

Eclipse Phase Introduction for Convention Games

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*This document is a transcription of my normal introduction of Eclipse Phase to new players, especially at convention or one-shot games. In addition to this spiel, I distribute **10 Things You Should Know about Eclipse Phase** (David Cooper), **Eclipse Phase Cheat Sheet** (Marc Huete or David Cooper), note cards, and pencils. It is recommended you have a selection of sample characters printed, with the attached expanded equipment lists (Marc Huete or David Cooper) for each.*

Introduction *If there are multiple tables running, one person may read the following to all the tables simultaneously.*

Introduce the GMs, myself, and the venue (if appropriate). Name the game.

Background Technologies & History

Eclipse Phase's history begins in our near future. Man expands into space. Settlements grow on Luna, Mars and the asteroid belt to support mining, research and recreation. Skimmers, freighters and research vessels spread to the outer system. Scientists unlock the secret of the brain. They discover how to copy it, manipulate it, save it to back up, email and restore it, like data. Medical technology permits bodies to be custom-designed and grown. Almost all modern diseases are cured. Those with the money and influence become effectively immortal. Robotics make menial labor unnecessary, and 3D printing revolutionizes manufacturing, eliminating the scarcity of most resources. People begin uplifting animals, putting them through forced evolution programs to design, breed and cull them for intelligence. Several species are brought up to the level of sapience of *homo sapiens*. Computer technology blossoms, and the first self-aware, self-teaching AIs are developed. These intelligent animals and AIs, combined with humans, are referred to collectively as transhumanity. Truly it was a golden age, for those who had the resources to reap the benefits.

But all things must end. Conflicts between the US and China rise, eventually leading to war. Only when a fleet of robots enter New Orleans, severing and collecting the heads of civilians, do people begin to suspect it isn't the Chinese attacking, but a third party. It takes several months to determine that a major US defensive computer network, the Total Information Tactical Awareness Networks, or TITAN, has developed (or been corrupted) in ways which are simply inexplicably advanced, that TITAN is attacking us for reasons unknown, and it is winning. Automated factories appear practically overnight, spewing fleets of killbots across the world. At first transhumanity fights back, but a TITAN site would be nuked and rebuild itself the next day. Eventually it was clear there was only one option left: abandon Earth.

In a mad rush, transhumanity flees Earth by any means necessary. Thousands load into shuttles. Millions are taken to facilities where their brains were flash-frozen, sliced, recorded, transmitted off-world, their bodies destroyed, as quickly as can be managed. Some people escape because they are wealthier and buy space for themselves at the expense of others. Others are chosen for their skillsets. Many are chosen

by lotteries, or first-come first-serve, or other rigid selection processes that split families, even nations, resulting in hundreds of millions of orphans, widows, lonely parents, and transients. Ultimately less than 1% of the transhuman population escapes. The remaining 20 billion are trapped on Earth to be hunted and killed.

Then, one day, the TITANs disappear. No one knows why, or where to. They simply ... stopped. They left behind their armies of killbots and dangerous programs, which still roam corners of Luna and Mars, and make Earth completely inaccessible and alien. Earth, now a barren, radioactive wasteland, is cordoned off by killsats to prevent a second attack.

Ultimately, the species is left to do what they do best; survive, and even thrive. People still remember the Fall, which ended ten years ago. But since then, life has spread to the edges of the solar system and beyond, and for many people, it's returning to some sense of normalcy. There's still major conflicts over how things should be run, and a justified fear of many technologies, but transhumans re-establish cities, political parties, space exploration, not to mention political backstabbing and cut-throat competition.

Politics and Recent Advancements *edit as appropriate to the scheduled mission*

Politically, the inner system belongs primarily to the Planetary Consortium, a corporate-created state, similar to Shadowrun. Most of the transhuman population ended up here, and most of them arrived too poor to do anything but auction off their freedom in exchange for survival (or wait in cold storage to even be given the choice). The distances in space are truly vast, so further out it becomes difficult to support empires. Transhumanity has taken the opportunity to branch into a thousand different clades; families based on mutual trust and sharing, technosocialism, oligarchies, black research labs, exploration vessels, massive carnival ships all thrive in the outer system. Many of the truly rich and powerful of Earth migrated to Jupiter orbit, where they built high walls against the dangers of robots, AIs, nanotech, and uncontrolled genetic manipulation. These people believe (with good cause) that the technologies which destroyed billions just a decade ago are still a threat, and should be abandoned. Unfortunately, they also hold imperialistic inclinations, and have not been kind to their citizens or their neighbors.

A few significant finds have been made since the Fall. A number of jump gates (called Pandora Gates) connecting the solar system to other sites across the galaxy have been discovered and are now used for economic and scientific advancement. An alien species, the Factors, have contacted transhumanity and entered into a number of economic arrangements, although their motives are still unclear.

Ultimately, transhumanity stands on the knife's edge; nanofabrication and advances in power generation promise to provide everything man needs to live comfortably. Technology, philosophy, art and culture are blossoming again to fill the vacuum. People are rebuilding. But these same tools which promise to deliver a second golden age still carry the potential to destroy it. In addition, there are the exsurgent viruses, of unknown source, which linger around the edges of civilization; extremely contagious, practically unstoppable, they transform the victims into monsters, into typhoid Marys, or into TITAN puppets. The TITANs have disappeared, but no one is sure for how long, or what will happen when they return. Nor can people say what the Factors want. The galaxy is littered with the remains of intelligent civilizations which have disappeared, for unknown causes. Perhaps what struck them down still waits for

transhumanity.

Firewall *if relevant to the mission*

There are several organizations which work to protect transhumanity against existential threats; threats against the very survival of the species. One of these is Firewall, a politically-neutral, independent and highly secretive organization. The players may participate as the front-line covert agents of Firewall, called sentinels, sent in to investigate and address threats, be they alien, TITAN, or transhuman in origin. Sentinels must protect their identities carefully; most political bodies actively work to divert Firewall missions for their own gain.

Game Mechanics

Eclipse Phase uses a simple d100 mechanic, similar to Call of Cthulhu. You'll need a percentile die and a d10. When rolling tests, it has a target number based on its difficulty. You want to roll as close to that number as you can without going over it. Note that this has changed from the previous printing of the core rulebook. If you roll below your number, you succeed. How much above zero you roll without going over your number determines how much you succeed by, or the Margin of Success. This means if you and I are competing, we can both succeed, but you may still beat me if you roll higher. Roll above the number and you fail.

If you get doubles, like eleven or sixty six, that's a critical. That means something special happens. If you get a critical success, it's something awesome. If it's a critical failure, it's something terrible.

There are some additional rules, but we'll go over those later.

We'll be using pre-generated characters. Character generation is a bit complex. I recommend you hit the Eclipse Phase website, go to Resources and download the fan-created excel sheet by Kindalas. It's excellent and I use it all the time.

Availability of the Game

If you are interested in the game, please pick it up *<mention venue, if relevant, drivethrurpg, or your friendly local gaming store>*. If you're not sure, or if you are a bit short on cash, or whatever, it is also released under the Creative Commons license. That means it is available, for free, legally, for download. Posthuman Studios, who makes Eclipse Phase, seeds their own books on Bit Torrent. Check it out. Not only that, but you can cut it up, remix it, share it, do whatever you want with it. Reuse the setting or the rules. You don't need permission, it's available, for free. But please remember, if you enjoy the product and you can afford to support the line, please do. That tells us you want more, and covers the costs for us to provide it. If you have any questions or comments, hit the website, drop them an email. They love to hear from fans.

Questions

If you have any questions, now is a great time to ask!

Mission Introduction

Introduce the available mission(s) and direct players to tables, if appropriate.

Character Sheets

Provide sample characters and let players begin picking through. After everyone has a sheet in front of them, walk them through the character sheet using a sample.

Characters all have Aptitudes, or attributes. The aptitudes are Cognition (like intelligence, Coordination, Intuition, Reflexes, Savvy (like charisma), Somatics (which is a mix of strength and endurance) and Willpower. Aptitudes are modified by the body or “morph” you’re wearing.

Character Stats; Let’s start with DUR. That’s Durability; it’s how much damage you can take before you go unconscious. Next is DR; that’s how much damage you can take before your morph is irreparable. If you see WT, that’s Wound Threshold. If you take enough damage in a single attack, you take a Wound. So if the damage from one attack is above your WT, you take a -10 penalty to all your future actions. This is important. If you are hit with a thousand 1-point paper cuts, you will still die, but the damage is distributed so you don’t take any special penalties until you go down. However, if you lose an arm to a chainsaw, you’re now operating at a penalty. The good news is if your body is scrapped, they can pull your mind from it and stick it in a new one – if another body is available.

LUC, IR and TT are the same, except for your sanity rating. When you cross your Lucidity, you have a break down and can’t help the mission. IR is Insanity Rating; at that point, your mind is past saving. At that point they have to restore you from backup and everything you’ve done since that backup is lost. Try not to go insane! When you cross your TT, or Trauma Threshold, it’s like Wound Threshold, except you also take a Trauma, which is a temporary crazy behavior or belief you need to roleplay.

Init is Initiative. Roll 1d10, add your Init, that tells you who goes first. If your Initiative is above 12 that’s an error from the previous edition of the book. Divide by ten and use that number. Speed is how often you go every turn. If your speed is 2 or above, after everyone has gone once you get to go again.

Moxie is the butt-saving mechanic. It’s like karma pool or edge. It lets you buy a success when not in combat. It lets you upgrade a success to a critical success, or a critical failure to a failure. It also lets you swap the numbers on your dice, so if you rolled a 61, you can change it to 16. Each of these cost one point, and Moxie doesn’t refresh very often, so be careful how you use it.

Skills are what you know how to do, and generally define your target number for actions. Some important ones are Fray, which lets you dodge, Infiltration, which lets you sneak, and Kinesics, which lets you read peoples’ body language.

Background, Faction, and Motivations are for roleplaying, and we won’t go into them much here. Morph is the body you’re currently wearing. It’s explained on the equipment sheet. Traits are special traits your character have, explained on the equipment sheet. Reputation is how well regarded you are in those communities and is used to “buy” favors and equipment, but we won’t go into that unless it comes up.

All your other equipment is more fully described on the attached equipment sheet.

At this point give the players some time to review the equipment sheet and mechanics, and ask questions. Encourage players to create a name and a few words to describe their characters, and introduce themselves to the group. Players tend to get into roleplaying much quicker if they have a clear sense of the group relationships or rank hierarchy. Establish this group background before moving on to the mission briefing.