the shooter spent their Move to Aim, they set their Facing toward that target when Aim begins.

Turn Reaction

When an enemy moves into an adjacent space you do not threaten, you may spend your Reaction to change Facing toward them before their attack resolves. Turning can expose a different side to another opponent.

Flanking

Facing and flanking are separate. Facing determines which adjacent spaces you threaten and where Guard can be used. A character is Flanked only when two hostile characters who both Engage that character occupy exact opposite adjacent spaces across the target. The four opposite pairs are north/south, east/west, northeast/southwest, and northwest/southeast. While the pair remains opposite and both attackers remain Engaged, attacks made by either member of that pair gain +1 Effect against the Flanked target.

Valid Flank

.	ALLY	.
.	TARGET	.
.	FLANKER	.

The ALLY and FLANKER are directly opposite one another across the TARGET. This is a valid flank. The TARGET may turn to threaten either attacker, but turning does not remove the Flanked condition while the opposite pair remains in place.

Not a Flank

ATTACKER	.	.
.	TARGET	ALLY
.	.	.

The ATTACKER is outside the TARGET's threatened front arc, but the ATTACKER and ALLY are not exact opposites. The ATTACKER may therefore be harder to defend against, but this is not a flank and grants no +1 Effect.

Important: an unthreatened attack is not automatically a flanking attack. An unthreatened space affects Guard and Turn Reaction. Flanking requires the exact opposite-space geometry above.

Walls, furniture, cliffs, other bodies, and similar obstacles can prevent an attacker from occupying the required opposite space. If the opposite position cannot physically be occupied, that flank cannot be formed. Several enemies may still attack from other directions; those attacks can be unthreatened without receiving the flank bonus.

Engagement and Reactions

Characters in adjacent spaces are Engaged. Reactions use the same one-roll engine as the rest of combat; defenders do not make a separate defence roll. A character normally has one Reaction per round and must choose how to spend it.

Guard Reaction

When a melee attack from a space you threaten resolves at 7–9, you may spend your Reaction after seeing the result. Against an attack that would cause bodily Harm, reduce that Harm by one step. Against a Combat Manoeuvre, reduce the manoeuvre's Effect by one step. A 10+ beats an ordinary Guard and resolves normally. You must have a credible means to defend yourself. Guard cannot protect against ranged attacks, attacks from unthreatened spaces, or attacks made while you are Helpless. Guard does not stack with armour, Cover, or Going Low to reduce the same Harm twice.

Reaction Strike

When an enemy voluntarily leaves a space you threaten without using Fighting Withdrawal or another permission, you may spend your Reaction to make one melee attack before their movement completes. You still make only one attack roll. A Reaction Strike does not automatically stop movement unless its consequence, the fiction, or a Technique such as Hold the Line does so.

Combat Manoeuvres

A Combat Manoeuvre is an Action used to control position rather than simply inflict Harm. Grappling, shoving, disarming, knocking someone down, forcing through a defender, or similar actions use one normal roll. Use Athletics or Close Combat as appropriate. The target does not make an opposed roll; their size, footing, skill, equipment, and position change Risk and Effect.

Grapple

To Grapple, use an Action while adjacent and with a credible free hand, limb, or hold. Use Athletics or Close Combat as appropriate. If you attack from a space the target threatens, Guard Reaction applies normally; Guarded Stance may make that Guard free. Standard Effect makes the target Grappled. Great Effect makes the target Grappled and may immediately establish a Pin when the position supports it. Limited Effect does not establish Grappled; it achieves only a lesser positional advantage appropriate to the fiction.

Grappled means you have physically seized and controlled the target. Neither character can voluntarily separate while the hold remains. The Grappled character cannot Sprint

and must use an Action to Escape. They may still struggle, speak, attack with a free limb or suitable small weapon, and take other plausible actions. Grappled is control, not Helplessness and not automatic Harm.

The grappler must keep at least one hand, limb, or equivalent means committed to the hold and cannot freely use equipment that requires that control. Two-handed weapons and long firearms are normally awkward or unusable while maintaining a close Grapple. A Grappled pair can screen one another from ranged attacks depending on the firing angle; use the normal Screened Shot rule.

Drag: spend your Move to move yourself and one Grappled target of comparable size 1 space together. Difficult terrain, a much larger target, active obstruction, or another serious complication may require a Combat Manoeuvre instead.

Release: the grappler may release the target at any time without spending an Action or Reaction.

Forced Separation: if either character is shoved, thrown, pulled, or otherwise moved so that the pair cannot remain adjacent, the Grapple ends unless the fiction clearly provides another way to maintain the hold.

Escape Grapple: spend an Action and make one normal Athletics, Mobility, or Close Combat roll as appropriate. Standard Effect ends the Grapple. A 7-9 still escapes but carries the established consequence. On a 6-, the hold remains and the situation changes against you.

Pin

A Pin is a stronger hold established from an existing Grapple. While already Grappling, the grappler may use an Action to attempt a Pin; Standard Effect establishes it. A Pinned character cannot Move or freely change Facing, and actions requiring full body movement usually have Limited or No Effect. The grappler is also committed to maintaining the Pin and cannot move normally. A Pin does not by itself make the target Helpless or automatically improve allied attacks; use normal Risk and Effect if the position genuinely exposes the target.

Escape Pin: spend an Action and roll Athletics, Mobility, or Close Combat as appropriate. Standard Effect reduces Pin to Grappled. Great Effect breaks the hold completely. A 7-9 succeeds at the established Effect but carries the normal consequence; on a 6-, the Pin remains and the situation changes against you.

Other Manoeuvres

Shove: Standard Effect moves a comparable target 1 space; Great Effect may move them 2 spaces or knock them down. **Disarm:** Standard Effect makes the target drop one held item into an adjacent space; Great Effect may throw it farther or place it under your control. **Knock Down:** Standard Effect puts the target on the ground; standing normally costs their Move. While down, the target cannot Sprint or effectively use Reach beyond adjacent spaces. Otherwise resolve their actions through normal position, Risk, and Effect. Use the same procedure for other credible manoeuvres instead of creating a new subsystem.

Range

Ranged weapons use Normal Range / Extended Range. Within Normal Range they operate normally. Beyond Normal but within Extended Range, reduce Effect by one step. Beyond Extended Range, the attack has No Effect and normally cannot be attempted at Personal Combat scale. These are encounter bands for resolving a specific

individual shot under pressure, not historical effective ranges or literal ballistic limits. Longer prepared, massed, or formation fire belongs to Battlefield Scale or a scenario-specific profile.

Weapon	Normal	Extended
Pistol	5 spaces	15 spaces
Boarding Gun	3	9
Carbine	10	30
Musket	12	36
Early Rifle	24	90

Ranged Attacks and Melee

Clear Shot

An Engaged target can be shot normally if the shooter has a clear line of fire. Being in melee does not itself provide protection.

Screened Shot

If another combatant substantially lies between the shooter and the target, reduce the ranged attack's Effect by one step. On a 6-, an intervening combatant may be hit if friendly fire was established as a possible consequence before the roll.

ONE ROLL Do not make a second friendly-fire roll. Establish the danger before the shot; the attack roll resolves the intended shot and any consequence.

Firing While Engaged

Weapon	Close-combat handling
Pistol	No inherent Effect penalty.
Boarding Gun	Normally usable at normal Effect where there is room to bring it to bear.
Carbine	Usually normal or Limited Effect depending on position.
Musket / Rifle	Normally reduce Effect by one step.
Any firearm	No Effect if the fiction makes firing genuinely impossible, such as an opponent controlling the barrel.

Scatter Weapons

A Scatter weapon may attack an area instead of one target. The area is the three adjacent spaces directly in front of the shooter. Roll once for the entire attack.

Scatter Area

HIT	HIT	HIT
.	YOU	.
.	.	.

Facing is upward. A close Scatter attack affects all three adjacent front spaces with one roll. Allies in those spaces are also exposed.

Result	Area attack
10+	Every character in the affected spaces suffers the weapon's normal Effect.
7-9	Choose one target in the affected spaces to suffer normal Effect. Every other character in the area suffers Limited Effect. Resolve the normal 7-9 consequence.
6-	Resolve failure normally. Anyone in the area, including allies, may be endangered if established by the fiction.

Scatter attacks do not suffer the normal Screened Shot reduction inside their area because they attack the occupied area rather than thread a precise line. Allies in the area are not protected from the blast.

Boarding guns and blunderbusses use Scatter only in the adjacent front spaces. At longer range, they may fire at one target using their normal range profile.

Cover

Substantial Cover protects rather than subtracting Effect. When a ranged attack crossing substantial Cover rolls 7-9, reduce bodily Harm by one step if the Cover plausibly intercepts or spoils the shot. A clean 10+ finds an opening, strikes through, or otherwise resolves normally. Complete Cover means there is no direct shot and the attack normally has No Effect until the line of fire changes. Cover does not stack with armour, Guard, or Going Low to reduce the same Harm more than once. Take Cover changes position; it does not create repeated layers of protection.

Take Cover

Use your Move to place yourself behind available physical protection or to improve how fully existing protection covers you. You cannot declare Cover where no suitable obstacle exists. Roll only when reaching or using the cover is itself uncertain or dangerous.

Go Low

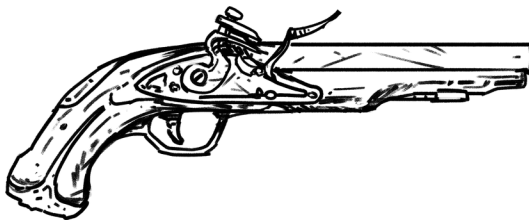
Use your Move to drop flat, crouch very low, or otherwise deliberately minimise your exposed profile. While Low, a ranged attack from roughly the same elevation may reduce bodily Harm by one step on a 7-9 when the reduced profile would genuinely make the shot harder. A clean 10+ resolves normally. Going Low provides no benefit against a nearby attacker with a clear downward shot, an elevated attacker, Scatter or another area attack, or when the position does not meaningfully reduce the target presented. Going Low is not Cover and never creates Complete Cover. It does not stack with Cover, armour, Guard, or another source of Harm reduction. Standing or returning to a normal stance uses your Move. While Low, you cannot Sprint and may move up to 2 spaces with your Move unless the terrain makes even that impossible.

Smoke, Darkness, Fog, and Obscurement

When smoke, darkness, fog, foliage, powder haze, or another condition substantially interferes with seeing a target but the target can still be meaningfully located, reduce the attack's Effect by one step. If the attacker cannot meaningfully identify or locate the target at all, the attack normally has No Effect until the situation changes.

Obscurement is not physical Cover and does not reduce Harm after the hit. It changes whether the attack can be made effectively in the first place.

Firearms, Harm, and Rigid Armour



Firearms do not use damage dice. A firearm achieving Standard Effect against a meaningfully exposed person will normally inflict Wounded. Great Effect can justify Broken when the fiction supports it; Limited Effect usually produces Strained or another limited consequence. Personal firearms are intentionally decisive: two same-severity firearm wounds can escalate a character from Wounded to Broken. The expected defence is Cover, obscuration, movement, preparation, surprise, protected firing positions, or denying a clean line of fire, not standing exposed and trading shots. Hard to Kill represents exceptional resilience; it is not assumed for frontline characters.

Rigid Armour

Rigid Armour uses the attack result itself. There is no armour save or penetration roll.

Attack result	Rigid Armour against firearm
10+	No reduction. Resolve firearm Harm normally.
7-9	When the armour plausibly covers the hit, reduce bodily Harm by one step. A typical Standard firearm hit therefore becomes Strained instead of Wounded.
6-	Resolve the failed attack normally.

At contact distance, Rigid Armour provides no firearm benefit. Deadeye ignores Rigid Armour on a successful aimed shot when an exposed weak point can be identified.

Example

A musketeer fires at a soldier wearing a breastplate within Normal Range. On a 10+, a Standard-Effect hit makes the soldier Wounded. On a 7-9, the breastplate reduces that bodily Harm one step, so the soldier becomes Strained. If the shooter spent their Move to use Deadeye, the breastplate is ignored.

Firearm State

Loaded -> Fired -> Reloaded /Loaded

After firing, a normal firearm must be Reloaded before it can fire again. Reload is normally an Action unless a weapon, Technique, item, or rule explicitly changes this. Repeating weapons follow their own permissions.

Staged Firearms at a Prepared Position

If the characters had time to prepare a firing position, Loaded muskets, carbines, rifles, or other long firearms may be laid or racked within immediate reach. These are Staged firearms. The number staged is limited by what was actually brought and by the physical space available.

Once during an Activation, spend your Move to set aside the long firearm in hand and take one Staged long firearm. You may then use your Action normally, including to fire it. You may also fire first and spend the Move afterward to take the next Staged firearm. Each fired weapon remains Fired until someone Reloads it.

Staged firearms never grant extra attacks. They replace reload time with preparation and a fixed position. If you leave the position, unstowed Staged firearms remain behind unless you spend the normal time and Load to carry them. Quick Draw applies only to its normal one-handed weapons and does not make long-gun exchanges free.

Harm

Condition	Meaning
Strained	Hurt, shocked, exhausted, winded, burned, rattled, or impaired, but still capable of meaningful action.
Wounded	A significant injury that changes what the character can reasonably do.
Broken	Severe Harm; the character can no longer function normally in the scene.

Repeated or worsening Harm can escalate an existing condition. Broken does not automatically mean death. Death normally requires further serious Harm while Broken or circumstances where survival is no longer reasonably possible.

Harm by Effect

Effect of a successful lethal attack	Typical personal Harm
Limited	Strained
Standard	Wounded
Great	Broken, when the fiction supports severe injury
No Effect	No meaningful bodily Harm

This is a baseline, not a damage table. The weapon, armour, target, position, and stated objective still determine what Harm is plausible. A successful attack can also spend its Effect on control, position, disarming, or another established objective instead of bodily Harm.

Accumulating Harm

If you already have a Harm condition and suffer Harm of the same severity or worse, escalate one step: Strained + Strained becomes Wounded; Wounded + Wounded becomes Broken. Lower-severity Harm does not automatically escalate a higher condition, but it can still create a concrete fictional consequence. Harm that is clearly unrelated or trivial may be handled by the fiction rather than forced up the track.

Broken characters cannot function normally in the scene. They may still speak, crawl, take a very limited action, or attempt something desperate when the fiction allows it. If the injury is immediately life-threatening, mark the character Unstable. Further serious Harm while Broken can kill whether or not they are Unstable.

Recovery

Strained normally clears after the immediate Scene once the character has safety, a breather, and basic attention. As a default when the exact injury does not dictate otherwise, a treated Wounded character improves to Strained after about 3 days of safe recovery; a treated Broken character improves to Wounded after about 1 week, then follows normal Wounded recovery. Severe gunshot wounds, surgery, infection, crushed limbs, catastrophic burns, or similar injuries may take much longer. A Physician, proper facilities, Fortera-assisted care, and good conditions can shorten or improve recovery, but severe injury is never erased instantly.

Unstable and Stabilisation

An Unstable Broken character is at immediate risk of dying from the established injury. Anyone with a plausible method may attempt emergency stabilisation. Medicine with appropriate tools or materials is the normal method. A Fortera Working may substitute when its physical effect directly addresses the established cause, such as controlling bleeding, dangerous pressure, breathing, or circulation. Standard Effect removes Unstable; it does not remove Broken. A 7-9 stabilises but carries the established consequence. Further serious Harm while Unstable may kill when the fiction supports it. There is no universal death-save loop.

Environmental Hazards

Falls, fire, drowning, crushing machinery, explosions, extreme weather, toxic exposure, collapsing structures, and similar hazards use the normal Risk, Effect, and Harm rules. Do not create a separate damage table unless a scenario specifically needs one.

As a baseline, brief or minor exposure may cause Strained, serious exposure may cause Wounded, and overwhelming or sustained exposure may cause Broken or death when the fiction clearly supports it. Repeated exposure can escalate Harm normally. If the outcome is already obvious and no meaningful uncertainty remains, apply the fictional consequence without forcing a roll.

Helpless Targets and Decisive Harm

Combat assumes both sides retain some ability to react, resist, move, interfere, or survive. A target is Helpless when they cannot meaningfully defend themselves against the immediate action: sleeping while an attacker stands over them, unconscious, securely restrained, completely incapacitated, deliberately submitting, or otherwise unable to respond. Surprise alone is not automatically Helplessness.

Decisive Harm

When a character has complete control over a Helpless target and uses a clearly lethal method at contact distance, do not treat it as an ordinary combat attack. If there is no meaningful uncertainty, no roll is required. Follow the fiction.

When to Roll

Roll only for what remains uncertain: reaching the target without waking them, keeping the weapon concealed, preventing intervention, controlling a struggling prisoner, firing during violent movement, or finishing before guards arrive. Do not invent uncertainty merely to protect a target from an established situation.

Ambush

Ambush creates tactical advantage but does not automatically make every target Helpless. A successful ambush may determine which side acts first, improve Effect, reduce Risk, or establish superior position. If the ambushed side is genuinely surprised, it cannot use Reactions until after its first combatant completes an Activation. Helplessness only applies when the fiction truly removes meaningful resistance.

CHAPTER 7 - BATTLEFIELD SCALE

Personal Combat or Battlefield Scale?

Use Personal Combat while the table cares about individual movement, facing, Cover, reloading, Harm, and specific attacks. At this scale every relevant PC and NPC receives their own Activation.

Use Battlefield Scale when the important decisions are about formations, ground, objectives, Cohesion, artillery, or command, and resolving every person separately would add bookkeeping rather than useful choices. There is no fixed headcount. Ask whether the table still cares what each individual does.

Do not use a middle abstraction layer inside Personal Combat. If individual actions matter, keep the combatants individual. If individual actions no longer matter, change scale.

Example: one prepared shooter against three guards is Personal Combat because each guard can move, seek Cover, fire, Reload, become Wounded, or withdraw separately. Five player characters and eighteen sailors fighting twenty-five dock guards is usually Battlefield Scale because the meaningful choices are now about bodies of troops, ground, objectives, and Cohesion.

Zoom back to Personal Combat whenever a specific person, location, or action becomes decisive, such as boarding a gun position, rescuing an officer, sabotaging a mechanism, or fighting inside a breached compartment. Zoom out again when those individual details stop being the important decisions.

Carry facts between scales, not arithmetic. A Wounded character remains Wounded, a disabled gun remains disabled, captured ground remains captured, and a broken gate remains broken. Use those facts to set Risk, Effect, formation State, Cohesion, and clocks. Do not convert every personal Harm mark into a fixed amount of Cohesion.

Formation Profile

A formation is described by Quality, Cohesion, Type, Position, State, Facing, and Objective.

Type describes what the body is and how it is organised, such as line infantry, skirmishers, cavalry, or a battery; it provides fictional permissions rather than a fixed bonus. State is a short current fiction tag such as formed, marching, entrenched, disordered, or routing. State changes Risk, Effect, movement, or available actions only when the situation makes that consequence relevant.

Quality	Cohesion	Effect guidance
Green	0/4	Reduce Effect in demanding conditions.
Regular	0/4	Baseline formation performance.
Veteran	0/5	May improve Effect when acting in conditions suited to training and doctrine.
Elite	0/6	Can produce Great Effect when fiction, training, and position support it.

Commanding a Formation

When an order is uncertain and consequential, the commander rolls the relevant Capability using the normal 2d6 procedure. Establish Risk from the battlefield situation and Effect from the order, formation Quality, facing, position, terrain, morale, support, and opposition.

Common formation action	Purpose
Advance	Take or close on ground.
Fire	Deliver disciplined ranged pressure.
Charge	Close violently and attempt to break the enemy position.
Hold	Maintain position under pressure.
Rally	Restore order, morale, or Cohesion where fiction allows.
Redeploy	Change facing, frontage, reserve posture, route, or tactical role.
Withdraw	Disengage or abandon ground without simply collapsing.

Scale Clocks

Battlefield objectives use Scale Clocks. Successful formation actions mark segments according to established Effect.

For battlefield objectives, use 4 segments for a straightforward but pressured objective, 6 for a contested objective, 8 for a fortified, difficult, or multi-stage objective, and 10+ for a major operational objective. If an objective is genuinely unopposed, resolve it from the fiction instead of creating a Clock.

Effect	Clock progress
Limited	1 segment
Standard	2 segments
Great	3 segments

Clocks represent objectives and changing situations, not universal army hit points.

Cohesion

Cohesion tracks whether a formation can continue functioning as a body. Pressure, casualties, enfilade, failed orders, broken ground, loss of officers, artillery shock, isolation, and morale events can reduce Cohesion when the fiction supports it. Reaching the formation limit means it can no longer continue normally.

ZOOM RULE Personal Combat keeps every relevant combatant individual. When individual Activations stop adding useful decisions, move to Battlefield Scale instead of combining NPCs. Carry forward the fiction, not a numerical conversion. Zoom back to Personal Combat for decisive local acts.

Formation Facing

Formations have a front, flanks, and rear. An attack into a formation's flank gains +1 Effect when the geometry and formation state genuinely expose that side. An attack into the rear also gains +1 Effect. If a rear attack achieves Great Effect and the formation

cannot immediately turn, withdraw, or reform, mark 1 additional Cohesion. Effect still caps at Great.

Cohesion Loss

When the direct objective of an action is to break an enemy formation, successful Effect reduces Cohesion using the same scale as battlefield clock progress: Limited 1, Standard 2, Great 3. When the action is primarily about taking ground, delaying reinforcements, destroying a bridge, or another objective, mark the appropriate Scale Clock instead. Do not automatically apply full Cohesion loss and full clock progress from the same action unless Great Effect or the fiction clearly supports both.

Battlefield Position

Battlefield Scale uses scenario zones, lines, heights, roads, fortifications, and objectives rather than converting every personal-combat space. An Advance normally changes the formation's position by one meaningful battlefield step. Faster formations, columns, cavalry, or unopposed movement may cover more when the scenario makes that distinction important.

Artillery

Artillery is too powerful to model as an ordinary personal firearm. At Battlefield Scale, a prepared battery acts as a formation asset and uses the normal formation Action, Effect, Cohesion, and Scale Clock rules. At Personal Scale, a crew-served gun requires access, loading, aiming, and a credible firing lane; one successful direct hit against people, light structures, or ordinary personal cover normally has Great Effect or simply follows the obvious fiction.

A loaded field gun normally needs a crew and an Action to fire. Reloading is an extended crew task rather than a normal one-person firearm Reload; under pressure, model it as a short Progress Clock or as one or more crew Actions according to the gun and situation. Personal armour does not protect against a direct artillery hit, though cover and fortification may determine whether a direct hit is possible at all.

A screened battery is not automatically exposed to ordinary direct fire merely because its supporting formation is engaged. It can be attacked only by fire or manoeuvre that can credibly reach it, such as counterbattery fire, a dedicated flanking move, cavalry breakthrough, elevated fire, or another established firing lane. Do not make the battery resolve defensive pressure unless it is actually targeted or exposed.

Ships and Airships

Use a vessel layer when the ship itself is the acting unit. Track only systems that matter to the encounter: Structure, Rigging/Lift, Weapons, Crew, Command, and for airships Éterlumin Reserve. Each system is normally Stable, Impaired, or Disabled. Damage, depletion, and miscalibration are different problems: damage is repaired, depletion is resupplied, and miscalibration is tuned.

A vessel normally receives one meaningful Activation per round unless its profile says otherwise. Establish Risk and Effect from range, facing, firing arc, manoeuvre, crew condition, weapons, and target scale. A Broadside or battery attack is one aggregate vessel action, not one roll per cannon. Great Effect may disable a relevant system, Standard may Impair it or make major progress toward the objective, and Limited produces partial damage or position according to the fiction.

Boarding, sabotage, repairs under fire, and attacks on exposed crew Zoom to Personal Scale. Fleet actions, formation manoeuvre, and batteries can Zoom to Battlefield Scale. An intact hull normally prevents personal weapons from directly damaging internal machinery until characters gain physical access through boarding, a breach, hatch, exposed mechanism, or another credible route.

CHAPTER 8 - THREATS AND BESTIARY

NPCs

NPCs use the same world rules as player characters. The GM chooses how much mechanical detail is useful: a fast **Quality** profile or a full character-style build. In Personal Combat, every relevant NPC acts individually and receives its own Activation. Do not merge several NPCs into one shared attack or Activation. If individual NPC actions stop being useful to track, change to Battlefield Scale.

NPC Detail Level

Choose the lighter format unless extra detail will improve play. The choice is about GM workload, not how important, dangerous, or real the NPC is.

Format	What to record	How the NPC rolls
Quality NPC	One Quality from +0 to +3, objective, morale, equipment, Harm, and only the traits or Fortera facts that matter.	Roll 2d6 + Quality for uncertain actions.
Full-Build NPC	Use the same statistic types available to PCs: Skills, Strengths, Techniques, Background, Fortera Workings and Capacity, equipment, Harm, and other relevant details. The NPC need not be a starting character.	Roll 2d6 + the relevant Capacity exactly as a PC would.

The GM may expand a **Quality** NPC into a full build whenever the character becomes more important, or simplify a full build when that detail no longer helps. Preserve what play has already established: competence, injuries, equipment, relationships, Fortera capability, and other facts. Do not retroactively rewrite previous results.

ONE ROLL, ONE PROFILE Use either **Quality** or the relevant full-build **Capacity** for a roll, never both.

Antagonists Are Characters

Important antagonists may use full builds with the same Skills, Strengths, Techniques, Fortera Workings, Capacity, equipment, Harm, and tactical options as player characters. Their danger should come from competence, preparation, allies, resources, position, and objectives rather than immunity to the rules that govern everyone else.

Story importance alone does not make a human antagonist a Major Threat. A dangerous captain, assassin, investigator, officer, or Fortera practitioner normally still receives the

same one Activation, Move, Action, Reaction, Harm rules, and physical vulnerabilities as another person unless a specific established trait says otherwise.

NPCs are not required to fight until physically destroyed. Morale, objectives, casualties, isolation, leadership loss, and changing circumstances should influence retreat, surrender, regrouping, or collapse.

Individual NPC Activations

An individual NPC in Personal Combat uses the same normal action economy as a player character: one Move, one Action, and one Reaction per round. An NPC may Move and then attack, attack and then Move, Take Cover and then attack, or use the Action to Sprint, Reload, Ready, assist, withdraw, or pursue another objective. Sprint consumes the Action, so an NPC that Sprints normally cannot also attack that Activation.

When an individual NPC takes an uncertain action, use $2d6 + \text{Quality}$ for a Quality NPC or $2d6 + \text{the relevant Capability}$ for a full-build NPC. Establish Risk and Effect from position, equipment, target, objective, and the fiction. On 10+, the NPC achieves the established Effect. On 7-9, it achieves the Effect and suffers a consequence appropriate to its Risk. On 6-, it fails to achieve the intended Effect and the situation changes against it. For attacks, the target does not make a separate defence roll. Guard, armour, Cover, Facing, range, and other protection apply normally.

Self-Preservation Under Fire

Ordinary NPCs are not suicidal. When an NPC is exposed to effective hostile fire, decide its Activation from its objective, training, morale, injuries, and available protection. Do not leave ordinary guards standing in the open simply because their stat block says they have an attack.

- If substantial Cover is reachable within the NPC's normal Move, an exposed NPC will normally move into Cover before taking its Action. It may still fire, Reload, Ready, or take another Action from that position.
- If meaningful safety requires a Sprint, an ordinary NPC will usually Sprint rather than remain exposed, unless its objective, discipline, or immediate necessity makes holding or returning fire worth the danger. Because Sprint uses the Action, it does not also fire.
- If no useful Cover is reachable, an NPC may return fire, withdraw toward safety, help a casualty, spread out, surrender, or continue the mission according to the fiction. Trained troops may deliberately cover one another while others move.
- After a serious casualty, loss of a leader, encirclement, or a clearly untenable position, reassess morale. If the response is obvious, apply it without a roll. If it is genuinely uncertain, use the normal NPC Morale rule.
- A Wounded NPC still receives an Activation unless the injury makes meaningful action impossible. Ordinary wounded people usually seek Cover, aid, or withdrawal. Disciplined, trapped, desperate, or highly motivated NPCs may keep fighting when the injury permits it.

Worked Example: One Prepared Shooter, Three Guards in the Open

A Soldier is behind a stone firing position with four Loaded muskets Staged within reach. Three ordinary Quality +1 guards are caught in open ground. The prepared position gives the Soldier the tactical advantage, so the Soldier chooses the first Activation.

Soldier Activation: the Soldier fires the musket in hand. After resolving the shot, the Soldier spends the Move to set the Fired musket aside and take the second Staged musket. The Soldier ends the Activation behind Cover with a Loaded firearm ready for the next round. The Staged weapons did not create an extra attack; they avoided spending the next Action on Reload.

Guard Activations: each surviving guard now receives its own Activation. A guard with substantial Cover within 4 spaces may use its Move to reach that Cover and then use its Action to fire. A guard whose only safety is 6 spaces away may Sprint to it, but cannot fire because Sprint used the Action. A Wounded guard may instead withdraw or seek aid if that is the credible response. The guards do not remain in the open merely to use their attacks.

Next Round: reassess the fiction. The guards now know the firing position, some may have reached Cover, and others may be retreating or returning fire. Risk and Effect are set again from those new positions. If the Soldier still has another Staged musket, the Soldier can fire it on the next Activation and use the Move to take the next one. Four staged muskets can therefore support up to four firing Activations without a Reload Action, but they never grant extra Activations or extra attacks.

SCALE REMINDER Three guards in Personal Combat are three NPCs with three Activations. If tracking each guard stops creating useful tactical choices, do not compress them into one roll. Change to Battlefield Scale.

NPC Morale

NPC morale follows objectives and fiction rather than a mandatory morale check. If the outcome is obvious, apply it: frightened levies may flee after their line collapses, disciplined troops may hold while their objective still matters, and trapped enemies may surrender when resistance has no credible purpose.

Roll only when whether the NPCs hold, flee, surrender, or regroup is genuinely uncertain and consequential. A Quality NPC uses Quality. A full-build NPC uses the most relevant Command, Influence, or other Capability supported by the fiction. Resolve it through normal Risk and Effect.

Major Threats

A Major Threat may receive multiple Activations in a round. This can represent scale, speed, multiple simultaneous threats, environmental influence, unusual physiology, distributed systems, or extraordinary tactical pressure. Extra Activations are explicit traits, not generic extra attacks. A human antagonist does not become a Major Threat merely because they are important to the story.

Large Bodies and Footprints

A creature, machine, or phenomenon larger than one space lists its occupied footprint in its threat profile. It threatens and is targeted from the edges of that footprint rather than from an imaginary centre square. Large bodies block movement through the spaces they occupy unless a specific rule or manoeuvre permits otherwise.

Do not use a universal size ladder unless the encounter needs one. A Major Threat profile should state only the footprint, reach, facing if relevant, and any special movement or targeting rules that actually matter.

Using the Bestiary

These entries are threat profiles, not hit-point blocks. All creatures and phenomena remain at Personal Scale regardless of physical size. Size changes footprint, reach, movement, protection, what weapons can plausibly affect the target, and the consequences it can create.

Quality is used only when the creature or phenomenon directly acts, contests, or resists through the normal resolution procedure. Activations show how many meaningful actions a Major Threat normally receives in a round. When a profile does not list ordinary Harm, resolve the encounter through its stated objective, clock, Breakpoint, or physical conditions instead of inventing hit points.

Every entry has an Encounter Question. That question tells the GM what makes the encounter more than a damage race. Players may still use force when force is plausible, but understanding behaviour, signals, pressure, memory, terrain, or Fortera often creates safer or more effective solutions.

MOON-AFFECTED

Encounter Question: What remains of the person, and what is driving the transformation?

Nature: A human whose biology has become unusually Responsive to prolonged Fortera field exposure. The condition is poorly understood. Exposure can sensitise previously unresponsive biological pathways and, over weeks, months, or longer, redirect growth, metabolism, tissue remodelling, sensory development, and neurological regulation, eventually producing an overbuilt or predatory body. Added mass comes from real biological growth and therefore requires time, nutrition, water, minerals, and other material. Lunar conditions can change the surrounding Fortera field and modulate established symptoms, but Moon-Affected do not transform instantly. The condition is not transmitted by bites, blood, touch, or ordinary contact. It is not a supernatural curse. Recognition, habit, memory, and other parts of the original person can remain.

Moon-Affected rule: prolonged field exposure can make relevant biological pathways Responsive and then drive them over time. The condition is not contagious, does not create mass from nothing, and does not produce instant lycanthropic transformation.

Typical profile: Quality +2. Two Activations in an advanced overbuilt state. Footprint 1 space. Move 5 spaces. Ordinary melee Reach 1. Use the normal Harm ladder, but treat improvised or clearly inadequate attacks as Limited or No Effect. Firearms and serious weapons remain dangerous when they can physically harm the body.

Warning signs: Unexplained appetite or thirst, rapid but progressive changes in muscle or bone, altered sleep, sensory sensitivity, unusual healing or tissue growth, behavioural changes linked to stress or field conditions, and symptoms that strengthen or weaken with particular lunar conditions. Familiar habits, names, places, and routines may still provoke recognition.

Behaviour: The affected person remains a person, but long-term changes to stress, hunger, pain, sensation, endocrine regulation, and neural response can make behaviour increasingly unfamiliar or dangerous. Advanced cases may pursue strong resonance, protect remembered places or people, or react violently when the environment amplifies the same instability. Do not play every Moon-Affected as a mindless berserker.

Counterplay: Remove or reduce the relevant field exposure, change local Fortera conditions, use Sense to identify which biological pathways are responding, use Read when the mechanism is unclear, stabilise or manipulate those pathways with an appropriate Working, exploit recognition or memory, or physically disable the threat. Understanding what the body is responding to can create options that simple injury cannot.

SOURCE BEAST

Encounter Question: What is it correcting?

Nature: An intelligent, morally neutral Fortera correction phenomenon. It is independent of the Source that first produced it. It observes, tests, forms hypotheses, and may follow resonant people or unresolved signals. It can harm innocents who obstruct correction, but cruelty is not its purpose.

A Source Beast may be physically stopped, but destroying the manifestation does not necessarily resolve the underlying contradiction. If the disturbance remains, the manifestation can return and campaign-scale Correction can adapt.

Encounter objectives may include Destroy the Manifestation, Exploit a Weakness, Sever Local Feedback, Stabilise the Chamber, or Escape.

Tactical Insight

Characters may discover information about a manifestation during the encounter. A confirmed weakness becomes shared usable knowledge for the Scene. When an action directly exploits that confirmed weakness, the characters may normally gain +1 Effect where appropriate. Once per round, instead of taking that +1 Effect, a successful Standard-or-better exploitation may Disrupt the Weakness and force the manifestation to Reorient. Learning a weakness does not itself defeat the Source Beast.

Reorientation

If characters materially alter the local pattern or feedback structure sustaining the manifestation, or successfully Disrupt a confirmed weakness, the Source Beast must Reorient and loses one Activation on the following round. Multiple Reorientation triggers do not remove more than one Activation in the same round unless the threat profile explicitly says otherwise. Learning information alone does not trigger Reorientation; the characters must actually exploit or change something.

Manifestation Breakpoints

When the objective is to physically disrupt or destroy a Source Beast manifestation, use a Manifestation Breakpoint rather than ordinary personal Harm. A successful action that can genuinely destabilise the manifestation adds progress by Effect: Limited 1, Standard 2, Great 3. Attacks or methods that cannot plausibly affect the manifestation have No Effect.

Suggested starting budgets are Minor Manifestation 10, Major Manifestation 20, and Source-scale Manifestation 30+. These are encounter-tuning baselines, not creature hit points. Raise or lower them for the scenario, and use an objective or Scale Clock instead when destruction is not the real goal.

Breakpoint progress represents loss of local stability, structure, coherence, or the conditions sustaining the manifestation. Insight can accelerate that progress through +1

Effect, while Disrupt Weakness trades that extra progress for Reorientation and reduced enemy tempo.

Source Beast Correction

Correction is campaign-scale material. There is no combat action called Resolve the Contradiction and no six-step combat clock that solves the underlying phenomenon during a fight. The local manifestation is only an expression of a larger problem.

Campaign Correction may rise when manifestations are repeatedly destroyed while underlying conditions remain unchanged. It may fall or change when characters discover the causal mechanism, alter a Source relationship, interrupt repeating feedback, change environmental conditions, or correct a false assumption driving previous interventions.

Minor Manifestation

Typical profile: Quality +1 or +2. One Activation. Breakpoint 10. Footprint 1 to 2 spaces. Use when the manifestation is local, newly formed, or only partly expressed.

Major Manifestation

Typical profile: Quality +2. Two Activations. Breakpoint 20. Footprint commonly 2 by 2 spaces, but the actual body follows the fiction. One Activation should often reposition, alter terrain, test a response, or interfere with the objective rather than deal direct Harm.

Source-Scale Manifestation

Typical profile: Quality +3. Two Activations, occasionally three when the scenario explicitly requires it. Breakpoint 30+. Footprint is scenario-defined. Personal weapons may still harm exposed or vulnerable parts when the fiction supports it, but changing the sustaining structure is usually more effective than shooting the largest visible mass.

Confirmed understanding may also open communication or coexistence when the Beast can recognise that the contradiction is being addressed.

BLACKWAKE RAY

Encounter Question: How do we make it leave without panicking it?

Nature: A large Fortera-sensitive ray drawn to heat, pressure, vibration, and machinery. Its danger comes from attachment, agitation, and the scale of its movement around vessels or structures rather than from deliberate predation.

Typical profile: Quality +1. One Activation. Large footprint appropriate to the water or space it occupies. Its body can be harmed by firearms, heavy weapons, and vessel weapons when a clear target exists, but ordinary personal attacks may have Limited Effect against the full mass.

Warning signs: Changes in water pressure, repeated passes near active machinery, vibration in hull or structure, and increasing agitation when engines, pumps, guns, or resonant equipment intensify.

Behaviour: Approach the strongest attractive signal, attach or circle, react violently to abrupt spikes, and withdraw when the attracting pattern is reduced or redirected.

Counterplay: Reduce heat, vibration, or pressure; redirect the attracting signal; shut down or isolate machinery; create a safer competing signal; or drive it away with credible force. A panicked response should make the encounter more dangerous, not automatically make the animal malicious.

DROWNED CHOIR

Encounter Question: What did this place remember?

Nature: A Fortera phenomenon that stores and reproduces sound, vibration, and pressure patterns in flooded or saturated environments. The Choir can repeat voices, impacts, alarms, machinery rhythms, or fragments of an event long after the original source is gone.

Typical profile: Usually no conventional body and no ordinary Harm track. Use Quality +1 when the phenomenon actively contests characters. A 4- or 6-segment objective clock is typical for crossing, quieting, interpreting, or isolating it.

Warning signs: Sounds with impossible direction, pressure pulses repeating at the same interval, voices that match a place but not the current occupants, and machinery answering a sound that should not exist.

Behaviour: Repeat stored patterns, strengthen when the environment reproduces matching pressure or sound, and trigger responses in people or machinery that treat the copied signal as real.

Counterplay: Read the repeating pattern, identify the original event, isolate the medium carrying it, damp the pressure cycle, or deliberately feed it a safer pattern. Shooting the water does not solve a memory stored in the environment.

HUSHMOTH SWARM

Encounter Question: What happens when communication fails?

Nature: A swarm whose Fortera interference disrupts hearing, signalling, and the reliable transmission of patterned information.

Typical profile: Quality +1. One Activation. Swarm footprint usually 2 by 2 spaces and may spread or contract. Direct bodily Harm is not its main threat. Inside the active swarm, spoken orders, hearing-dependent Observation, and ordinary acoustic signals are normally reduced one Effect step; communication that cannot be meaningfully perceived has No Effect.

Warning signs: Voices become indistinct at short range, signal calls fail to carry, rhythm loses synchronisation, and groups begin acting on different understandings of the same situation.

Behaviour: Cluster around patterned sound or active signalling, break coordination, then move when the interference source changes.

Counterplay: Leave or disperse the swarm, switch to visual or physical signals, create prearranged orders, isolate critical communications, or physically drive the insects away. The encounter is about lost coordination before it is about damage.

BELLMOUTH

Encounter Question: What happens if an animal repeats the right signal?

Nature: A small creature able to reproduce learned patterns with disturbing precision. It can imitate calls, bells, knocks, alarms, whistles, command rhythms, and other signals well enough that systems or people may accept the copy.

Typical profile: Quality +1. One Activation. Footprint 1 space. Physically an ordinary small creature for Harm purposes unless a specific specimen has unusual protection.

Warning signs: A familiar signal with no visible operator, an alarm repeated at the wrong interval, a command voice without the speaker, or a mechanical response triggered by an animal nearby.

Behaviour: Observe, learn, repeat, and use response as feedback. A Bellmouth need not understand the meaning of a signal to reproduce the pattern that produces a useful reaction.

Counterplay: Verify source as well as signal, change authentication patterns, remove the animal from the signalling environment, or exploit its mimicry deliberately. Once characters know a Bellmouth is present, the problem becomes trust in signals rather than combat alone.

THE LAST CREW



Encounter Question: What unfinished action is it trying to complete?

Nature: A repeating Fortera imprint of a crew in crisis. It is a phenomenon, not a group of surviving people and not a set of conventional targets. The sequence repeats fragments of an emergency action, procedure, evacuation, repair, or final attempt.

Typical profile: No conventional Harm. Use a 4- or 6-segment sequence clock representing the unfinished action, plus a danger clock when remaining in the repeating environment creates escalating risk.

Warning signs: The same footsteps, orders, tool movements, impacts, or door operations repeat with small variations while no living crew is present.

Behaviour: Restart the sequence when interrupted, draw nearby systems or people into roles that complete missing steps, and preserve the logic of the final emergency even when the original context is gone.

Counterplay: Determine what the crew was trying to finish, complete or safely redirect the missing step, isolate the machinery or field carrying the imprint, or leave the sequence before it recruits the characters into it.

REEF SHEPHERD

Encounter Question: What disturbance makes coexistence impossible?

Nature: An immense native creature whose movement and behaviour can make it function like living geography. It reacts to disturbance in the environment around it rather than hunting people as ordinary prey.

Typical profile: Quality +1 or +2 when it directly acts. One Activation. Footprint may cover many spaces. Personal firearms can injure exposed tissue when a credible target exists, but cannot meaningfully stop the entire body through ordinary volume of fire. Heavy weapons, vessels, terrain, and objectives matter more than raw personal damage.

Warning signs: Reef or shoal movement that does not match current, animals changing course around an apparently fixed feature, and local water or terrain responding as one connected body.

Behaviour: Shift territory, shelter associated life, react to intrusion or repeated disturbance, and use mass rather than precise attacks.

Counterplay: Identify what it treats as a disturbance, change route or behaviour, create space, redirect associated animals, or use vessel-scale force only when coexistence has genuinely failed. The best outcome is often passage, not a kill.

ROADBACK

Encounter Question: What is moving beneath us?

Nature: A large migratory creature strongly responsive to deep vibration and buried disturbance. Its movement can be mistaken for ground, road, ridge, or slow terrain until the pattern shifts.

Typical profile: Quality +1. One Activation, two when stampeding or reacting to major disturbance. Large elongated footprint. Reach follows body and momentum rather than a precise weapon arc. Personal firearms can wound exposed parts, while stopping the whole animal often requires changing movement, terrain, or the stimulus driving it.

Warning signs: Repeating tremors, displaced soil, road surfaces that rise or settle out of sequence, and animals reacting before people can identify the source.

Behaviour: Follow deep movement or vibration, continue along established migratory paths, and react strongly when buried systems, artillery, excavation, or Fortera disturbance resembles a competing signal.

Counterplay: Stop or redirect the deep disturbance, clear its route, use terrain to guide movement, or disengage before momentum becomes the primary threat.

RAIN SAINT

Encounter Question: What memory is the field repeating?

Nature: A Fortera phenomenon retaining a human pattern in rain, runoff, wet surfaces, or repeated weather conditions. It can reproduce posture, route, gesture, or fragments of an unfinished human action without being the original person returned to life.

Typical profile: No conventional Harm. Use Quality +1 when the phenomenon actively resists interference. A 4- or 6-segment understanding or release clock is typical when the scene needs extended resolution.

Warning signs: A human-like pattern appears only under specific rainfall or water flow, repeats the same path, and ignores ordinary conversation unless something matches the remembered conditions.

Behaviour: Repeat the retained action, react to objects or people connected to the memory, and fade when the environmental conditions no longer support the pattern.

Counterplay: Identify the retained action, reconstruct what the person was doing, change the water or field conditions, complete or interrupt the remembered sequence, or simply allow the phenomenon to pass without treating it as a hostile spirit.

KEEL LEECH

Encounter Question: Where did the stored pressure go?

Nature: A hull parasite that creates drag, pressure imbalance, and calibration problems while storing mechanical or resonant stress in and around its attachment.

Typical profile: Quality +1. One Activation when disturbed. Footprint usually 1 to 2 spaces along a hull. Direct attacks can injure it, but careless removal can release the pressure or miscalibration it has accumulated.

Warning signs: Unexplained drag, repeated trim correction, gauges disagreeing without obvious mechanical failure, pressure noise near the hull, and a local system that will not stay tuned.

Behaviour: Remain attached while conditions feed it, shift toward stronger pressure or resonance, and release accumulated stress when violently dislodged.

Counterplay: Diagnose the stored pressure first, vent or isolate the connected system, then cut, detach, or drive off the leech. Engineering, Seamanship, Tune, and controlled physical removal can all matter. Killing it before relieving the stored pressure may create the very failure the crew was trying to avoid.

BORROWED TIDE

Encounter Question: Is that actually a survivor?

Nature: A deceptive marine phenomenon or distributed organism that uses human-shaped debris, clinging material, and false survivor silhouettes to draw rescuers into the wrong water.

Typical profile: Quality +2 when its deception has not been recognised, otherwise +1. One Activation, sometimes two during an established ambush. Its footprint is distributed through the affected water rather than centred on the visible bait.

Warning signs: A survivor shape that does not move with waves correctly, debris that seems to cling together against current, repeated cries or motions with no believable source, and water movement converging on the rescuers rather than the apparent victim.

Behaviour: Present the bait, wait for approach, cling or close around the rescuer, then use the water and debris as the real threat. Once exposed, it may abandon one silhouette and form another elsewhere.

Counterplay: Observe before entering the water, test the silhouette from range, use ropes or poles, track current rather than appearance, separate debris, or attack the distributed mass when its position is established. The encounter punishes reflexive rescue without making compassion itself a mistake.

CHAPTER 9 - PLAYING MAR DE ORO

Fiction First

Begin with what is happening, not with a rule name. A player states a goal and describes an approach. Establish whether the action is possible, whether a roll is needed, and what Skill actually matches the approach. Then set Risk and Effect from the fiction.

The Basic Procedure

1. State the goal: what changes if this works?
2. Describe the method: what does the character actually do?
3. Choose the relevant Skill and Capability.
4. Establish Risk and Effect before the dice are rolled.
5. Roll 2d6 + Capability. Apply any Specialist Die only when a narrow Strength directly applies.
6. Apply the result once. On 7-9, the action succeeds and the established consequence also happens.
7. Describe the new situation. The fiction now determines what can happen next.

Use One Roll to Answer One Question

Do not turn one uncertain action into an attack roll, defence roll, armour roll, damage roll, and morale roll. Establish the meaningful uncertainty and let one roll resolve it unless a separate rule explicitly creates another decision.

Risk and Effect Are Information

Tell the player the Risk and Effect before the roll. If the player dislikes the stakes, they can change approach, seek Cover, create Setup, use equipment, move to a better position, or abandon the attempt. Predictable stakes create meaningful choices.

Worked Example of Play: The Receiver Room

The following example is written like actual table conversation. The group enters a damaged receiver room on an airship. A pressure line is screaming, an armed guard is behind a waist-high console, and a Fortera pattern is feeding back through the machinery. The GM starts a 6-segment Receiver Cascade clock because the failure will worsen if nobody acts.

1. Read the situation

GM: “The receiver is bucking in its frame. The guard is watching the door. What do you do?”

Scout player: “I stay low and study the gauges and the vibration. I want to know what is actually failing.”

GM: “Use Observation. You are Expert, +2, and your relevant Strength gives the Specialist Die. Low Risk, Standard Effect. The danger is losing time while the cascade grows.”

The player rolls 3d6, keeps the highest two, adds +2, and succeeds. The GM explains that the receiver is caught in a feedback loop and marks 2 segments of progress toward understanding and controlling the problem.

2. Create an opening

Officer player: “I shout that the feed line is about to burst on his side and point past him. I want him looking away from the Engineer.”

GM: “That can be Setup with Command. Serious Risk because he is armed; Standard Effect. On a bad result he gets a clean shot at you.”

The Officer rolls 7-9. The guard turns and the opening is created, but he fires back as the consequence. The Officer chooses the Setup benefit: the Engineer gets +1 Effect on the next directly supported action.

3. Fix the machine under pressure

Engineer player: “I use the opening to reach the regulator and isolate the damaged branch.”

GM: “Engineering +2. Serious Risk, normally Standard Effect, but the Officer set you up, so Great Effect. If it goes badly, the line ruptures beside you.”

The roll is 10+. The repair works cleanly. Great Effect marks 3 segments on the clock. There is no separate repair roll, damage roll, or machinery save.

4. Use Fortera because the fiction calls for it

Soldier player: “My Fortera Musketeer uses Sense to check whether the remaining pressure is mechanical or field-driven.”

GM: “You confirm the field is still feeding the receiver. Redirecting it at the scale you want is one Capacity above your safe limit. If you do it, the Overdraw cost is Strained. You know that before you roll.”

Player: “I do it.”

The next roll uses Fortera. The Working succeeds, the remaining problem is redirected into the grounded fitting, and the character marks the known Overdraw consequence. The price was a choice, not a surprise after the dice.

5. Combat remains part of the same fiction

GM: “The receiver settles. The guard is still behind the console with his pistol. We are now in a normal combat situation.”

The group uses the Personal Combat rules only because exact order, Cover, facing, and movement now matter. Solving the receiver did not create a hidden numerical combat bonus. It changed the fiction: the room is no longer seconds from catastrophic failure.

Why this example matters

The same engine handled investigation, teamwork, engineering, Fortera, a clock, and combat positioning. The characters were effective in different ways because of the situation, not because one build had a higher universal power level.

CHAPTER 10 - GAME MASTER GUIDE

If You Have Never Been a GM

You do not need to write a story for the players to follow. Prepare a situation: who wants what, what is dangerous, what will happen if nobody interferes, and a few places or people the characters can interact with. Then describe honestly and react to what the players do.

When a player asks “Can I do this?”, begin with the imagined situation. If it is plainly possible and there is no meaningful danger, say yes. If it is impossible with the current method, explain why. If it is possible but uncertain and consequential, state Skill, Risk, Effect, and likely consequence, then roll.

You are allowed to stop for ten seconds and think. You are also allowed to say, “I am not sure; I will make the simplest reasonable ruling now and check the edge case after the scene.” Consistent, understandable stakes are more important than perfect recall.

Fast Judgment

Use this sequence whenever a ruling is not obvious. It is designed to take a few seconds, not become a negotiation. Say the ruling, explain the one fact that matters, and move on.

Step	Ask	Fast ruling
1. Possible?	Can this method physically achieve the goal?	If no, explain what is missing. Do not roll. If yes, continue.
2. Roll?	Is the outcome uncertain and would failure meaningfully change the situation?	If no, it simply happens. If yes, continue.
3. Effect	What does success accomplish?	Start at Standard. Use Limited, Great, or No Effect only when the fiction clearly requires it.
4. Risk	What is the most important immediate consequence if things go wrong?	Start Low. Use Serious when active opposition or another hazard creates a credible major consequence. Use Deadly only for clearly established severe or potentially irreversible danger.
5. Consequence	What one thing is most likely to happen on a mixed result?	Name one credible consequence that fits the Risk before the roll.
6. Resolve	What question are we actually answering?	Roll once, apply the result once, describe the new situation, and continue play.

Fast Tie-Breakers

- Start at Low Risk when no major danger is established. Move to Serious when active opposition or another hazard creates a credible major consequence. Use Deadly only for clearly established severe or potentially irreversible danger. If still between two levels, use the lower one.

- If you are between Effect levels, use Standard unless the fiction clearly points elsewhere.
- One fictional fact should normally do one mechanical job. Do not count the same advantage as lower Risk, higher Effect, and extra protection unless separate rules genuinely apply.
- In Personal Combat, a 7-9 does not grant an enemy an extra attack. Enemy attacks come from their own Activation, Reaction, Readied Action, or a specific rule.
- If an edge case remains unclear, make the simplest reasonable ruling, state it openly, and continue. Check the rule after the scene rather than stopping play.

Quick Consequence Menu

Choose the consequence that follows most naturally from the danger already established. Usually choose one. Do not add a second punishment just because the result is 7–9.

Type	Examples
Harm	Strained, Wounded, or Broken when the established Risk supports it.
Position	Exposed, driven back, surrounded, trapped, worse Cover, lost footing.
Time	Delay, opportunity closing, opposing clock advances.
Equipment	Dropped, damaged, jammed, spent, lost, or forced out of reach.
Exposure	Alarm raised, identity revealed, firing position discovered, evidence left behind.
Separation	Ally cut off, route split, formation broken.
Opportunity	Target escapes, route closes, enemy gains leverage or a better position.

What the GM Is Here to Do

- Portray a credible world that reacts to what the characters actually do.
- Make danger understandable before the roll whenever the characters could reasonably perceive it.
- Let preparation, geometry, tools, knowledge, relationships, and positioning matter.
- Follow consequences instead of protecting an intended plot.
- Use the lightest rule that answers the current question, then move the fiction forward.

Good Table Practice

- Ask for the player's goal when an action description is ambiguous.
- Say what makes the Risk serious or the Effect limited. This teaches the table how the world works.
- When a player proposes a clever approach, change Risk, Effect, permission, or position before reaching for a flat modifier.
- Do not hide routine information behind rolls. Give characters what their training and Background would reasonably tell them.
- When unsure, resolve one meaningful question with the resolution roll and continue. Look up edge cases after the scene if necessary.
- One fictional fact should normally do one mechanical job. Let Cover protect, let position change Risk, and let a better tool change Effect instead of counting the same advantage repeatedly.

Use the Named Consequence First

On a 7–9, the GM usually does not need to invent anything. Apply the consequence stated before the roll. Use the Quick Consequence Menu only when the danger is clear but you need the most natural form it takes. Usually choose one consequence, not a chain of punishments.

Consistency Rule

When a materially similar situation returns, start from the previous call. Change Risk or Effect only because a concrete fact changed: position, tools, opposition, scale, preparation, leverage, or objective. Say that changed fact out loud. The table should be able to understand why the call moved.

Fast Consequence Lanes

If you know the kind of scene but not the exact consequence, use the nearest lane below. Reach for the Lanes first when the scene type is clear; use the Quick Consequence Menu only as the generic fallback when no lane fits. Deadly consequences still require Deadly Risk to have been established before the roll.

Scene	Low consequence	Serious consequence
Firefight	Position revealed; Cover worsens; brief exposure	Wounded; forced from a key position; ally separated
Infiltration	Noise; delay; evidence left behind	Alarm; identity exposed; route or group split
Engineering / Fortera	Time lost; material spent; brief disturbance	Wounded; system failure spreads; major field escalation
Social pressure	Suspicion; delay; minor access lost	Arrest or exposure; leverage lost; major concession
Travel / investigation	Time or supplies lost; route worsens	Separation; critical window closes; serious hazard

Tuning Danger and Difficulty

Lever	Question
Risk	Start Low. Serious when a credible major consequence is established; Deadly only for clearly severe or potentially irreversible danger. Low usually means at most Strained; Serious may Wound; Deadly may mean Broken, death, or catastrophe.
Effect	How much can this action accomplish?
Position	What does the fiction currently allow?
Facing / geometry	Which spaces are controlled, screened, exposed, or protected by terrain?
Opposition	How much pressure exists simultaneously?
Activations	How often can a Major Threat change the situation?
Cover / Range	Is the shot attenuated by distance, screened by geometry, or protected on a mixed result?
Formation Quality	What can a military body realistically achieve here?
Objectives	Does victory actually require killing the opposition?

Do not increase difficulty simply by inflating Harm. Make encounters dangerous through worse position, stronger tactical options, higher failure costs, harder objectives, divided attention, or credible numbers.

Risk Calibration for the GM

When you are unsure between two Risk levels, name the concrete consequence first. The severity of that consequence usually answers the question. If both still seem plausible, use

the lower Risk unless a concrete danger clearly establishes the higher. Do not begin with the label and invent a punishment afterward.

- Low Risk: failure costs time, secrecy, position, a minor resource, or causes a limited physical consequence such as Strained. Example: quietly searching an office before a clerk returns; shooting from a protected position where return fire cannot seriously reach you; adjusting an inactive mechanism under time pressure.
- Serious Risk: failure can Wound, cost important equipment, split the group, trigger arrest or a major alarm, expose the character to direct retaliation, or seriously worsen an active system. Example: exchanging shots with an armed guard; repairing a live pressure line; sneaking through a guarded military office; lying to an official who can detain you.
- Deadly Risk: failure can immediately produce Broken Harm, death, catastrophic machinery or Fortera failure, destruction of a critical objective, or similarly severe consequences. Example: crossing open ground under a prepared volley; working inside a collapsing lift chamber; containing a Source-scale runaway at close range.

Common Risk Mistakes

- Do not make a task Serious simply because it is technically difficult. Difficulty without danger should change Effect, require preparation, or use a Clock.
- Do not make every combat roll Serious by default. Shooting an unaware target from a safe position may be Low Risk or may require no roll if nothing meaningful is uncertain.
- Do not make every firearm exchange Deadly. A single armed opponent in an ordinary firefight is usually Serious. Deadly is for exposed prepared fire, overwhelming weapons, catastrophic terrain, or similarly severe immediate danger.
- Do not ignore protection when describing consequences. Cover, armour, Guard, Going Low, and established position may mitigate an applicable 7-9 consequence according to their rules.
- Do not choose the worst imaginable consequence. Choose the most serious immediate consequence the characters can credibly perceive from the current situation.

Principles of Adjudication

- Fiction first. Resolution second. Consequence third.
- One roll should answer one meaningful question whenever possible.
- Geometry should create tactical benefits before numerical modifiers do.
- Facing matters because it defines threatened spaces. Weapon choice determines how far those spaces extend.
- Numbers are dangerous because more opponents receive more activations, not because of a universal outnumbered penalty.
- Melee mastery is powerful inside threatened space but does not protect a character from ranged fire.
- Firearms remain dangerous. Armour may save you; it does not make standing in the open safe.
- When someone is helpless and nothing meaningful remains uncertain, follow the fiction rather than forcing a combat roll.

Avoid These Mistakes

- Hide the stakes until after the player rolls. Risk and Effect should be understood before commitment whenever the character could reasonably judge them.

- Roll for routine competence. If failure would not matter, simply let the character do it.
- Turn every 7-9 into bodily Harm. Consequences may be position, time, exposure, equipment, separation, alarm, lost opportunity, or Harm when the fiction supports it.
- Cancel a successful roll with its consequence. On 7-9 the character succeeds; the consequence changes the situation without erasing that success.
- Grant an enemy a free extra attack on a player's 7-9 in Personal Combat. Enemy attacks use their own Activation, Reaction, Readied Action, or a specific rule. Use the consequence to change position, time, exposure, equipment, or another established danger instead.
- Treat Callings as classes. Never tell a player that a Technique, Fortera Practice, weapon, or profession is unavailable simply because of their Calling.
- Stack modifiers when the fiction already explains the advantage. Prefer permission, position, Risk, Effect, Cover, geometry, or a Specialist Die when appropriate.
- Build encounters by inflating NPC Capability alone. Numbers, terrain, objectives, lines of fire, readiness, equipment, and morale usually matter more.
- Use a Clock for a problem one meaningful action could settle. Clocks are for layered or ongoing situations.

Beginning a Campaign

Begin with pressure already present. Give the characters a concrete reason to act, at least one person or faction that wants something, and an immediate situation that can change if nobody intervenes. Do not require a prewritten plot. The first decisions and consequences should generate the next situation.

For a first session, choose one problem that can reveal several parts of the system: an investigation that may become dangerous, a damaged machine or Fortera phenomenon, armed opposition with a clear objective, and at least one route that does not require combat.

Three-Line Session Prep

After each session, write only three lines: (1) what changed permanently, (2) which person, faction, or pressure reacts, and (3) what pressure can reach the characters next. Carry unresolved clocks, Harm, obligations, and exposed relationships forward. Start the next session where one of those pressures becomes actionable.

APPENDIX - QUICK REFERENCE

If You Remember Only Five Things

- Describe what your character does before naming a rule.
- Roll only when the outcome is uncertain and a meaningful consequence is possible.
- Before the roll, know the Skill, Risk, Effect, and important consequence.
- Roll 2d6 + Capability: 10+ succeeds; 7-9 succeeds with a consequence; 6- changes the situation against you.
- When unsure, use one roll to answer one meaningful question and continue play.

GM Quick Judgment

Use the Named Consequence First

On a 7-9, apply the consequence named before the roll. Do not invent a second twist just because the result is mixed. Usually apply one consequence, then continue play.

Consistency Rule

For a materially similar situation, start from the previous Risk and Effect call. Change it only because a concrete fact changed, and say that fact aloud.

Fast Consequence Lanes

Use this first when the scene type is clear. If no lane fits, fall back to the generic Quick Consequence Menu in Chapter 10.

Scene	Low consequence	Serious consequence
Firefight	Position revealed; Cover worsens; brief exposure	Wounded; forced from a key position; ally separated
Infiltration	Noise; delay; evidence left behind	Alarm; identity exposed; route or group split
Engineering / Fortera	Time lost; material spent; brief disturbance	Wounded; system failure spreads; major field escalation
Social pressure	Suspicion; delay; minor access lost	Arrest or exposure; leverage lost; major concession
Travel / investigation	Time or supplies lost; route worsens	Separation; critical window closes; serious hazard

7-9 AND CONSISTENCY

Use the consequence named before the roll. If you need a fallback, choose ONE: Harm • Position • Time • Equipment • Exposure • Separation • Opportunity. Same fiction = same baseline call. If Risk or Effect changes, say which concrete fact changed.

Call	Rule
Possible?	If the method cannot achieve the goal, explain what is missing. No roll.
Roll?	Only if the outcome is uncertain and failure matters. Otherwise it happens.

Effect	Start Standard. Limited = partial; Great = substantially more; No Effect = method cannot achieve it yet.
Risk	Start Low. Use Serious when active opposition or another hazard creates a credible major consequence. Use Deadly only for clearly established severe or potentially irreversible danger. If tied, use the lower.
Consequence	Choose one that follows from the danger: Harm, position, time, equipment, exposure, separation, or opportunity.
Resolve	Roll once, apply once, describe the new situation, continue.
COMBAT A 7-9 does not create a free enemy attack. FORTERA Ask: Can it respond? Can it physically happen? Can you safely push it that far?	

Rule	Value
Resolution roll	2d6 + Capability
Results	10+ success; 7-9 success + consequence; 6- situation changes against you
Capability	Familiar +0 / Trained +1 / Expert +2 / Master +3
Strength	Specialist Die: 3d6 keep highest 2; maximum one
Normal Activation	1 Move + 1 Action + 1 Reaction
Move	4 spaces
Space	about 2 metres
Facing	Threaten the three adjacent front spaces with normal melee weapons
Reach	Threaten 3 adjacent front spaces plus 5 spaces immediately beyond
Turn Reaction	Spend Reaction to face an enemy entering an adjacent unthreatened space
Flank	Two hostile Engaged characters occupy exact opposite adjacent spaces across the target. Attacks by that opposite pair gain +1 Effect. Unthreatened alone is not a flank.
Guarded Stance	Spend Move to hold ground; first Guard before next Activation does not consume your Reaction
Range	Beyond Normal but within Extended: -1 Effect
Screened Shot	Combatant substantially between shooter and target: -1 Effect
Scatter	One roll against the three adjacent front spaces
Rigid Armour	Firearm 7-9: reduce bodily Harm one step; 10+: normal Harm; contact: no benefit
Deadeye	Spend Move to Aim; successful shot ignores Rigid Armour
Reload	Normally 1 Action
Harm	Strained / Wounded / Broken
Battlefield Effect	Limited 1 / Standard 2 / Great 3 clock segments
Fortera Practice	Capacity 2 + two Workings
Fortera Test	Three questions: Can it respond? Can it physically happen? Can you safely push it that far? Objects are usually simple; living systems are complex. Overdraw supplies power, not miracles.
Deep Reserve	Capacity 3
Overdraw	+1 Strained; +2 Wounded + local disturbance; +3 Broken risk + Dead Zone; +4+ catastrophic. Field consequences begin at +2.
Starting Skills	1 Expert, 5 Trained; all others Familiar

Rule	Value
Growth Tokens	End of session: +1 participation; +1 if Background/Bond/Burden materially affected play; +1 group Milestone. Maximum 3. Save indefinitely; spend between sessions or during genuine downtime.
Effect stacking	Apply all steps; Great maximum; below Limited = No Effect
Guard Reaction	Melee 7-9 from threatened space: spend Reaction; reduce bodily Harm one step, or reduce a Combat Manoeuvre's Effect one step. 10+ beats Guard.
Reaction Strike	Enemy leaves threatened space without safe withdrawal: spend Reaction, make one melee attack
Grapple	Action while adjacent; Standard Effect = Grappled. Neither side can voluntarily separate; Drag moves pair 1 space; Escape costs Action.
Pin	From existing Grapple, Action + Standard Effect. No Move/free Facing; Escape Standard -> Grappled, Great -> free.
Melee Harm	Limited Strained / Standard Wounded / Great Broken when plausible
Harm escalation	Same-or-worse Harm escalates one step
Rigid Armour vs melee	On an appropriate melee 7-9, reduce bodily Harm one step when the armour covers the hit; 10+ resolves normally
Bonus attacks	Maximum one additional attack per Activation unless explicitly stated
Formation Cohesion	Direct break action: Limited 1 / Standard 2 / Great 3 Cohesion
Change Scale	Personal Combat: every relevant PC and NPC gets its own Activation. When individual Activations stop adding useful decisions, move to Battlefield Scale. There is no fixed headcount. Zoom back in when a specific local action matters.
Initiative	Tactical advantage acts first; otherwise each side rolls 1d6, reroll ties. Alternate activations; next round begins with the side that did not make the previous round's final Activation.
Surprise	Genuinely surprised side cannot use Reactions until after its first combatant completes an Activation
Protection	On one attack, Guard, armour, Cover, or Going Low can reduce bodily Harm at most once; clean 10+ gets through ordinary protection
Cover	Substantial Cover protects on ranged 7-9 by reducing bodily Harm one step; complete Cover means no direct shot
Go Low	Move: drop flat/crouch low. Same-elevation ranged 7-9 may reduce bodily Harm one step when the smaller profile genuinely matters; 10+ normal. Not Cover; no benefit against elevated/clear downward or area attacks. No stacking. While Low: no Sprint, Move up to 2 spaces; standing uses Move.
Source Beast	Confirmed weakness: +1 Effect when exploited, or once/round trade that bonus for Reorientation. Breakpoint progress: Limited 1 / Standard 2 / Great 3; suggested 10 / 20 / 30+.
Ready / Hold	Spend Action and name trigger; when it occurs before next Activation, spend Reaction to resolve Readied Action. Lost if trigger never occurs.
Occupied spaces	Move through willing allies if space permits; cannot end in occupied space. Hostile occupied spaces block movement unless a Manoeuvre/rule permits passage.

Rule	Value
Contact	Actual immediate physical control, not merely adjacency. Usually Grapple/Pin/Helpless/submission or equivalent fiction.
Progress Clock	4 straightforward but pressured / 6 contested / 8 fortified or multi-stage / 10+ major operational. Limited 1 / Standard 2 / Great 3 progress. Do not use a Clock for genuinely unopposed goals.
Unstable	Life-threatening Broken injury. Anyone with plausible aid may use Medicine; Standard Effect removes Unstable, not Broken. Field Stabilisation enables emergency treatment during active danger. Further serious Harm may kill; no death-save loop.
Recovery	Default: Strained after Scene; treated Wounded -> Strained about 3 days; treated Broken -> Wounded about 1 week, subject to injury fiction.
Equipment access	Common / Professional / Restricted / Rare-Prototype. Money is tracked literally when relevant; no abstract wealth score.
Large threat footprint	Threat profile states occupied spaces/reach/facing. Target and movement use footprint edges.
Artillery	Use formation asset at Battlefield Scale; direct Personal-scale hit is normally Great Effect or obvious fiction; crew reload is extended task.
Vessels	Track relevant systems Stable/Impaired/Disabled; one aggregate vessel action; Zoom boarding/sabotage to Personal Scale.
Setup	Action to help an ally. On success: +1 Effect on the next directly supported action or reduce its Risk one step. Multiple Setups do not stack.
Cover / visibility	Use Move to get behind available physical protection; no suitable obstacle means no Cover. Obscured target identifiable: -1 Effect. Target cannot be meaningfully located: normally No Effect.
Fortera Embedding	Fortera Practice + known Working. Choose fixed effect and Depth. Creation time = Depth days; natural useful life = Depth days. Depth changes longevity, not power. Tune can Preserve Embedding: touch for at least 10 minutes; decay pauses for Depth days, then resumes. Cannot restore expired or consumed effects.
Biological Response	Ordinary physiology usually responds. For an unusual, genuinely unknown response, use Sense only if learning the answer is uncertain and consequential. Resolve it with the normal 2d6 Fortera roll; no separate response die. Prolonged field exposure can make pathways Responsive.

APPENDIX - RULES FINDER

Use this as a fast index by topic. Page references below match this 6 x 9 production edition.

Topic	Page / section
Basic roll and result bands	p. 7 - Rolling the Dice
Risk	p. 9 - How the GM Sets Risk
Effect	p. 10 - Effect
Clocks and Setup	pp. 12-13 - Progress Clocks; Teamwork and Setup
Character creation	p. 14 - Character Creation; Fast Start
Skills and Capability	pp. 15-16 - Starting Skill Ratings; Skill List; Capability
Familiarity and specialised tasks	pp. 7-8 - Capability; Familiarity and No Effect
Strengths and Specialist Die	p. 16 - Strengths and the Specialist Die
Techniques	p. 28 - Techniques
Advancement	p. 34 - Advancement
Equipment, Load, weapon tags	p. 36 - Equipment
Fortera Workings and limits	pp. 41-42 - Fortera Workings; What Fortera Can Do
Biological response and healing	pp. 44-46 - Biological Response; Medicine, Wounds, and Healing
Capacity and Overdraw	pp. 49-50 - Capacity; Overdraw
Embedding	p. 50 - Embedding Fortera into Items
Initiative, movement, facing	pp. 53-55 - Combat Round; Movement, Facing, and Threatened Spaces
Range, Cover, firearms, Harm	pp. 58-61 - Range; Cover; Firearms, Harm, and Rigid Armour
Grapple, Pin, manoeuvres	p. 57 - Combat Manoeuvres
Battlefield Scale	p. 65 - Battlefield Scale
NPCs and Major Threats	pp. 69-71 - NPCs; Major Threats
Worked table procedure	pp. 80-81 - Playing Mar de Oro; worked example
Fast GM rulings	pp. 83-86 - Fast Judgment; consequences; consistency
Common GM mistakes	pp. 87-88 - Avoid These Mistakes
Table reference	pp. 89-92 - Quick Reference

APPENDIX - CHARACTER RECORD

Use one copy per character. Write only what matters in play; the full rulebook remains the reference for detailed Technique and Working text.

Name	Calling
Background	Bond
Burden	Significant Assets
Growth Tokens	Load / 6

Skills

Skill	Rating	Skill	Rating
Athletics		Mobility	
Close Combat		Firearms	
Observation		Fieldcraft	
Stealth		Command	
Influence		Deception	
Investigation		Scholarship	
Engineering		Medicine	
Navigation		Seamanship	
Fortera			

Strengths and Techniques

Strengths	Techniques

Character Record - Equipment, Harm, and Fortera

Harm	State	Notes
Strained	☐	
Wounded	☐	
Broken	☐	

Equipment and Load

Item	Load	State / notes

Fortera

Fortera Practice	☐
Safe Capacity	
Known Workings	
Embedded items / projects	
Current field consequences	

Notes, Contacts, Conditions, and Objectives

DESIGN INFLUENCES AND THANKS

Tales of Mar de Oro grew from years of playing, running, and studying tabletop roleplaying games. No game is designed in isolation, and several traditions helped shape how we approached these rules.

John Harper's *Blades in the Dark* demonstrated the value of clearly communicating danger, consequences, fictional position, progress, and practical guidance for the Game Master.

Vincent and Meguey Baker's *Apocalypse World* demonstrated how a simple 2d6 structure can keep play moving through clear success, success with consequences, and changing situations rather than repeated binary checks.

We are also indebted to the wider tradition of tactical, historical, maritime, and military roleplaying games. Those games showed how equipment, positioning, logistics, formations, and credible danger can make the fictional world matter mechanically.

We studied these games to understand what they did well, then built a system around the particular needs of Mar de Oro: dangerous firearms, expeditions, investigation, institutions, naval and battlefield conflict, and Fortera as a physical phenomenon.

To the designers who came before us, and to the players whose tables continue to teach us how roleplaying games actually work: **thank you.**

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