

On Wednesdays We Wear

Welcome to high school.

You will spend the next four years within these walls with nothing to do and nobody to take it out on except each other. So don't waste your time learning how to pass exams, learn how to survive: Keep your head down, keep to your own kind, and give the queen bee anything she asks for.

On Wednesdays We Wear is a book about stories set in high schools for *Chronicles of Darkness*, [Princess: the Hopeful](#), and [Genius: the Transgression](#). Here you will not find accurate models of young and adolescent psychology or details of the American school system. This book sets its stories in the high schools of film and legend; where the corridors are spacious and clean but the jocks are mean.

You will find rules for playing evil cheerleaders and outcast nerds, rules for cliques and parties, and of course a toolbox of options to design the school your story needs, from the small town standard to a hidden school for supernatural students. As well as everything you need to play boy Geniuses and magical young girls in a school setting.

On Wednesdays We Wear Lab Coats

It is not enough to possess the will to power, the madness to defy the laws of god and man. To create his wonders a Genius requires education!

High school is a fitting place for a genius, because it is not a fitting place for a genius. What is mad science if not paradoxical? High school is a place of education and knowledge, where the most important things are athletics, beauty, and superficial social games. A place that teaches the latest scientific knowledge, at the pace of the slowest student.

Above all else high school is a crucible in which Genius is formed. A place where the unformed clay of childhood is hammered down into narrow moulds, where those who will not fit are broken until they can be made to fit, and those with the spark of transgressive brilliance that cannot be made to fit must ignite into a fire that can change the world or be extinguished.

Theme: Self Discovery

College is perfect for experimenting and trying new things.

Mm-hmm, new sex stuff.

For me, it was drugs and alcohol.

Yeah.

How about you Klaus?

I conducted many experiments which defied the laws of God and man.

- CollegeHumour, Experimenting (Literally) in College

High school and college are a time of self discovery, imagine how much more so would it be with Inspiration. As children we internalised more than we will ever know, how to talk, how to think who to love. As teenagers we push the boundaries, making space to discover our own identities. But the Breakthrough, the Breakthrough exposes all those boundaries as mere smoke, even the ones we'd never think to question. A young genius has absolute freedom to build their identity but no support or structure and only madness and mania for materials.

And as for the youngest, you grow up so fast trying to destroy killer orphans before they escape the lab.

Mood: Fish out of Water

We only have one night left to have studied and partied in high school. Otherwise we'll always be the girls who missed out. We never made out with strangers or snuck out and had to sneak home without waking up our parents or broke any rules!

- Molly, Booksmart

The essential ingredients for a school comedy is to take an archetypal character and put him in a situation he was never meant to be in. The workaholic academic geeks must fumble their way through a world of sex, drugs, and parties. The class clown becomes the roommate of three computer nerds. Or a mad scientist born to defy the laws of god and man must try to follow a new principal's arbitrary rules. A sense of alienation and bewilderment should be paired with an omnipresent sense of time running out. Whether it's coursework, the prom, or graduation, the characters have a deadline that keeps them moving from scene to scene. Whenever it looks like they're finding their feet and figuring things out, something new comes along to throw everything into confusion.

This mood ties in closely into the theme of self discovery. Absorbing new experiences and seeing how you react to them is the best way to learn about yourself. A character should not find stability or belonging until they know who they are. And if that deadline passes before a Genius discovers herself; she would not be the first mad scientist to be forever lost in her own mania.

On Wednesdays We Wear Frills

It is common to look at the overwrought teen drama in high school, real or fictional, and gently laugh at how seriously students take fashion and gossip about boys. But as any Princess of Diamonds will tell you, school *does* matter. Education is the key to social mobility and independence, and a good school is the key to an education. If lockerroom drama and barbaric bullies are standing between students and learning someone will have to fix that!

Nobility obliges.

Theme: Inherent In The System

If life seems awful to kids, it's neither because hormones are turning you all into monsters (as your parents believe), nor because life actually is awful (as you believe). It's because the adults, who no longer have any

economic use for you, have abandoned you to spend years cooped up together with nothing real to do. Any society of that type is awful to live in. You don't have to look any further to explain why teenage kids are unhappy.

I've said some harsh things in this essay, but really the thesis is an optimistic one-- that several problems we take for granted are in fact not insoluble after all. Teenage kids are not inherently unhappy monsters. That should be encouraging news to kids and adults both.

- Paul Graham, Why Nerds are Unpopular

Once upon a time Rudolph Schenkel studied wolves and saw that in every pack the wolves would fight each other for dominance. Later he would learn that in the wild a wolf pack is a family led by nurturing parents. It is only when unrelated wolves are forced to live together in captivity that they fight for dominance.

In high school unrelated teenagers are forced to live together in captivity.

The storyteller should emphasise that the problem a Princess sees in her school goes beyond one evil yet popular cheerleader or football star, that highschool is trapped in a self reinforcing culture that ensures every senior class produces another queen bee and alpha wolf, only fixing this culture will do.

Mood: Soap Opera

Imagine 4 years.

Four years, two suicides, one death, one rape, two pregnancies (one abortion), three overdoses, countless drunken antics, pantsings, spilled food, theft, fights, broken limbs, turf wars—every day, a turf war—six months until graduation and no one gets a medal when they get out. But everything you do here counts.

High school.

- Courtney Summers, Cracked Up to Be

To a Princess the systemic problems of high school culture are not an abstract force, they are present in the people she sees every day. One day she is helping a shy girl confess her feelings to her crush, the next she has to stop the gamers and the influencers fighting over the computer labs. Storyteller's should present a large cast of established characters with unending drama for a Princess to help with.

Even if the story moves onto more serious matters than locker room drama, the soap opera should remain as an obstacle to resolving the bigger issues; the key witness is unreachable because he's hiding from a bully. The mortal baseball team grabbed their bats and charged straight into the Tainted Place to impress girls. If nothing else the drama can be a source of Shadows at the worst possible time.

On Wednesdays We Wear Whatever

To the Inspired highschool is a hostile world filled with bullies and bizarre arbitrary rules standing between them and the resources they need to complete the Magnum Opus. To the Nobility high school is a sick culture that must be healed. But to mortals high school is normal. The football captain gains superhuman strength by playing to a masculine ideal? Ok, but will he take me to the prom?

Whereas games starring Geniuses or Princesses focuses on their relationship to high school itself, in a game starring mortals high school is a setting. A small world packed with larger than life characters from well known archetypes who can band together against a supernatural threat. Or just fight each other for the affections of the prom queen.

Theme: Constrained Options

And it seems to me, my ability to fit into that little vent is very, very valuable to you all. So, you want my help? This USS Butterscotch better be the first of many. And I'm talking free ice cream for life.

- Erica Sinclare, Stranger Things

If one thing defines childhood it is a lack of control over one's life. Children rarely choose to go to school or even which school to attend. When a supernatural threat arises children lack the options adults do. They do not own cars and cannot drive away, so they have to defend themselves. They cannot buy guns and the bad guys are bigger than them, so they have to build an elaborate trap. There are no elite hackers among their school friends, so ask the computer gamers and hope for the best.

For a game of mortal children emphasise two things: Arbitrary restrictions that lock out obvious solutions, and creatively using the resources that remain available.

Mood: Naive Optimism

Lisa: Nancy Drew says that all you need to solve a mystery is an inquisitive temperament and two good friends. And I've got an inquisitive temperament. Maybe I could help solve this.

Marge: Mmmmm... I think you're a little young to be investigating an attempted murder.

- The Simpsons

There is a reason why adults don't seem to notice the supernatural, and it's not because they're close minded. It's because they know better than to look too deeply into the shadows.

A story starring children investigating the occult should start with a feeling of optimism, mystery and adventure. Storytellers should try to ramp up the danger gradually, consider throwing a few red herrings where the "witch" turns out to be a harmless old woman or the "werewolf" is just a big friendly dog and safe supernatural problems like a ghost who only needs to deliver a message to his son before he's ready to pass on. By the time the protagonists encounter a real threat they should be feeling as naive as children who think they can handle supernatural danger. At which point they have its attention and it's too late to back out.

Naive optimism doesn't have to shatter at the first sign of real danger, if the characters survive that could just as easily reinforce their belief in their own invincibility as traumatise them into staying home. For some characters naivety and optimism will prompt them to look into shadow after shadow until they look at one too many. For others it's a starting point from which they must grow up.

Chapter One: Rules for Kid Characters

General Rules

Character Creation

When creating a child character you have two options. The first is to use the standard character creation rules. The second is to reduce the skill dots based on the age of the characters to represent the lower amount of experience younger people possess. Under the following rules the minimum viable age for a player character is three years / early childhood. Exceptions to this are unlikely to actually be natural born humans, such as an automaton that merely looks like a baby.

Characters retain three specialties at any age to differentiate themselves.

Extra Dots are provided to young Geniuses or Princesses. Geniuses place their extra dots into Mental Skills, Princesses place them into Social Skills or Transformed Skills. Extra dots placed into Transformed Skills are not counted towards the maximum Transformed Dots. The storyteller has discretion for how and if Extra Dots apply to other supernatural beings.

Age Band	Dots in Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Extra Dots
0-3 (Baby)	2	0	0	0
3-5 (Early Childhood)	4	2	1	4
5-10 (Middle Childhood)	6	4	2	3
10-15 (Adolescence)	8	5	3	2
14-19 (Late Adolescence)	10	7	4	1

Free Merits

Storytellers should consider giving child characters a free dot of Mentor to represent a child's parents or guardians. For nobles and mortals consider a free dot of Clique Integration, Floater, or a dot towards School Saint; Noble characters are especially likely to be a School Saint. While Geniuses are often unpopular enough to have no Clique Integration at all if there is a suitable clique for them in your setting consider a free dot of Clique Integration for them too. If they do not offer them a dot of Clique Orphan, they usually had a group before the Breakthrough.

If your game downplays social interactions within the school in favour of solving supernatural mysteries or fighting monsters you could give everyone a dot of Clique Orphan instead to

represent how they've been isolated socially by their extracurricular activities (or their social isolation is what led to encountering the supernatural) while still giving each player character their unique skills and archetype.

If the players aren't all going to be part of the same clique then Storytellers should also consider giving all player characters the Secret Clique merit representing their loyalty to each other, either immediately or after some shared experience like an encounter with the supernatural.

Conflicts Across Age Gaps

Calvin: Your polls are slipping Dad. Better get with it.

Dad: Calvin, being your Dad is not an elected position. I don't have to respond to polls.

Calvin: Not elected? You mean you can govern with dictatorial impunity?

Dad: Exactly.

Calvin: In short, open revolt and exile is the only hope for change?

Dad: ...I don't like the direction this conversation is taking.

- Calvin and Hobbes, 30 August 1986

When characters of different ages come into a physical, social, or intellectual conflict where age is an advantage – that's most conflicts though the storyteller must use their judgement and call exceptions, guns won't hit harder if you're older – the older character applies the Extra Successes rule. An adult rolling to grab a child rolls like normal to see if he manages to make contact, if he does the Extra Successes mean the child is unlikely to escape.

First identify the characters age band on the chart below, there is some flexibility because people mature at different rates. Every step between the two characters on the chart grants two Extra Successes:

Age Band	Description	Likely age range
1	Baby	0-3
2	Early Childhood	3-5
3	Middle Childhood	5-10
4	Adolescence	10-15
5	Late Adolescence	14-19
6	Adulthood	18+

There are some special cases. A mortal with four dots in a Mental or Social skill is a prodigy and is treated as one band higher (to a maximum of 6) when that trait is rolled, this can stack if multiple traits are used in the same roll, and a trait at five dots moves you up two bands. If you have a trait at six dots you are beyond a prodigy and are automatically treated as an adult. Dots granted by Exelixi, Bless Charms, and similar effects count in full.

A character with Inspiration is treated as an adult for all mental rolls unless they have the Ditzzy Genius merit and are in their Ditzzy persona, or they have the Fool's Brilliance merit; brilliant fools are still treated as an adult when spending mania to add extra dice. As an optional rule modification you can say a character with Fool's Brilliance is always treated as being in Middle Childhood for mental and social rolls when they are not spending Mania.

Socially; a Director can spend a point of Mania to be treated as the age of whomever they are rolling against for one single roll, this is separate to their regular grant. Witnesses can do the same but only when they are using Status dots acquired through their grant. Iconoclasts get this benefit for free when rolling to use their grant. Finally Dharmists were always treated as adults when interacting with other Genii or Beholden, but there are no longer any Dharmists.

By default a Princess is treated as an adult in her transformed identity and her own age in her mundane form. Magic can pack a lot of muscle into a tiny package. Transformation has a flexible relationship to age. Some Princesses are older while transformed, others are not. Some Princesses possess wisdom and maturity beyond their age when transformed, others act their age. Players may voluntarily say that while transformed their character is still treated as a child of any age for some or all trait categories.

Adults Disguised as Kids

How do you do, fellow kids?

- Lenny Wosniak, 30 Rock

Sometimes an adult thinks it will be quite corking to blend into their fourth form chums. Doing so is an exception to the above rules, when rolling to convince younger people that you are in their age group the older character never gains Extra Successes, and they take a penalty equal to $2 * (\text{their age band} - \text{the age band they're disguised as})$. If the older character is at least five years older than the age they are disguised as all failures and defeats on contested rolls become dramatic failures.

If the adult has a metanormal disguise that means they couldn't possibly be much older than they are portraying themselves as — such as shapeshifting into a prepubescent form — the above rules stand. Dramatic Failures will not expose their real age except to people aware that metanormal age regression is a possibility. They will face some other consequences.

It takes months of immersion in youth culture before the above penalties can be overcome. Many geniuses find it is easier to use an Epikrato Someone Else's Problem field to make everyone overlook their outdated slang and behaviour.

Extra Defence

When a child (or other small character) makes a Dodge action they gain bonus Defence equal to $(5 - \text{Size})$. This applies after doubling their Defence.

Innocence

The World of Darkness is a deeply cynical place. Powerful metanormal beings move in the shadows and mortal men can do little to control their own fate but pray the gaze of greater powers falls elsewhere. When a lifetime of work to improve your town can be undone on a whim by untouchable beings it takes childish naivety, or madness, to believe you can make a difference.

Most mortals learn through bitter experience, or more likely, through immense social pressure, that you pretend the supernatural isn't real. That you deny it in polite company and only speak honestly in small groups where everyone is known to be open to the topic. Kids often haven't learned yet.

The following Persistent Conditions can represent a child's (or adult's) ignorance of how their world really works and the dangers lurking in the shadows of even the leafiest suburb.

Bernard's Lament (Persistent)

Your character hasn't learned why it's best to keep your mouth shut when the metanormal is involved.

This condition is often combined with Wide Eyed or Meddling Kid. Ignorance of the supernatural goes hand in hand with ignorance of society's reaction to the supernatural.

Beat: Take a beat when you suffer social consequences from talking openly about the supernatural.

Resolution: Suffer a breaking point from the social consequences of talking openly about the supernatural.

Resolution: Be taught by trusted adults when you can safely talk or when to keep your mouth shut.

Wide Eyed (Persistent)

Your character is completely ignorant of the dangers of the supernatural, and probably of many other dangers too.

Beat: Take a beat when you treat a supernatural or mundane danger as safe in defiance of good sense, like eating the sweets a faerie offers you.

Resolution: Experience a Breaking Point from interaction with the supernatural or mundane danger. A success or failure results in a healthy fear of dangerous situations, a dramatic failure results in an unhealthy phobia. On an exceptional success your character remains willing to look into the shadows, but does so with appropriate caution, the Meddling Kid Condition may be suitable.

Meddling Kid (Persistent)

Your character understands that monsters are dangerous, but vastly overestimate their ability to handle the supernatural. They wouldn't eat the sweets a faerie offers them (at least not if they've read the right stories) but might think their experience playing hide and seek will let them follow an ogre without being caught.

Beat: Get yourself into serious danger pursuing a supernatural entity or dangerous human you could have safely ignored.

Resolution: A Failure or Dramatic Failure on a Breaking Point from conflict with the supernatural or the dark side of humanity can end this condition.

Sweet Summer Child (Persistent)

Your character has never experienced real violence before and is not prepared for it. The first time in a scene they see violence that inflicts a point of lethal damage or uses real weapons roll Resolve alone, on a failure you become Beaten Down.

Beat: Fail a Resolve roll when Beaten Down causes a significant inconvenience.

Resolution: Succeed on a Breaking Point caused by violence.

The Threshold

The innocence of children is a psychological effect, so the threshold between child and adult here is fuzzy. But if you need to draw a line children stop qualifying in late adolescence (around 14 or 15), or when they're a year older than your oldest player character. If you want these rules can even apply to particularly sheltered adults. Pick whichever fits the needs of your story.

Bernard's Lament can be reused as a Staunen, Klage, Neid, or Befreit's Catalyst Condition: When Befreit see a rule that strong they cant resist challenging it, Klage are infamous for their ignored warnings, a Neid who Catalysed after trying to expose the supernatural may feel the need to finally prove themselves right, and Staunen fascinated with supernatural phenomena may be compelled to expound on their discoveries to a hostile public. Staunen may also use Meddling Kids as a Catalyst condition to represent a mad scientist too curious to resist poking supernatural things that they shouldn't, a narrower focused alternative to the For Science Condition. It is rare for any Genius to have the Wide Eyed Condition, a genius might not have a sane reaction to the dangers of the supernatural, but they're too smart to be unaware that those dangers exist.

In contrast Princesses can be as Wide Eyed as any mortal, their duties means it won't be long before they learn better but until they do they can be as misinformed as any other kid. Since Nobles don't have Breaking Points a Sensitivity check can resolve the condition instead. The Meddling Kid Condition is not appropriate for Princesses. The kind of Noble who pursues dangerous supernatural entities more powerful than herself cannot safely ignore *any* of them for she is concerned with protecting everyone, not just her own circle.

Geniuses can take Sweet Summer Child but if their insanity pushes them into acting violently it overpowers the Condition. Treat combat separately from "research", a mad scientist might be comfortable dissecting humans as they beg for mercy yet still freeze in the chaos of battle. Princesses cannot take the Condition. Standing up for your ideals in the face of fear is the heart of Nobility. If you want to represent a Princess freezing in her first fight use the following rules: The Princess starts the combat Beaten Down but reflexively rolls Resolve once per turn, on a success remove Beaten Down. The same can be used for a Princess

who hasn't Blossomed yet. Roll Resolve once per turn, on a success she reflexively Transforms for the first time and is no longer Beaten Down. This isn't limited to Champions, as an example a Grace may unfreeze and start leading the panicking civilians to safety.

To further emphasise the wide eyes of youth, child characters can buy Unseen Senses and Eye for the Strange for one merit dot, and do not need any prerequisites for Eye for the Strange.

Adult Allies

Grooberson: We should probably get out of here.

Phoebe: You're an adult.

Grooberson: Yeah, and liable.

- Ghostbusters: Afterlife

From the perspective of kids an adult ally is an invaluable advantage. An adult is more likely to be taken seriously, in a fight an adult is bigger and stronger, an adult can drive or just buy beer legally.

But why would an adult need kids as an ally? Even if the kids are some of the few people in town who care about solving a supernatural problem, an adult could easily believe their best opportunity lies in trying to convince other adults or have a moral objection to leading kids into danger. The following conditions can explain why they feel they have no other options than to turn to people much younger than them.

Eyes of the Law (Persistent)

Your character is under surveillance by the authorities. Maybe they've got a record, maybe they've gotten too close to the truth and offended the powers hiding in the shadows, or maybe your town has very active law enforcement.

Beat: At any time when the presence of law enforcement would not be to your advantage, you can take a beat to have the cops show up and keep you busy for the remainder of the scene. If you are detained until the climax of the session or the start of the next one, take one beat per lost scene up to a full experience point.

Resolution: Gain enough skills in stealth and counter surveillance to move unseen.

Outcast (Persistent)

Your character has spoken once too often about the supernatural and now they are seen as an outcast freak by the town.

Beat: Turn a success on a significant social roll into a failure, or a dramatic failure if you are talking about supernatural issues.

Resolution: Start fresh in a new town.

Adult Supervision

Professor Utonium: Well, they are superheroes, you know, and saving the world's a big responsibility.

Ms. Keane: But education is a bigger responsibility.

Professor Utonium: Yup, that am true, Ms. Keane, but what do you propose?

Ms. Keane: Well, I suggest you set... a curfew.

- Powerpuff Girls, Daylight Savings

The lack of freedom given to children can cause no end of problems when facing a supernatural danger. Anything from being unable to stop your run-away chemistry experiment because your parents refuse to let you leave dinner early to untrained fathers insisting on accompanying their magical daughters into battles they're no way prepared to handle.

As a storyteller the key is to ensure that adult supervision creates interesting challenges to overcome, not a reason for player characters to have to sit in their room while the interesting plot happens without them (at least, not unless this is the consequence of bad decisions by the player). Therefore these rules focus on creating complications that can be introduced into a scene rather than more sensible punishments.

Strict parents or guardians have one or more triggers, you may choose from the list below or make your own.

- **Bad grades:** A dramatic failure at schoolwork arouses parental ire.
- **Breaking curfew:** The character must be at home between certain hours. If they tell their guardian about a plan to be elsewhere the trigger is activated. If they are absent without an explanation it is too late to do damage control.
- **Jabir (genius only):** Jabir in front of their parents, or someone who'll report to their parents, is a trigger. (This one has no chance of damage control)
- **Local danger:** Local headlines filled with lurid tales of doom scare your parents. When something bad makes the news they will try to impose extra safety precautions.
- **Nonconformity:** Acting in a way that defies social conventions is a trigger. When defining what nonconformist traits player characters exhibit, choose something that is either difficult to hide, or a useful skill or ability which would be a disadvantage to keep hidden. A character's metanormal nature or their clique are always good choices.
- **Sensitivity (noble only):** A failed sensitivity check in front of her parents, or someone who'll report to her parents, is a trigger.

Unless stated otherwise a trigger activates the next time the guardian sees the character. Upon activation, the player character has until the end of the scene to do damage control. As a guideline damage control requires two things: Some solid evidence or backing from authority, and a social role (usually Manipulation + Persuasion or Subterfuge) to make the parents give it a fair hearing.

Example: Gary's parents are as open minded as the suburban cul-de-sac they live on. So when they see a pamphlet from a gay charity in his school bag he has to think quickly. For

evidence he quickly scrawls a fake assignment in his homework diary then goes downstairs to roll Manipulation + Subterfuge and convince them it's just study material.

Unless you are running a comic game and featuring bumbling parents as a running gag, players should not expect to be able to constantly break rules then weasel out of things at the last moment. Parental supervision can be gradually written out of the plot as players get better at avoiding triggers and characters get better at stealth, subterfuge, or otherwise grow past the issue.

If they don't then after too many triggers they may automatically fail damage control for the next one (3 + Manipulation triggers makes a good guideline). If a character fails or is unable to attempt damage control then one of the following conditions is applied, allowing the storyteller to introduce a complication to a future scene.

Amber Alert (Persistent)

Whether justified or not, you have been reported as a missing person.

Beat: A random adult recognises you and insists on holding you until the proper authorities arrive. Only mind control or an exceptional success will convince them otherwise.

Resolution: You return home, or the authorities are convinced it was a misunderstanding.

Confiscation

A small but key item is confiscated. This could be a wonder, bequest, or something more mundane like your car keys.

Resolution: The storyteller declares an item is in the parents' custody and not where it should be. Reacquiring it should not be too hard, but if you're far away from home don't expect to get it back this scene.

The All Purpose Solution

A character who uses Epikrato to solve the issue of parental authority has either grown too powerful for these rules to apply, or they're saving up trouble for later. Trouble like catching the attention of a fanatically anti-mind control iridium sentinel or Clockstopper.

High School Rules

Bullying

He was said to be the most successful bully in the school's history. He had twice won the Public Schools Bullying Cup and last year beat the extraordinary vicious Ackroyd of Chaterhouse at a kick-in of fags at the Hurlingham Club.

- Tomkinson, *Ripping Yarns*

It is a law of drama that every fictional high school has a hulking gorilla who shoves smaller smarter students into a locker at the first whiff of poindextrose or a beautiful girl who'll smile then destroy a newcomer's self confidence on their first day. Whether the players must overcome the bullies, or are the bullies, these rules will allow a bully to make lives into misery.

Bullying can be done one of two ways. The first is with fake smiles and poisoned words. The bully declares an intent to victimise another character and calculates a number of Doors equal to her Composure + 2. Once per scene she may open one door whenever she successfully humiliates or hurts that student, a particularly effective move may open two doors. When all the Doors are opened the target takes the Victimised Tilt or increases its severity by one to a maximum of five. The bully can only Force Doors with some particularly powerful and juicy bit of material, such as by reading out loud from the victim's secret diary.

In fiction these social bullies are normally a popular cheerleader or plastic who selects victims at the bottom of the popularity totem pole, but in real life this kind of bullying often occurs within friendship circles under a mask of support; "I wish I was brave enough to wear what you're wearing". Players should note that the social bonuses from Clique Integration also apply to subterfuge and emotional sabotage, and while the Merit requires members to show a united front before outsiders, hostility within the clique is only forbidden by the members' willingness and ability to self-police.

The second way to bully someone is to use physical violence. This can be a fight with the intent of "inflict the Victimised Tilt", but given the disparity between a bully and their favoured victims it can usually be simplified down to a single roll, usually Strength + Brawl vs Strength + Brawl. If the bully wins the target takes the Victimised Tilt or increases its severity by one. The victim may also choose to accept the Tilt as an alternative to combat, they likely will if weapons are involved. While faster, this method has a far higher risk of attracting a teacher's attention; if there are any teachers who care.

Tilt: Victimised

Your character takes a penalty equal to the Tilt's severity to Presence, Composure, and Intimidation rolls (the penalty stacks if multiple affected traits contribute to the dicepool) while in the bully's presence, and a penalty equal to (severity -2) while anywhere in school. In addition if the victim and bully share Status in the same group the penalty also applies to their Status dots (or Popularity); they struggle to use their status to their advantage while cowering.

If the severity reaches three you take the Shaken Condition the first time you encounter the bully in a session. If it reaches five you take the Shaken Condition the first time you enter school, and you are Beaten Down while in the Bully's presence.

Fighting Back

There are three ways a character can escape victimisation.

The first is to be persistently separated from their bully. This is easiest achieved by having

teachers put their foot down and separate the two, perhaps suspending or expelling the bully. The Snitches Get Stitches rule may be used here.

The second is to escalate to violence. If a character with the Victimised tilt declares an intent of “stop them from bullying me” and forces their bully to surrender, they immediately remove the Tilt, and the bully cannot try to inflict the Tilt through violence again without a significant change of circumstances to their advantage. They may still fight, perhaps with an intent like “remind the school of my strength”, but neither side will take the Victimised Tilt.

The third is to fight back with the same subtle social games some bullies use. Every time the character is aware of, and successfully blocks, an attempt by her bully to humiliate or hurt her she makes one mark against the Victimised Tilt. If she ever successfully humiliates her bully, make two marks. When the marks equal or exceed the severity of the Victimised tilt, clear the marks and reduce the severity by one. A character with Victimised cannot apply the Tilt to the bully until after they’ve cleared their Tilt.

Successfully humiliating a would-be bully also closes all Doors opened towards inflicting or increasing the Victimised Tilt. Two girls who regularly humiliate each other are unlikely to become Victimised.

Bullies as a Social Niche

Your absence as a bully has created a power vacuum. Now the school is filled with rogue thugs carving out random spheres of influence. I've been hit up for my lunch money twice today.

- Lloyd Jensen, Malcolm In The Middle

One idea that pops up in fiction is that bullies are a necessary or inevitable part of the school system. If the bully is reformed or expelled a new bully will inevitably arise, possibly after a period of anarchy where aspirants to the position run amok in an orgy of wedgies to stake their claim.

This is of course nonsense, but it’s the kind of nonsense that is suitable for a game. To the Nobility it emphasises that the system itself is flawed and must be fixed from the ground up. For Geniuses it means a perfectly sensible scheme of revenge will backfire in weird and zany ways. If you wish to include this dynamic in your game you can simply have the playground descend into anarchy the moment a bully is neutralised, or you can use the following optional rule:

When the school has a reigning bully or clique of bullies all other characters subtract the bully’s dots in a trait from any attempt to inflict the Victimised tilt on a character outside their clique. Pick the trait most relevant to the bully’s modus operandi from the following: Strength, Intimidation, Socialize, Subterfuge, or Popularity. You may declare there are multiple niches for Bullies with different modus operandi. If a niche is empty all students gain 8 again on attempts to inflict Victimised until the niche is filled.

As this produces significant overlap between the power dynamics between Alpha Bitches, you may decree the optional rule only applies to bullies who use physical intimidation.

Mad Scientists and Bullies

As mad scientists are usually both geeks and outcasts it makes thematic sense for them to be the primary targets of bullies, but does the psychology of a genius lead to victimisation?

The answer is that it depends. A Furcht who wants nothing more than to hide in a bunker is more likely to cower before threats of violence than a mortal, while a Grimm who patrols the streets in a suit of powered armour might be able to fight on through lethal damage. A Neid may be more affected than mortals by cruel whispers, but is more likely to rant and rave or seek revenge than to cower.

Players decide if their Genius character is psychologically capable of victimisation. If you want to recreate the typical hollywood dynamic for a character who isn't normally going to fear a bully there is the Clockstopper Void: Hollow Presence. All mad scientists are affected by that and Clockstoppers have a built in motivation to focus their wrath on Geniuses.

Void: Hollow Presence

The Clockstopper becomes a void that drains courage and self-respect, those most susceptible cower in their presence.

- : Geniuses within the Clockstopper's Acadia take the Victimised Tilt at severity one and remove the Tilt when leaving the Clockstopper's presence, this stacks with mundane Victimisation to a maximum of severity five. In addition the Clockstopper is able to apply Victimisation to the Genius the mundane way regardless of whether or not the Genius will normally be immune.

- : The Clockstopper applies Victimised at severity three. When the Genius is leaving the Clockstopper's presence roll Resolve - Hollow Presence, on a Failure or Dramatic Failure the Shaken Condition remains until it resolves normally, otherwise it vanishes now Acadia is no longer affecting the Genius. If Genius who would become Shaken from mundane victimisation the mechanics from the Tilt take precedence.

- : The Clockstopper applies Victimised at severity five. Any Genius who is exposed to their Acadia remains Shaken until the Condition is resolved normally. The Beaten Down Tilt lasts until it is resolved normally or until the Genius leaves the Clockstopper's Acadia. Whichever comes first.

As for mad scientists who are bullies: Epikrato can inflict Victimised with the Neural Triggers Inference. The roll to use the wonder is penalised by the desired severity. Directors can also force doors when inflicting Victimised without embarrassing secrets, they simply spend a point of Mania (adding Inspiration to their roll as normal) and press their victim's psychological buttons. Aside from that, the rules apply as normal.

Bullies as Memetic Police

In the past teachers were encouraged to overlook bullying so that kids could enforce social norms on their more deviant peers. This is of course even more harmful nonsense than

believing bullies are an inevitability, and it is also suitable to use in a game. If you want to include this in your game apply the following optional rules.

A genius with the Victimised tilt subtracts the severity of the Tilt from Jabir and Trigger roles. In addition before they can use mania in school they must spend a number of turns equal to the tilt's severity working themselves up. Doing so is attention grabbing and visible, usually it involves ranting, and gives students time to stop the mad scientist before he does something crazy. If you use this rule you may need to increase the susceptibility of mad scientists to victimisation or have society delegate its memetic policing to Clockstoppers.

Memetic police also deal with characters who have the Nerd template. Mostly this works by threatening Nerds until they stop behaving like Nerds and so lose the template. A Weregeek is more affected, they roll the severity of the Victimisation Tilt when exposed to their trigger, a success means they won't transform into a geek this time. Memetic policing also means the normal half of a Weregeek will become the final personality. If they want to remain a geek or merge their two halves they must first defeat the bully.

Under these rules the Victimisation Tilt interacts with the Contagion Merit, increasing the hours of exposure needed before a mark of Contagion is added by its Severity.

Nobles and Bullies

Compared to the minions of The Outer Darkness a school bully is nothing. As a rule of thumb no Princess will fear a mere schoolchild enough to take the Victimised Tilt. Even Princesses who deal with mundane problems and have never faced combat have the strength of their Belief to keep them strong in the face of such a minor threat.

But there is one thing a bully can do and that is trigger Sensitivity. The rules for intentionally triggering a Noble's Sensitivity are described in the Princess: the Hopeful core book.

Nobles are even less likely to be a bully. Firstly because Blossoming is selective so nobles are good, secondly because bullying triggers Sensitivity. A check every time a character gains or grows the Victimised Tilt, or gains a Condition from that Tilt, is the minimum. The storyteller may call for additional checks on top of that when appropriate. This does not stop some Brats from bullying their classmates and hiding from the guilt in the arms of Specchio. Using strategies where you don't have to see your victim's pain helps too.

The Outer Dark of course loves bullying and the pain it inflicts. Usually Dark bullies arise when a Darkened or Mnemosyne was a student before becoming what they are, a Creature of the Dark with the skills to fake their way into attending a school regularly often has more sadistic options than spreading malicious gossip or shoving nerds into lockers.

Gossip

Rumours and juicy details are the food and drink of any Hollywood highschool. To represent this all characters can create, discover, and make use of rumours.

Each rumour consists of a statement about a student or character such as “Lance’s parents are out this weekend, he’s throwing a crazy party” and a rating of one dot to three dots. Ask if the rumour is: Plausible, scandalous, and widely known. For every question where the answer is yes, the rumour gains a dot.

Students who know of a rumour can exploit it in social interactions, adding its dot value to all social rolls to persuade the subject of the rumour to act in line with the rumour. If Lance isn’t throwing a party, characters get bonus dice to persuade Lance to throw a party. If the party is real, they get bonus dice to persuade Lance to throw the kind of party parents shouldn’t know about; to add alcohol or invite the college fraternity from the local university. Getting yourself an invite only works if you’re the kind of person people think Lance would invite. Characters can combine multiple rumours if they are all applicable, but only to a maximum of +5 dice. Staff and parents can also exploit rumours, but they treat them as one or two dots lower respectively. However in exchange for this they gain increased flexibility, they could get bonus dice to persuade Lance not to throw a party.

When a rumour or combination of rumours reaches three dots all students take a (dots - 2) penalty (minimum of -5) to persuade Lance not to throw that party. Even if his long-time friends know he’s a mature and responsible student they can’t keep a hint of doubt from entering their minds, driving a small wedge into their friendship

From Lance’s perspective this feels like peer pressure, he knows what the school expects of him - everyone is telling him - and that he’ll be rewarded for playing along. If the rumour is negative Lance feels it is safer to play along and fulfil his role, rather than fight back, draw attention to himself and risk making things worse. In the world of Genius: the Transgression, where ideas are wild powerful forces, this effect is even stronger in the real world. Any character who is subject to a two dot rumour (or two one dot rumours that both encourage the same action) can take a beat for acting in line with the rumour, even if it’s untrue and out of character for them; only one beat per session can be gained in this way. If the rumour reaches three dots, or two simultaneously applicable rumours combine to reach four dots, your character can no longer add two extra doors to defend against committing a Breaking Point when they are the subject of social manoeuvring, when being pushed to act in line with the rumour. And if your character offers an alternative they must offer something in theme for the rumour.

A character who succeeds on a Breaking Point roll inflicted when trying to live up to a rumour, or trying to fight against a rumour, is immune to that rumour or rumours for the remainder of the session, no character can use it for bonus dice. If they roll an Exceptional Success they are permanently immune. However if they roll a Dramatic Failure, they may take Rumour Thrall as the breaking point’s Persistent Condition. A character with Rumour Thrall who is the subject of a rumour with Dots equal or greater than their Integrity upgrades the Condition to Rumour Slave.

Rumours can also be used on people other than the subject. If there’s a rumour that Brad gave his last girlfriend a black eye, that will help a student persuade her best friend forever not to go on a date with Brad.

Mad psychologists are well aware that in the pressure-cooker environment of high school it is possible to essentially reprogram a malleable teenage brain simply by starting enough rumours around them. Regular psychologists are divided on the topic, with the current consensus saying that peer pressure has a significant effect but can only push a person so far. In other words, the consensus knows about Rumour Thralls but not the metanormal Rumour Slaves.

Rumour Thrall (Persistent)

Your character is so accustomed to submitting to peer pressure that they rarely fight it any more.

Beat: The first time in a scene that character makes a social roll to persuade you to act in line with a rumour, take a beat and you cannot roll to resist or subtract any of your traits from their roll. This is not a metanormal effect.

Ending the Condition: Gain a point of Integrity. If your Integrity falls to zero replace this Condition with Rumour Slave.

Rumour Slave (Persistent)

Your character has been so dominated by peer pressure that they no longer have free will. At any given point they act as the rumours about them imply they would, even if they're unaware of those rumours. This *is* a metanormal phenomena.

Player characters with this condition may need to be retired from play.

Resolution: Resolving this condition requires raising Integrity to four dots *and* metanormal solutions or extensive and highly specialised therapy.

Burning Out

A student trapped by rumours always has one final escape option. By making a dramatic and embarrassing scene—punching someone, bursting into tears and running away—they can immediately take the Aloof Merit. If necessary they can permanently burn dots of Social Merits, Skills, or Attributes to reclaim the EXP they need to become untouchable. However this marks them as a Looser, giving them the bad variant of the Nerd Template (for this reason check if a character can afford Aloof before refunding dots in Clique Integration or School Saint).

They can also quit school and start again elsewhere, if their parents let them.

Creating and Spreading Rumours

Spreading a rumour is an Extended Action, the dice pool is Manipulation + Persuasion + Popularity, modified by the plausibility of the rumour. The threshold is five times the target's Composure + Popularity. Each roll represents telling one person the scandalous news. Hard evidence turns every roll into a rote action. Once formed the rumours dots are assigned based on the three questions.

Extra Successes are applied to every roll based on the merits of whomever you're telling the rumour too. One extra success per dot of Popularity in the school, and one extra success per two dots of other appropriate merits such as Allies or Hobbyist Clique. With the exception of Popularity, merit dots cannot give extra successes beyond the first character who possesses those dots.

Example: Willow has two dots of Allies (School Band), which grants one extra success when Regina tells her a new rumour she's trying to spread. Next Regina tells Michell who has four dots of Allies (School Band). To represent that Michell's social circle is partly redundant alongside Willow's, Michell is treated as having two dots of Allies (School Band) and only provides one extra success.

If a character chooses not to spread the rumour further, perhaps out of loyalty to the subject, then the roll against them is an automatic failure and may have further consequences. Social Manoeuvring can be used to change their mind, but it's usually easier to just spread the rumour elsewhere.

Discrediting and Ending Rumours

Ending a rumour is an Extended Action, the dice pool is Manipulation + Persuasion + Status and it requires five successes per dot of the rumour. However every individual roll subtracts one success per dot of the rumour to represent how sticky rumours are. Hard evidence does not provide a rote action, but it does bypass this penalty.

There is one other way to dispel a rumour, and that is to gather the whole school in one place and discredit it all at once. This usually requires a teacher to call an assembly though a student might be able to gather everyone with a zany scheme or Epikrato. Once everyone is gathered roll Presence + Persuasion as an instant action, you must score more successes than the rumour's dots. With this strategy evidence provides bonus dice, or a rote action if it's rock solid.

Rumours and the Inspired

Geniuses have an odd relationship to rumours. Firstly because their lives are so weird that rumours about them are rarely accurate. Secondly, because their minds are so powerful that peer pressure cannot mould them, a Neid told by a committee of her peers that her fashion sense is mad is more likely to vow revenge and start brewing monsters than to buy a new outfit. Unless the symptoms of their insanity makes them extra vulnerable of course.

To represent this Geniuses have two choices, the simpler but far rarer one is that a player may choose Rumour Thrall as their Catalyst Condition and be subject to rumours like normal. Klages whose self-inflicted tragedy has destroyed the self-confidence they need to say no (but not their ability to complain about what they are asked to do) and popularity seeking Wollen are the most likely Geniuses to take this path.

The second path follows the mad scientist's, and the high school movie geek's, archetypal position as someone disdainful of regular society yet judged harshly by it. Characters cannot use rumours to persuade a Genius, but they can still apply the rumour's usual bonus to

persuading others about how they should treat the Genius, and they gain an extra die to all rolls using a rumour simply because a Genius' weird life and often poor social skills makes them a magnet for weird gossip. This applies even in a school exclusively for mad scientists, Geniuses are better than mortals at resisting peer pressure telling them not to build a doomsday device, but rumours of a doomsday device will have them running for a Prostaia textbook.

Beholden also have a unique relationship to rumours. No character can use rumours for bonus dice to persuade a Beholden to go against their external worldview, a beholden's relationship to their master is exclusive. However a beholden can be affected like normal when the rumour is unrelated to their external worldview, and a beholden tied to a Genius can be treated like a genius for rumours related to their mad scientific activities.

Mania Storms

If a rumour is discredited in one fell swoop, such as a "murdered" student returning alive and well it may trigger a minor mania storm. Roll the rumours dots, on one success it may produce small scraps of evidence that suggest the rumour was true. On three successes it may produce a single mane with no or limited special abilities such as a Canadian Boyfriend or a small goblin like creature responsible for the "thefts".

Storytellers should feel free to choose the result if the manes wouldn't be interesting, or if they'd be really interesting.

Mad scientists can of course build wonders to interact with rumours. Not directly — though if you will excuse a pun, there are rumours that the Dharmists once built wonders that treated a rumour as an independent entity which could be captured, stored, modified, and released. If so that art is lost — modern mad scientists track rumours with hidden cameras or web crawlers, and create or silence them by manipulating the student body.

An Apokalypsi wonder with both the Radar and Microphone inferences and the vigilant variable can record every conversation about the genius (or someone else), identifying rumours from its output will require nothing more than time. Add a basic automaton (which will be needed to offset the dice penalty for the area scanned unless the school is unusually small) and the wonder can summarise its results as a list of rumours.

Detecting rumours via computers requires nothing more than a vigilant Telephony or Data Transmission wonder to sniff SMS messages out of the air. Encrypted protocols like WhatsApp require a combination of Telephony or Data Transmission with an Epikrato Hacking tool, and an Automaton to regularly probe a list of student's phones.

Rumour Engine (Epikrato •••• Inference)

Dice Pool: Intelligence+Politics

Duration: Lasting

Construction Skill: Academics

Mania Cost: 3

Spark Cost: 2 Sparks

A rumour engine can create or kill rumours from the comfort of one's laboratory. This takes an extended roll with an hour's work per roll, it takes three successes per dot to create or remove a rumour, as always a rumour's dots are calculated based on whether the rumour is plausible, scandalous, and widely known. (The third one gives geniuses some flexibility when creating a rumour from nothing).

Dramatic Failure: The genius creates the wrong rumour, something that will come back to haunt him.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: Odd coincidences prevent rumours from spreading, or cause them to be overheard at just the right spot. The desired effects take place.

Exceptional Success: As above, but the genius' invisible hand is exceptionally well hidden. All rolls to track him down take a -2 penalty.

Creating rumours is not innately a transgression, but spreading a cruel and spiteful rumour may be. However creating a rumour to manipulate someone with the Rumour Slave condition is morally equivalent to mind control, this remains true if the rumour was spread the old fashioned way.

Rumours and the Nobility

It will take a lot more than peer pressure to make a Princess waver in her Beliefs. Rumours grant no bonus to influence a Noble, with one exception. If a Princess faces a Sensitivity check applicable rumours can add extra dice. If a Noble's boyfriend breaks up with her because of a rumour she cheated on him add the rumour's dots to her Sensitivity check.

A Princess of Mirrors can take Rumour Thrall as a Condition from Specchio's drawback, on a regular success it is resolved the first time it grants a Beat. On four Successes it may be taken as a Persistent Condition. Specchio's Ban can also interact with rumours, a Brat breaks the Ban if she denies rumoured accomplishments, or doesn't show up to a challenge she is rumoured to attend.

A Princess with the Veiling Merit treats adds ten successes per dot to the threshold to create a rumour connecting her two identities. A rumour alone is not enough to breach the protection of Dual Identities but it can be used for bonus dice to encourage others to start an actual investigation.

Charm: Fruit of the Vine (Connect ●)

Action: Instant

Cost: 1 Wisp

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Socialize

Duration: Lasting

The Princess reaches out and plucks a rumour sweet or sour from the grapevine. This charm can be invoked generally or on a specific person, which applies Intimacy to the roll.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess learns some wildly misleading information that will lead her astray.

Failure: The Princess learns nothing

Success or Exceptional Success: The Princess learns of one rumour per success, starting with the highest dot rumours she does not know. If the Princess named a specific person she will only learn rumours about that subject.

Charm: Boots of Truth (Connect ●●, Aria ●● or Terra ●●●)

Action: Instant

Cost: 1 Wisp

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Socialize

Duration: Lasting

With a few well placed words a Princess issues her royal judgement, declaring a rumour unworthy of anyone's attention. This charm must be invoked where the rumour circulates, normally that means on school grounds.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess convinces herself the rumour is true.

Failure or insufficient Successes: Nothing happens.

Success equal to rumour dots: The rumour begins to fade rapidly from the grapevine.

Exceptional Success: As above, and anyone trying to recreate the rumour faces a -2 penalty.

House System

Some of you may be wondering at the thinking of the school's decision to put all the appalling duffers into one house, call it "Hufflepuff", and give it the symbol of a badger. A little harsh, you may feel. You may even, who knows, be questioning the wisdom of entrusting the school's entire admissions procedure to a hat. These are not, alas, questions I can answer. All I can do is urge you to look on the bright side; at least you're not in Slytherin. Another curious decision of the school's there, to dedicate an entire house to those of the children in its care who are evil. Surely a recipe for trouble.

- That Mitchell and Webb Sound

In many British schools students are divided into houses. For ordinary day schools a student's house is usually irrelevant on a day to day basis, it only matters during house vs house contests and the yearly award for the house with the most points. In traditional boarding schools a student's house is more literal, with a student's house providing their dormitories and pastoral care.

In fiction house systems are a defining aspect of a character, with members of each house having shared characteristics. If you want to import the house system into your American high school or set your game in the United Kingdom then creating houses is simple. Every house provides the Mystery Cult Initiation merit (renamed as House Integration because houses are not cults, probably). It is highly encouraged that the three dot benefit is either the Virtuous Merit or the Vice Ridden Merit to represent the stereotype of a house's members.

Noble Houses

Nobles cannot be Vice Ridden and already have two Virtues, the easiest way to deal with this is to say that Nobles take House Integration like normal and gain no benefit at three dots. Alternatively you may cap House Integration at two dots for Nobles without a matching Virtue or Vice and emphasise the self-actualized independence of Princesses.

Outside of sporting events and other formal contests British school stories rarely have house vs house conflict, but if you want to make that a theme of your game copy the drawback of Clique Integration onto House Integration.

Houses and Cliques

It is rare to find a story with American style cliques and British style houses at the same time. If you want to outright replace cliques with houses then assign each house a popularity cap and let House Integration also provide Popularity.

You will also have to make a couple of tweaks to the rules for Nerds, they will not lower the popularity of an entire house with their presence (though a house that values smarts may have a low popularity cap). Alpha Bitches need a tweak too. Only her close friends become Beta Bitches. Consider retaining the Clique Integration merit for the queen bee's circle and perhaps other exclusive and like-minded groups.

If instead you want to have a school with both Hollywood style cliques and Hogwarts style houses the simplest way to do so is to say each clique exists exclusively within one house, and if house vs house conflict is an important part of your story hostile cliques will display a united front in front of a rival house, unless characters are intentionally exploiting those divisions against a rival house. Unpopular cliques like the geeks and nerds may be spread across multiple houses, showcasing their lack of integration into the school community and its value system.

Parties

"You know, there's going to be sex, drugs, rock-n-roll... chips, dips, chains, whips... You know, your basic high school orgy type of thing. I mean, uh, I'm not talking candlewax on the nipples, or witchcraft or anything like that, no, no, no. Just a couple of hundred kids running around in their underwear, acting like complete animals."

- Lisa, Weird Science

The natural result of combining teenagers, alcohol, and a lack of adult supervision is a wild teen party. Parties provide a wealth of opportunity that the hosts (or guests) can exploit to scheme and plot, as well as a unique opportunity for the hosts to win Popularity.

Organising A Party

Organising a party requires three things. The first is a venue free from adult supervision, anything from an empty field to their parents house will do, though it is best to find a place that fits the theme. The second requirement is supplies. The third requirement is guests, lots of guests, but while you could just go around school asking people to attend, that is a sign of uncoolness and desperation. Cool kids let Popularity speak for itself.

Supplies are further subdivided into legitimate supplies, things that responsible and conservative adults would not mind seeing at a party their kids attend, and Illegitimate supplies which cover everything else.

Legitimate Supply Level	Examples	How to acquire
-1	Nothing at all	Put no effort in.
1	Chips and dips, a sound system and mix tape, birthday cake, halloween decorations.	Availability ●● purchase or a day of prep work.
2	A live band or DJ, professional caterers.	Availability ●●● purchase or a few scenes of hustling for favours.
3	A special performance by a celebrity. Top of the line catering.	Availability ●●●● purchase or tracking down and persuading (or mind controlling) a famous guest; a Session's worth of effort with actual challenge.

Illegitimate Supply Level	Examples	How to acquire
0	Nothing at all.	Be a goodie two shoes.
1	Booze, mild drugs (marijuana). For younger kids: scary stories, 'parental advisory' music.	Availability ●● purchase, with Alternative Identity ● or a one dot favour from appropriate Allies. Minimal danger for getting caught (parental punishments)
2	Serious drugs (ecstasy, LSD), easy access to sex (inviting a sorority with a rep, hiring prostitutes) For younger kids: 15+ horror movies, legitimate sex-ed textbooks.	Streetwise ●●●● or Streetwise ●● with an appropriate Speciality, a session of hunting, or a three dot favour from Allies to set up the meeting. Availability ●●● to purchase. Serious life-altering consequences like jail if you're caught.
3	Custom made punch spike (strong enough to liven things up, subtle enough not to be noticed), hiring famous porn stars. For younger kids: 18+ horror movies, episodes of Game of Thrones with nudity, ouija boards.	Multiple sessions of searching the seedy underbelly of society. Risk of death if things go wrong (like being mistaken for narcotics cops)

Having a Popular member of the school is vital. If a Popular member is going, other students are sure to follow, and if nobody Popular is there no amount of provisions will convince them that the party is worth attending. There are four ways to get a Popular student to your party.

- Be Popular yourself, you can be your own star “guest”.
- Ask Allies. The favour level is equal to 2 times (the guest’s Popularity - the highest host’s Popularity).
- Use social manoeuvring. The guest gains (the guest’s Popularity - the highest host’s Popularity) extra Doors.
- Mind control.

Once you have your supplies and your star guest calculate the amount of Party Points generated with (Legitimate Supply Level + Illegitimate Supply Level) * Star Guest’s Popularity.

A Nerdy Night In

While Nerds have Popularity zero, they can be treated as Popularity one when trying to throw a party targeting Nerds, Geeks and other associated groups (capitalised or small letters). There is no drawback for throwing a tier one party for Nerds. Everyone else would think drinking Earl Grey tea and watching a Star Trek marathon is the height of tedium but they’ll have a good time. If a Nerd wants to attract a broader audience they must attract a star guest with actual Popularity.

Supernatural Supplies

Instead of going on a quest through the seedy underbelly of society to find a reliable and skilled “cook”, a Genius could brew up his own supplies (with Epikrato ••). This is often easier and usually more effective, Epikrato can make some *really* fun products, but usually riskier.

Supernatural supplies provide a Supply Level based on what the mortal guests think they really are. You cannot tell people you brought Freddy Mercury back from the dead to give a live performance, they won’t believe you or worse they will believe you and stay away for their own safety. So you have to say you’ve hired live music from a Freddy Mercury impersonator.

For legitimate supplies and illegitimate supplies metanormal techniques provide bonus party points, after multiplication. Mad science provides three each, Noble magic provides one each; a Troubadour band plays exceptionally good music but Mad Music directly stimulates the brain’s “OMG this is like the best party ever” lobe (it’s next to the amygdala). However for every category (including the star guest) where mad science is used the Storyteller should introduce one complication. Someone reacts badly with the custom cocktails or causes Havoc by adding a slice of lemon, the star guest snaps out of mind control at the worst possible time. If you can’t come up with something that logically follows from the Wonder’s Fault, use Havoc or an unrelated problem like an Orphan escaping from the laboratory beneath the venue.

Incidentally Dark Magic only provides one Party Point but causes two problems per category. Even if you enjoy the Dark's idea of fun Dark Magic doesn't offer much more than mundane perversions but it does draw a lot of unwanted attention from police, Princesses, and vigilantes. Other sources of magic are at a storyteller's discretion.

If the entire guestlist is metanormal the rules work differently. There are no bonus Party Points for using metanormal supplies, instead the bonus points become an equivalent penalty for using purely mundane supplies. If every other party you've been to serves gargle blasters with humorous names and paper umbrellas, finding heisler in red plastic cups is a disappointment.

However there is also one less complication per category for using metanormal supplies in an all metanormal party. Mad scientists and beholden know that the drinks bar consists entirely of dangerous untested chemicals and the hosts probably forgot to label at least some of the menu in their excitement. Turning up without a testing kit or Apokalypsi scanner is like not reading the allergy warnings on the packet at the supermarket; you have no one to blame but yourself.

Mechanically the Storyteller should adjust the requirements for getting supplies to fit the metanormal powers in question, but keep the difficulty the same. For Geniuses that means looking for scientific chemical suppliers rather than drug dealers and robotic parts instead of caterers, and that you can use Laboratory instead of Resources to calculate how much funding you have, treat supplying a party as building one wonder with a rank based on the appropriate inference. For Princesses finding supplies usually means using Socialize and Allies to ask other Princesses to lend their supernatural culinary and performance talents. (Princesses' parties are usually light on illicit supplies which is great for keeping things safe but not what teenagers look for).

Using mind control to get a popular guest is still an option, though riskier when they themselves are metanormal and may have defences. The storyteller decides if the culture of this school is likely to consider it abhorrent (and thus it introduces a complication) or a harmless wacky hijink (and thus not cause any complications beyond the mind controlled's reaction when it wears off).

Spontaneous Party Engine

An Epikrato Political Domination wonder can create parties. To adapt it to the rules here simply translate the intensity to tiers in the chart below; Tranquil is tier one and so on. Roll until you reach the intensity/tier you want, then automatically spend the minimum Party Points for that tier as you wish. Don't worry about finding fake IDs and getting booze, it will show up.

This produces one complication at normal intensity, two at aggressive, and three at explosive. Even if the wonder's fault doesn't affect the quality of the party directly, if you manipulate probability until drug dealers start showing up to hand out free samples to drunk uninhibited teens you can expect weird complications to arise.

Parties in this section are wilder and more impactful than parties as described under the rules for Political Domination, this is intentional to reflect the themes and priorities of school stories.

The Big Night

Party points can be spent on gaining various advantages while at the party:

- **Specific Guests:** It costs Party Points to ensure a specific student (usually with their Clique in tow) turns up where these advantages can be used on them. The cost is the guest's Popularity (double if they have a hostile Clique relationship or personal feud with the hosts), which must be lower than the Star Guest's. The storyteller may veto any guest if they have an established reason to be elsewhere and waive the cost if the guest is in the host's clique, an Ally, or has a positive link to the host on the social web.
- **Social Lubricant:** For every three points spent all partygoers gain +1 to all socialise rolls until they have a bonus equal to their Socialize dots. Afterwards they gain +1 for every six points spent. This bonus caps at +5.
- **Lowered Inhibitions:** For five points the first Door opened against a character within the party automatically opens a second Door.
- **Vulnerability:** Every three points provides a -1 penalty (maximum of -5), to all rolls to notice danger. This applies to spotting someone hiding in the bushes or empathy rolls to realise someone is bad news. It applies to humiliating teen pranks as well as genuine threats. Once the danger is revealed, there is no further penalty to responding to it.
- **Peer Pressure:** For five points. If any character attempts to persuade another character to act in line with their own Vice, such as a lusty character trying to seduce someone, their target is treated as sharing their Vice. If a character gains Willpower from a shared Vice it does not prevent them gaining Willpower from their own Vices like normal.
- **Increase first impressions:** For five points everyone's first impressions are improved by one step, to everyone, while they are attending the party.
- **Special Guest:** A character from outside the school will show up. Pick a generic role like a local official or pop singer to join the party. Someone who fits the description will show up, they cost Status squared, or (Fame+2) squared party points. If they need to be metanormal, increase the relevant merit by one to a maximum of six. Players can name an individual, they must be willing to attend parties in general and have nothing specific against this party.

Parties are divided into tiers based on the number of points they have. This is not absolute, some people are the sort to get drunk and start fights with nothing more than an empty field and some people can be responsible while having a great time. However the fundamental nature of a teen party gravitates towards trouble.

The following descriptions assume a teen party. However these mechanics apply as is for younger characters, simply adjust the descriptions to age appropriate equivalents. The "scandalous behaviour" may simply be hand holding, giggling over high school biology textbooks, or a chaste kiss to see what their older siblings are making such a fuss about.

Unlike in the real world, adults will not consider this behaviour any less shocking or dangerous than what teenagers get up to. It's funnier that way.

Party Points	Wildness	Effects
0-5: Tier one	People stand around quietly drinking and talking. A dull night, unless everyone is friends.	Guests, who are not friends with the hosts, treat the hosts as having one fewer dots of Popularity for the remainder of the story. No direct effects if the party is by and for geeks and nerds.
6-10: Tier two	There is music, dancing, and kissing. In the real world this would be a typical party.	No direct effects.
11-15: Tier three	Furniture is trashed, people drink too much and regret it, all in all a solid party.	Guests treat the hosts as having one additional dot of Popularity for the remainder of the story; to a maximum of five dots. Hosts will have to do extensive clean up afterwards, if they care about the venue.
16-25+: Tier four	The party is well and truly out of control. The venue suffers structural damage. Uninvited guests turn up. And someone could get seriously hurt by taking drugs or going into the bushes with a thirsty vampire.	Guests treat the hosts as having two additional dots of Popularity for the remainder of the story; to a maximum of five dots. While it is not guaranteed, someone is likely to get into real trouble unless the hosts or good samaritans run around doing damage control (assuming they care about their guests, or consequences finding their way back to them). It will take real social skills to manage the situation and still enjoy or use the advantages of the party. Cleaning up after the party will require hiring workmen or supernatural resources.
26+: Tier five	This party is truly legendary. It will show up on national news and be cited in congress as evidence of the problem with the Youth of Today. Serious politicians or Hollywood stars may have their careers made or	Everyone who wasn't harmed by the party (and some people who were) treats the hosts as having five dots of Popularity for the remainder of the story. The venue is utterly destroyed and must be rebuilt from the ground up.

	destroyed when the paparazzi capture what they do at this party. Bacchus Himself may make an appearance to bestow his double edged blessings. In an election year the party may swing the outcome. If the police arrive they will bring a full riot team, and they will either be assimilated into the party or driven off.	Unless the hosts go to heroic lengths, such as suiting up in powered armour to battle supernatural gatecrashers, someone's life will be ruined. Possibly many people, and lives may also change for the better. But at a minimum at least one person will: Die of a mundane drug overdose, be permanently mutated after trying a mad scientists' "special punch", fall in love with an abusive guest, or something of a similar severity. In light hearted games the consequences could be played for laughs, like being shipped off to a convent for a life of Sister Act like wacky fish out of water hijinks. Or someone with the potential to be a nobel prize physicist meeting Mr Right and embarking on a life of domestic bliss... the horror.
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Rival Parties

If two characters host parties on the same night they can compete for guests. This isn't always a problem. Two birthday parties with mostly non overlapping friend groups can coexist peacefully. Knowing they're unwelcome at the cool party, the geeks might choose to throw their own LAN party. But when two parties conflict the rules are simple. The one with the most party points wins, and the losing party is reduced by (winner's tier * 5) party points to a minimum of 5, representing all but the hosts' close friends being pulled to the better party.

If a party is reduced to tier one the host is considered to be humiliated. If the other host is trying to socially inflict the Victimised Tilt then this opens one door per lost party Tier. If the victorious host is an Alpha Bitch and the defeated host is female, the Alpha Bitch (and any Betas and undercover plastics at her party) take a Cheerleading beat. And if a pretender to the throne hosts a better party than the Alpha Bitch she becomes the new Alpha (regardless of the old Alpha's final tier).

The Social Web

Middle Man: Girls come in, come out, they talk in groups of variant size. There's no pattern, I don't like it.

Wendy Watson: That's because they're sorority girls, not Soviet spies.

- The Middleman, The Ectoplasmic Panhellenic Investigation

The school's social network is not a fine web of connections between individuals, but tight cliques bound by thick collective relationships. When designing a school story it helps to draw a full map of the relevant groups. First write a list of cliques in your school (see the

sidebar on Sample Cliques for some possibilities), then connect them using the following social links:

- Strong alliance (bidirectional): Members of either Clique can add (their dots in Clique Integration - 1) when making social rolls with members of the other clique, and are treated as having (Clique Integration - 2) dots of Allies in the other clique.
- Weak alliance (bidirectional): Members of either Clique are treated as having (Clique Integration - 2) dots of Allies in the other clique.
- Mercenary (directional): Members of one clique add their (Clique Integration - 2) as Dots of Allies in the other clique, however must always do something in return as though they had already spent their favour budget.
- Awed (directional): Members of one clique add (Clique Integration - 2) as bonus dice whenever they offer Soft Leverage (even outside of social manoeuvres). These bribes normally revolve around granting social status rather than material goods.
- Intimidated (directional): Members of one clique add their (Clique Integration - 2) as bonus dice when making Intimidation rolls against another Clique. The other clique gain nothing from the relationship, except perhaps mercy if they are quick to roll over.
- Hostility (bidirectional): Members of each clique take a penalty of Clique Integration to all social rolls with the other clique, except for Intimidation.

These rules apply to all extra-clique interactions unless the characters know each other personally and have a strong enough relationship to take priority. A merit dot always qualifies as sufficient but is not strictly required (personal relationships do *not* bypass the Drawback of the Clique Integration merit). Remember though, one's clique may disapprove of the relationship.

Normally a clique can have only one relationship with another clique, however Hostility and Intimidation can coexist as can Mercenary or Awed (with both pointing in the same direction).

Star-Crossed (Persistent)

Your character is in a relationship, which her Clique will disapprove of in the strongest terms. The relationship does not have to be romantic, it doesn't even have to be good — the Clique might have excellent reasons to separate her from a womanising douche — but your character feels strongly enough to pursue the relationship in secret.

Beat: Suffer a significant complication from trying to keep the relationship secret.

Resolution: Arrange things so the clique will accept the relationship.

Resolution: End the relationship.

Resolution: Expose the relationship and suffer the consequences.

Resolution: Leave your clique.

Popularity

A character has a popularity rating equal to the lower of their Clique Integration (or five if they have Clique Leadership) and their Clique's popularity cap. The popularity cap is in turn

assigned by the storyteller. Ideally it should be immediately obvious who is on top simply by looking at who has the most support on the social web, but if you'd like to have everyone loath the cheerleaders yet they are still the most Popular girls in school that is fine too; the mechanics were designed to leave this as an option without introducing ludonarrative dissonance.

When two characters who are not part of the same Clique or Un-Clique are interacting the character with higher Popularity can choose to apply their Popularity as a penalty to all rolls the others make using a Social Attribute or Social Skill. However they can only do this if they are in the presence of three other students, and the overall vibe of the crowd must be on their side — most places in school will be good enough.

A Merit By Metanormal Means

While popularity is not brought as a merit, it may be treated as a social merit for the purposes of supernatural powers that add or remove merits such as Epikrato asset manipulators.

Popular Brotherhoods

When a Clockstopper uses Brotherhood of Righteousness they add their Popularity - the highest of all targets' Popularity to the roll. This replaces the modifier for targeting a genius who is respected in the community, but not the modifier for a genius who has directly hurt their community.

Charm: No Man Is An Island

The Charm No Man is an Island works as well on school cliques as it does on any other social links. A Princess may spend her successes on the following additional questions:

- The target's clique (or Un-Clique) and dots in Clique Integration (or dots in Allies for the Un-Clique)
- Are they a member of a Secret Clique?
- The name of one other member of their Secret Clique. (If they are known to have a Secret Clique).

Charm: Homecoming Heir (Connect ●●●, Specchio ●●)

Action: Instant

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Presence + Socialize

Duration: Day

The Princess reweaves the threads of Popularity, putting herself on top of course.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess reduces her Popularity by her Specchio dots. If this takes her down to zero she is treated as Nerd for the purposes of social interaction and also takes a -2 penalty to all social rolls with anyone except Nerds until the effect wears off.

Failure: The magic fails to take hold

Success: The Princess increases her Popularity by her Specchio dots up to a maximum of six dots. If she reaches six dots she becomes an Alpha Bitch, this does not dethrone an existing Alpha Bitch (see the rules for rival Queen Bees under Coronations and Usurpations). If a rival Alpha defeats the Princess she takes a -5 penalty to using this Charm again so long as her rival sits upon the throne.

Exceptional Success: The duration increases to one day per dot of the Princess' Socialize.

This Charm can be invoked before a Princess joins a school, in which case she'll make one hell of a first impression. When the duration expires a Wisp may be spent to extend it for another day without rolling, though a competent Brat can use her popularity to carve a niche that will last after the magic ends.

Upgrade: Usurping

When the Princess uses this charm the existing Alpha Bitch loses an equivalent amount of Popularity and is automatically dethroned. On an exceptional success they lose an extra dot of Popularity. If this takes them to zero popularity they are treated as a Nerd for the purposes of social interaction and take a -2 penalty to social roles with everyone in school except Nerds.

Un-Cliques

Oh, oh, we're not friends. This is the table for the singles.

- Beth Chapel, *Stargirl*

An Un-Clique is a special type of Clique which is not a Clique. It is a group with nothing in common except that they have no other group to belong to and are forced to band together for protection or just to have somewhere to sit at lunch. An Un-Clique exists on the social graph, but may only have links of hostility or intimidation connecting them to other groups, some people like to pick on the losers and misfits. Members do not take the Clique Integration or Clique Leadership merit to represent their mutual circle, but may buy merits like Allies or True Friend if their Un-Clique grows from allies of convenience to more as they face the plot together. Or if appropriate they could become a regular Clique.

Because an Un-Clique allows for a more diverse array of interests and personalities than a clique, and because Mad Scientists' social status is often dire, membership in an Un-Clique makes a fitting way to bring player characters together into a group.

Void: Be Freed From Individually

No, no, no

Stick to the stuff you know

If you wanna be cool, follow one simple rule

Don't mess with the flow, no, no

Stick to the status quo, oh

- High School Musical

The Clockstopper suppresses higher social cognition leaving only an ape's pack instincts.

The Void affects characters within the Clockstopper's Acedia. If they remain within the Acedia for five minutes per dot of Composure, the effects extend to one hour per dot of Acedia. This cannot stack but further exposure resets the timer.

Storytellers who wish to adapt this Void for use without the Clique mechanics can sort characters into groups based on the dark history of humanity's tribal instincts: Racism or religious persecution.

- : All Skill Checks, unless they use a Clique's asset skills, take a -1 penalty. A character with Clique Integration treats their dots as one higher for the purposes of that merit's drawback.

- : All Skill Checks, unless they use a Clique's asset skills, take a -2 penalty. A character with Clique Integration treats their dots as three higher for the purposes of that merit's drawback. Any character who lacks Clique Integration or membership in an Un-Clique suffers a Breaking Point with a -Acedia penalty the first time they enter the Clockstopper's Acedia in a Session. School Saints are affected, but add their merit dots to the breaking point roll. Floaters take a Breaking Point without adding their merit dots unless they're presently attached to a Clique, and cannot switch Cliques within the Acedia.

- : All Skill Checks, unless they use a Clique's asset skills, take a -3 penalty. A character with Clique Integration treats their dots as five for the purposes of that merit's drawback. All failures on social rolls with members of another clique become a Dramatic Failure, unless you are talking to the idea of their clique rather than the person. Asking a horse girl about horses has no penalty, asking her about dogs is penalised. The Secret Clique merit ceases to protect characters from the Drawback of Clique Integration while a character has the Going Native Condition. A School Saint who scores an Exceptional Success on a Breaking Point caused by this Void will not see her failures upgraded for the remainder of the Session.

Charm: School Sorting (Connect ●●●, Specchio ●●●)

Action: Instant and Contested

Cost: 2 Wisps, 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Socialize vs Composure + Potency + Clique Integration or (School Saint+2)

Duration: Day

The Princess severs the threads between a student and her clique then reattaches them to a group of her choosing.

This Charm can also remove the Secret Clique merit. But only if the Princess knows the target has a secret allegiance and chooses to target it. It can also add someone to a Secret Clique but again the Princess must know it exists. The Storyteller must judge how integrated a character is into a secret clique when calculating the dice pool.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess manages to offend the target and her entire clique
Failure: The magic fails to take hold

Success: If the Princess wins the roll the target loses all dots in Clique Integration or School Saint and gains one dot of Clique Integration in a Clique of the Princess' choosing. This affects the target on an emotional level, they no longer laugh at their groups in jokes even though they remember what they were. She no longer feels the comfort of being among friends in her old group, but does in her new group even if they have a history of bad blood. If her new Clique is intimidated by her old one her friends feel butterflies in their stomach when they see her and don't know why. This may trigger a breaking point, a trip to a therapist, or tip the target off that they're under a supernatural effect.

Clique membership created by this charm can turn people into Beta Bitches, using the regular rules for who can and can't become a Beta.

Exceptional Success: The duration increases to one day per dot of the Princess' Socialize.

While the supernatural effects are temporary, a character's social life may be permanently affected by what she and others do while she is under the spell.

Upgrade: Deep

The target gains more dots of Clique Integration, equal to the mean average of their dots in their new Asset Skills (round up, minimum of one dot).

Upgrade: Secret

The Princess can create a secret clique out of whole cloth by invoking the Charm on multiple people at once. This adds Commonality to the roll.

Umbrae: Inherent In The System

The Darkened becomes nothing more than an extension of cruel social norms, hidden from personal accountability. Any attempt to identify him as the perpetrator of a misdeed requires success on an appropriate roll, with a penalty equal to twice his shadows. On a failure even a victim who saw him do it cannot say who it was with any more precision than "one of the jocks". The same penalty applies to noticing he's missing if all the jocks are rounded up for investigation.

Magical attempts to identify the Darkened as the perpetrator trigger a Clash of Wills, if the Darkened wins the umbrae applies a penalty as normal otherwise it does not. It also provides no defence if the clique he is hidden within is entirely removed from the school.

Drawback: All social rolls take a -Shadows penalty when the Darkened is portraying himself as an individual rather than as a generic member of his clique.

School Laboratory

For most kids their best access to scientific equipment and supplies is the school, not their own home. To represent this Wesleys turn their free Laboratory dot into an extra starting merit dot. And since they have no laboratory of their own they can make a Dexterity + Larcanary roll to access a laboratory of up to three dots, depending on the school's funding.

If they ever gain permission to come and go to the school laboratory as they please they must buy regular dots in Laboratory.

Snitches Get Stitches

Marge: Well, Bart, I hope you're going straight to the principal about this.

Bart: I guess I could do that.

Homer: What, and violate the code of the schoolyard?! I'd rather Bart die!

- *The Simpsons, Bart the General*

School fiction often treats telling a teacher of another student's misdeeds as the ultimate playground sin. Half the time the moral is that this rule is misguided, or a distinction is drawn between snitching on harmless rule breaking fun and genuinely bad behaviour, but in the world of Genius: the Transgression it makes sense to emphasize both the effectiveness of a simple sane solution, and the insanity of the code of the schoolyard. For Nobles putting a cost on telling the teachers emphasises that playing within the system is only dealing with the symptoms of the problem and is thus an unsustainable solution.

Successfully snitching requires one of three things: Proof of a student's rule breaking, such as a cell phone video. Completing an Investigation into a rulebreaker, at which point the Clues combine into evidence that will persuade a teacher. Or successful Social Manoeuvring to convince a teacher to investigate, at which point assume they can quickly catch any student involved in mundane misbehaviour on school grounds.

Once a teacher has been roused to act the player can choose from one of three punishments: The target student cannot interact with them on school grounds and during school hours for the remainder of the story, if they try a teacher will soon appear to separate them. The student is sent to detention and removed from play for the remainder of the session. The student is expelled and removed from the story entirely, this requires an expulsion worthy transgression.

However a student who snitches, regardless of how justified they are, automatically generates a rumour saying they are a snitch and takes a permanent -1 penalty to Popularity and a -1 penalty when interacting with other students (this includes Jabir checks). Further snitching increases the penalty every time. Removing the penalty requires changing school or graduating.

Attempting to snitch on mad scientific activity is risky. A Genius caught pilfering from the school laboratory might simply get expelled, or they might get their wondrous lockpicks confiscated leading to havoc.

New Merits

Aloof (●●●)

Prerequisite: No dots in Clique Integration or School Saint

You do not consider yourself part of the school community, their judgements do not concern you. With this merit characters cannot use rumours for bonus dice when trying to persuade you and cannot use their Popularity to inflict dice penalties on you. However they can use rumours when talking about you, in essence you relate to rumours in the same way as a Genius. You do not instinctively back down to an Alpha Bitch, and a Bully cannot Victimise you except through physical threats.

Aloof students do not have to have a negative reputation. A cool senior surrounded by rumours of a musical career and college age girlfriends can be as distant as a nerd who ignores students to study. However they always have a reputation, if nothing else new kids will ask why they don't talk to anyone, so when taking the merit choose a rumour or three about your character if they don't have some already.

Clique Integration (● - ●●●●●)

The common definition of a clique is an exclusive group of girls who are close friends. I see it a little differently. I see them as a platoon of soldiers who have banded together because they think this is the best way to survive Girl World.

- Rosalind Wiseman, *Queen Bees & Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boys, and the New Realities of Girl World*

Every fictional highschool is divided into cliques, collectives of students with similar personalities and interests. Your character, like most students, is a member of one such clique and gains the following advantages:

- : Your character gets free dots of Allies in their own Clique equal to their dots in Clique Integration and a free Specialty in one of their Asset skills, the Specialty must be stereotypical, a tomboy could take an Athletics specialty in baseball but not ballet. In addition they add their dots of Clique Integration as bonus dice when making social rolls with their group, and half the bonus (round up) with equivalent cliques in other schools. Nobles also gain free dots of Circle equal to their dots in Clique Integration, and may use that merit for wisps by hanging out with their Clique and doing stereotypical activities.
- : Your character gains 9again on rolls using either of the Clique's two asset skills, this bonus increases to 8again when they are doing so as a teamwork action with other members.
- : You can instinctively size up other members of the same clique. See the sidebar on Who's In and Who's Out.
- : Your character gains a free dot in one asset skill.
- : When your character calls upon the Allies merit and asks their clique for a favour they reduce the cost of any favour by 1, to a minimum of zero.

Who's In and Who's Out

Any member of a clique with three dots of integration can roll an appropriate Attribute plus an Asset Skill to compare their relative standing to other students. For example a tradgirl may roll Wits + Crafts when examining another's cooking or sewing, or she can roll Dexterity + Crafts if they make a meal together. On a success they learn: If the character is in their clique or its equivalent in another school, their dots in Clique Integration, if they have Clique Leadership, and their dots in the asset skill rolled.

If someone is trying to be deceptive they must roll lower of the same asset skill and Subterfuge. If the asset skill is Subterfuge, both characters roll the average of both asset skills.

You can take clique integration twice, but this is often discouraged by all but strongly allied cliques. Be warned, any member of two cliques can find themselves torn in multiple directions by this merit's drawback.

Drawback: At three dots or above it costs a point of willpower to act out of unison with a member of your clique when you are in a group and in the presence of outsiders. At five dots it costs a point of willpower when you are apart from the clique. When two characters disagree the one with more dots of integration or Clique Leadership sets the group position, but if a lower ranked member has already taken a position (for example, a character hears shouting and goes to see what it is about) then it binds higher ranked members.

Characters ignore the drawback if they have a Condition (or metanormal influences) affecting their behaviour, depending on the frequency and severity of their disloyalty they risk losing dots of clique integration. The jocks are going to be more forgiving of a member who got Swooned and skipped practice to go on a date with a cheerleader than the geeks will be for a member who got a taste of popularity and threw the rest of the clique under the bus to hang out with their tormentors.

Sample Cliques

Jenko: Okay, those are Goths, those are nerds... I don't know what those are...

Schmidt: What the fuck are those things?

- 21 Jump Street

Below is a list of cliques that may be found in your character's school. This list is not exhaustive, nor is every group required in every school. It is unlikely that any school has two cliques of cheerleaders for example.

- Activists (sincere) - Politics & Persuasion
- Activists (performative) - Politics & Expression
- Activists (zealot) - Politics & Intimidation
- Atheists - Computer & Science
- Anime Fans - Computer & Crafts
- Artists - Crafts & Expression
- Babysitter Club - Empathy & Intimidation

- Basic girls / Instagram girls / Valley girls / VSCO girls (there are many variations on this theme) - Expression & Socialize
- Band - Athletics & Expression
- Bookworms - Academics & Expression
- Bullies - Brawl & Intimidation
- Cheerleaders (dedicated) - Athletics & Socialize
- Cheerleaders (evil) - Intimidation & Socialize
- Choir / Glee (dedicated) - Empathy & Expression
- Choir / Glee (mean) - Expression & Subterfuge
- Conspiracy Theorists - Investigation & Politics
- Delinquents - Brawl & Streetwise
- Drama kids - Expression & Subterfuge
- Druggies (functional) - Medicine & Streetwise
- Druggies (nonfunctional) - Larcenary & Streetwise
- Environmentalists - Science & Politics
- Fencing Club - Athletics & Weaponry
- Gearheads - Crafts & Drive
- Gamers - Computer & Investigation
- Geeks - Computer & Science
- Good Old Boys / Country Squires - Firearms & Animal Ken
- Goths - Occult & Intimidation
- Goodie Two Shoes (genuine): Academics & Empathy
- Goodie Two Shoes (false): Academics & Subterfuge
- Gossip Hens - Investigation & Politics
- Greasers - Drive & Streetwise
- Hall Monitors - Investigation & Intimidation
- Hipsters - Crafts & Politics
- Horse girls (and boys) - Athletics & Animal Ken
- Hustlers - Persuasion & Streetwise
- Influencers - Expression & Persuasion
- Janegirls - Crafts & Empathy
- Jocks (jerks) - Athletics & Intimidation
- Jocks (nice) - Athletics & Socialize (as sports are sex-segregated, male and female jocks may form their own cliques)
- Junkies - Larcenary & Streetwise
- Ladies' Men (manipulative) - Persuasion & Subterfuge
- Ladies' Men (romantic) - Empathy & Persuasion
- Ladies' Men (slutty) - Persuasion & Socialize (Ladies' Men can be unisex. More likely, there are separate cliques for Ladies' Men and "Gentlemen's Women")
- Mall Ninjas - Stealth & Weaponry
- Martial Artists (realistic) - Athletics & Brawl
- Martial Artists (mystical) - Occult & Brawl
- Metalheads - Brawl & Expression
- Military Brats - Athletics & Firearms
- Nerds - Academics & Science
- Occult Believers - Investigation & Occult
- Plastics - Socialize & Subterfuge

- Psychonauts - Occult & Streetwise
- Punks - Crafts & Intimidation
- Preps - Politics & Socialize
- Ravers - Athletics & Streetwise
- Religious kids - Academics & Occult (likely one clique per faith)
- Roleplayers - Weaponry & Expression
- School Newspaper - Investigation & Expression
- Scouts - Athletics & Survival
- Skaters - Athletics & Streetwise
- Stoners - Expression & Streetwise
- Stonks - Investigation & Persuasion
- Surfers - Athletics & Socialize
- Swots - Academics & Investigation
- Tradgirls - Crafts & Empathy
- Tomboys - Athletics & Brawl
- Vegans - Crafts and Politics
- Wiccans - Occult & Empathy
- Youtubers - Computer & Expression

Clique Leadership (●●)

Prerequisite: Clique Integration ●

Your character is the universally accepted leader of their clique. When making a social roll with another member of this clique they add +5 dice, not their dots of Clique Integration, and they gain five dots of Allies in their clique regardless of their dots in Integration. Naturally they also set the clique's position when in the presence of outsiders.

This merit exists because many cliques value something more than having lots of free time to spend with the group. Spending every weekend watching Star Trek with your fellow nerds leads to high integration. Missing most of the social events because you have a part time job at NASA makes you nerd royalty.

If multiple people have this merit then Clique Integration serves as a tiebreaker. Most cliques can have multiple equally ranked leaders, only those based around an activity that requires a singular leader like the football team cannot.

Clique Orphan (● - ●●●●)

Prerequisite: Zero dots in Clique Integration

Your character used to belong to a Clique but is now alone. Maybe he moved inland from California and there are no surfers in their new school, maybe the bookworms kicked her out because of her erratic behaviour during the Breakthrough.

Clique Orphan provides most of the benefits of Clique Integration at equivalent dots, it does not provide free dots of Allies. It can provide the extra social dice when interacting with

foreign cliques but this does not apply to their current school (if they weren't on bad terms they'd be integrated) and others who know and agree with their expulsion.

Delightful Child (●●●)

Your character is the perfect angel every parent wants to call their own. Polite, respectful, obedient, and seen but not heard.

Whenever your character is interacting with mundane adults they increase their impressions by one step. In addition while following the instructions of an adult with legitimate authority over them they add the Adult's highest Status dots (minimum of one) to all rolls. Their status and authority do not need to be related, if an adult has Status as the owner of a local business and authority because he's volunteered to help chaperone a school field trip then that counts.

Drawback: It costs a point of Willpower to disobey orders from a legitimate adult authority. If your character knows an adult is up to no good there is no Willpower cost, but adults add their highest Status to convince your character they're on the level. If multiple adults give conflicting orders use common sense to decide who has seniority.

Delusions of Invincibility (●●)

Prerequisite: Mortal

Your character has an incredible and outright dangerous belief in their own invincibility, no matter how bad things get they're sure they'll think of some clever solution or be rescued in the nick of time.

This merit confers outright immunity to Breaking Points caused by the threat of physical danger, mundane or supernatural. If a paranoid mad scientist unleashes plasma spitting robots to chase your character away from his laboratory he'll brush himself down afterwards and sleep soundly that night. If he stumbles on drug smugglers and gets locked in a basement for twenty four hours until they tip the police after leaving town, of course it was going to be ok in the end.

However your character is only protected against the *threat* of danger. The moment they take lethal damage, or witness an ally getting a serious injury from violence, they refund the merit and roll a Breaking Point like normal.

Characters with this merit often have the Meddling Kid persistent condition.

Eidolon (●●)

Prerequisite: Inspiration

We may be put on this Earth to devour each other alive but despite, or perhaps because of that, we all need a friend with whom we can idle the days lying in a big sunny field or looking under rocks at the creek.

For lack of a suitable someone your character has created their own. This is a fully sentient individual, a second personality software running on the same cranial hardware as your character. Their presence ensures a Genius never risks Transgression from isolation and serves as a touchstone, one who can follow your character into the most zany of situations. The Eidolon is built as a two dot Retainer. They have Integrity which functions like normal, except that they're entirely immune to the effects of Mania on Integrity. They're also used to seeing mad science weirdness so it never rattles their understanding of the world and they usually have high Composure, some are Companions.

Curiously Eidolons are capable of physically interacting with the world. But only if nobody but their partner is around to witness them doing so, they are rarely consciously aware of this limitation. Even other geniuses or cameras block the effect, though someone else with the Eidolon merit will not. An Eidolon can be detected with psychological scanners, moved to a different body with consciousness transferal (if their new body is inhabited by someone without this merit they are treated as a regular invading mind), targeted with Katastrofi, and similar. None of this has a direct effect on their genius friend.

A genius falling into Illumination destroys any Eidolons cohabiting their brain.

Floater (● - ●●●)

Prerequisite: No dots in Clique Integration

Your character floats between multiple Cliques, never fully committing to any but not rejected by any. Once per scene you may swap Cliques, you must be presently hanging out with members of your new Clique and have at least one dot in both its Asset Skills. You must also be compatible with the Clique in question though the membership requirements are looser for a floater: You do not have to have ridden a horse to hang out with the horse girls but you have to like horses, you do not need to be male or aspire to be a house husband to hang out with the janegirls but you have to think becoming a house husband is a respectable career aspiration.

Your character has Popularity equal to dots in this merit and cannot join Cliques with a popularity cap more than one dot higher than your Popularity unless you have an in; usually that means the Allies merit and asking for a favour with a value of (the Clique's popularity cap - your Popularity).

A Floater is treated as having one dot of Clique Integration in their current group. They do not gain a free Specialty from Clique Integration, and their favour budget for the Allies merit is not refreshed when they switch clique and thus Allies.

Drawback: Without an anchor to a clique of their own, floaters are vulnerable to being sucked into another's orbit.

If they are seen with Nerds they drop two points of Popularity instead of one (and temporary popularity drops from any source will limit which Cliques they can switch too). They also require two less marks to turn into a Nerd or Weregeek via the Contagion merit.

Female floats are also at risk of being sucked into an Alpha Bitch's orbit. Unless they are with two other members of a clique they currently belong to, and which has a hostile relationship to the queen bee's clique, the mechanics in the Undercover Plastic sidebar apply to Floaters.

Good Teacher (● - ●●)

Prerequisite: Be a teacher

When you are present in the scene all students may add your dots in this merit to rolls that help them act in a mature manner. From a Composure roll to resist peer pressure to a mad scientist restraining Jabir.

Gossip Queen (●●)

You are the mistress of the school grapevine, Bacchus upon a throne of salacious whispers. Others may hear that Amber D'Alessio made out with a hot dog, but you've heard every variation of the rumour and can track its evolution as it spread from person to person. So you know which girl she was competing with, which boy Amber was trying to impress, where it happened, and who won that little spat.

Once per session you may pick a rumour about a student, teacher, or recent alumni of your school and roll Manipulation + Politics or Manipulation + Socialize, on a success you can grant yourself the Informed Condition related to the target character and rumour, or inflict the Leveraged Condition on that character. You know the details that haven't spread... yet.

If the target is a mad scientist or a noble's transformed identity and you are a uninformed mere mortal then on a regular Success you may only apply Leveraged; assume that whatever rumours swirling around them are too inaccurate to provide Informed, but threatening to spread a false rumour can still be effective blackmail. However a mortal with sufficient experience of the supernatural can become Informed like normal.

Be warned that an uninformed mortal character who rolls an Exceptional Success against a supernatural being has gazed too deeply into the abyss. They hear enough rumours to put things together and suffer a Breaking Point as a glimpse of the truth shakes their understanding of the world. Against Genii this counts as a Breaking Point caused by exposure to mad science, against Nobles this is only a risk if you're investigating her transformed identity. Either way, further exposure is no threat once they update their understanding of the world.

An Exceptional Success while investigating a Noble's mundane identity will never reveal her supernatural side, however an Exceptional Success about a Princess who is trying to appear mortal while being her transformed self will reveal her supernatural nature. If the Gossip Queen is trying to uncover a Noble's secret identity her skills are useful but not enough to replace a proper investigation. A Gossip Queen can gain at most one free Clue towards exposing a Noble's identity through this merit; if rumours circulate about why her mundane identity wasn't present when trouble hit the school then a Gossip Queen investigating those rumours generates a Clue no matter how off target the students' speculation is. The

inaccurate rumours, the Gossip Queen's skill at analysing them, and the context of other Clues combine into something useful. However if a Noble's identity is already compromised to the point the secret is spoken about in the corridors then any Gossip Queen automatically hears a rumour that juicy.

Hypercompetitive (●)

Your character is way too fixated on victory. Pick one skill or skill specialty, when you are in a formal competition that uses that skill you may, once per session, choose to risk a point of willpower. If you do so your next roll gains +3 dice or scores an exceptional success on three successes, pick one. In addition if the roll succeeds you not only keep the point of willpower you gambled but you also gain a point of willpower. If the roll fails you spend the point like normal and the roll becomes a Dramatic Failure.

This merit may be taken multiple times, but each instance must apply to a different skill. You cannot take a Skill and a specialty within it, or two specialties within the same skill.

Drawback: Anyone trying to persuade you to compete in a competition automatically benefits from soft leverage, increasing their impressions by one step. This does not stack with appealing to a Vice if the competition is the vice but can stack with other vices such as offering cash to a greedy student.

Lout Licence (●●, ●●●●)

Your character has protection from school authorities, he can freely flout school rules and common decency without repercussion and if other students try to draw the staff's attention to his behaviour they'll be branded as troublemakers.

At two dots this protection applies to talking in class, graffiti, bullying, and other crimes that fit under the umbrella of bad school behaviour. At four dots the protection becomes outright ludicrous, with teachers being willing to cover for a student who commits mass murder or runs an international terrorist syndicate. After all, the school is sure to lose the big game if the star quarterback is taken out by the CIA.

This merit only affects the behaviour of teachers, it does not guarantee a blind eye from the police, FBI, or The Guardians of Forever. The teachers will help you hide from the aforementioned groups, but only to the limits of their abilities.

Teachers with the Good Teacher merit will not turn a blind eye to your character, though their attempts to enforce discipline may be suppressed by their colleagues and superiors. Teachers will also refuse to turn a blind eye if you target them or their personal friends.

If you use the Snitches get Stitches rule and a player tries to snitch on a character with this merit, they get the regular drawbacks and a punishment from the teachers but none of the benefits. Determining if a student has protection from the teachers before attempting to snitch should not be a challenge.

Mother Bear (● - ●●●●●)

I am Linda Mitchell, mother of two. Look upon me in fear!

- Linda Mitchell, *The Mitchells vs The Machines*

When a child is in danger in your presence you spring into action, pushing past your limits. For each dot in this merit you either gain a dot of Resolve (with a free point of Willpower), a dot in any Physical Attribute, or the maximum dots in one of the following merits: Fleet of Foot, Greyhound, Iron Stamina, Indomitable, Relentless, Iron Skin. You also cannot be Beaten Down. Attributes cannot increase past five. These benefits last until the child is safe or the scene ends.

For the purposes of this merit a child is anyone two or more age bands below you. See the section *Conflicts Across Age Gaps*. You may choose if this merit applies to all kids or just a select few.

An Alpha Man with this merit doubles the masculinity gain from winning a fight to protect the safety of applicable kids, as though he was protecting a woman. This does not stack if he is also protecting a woman. He may also assert his masculinity in a healthy way by demonstrating his potential to be a responsible father instead of a virile casanova out to sow wild oats. Once per session, if his mentorship causes a child to fulfil their Virtue or gain a beat from an Aspiration he regains a point of Masculinity. He cannot use this option and the ability to gain Masculinity from sex in the same session. The storyteller may declare any Aspiration a responsible adult will steer children away from provides no Masculinity.

Drawback: After using this merit you take a -1 penalty to all strenuous actions until you get some rest, pushing past your limits is exhausting.

Nerd Herder (●●)

Prerequisite: Not a Nerd

Your character is an expert at manipulating Nerds to their own advantage, when you apply Soft Leverage it increases their Impressions by two steps and also removes any social penalties from relationships between your respective cliques.

Nerd Liaison (●, ●●)

Prerequisite: Not a Nerd

Your character has an iron clad justification that lets her be seen with (some) Nerds without it affecting her social status. Perhaps the nerd is her brother, or a school assigned tutor. At two dots this also provides immunity to the effects of the Contagion Merit.

Party Animal (●)

Your character lives to Par-tay! Any time someone in school is hosting a party you automatically hear about it, along with a rough estimate of how cool the party is and how wild the party is. In addition you gain 8again on all social rolls to talk your way into a party where

you do not belong, to socialise or liven up a party you are in, and on Stamina rolls to hold your liquor and keep partying all night long.

School Saint (●●● - ●●●●●)

Prerequisite: No dots in Clique Integration

Your character belongs to no group, and every group. They are beloved by the entire school community and gain the following benefits:

- Popularity equal to their dots in this merit plus one.
- Allies (School) equal to their dots in this merit. This applies to all cliques unless there is a specific reason why they are exempt, but your favour budget is split between them all.
- Add one plus your dots in School Saint to all social rolls with students unless there is a specific reason why they dislike you.

Normally when the post of Alpha Bitch is vacant the female student with the highest Popularity takes the post. However a School Saint may choose to avoid the throne, if they do so the crown goes to the next in line. The most popular School Saint to reject the throne, should she have a Popularity of five or six, automatically takes the Rightful Queen Condition making her the greatest threat to the reigning queen bee. A new Alpha Bitch must carefully weigh the risks of attacking a beloved School Saint with the risks of ignoring her.

If a School Saint becomes an Alpha Bitch refund this merit, spending the experience on Clique Integration is advised.

A School Saint suffers no social penalty for being seen with Nerds, and cannot become a Nerd via Contagion. It's possible for her to become a Nerd or Weregeek some other way, she might fall in love with anime and go overboard if she ever watches it, but on a game mechanics level a School Saint can safely interact with Nerds.

Secret Clique (●)

Prerequisite: Clique Integration in two cliques, or one clique and membership of an Un-Clique

Though you publicly are a member of one clique your true loyalty lies to an entirely different clique or un-clique. You may be on an undercover assignment for your real clique, or more likely you belong to an un-clique that must hide its existence beneath a masquerade: An un-clique of the school's metanormal students, or of students who have faced against the metanormal together.

With this merit you ignore the drawback to Clique Integration when you are acting out of loyalty to your real team, or to maintain your cover story. Be warned, even a trusting clique can get paranoid their spies are going native.

If you are a member of a Clique and an Un-Clique you can apply the 8again bonus from the second dot benefit of Clique Integration when making a teamwork action with members of

your Un-Clique. This trick makes a good way for each metanormal student in the school to contribute their special skills to the group.

Characters with this merit don't have to keep their friendships with their real clique a secret, but they will likely have to downplay the strength of that friendship in public, if they look more loyal to their true group than their official clique they risk losing dots of Clique Integration.

Condition: Going Native

Your camaraderie to your public clique is starting to replace your true loyalties.

Gaining the Condition: A Breaking Point, a member of one of your cliques rolling an Exceptional Success on a social roll, or a Dramatic Failure on a social roll by a member of one of your cliques, can inflict this Condition.

Resolution: Side with your fake clique against your true team on a significant matter.

Undercover Plastic

The weird thing about hanging out with Regina was that I could hate her, and at the same time, I still wanted her to like me

- Cady Heron, Mean Girls

A mortal schoolgirl with the Secret Clique merit does not turn into a Beta Bitch if the Alpha is part of her fake Clique. Her ape brain is unsure if it should support and suck up to the Alpha like a member of her clique would or hide and cower from her as anyone else would, leaving her in a precarious position.

These undercover plastics can gain Plastic Beats like regular Beta Bitches, and every time they do they automatically take the Going Native condition. They can avoid the beat, and the Condition, by either being elsewhere when the Alpha earns the beat or by making a genuine attempt to sabotage the Alpha's attempt to humiliate. Both of these risk exposing her disloyalty. An Alpha cannot order her to shed Social Merits, but she can order all the other Betas to shun the secret agent, removing or reducing her dots in Clique Integration (the number of dots lost depends on how many boys are in the clique, and if they'll follow the girls lead in shunning).

Plastic Experience earned while undercover can only be spent on traits that bring the character closer to the Alpha Bitch or her Clique.

The player decides when their character has gone fully native and loses their Secret Clique merit, though if you want to add an element of chance a Failure on a Breaking Point makes a good reason.

Support Animal (●)

Your character has a registered support animal which he is entitled to keep by his side at all times. This merit doesn't guarantee that the school will be happy to have an animal on the premises or even allow it inside, but it does mean they are breaking the law if they separate your character and his pet.

The animal in question must be brought as a Retainer, built as an animal-looking automaton, or otherwise acquired.

Refuge of the Damned (●●●)

Your school has a network of forgotten tunnels and basements known only to a few. Characters in the know, which is to say characters with this merit, can enter and exit the refuge from any corridor in the school, though they must ensure they are not seen doing so. (See The Path of the Damned for who built and forgot about most of these shelters).

Basic amenities can be found in the refuge. Desks, chairs, electricity, mobile phone reception, drinking water and bathrooms, though nothing particularly comfortable. A genius may hide their Laboratory within the refuge, if they do so there's a convenient way to access it outside of school hours.

Teacher's Pet (● - ●●)

Your character is especially favoured by a teacher, and is widely known to be so. They get special privileges providing they can plausibly claim to be using them to run an errand for their teacher. For example they can freely enter the staff room, but only to inform a teacher of trouble on the playground and not to sit down away from the students. You cannot threaten fellow students with detention, but you can use your status as leverage by threatening to tell a teacher.

At one dot the character is favoured by a regular teacher with two or three dots of Status (Teacher) and your character is treated as having two dots of Status (Teacher) providing they are acting within the merit's restrictions. At two dots you are favoured by a senior teacher or the headmaster himself, they have four or five dots of Status, subject to a lot of restrictions and oversight. You cannot order teacher's around but you are trusted to pass on messages, so you could fake a few instructions if you're careful.

A teacher's pet also takes no social penalty from being a snitch (see the section Snitches Get Stitches) when invoking their borrowed authority. Other students dislike them as much as ever, but they are careful with their words when they know anything may reach a teacher's ear.

Drawback: Once per session the Storyteller may impose some inconvenient task or duty from your character's teacher. This is in addition to the social effects of being a teacher's pet, depending on the school those may be minor or require taking a Persistent Condition.

True Integrity (●●●●)

Prerequisites: Integrity, character creation only

Your character has the greatest strength of all, strength of character. You start the game at Integrity eight, not seven, and may replace any dicepool with Integrity when you are rolling to resist being forced to act against your moral code. What's more, if you do so you are

immune to *any* negative situational modifiers except those caused by your character previously violating his morals.

Tutor (● - ●●●●●)

Your character has access to a tutor who can coach them in various skills, for every dot in this merit assign three dots of Skills, up to a maximum of five per Skill. While the tutor is coaching your character you substitute the tutor's skills for your character's, so long as they are higher.

Tutors stay at arm's length from the plot. One actually accompanying the protagonists on an adventure should be a rare and climatic event. Tutors may be: Parents who can help with a "homework assignment" but who do not believe in the supernatural, friendly ghosts who cannot travel from their Anchors, an AI with no a physical form, a reclusive hermit, or even someone who would quickly solve the plot if they weren't tied up with even more pressing concerns.

All tutors have their own agenda for your character, you decide if your character is aware of this agenda and how they feel about it. A one or two dot tutor wants something simple and reasonable, such as to study hard at school and eventually get a good career. A three or four dot tutor wants your character to do something difficult and dangerous, such as slay a monster stalking the town. If your character disagrees the tutor may withhold their services, though at one or two dots a good roll will talk them around. A five dot tutor sees your character as a tool, not a person, they demand extremely difficult tasks and standards of behaviour such as a Genius demanding their student forsakes emotions in the pursuit of science and bring back research samples from dangerous bardos. They are likely to turn into an antagonist if their protege tries to slip the leash.

A genius may use their tutor's skill dots for calculating Sparks if and only if their tutor is also a Genius. A mortal tutor will lose the thread of the conversation as soon as Inspired leaps of logic enter the room; then they will likely suffer a breaking point from exposure to mad science. A Beholden Player character with a Genius tutor they serve gains additional benefits: One mania point per dot every session (this is likely their entire Mania supply) and the ability to build wonders. Naturally this represents the Genius creating wonders with the Beholden's assistance. The use of the Beholden's (tutor enhanced) Skills to calculate sparks and the fact you bind the Mania from the Beholden's pool are game-mechanical conveniences. An Inspired Tutor has one dot of Inspiration per two dots of Tutor, round up.

A Sworn with a Noble tutor gains one dot of Dedication for free but no other benefits. Their tutor will also provide any Bequests they buy as merits, within reason. Princesses gain no mechanical advantage from a fellow Noble tutor, though advice on handling their double life can be invaluable. A Queen can be a Tutor, though her tutelage is a quick piece of advice given to the protagonist while twelve other problems vie for her attention; anything more than that will create more skill dots than this merit can provide.

The Tutor and Mentor merit can be taken to represent the same person. Multiple players can combine merit dots to represent a shared tutor.

Wallflower (●●)

Prerequisite: Presence 1-

Your character is socially invisible, when in a crowd of five or more nobody will notice her unless they are explicitly looking for her or she is trying to get their attention. Even her own mother would see her as just another face in the crowd of teenagers heading for the all night alcohol soaked frat boy party without feeling concerned.

If someone is explicitly looking for your character you also gain 8 again on all Stealth roles that involve blending into a crowd, but not for more typical stealth techniques like hiding in the bushes.

A wallflower's invisibility vanishes when she is socially interacting with anyone who does not also have this merit, though only as long as they're actively interacting. She can also turn it off for a scene by spending a willpower point and faking a more outgoing personality. A character doesn't have to actually be shy or unconfident to have this merit, they might just be aloof, but it combines well with a Persistent Condition for shyness.

Chapter Two: School Splats

Alpha Bitches

This isn't a cheer-ocracy, I am the cheer-tator, I make the cheer-isions, I will deal with the cheer-onsequences.

- Priscilla, Not Another Teen Movie

If decades of high school films have taught us anything it is that high schools are a brutal darwinian jungle where the strongest survive by devouring their weaker rivals. And in Girl World the fighting must be sneaky.

This hellscape serves as an evolutionary force, moulding the young women at the top into a predator perfectly adapted to fight and dominate a world of salacious rumours and false smiles. As for everyone else, like the mouse watching the hawk circle overhead they learn to hunker down and hope juicer prey catches the predator's eye.

Alpha Bitches are an entirely mundane phenomena.

Powers and Abilities

This is Susan from Planned Parenthood, I have her test results. If you could have her call me as soon as she can. It's urgent, Thank You.

She's not going out with anyone.

- Regina George, Mean Girls

Alpha Bitches have access to a unique form of experience called Plastic Experience. She can gain one Plastic Experience in a scene if they successfully humiliate another female student (two beats if they humiliate a female Nerd, one for a male Nerd). In addition an Alpha Bitch may take a forth Aspiration which will grant Plastic Experiences provided that Aspiration revolves around increasing her own social status or ruining another student's.

Once per scene an Alpha Bitch can give one other female student a Plastic Experience if she does something to boost their social status. There is no cost or (innate) drawback to doing this as often as possible (any character can convert regular Beats into Plastic Beats).

Plastic Experience may be spent on Social Attributes, Social Skills, and Social Merits, as well as the following Merits: Fame, Pusher, Resources, Striking Looks, Clique Integration, Clique Leadership, Gossip Queen, Lout Licence, Nerd Herder, and Teacher's Pet.

However the true power of an Alpha Bitch is that other female students instinctively back down in response to them. Any female student must spend a willpower point in order to Resist or Contest a social roll the Alpha Bitch directs at her. This includes supernatural effects such as mind control techniques which can be described as social. The women talking to an Alpha Bitch instinctively feel that she could destroy their social lives with a word, and that the best way to protect themselves is to give her what they want. While Alphas do

not have direct influence over men, they can indirectly control the school's boys by promising to put in a good word with their crush or threatening to whisper poison in his girlfriend's ear. Not to mention using her own considerable social talents to persuade them.

The only exceptions to the above power are students outside the school status hierarchy, such as anyone with the Aloof merit, or most metanormal beings. Among mad scientists only those who are vulnerable because of specific psychological issues instinctively back down before the comparatively minor power of high school popularity. Beholden whose new worldview doesn't care about popularity are immune too, but Companions are usually affected. Thinking of an Alpha Bitch as normal doesn't make her predatory aura any less intimidating (anyway most people think of Alpha Bitches as normal, nearly all schools have one). Princesses are nearly always immune, their self belief is far too strong to fear high school drama. Sworn have no innate immunity but a sworn who assists in fighting Darkspawn will usually lose their fear of school drama.

Finally all Alpha Bitches have six dots of Popularity, and their Clique's popularity cap rises to five. Nerds among the membership can still lower the Clique's popularity cap and her own Popularity, so an Alpha Bitch must distance herself from or reform any Nerds in her social circle.

Coronations and Usurpations

There are two ways to become the queen bee. The first is to be the female student with the highest Popularity. If there is no Alpha Bitch—a common occurrence due to graduations—the female student with the most dots of Popularity automatically becomes the Alpha whether she likes it or not. In the likely event of a tie, the character with the most dots representing social links among the school (Allies, Contacts, Hobbyist Clique, etc, also count dots in Striking Looks if they represent beauty) wins. Having an Alpha Male as a stable boyfriend adds his Popularity.

A young woman doesn't find herself transformed into a cruel vindictive mean girl the moment the previous alpha graduates leaving her at the top. Instead she instinctively recognises that being nice to other students will grow their social acumen making them more threatening rivals, she is forced to ask which of her friends is genuine and who just wants the perks of her favour, and most of all she has to ask which smile hides the ambition to tear her apart and take her throne.

For the other way to become Alpha Bitch is to usurp the queen. Any female student with Popularity five may, at any time, declare herself to be a pretender to the throne. Doing so has two effects: Firstly she no longer needs to spend Willpower to Resist or Contest social rolls when competing with the Alpha Bitch, secondly she gains a forth Aspiration of "destroy the Alpha Bitch's reputation". If she succeeds in that Aspiration she becomes the new Alpha Bitch.

If the throne is vacant and the Storyteller feels there are many candidates who are close in qualifications they may declare a power vacuum. All candidates immediately become pretenders, and the first one to destroy another's reputation becomes the new Alpha Bitch. She may have to defend her position from day one. Alternatively, if there is a Popular Alpha

Male who is not attached to any candidate, the first one to bag him as a stable boyfriend becomes Alpha.

Screw This, I'm Out of Here

In the World of Darkness young women instinctively understand the social dynamic (and game mechanical effects, even if they don't use those terms) of the Alpha Bitch phenomena. So what stops an intelligent student buying a linux t-shirt and hanging out with the computer geeks to lessen her Popularity until the new queen has been selected?

Nothing at all. It's harder, but she can even do so after accidentally taking the throne. The problem is that people have memories, they won't forget she had everything it takes to reach top over a few days or a summer vacation so she takes the Rightful Queen condition. Escaping the game is much harder than avoiding the throne.

Many previously nice girls feel their best chance for survival is to accept their new role, to farm Plastic Beats until they're strong enough to defend themselves from would-be usurpers. Popular socially skilled women, even the Alpha Bitch's former friends, decide to go for the throne before she becomes unassailable and they become this year's harvest, creating a toxic self reinforcing dynamic. Other queen bees choose to take the throne to keep it from someone worse, they use their powers to build up their friends or the students who need it most and try to avoid tearing people down more than necessary, or at all. Who knows, they might even succeed.

Rightful Queen (Persistent)

By right of Popularity your character should have been queen of the school. She has abdicated her throne, but not her claim.

Beat: Your status draws trouble to you. This could be from a threatened Alpha Bitch, or from a "supporter" eager to push you into taking your crown.

Resolution: At any time this condition may be resolved to become an Alpha Bitch. This only takes a change of attitude, and perhaps untying the ponytail.

If there are multiple Alpha Bitches in the same school their positions are precarious. Firstly both immediately lock their forth Aspiration into humiliating their rival. Secondly if anyone, not just a pretender or an Alpha, humiliates one of the Alpha Bitches she loses her status immediately. The rival queen bees don't have to attack each other, humans can resist their instincts, but they feel those instincts and the skills to dominate the jungles of girl world rarely coincide with a personality that cooperates in a prisoner's dilemma.

Since an Alpha Bitch is a social niche big enough for exactly one woman it is rare for two or more students to inhabit it at one time. The Rightful Queen condition is one circumstance where this is possible: Everyone knew the rightful queen belonged on top, everyone knew the Alpha Bitch was on top, that confusion widened the niche. Summer camps often have multiple Alpha Bitches. Since nobody knows each other at first, social positions are hazy and

students can retain the instinctual regal bearing granted to them back in school until they've fought it out.

Gender Bending

An Alpha Bitch who is supernaturally transformed into a man, whether that transformation is a convincing illusion or a true change, loses all her abilities but suffers no further template-related consequences and regains her position when she changes back (unless transforming her was the method a rival used to steal the throne of course).

If the Queen Bee pretends she is absent from school until she returns to normal the throne becomes vacant when students start wondering if she is ever coming back. If she remains in school and lets people know of her transformation then she retains her position unless a rival steals from her. And since she's relatively defenceless her rivals will pounce.

Beta Bitches

The meaner Regina was to her, the more Gretchen tried to win Regina back. She knew it was better to be in the plastics, hating life, than to not be in at all.

- *Mean Girls*

Any female student in the same Clique as the Alpha Bitch becomes a Beta Bitch, unless they're immune to an Alpha Bitch's abilities.

A Beta Bitch takes a Cheerleading Beat every time she is present when her Alpha gains one and she gains 8 again when she is a secondary actor in a roll to assist her Alpha. In addition the Alpha Bitch can not gain beats by victimising her, but nor can she bestow Beats onto her Betas except by earning them in their presence. An Alpha Bitch can also strip her Betas of social merits with nothing more than a few well placed words to them or to the grapevine, and her Betas have no defence against this. These merits are not refunded until after the Alpha loses her throne or the two stop attending the same school.

A Beta Bitch can quit, or be fired at any time, however this requires her to leave the Clique. The Alpha can also strip social merits from her as a parting gift. Betas automatically shed their status the moment they no longer attend the same school or are part of the same clique as their queen.

The lifecycle of a Beta Bitch is a short and sad one. Their ability to share Cheerleading Beats means they're the only girls in school who grow as fast as an Alpha, that makes them a threat. Most Alphas watch their Betas closely and discard them ruthlessly at the first sign of disloyalty or the first sign that they're growing too capable.

Beta Bitches are immune to the powers of any Alpha Bitch except her own. They may freely defect, though initiative looks suspicious to a queen bee. If two Alpha Bitches join the same clique any girls not attached to either must immediately pick a side, this usually ends up splitting a clique into two but a male heavy clique might survive.

And yes, a Beta Bitch can declare herself to be a Pretender. She remains a Beta until she usurps the throne. Compared to other students she has the advantages she buys with Cheerleading Experience but the disadvantage is that if her ambitions are discovered she is easy to snuff out.

Regicide and Royal Executions

Dear diary, My teenage angst bullshit has a body count

- Veronica Sawyer, Heathers

Even in the World of Darkness it's rare for popularity contests to turn violent, but it can happen. If an Alpha Bitch uses her influence to kill another student (or push her onto hard drugs, or anything else life destroying) she gains a full point of Plastic Experience. However she loses her ability to gain Plastic Experiences the normal way. This doesn't compel her to continue racking up the body count, but the Conditions she gets from the resulting Breaking Points often result in paranoia that someone is coming to kill her for her throne, giving her every reason to seek more Experience and preemptively take care of rivals.

A pretender can kill her way onto the throne, instead of merely humiliate. This also locks her into the harsher way of gaining Plastic Experience.

Being known as a murderer doesn't strip an Alpha Bitch from her position, it's only natural people will become more deferential and afraid of her. But being expelled or imprisoned does remove her power.

Inspired Alpha Bitches

As a natural phenomena caused by social incentives nothing stops a mad scientist from being an Alpha Bitch. It's rare because most mad scientists are not popular but it can happen. Putting a mad scientist into a high pressure social situation usually ends badly, but with mad scientists that's to be expected. Furcht and Neid are known to be especially volatile if thrust into the role of Alpha Bitch.

There is one truly unique effect. If a Beta Bitch faces a Breaking Point with a chance to turn her Beholden, she turns on any result except an Exceptional Success; on an Exceptional Success she must choose between becoming Beholden or resigning as a Beta.

Geniuses rarely become a Beta Bitch. The Inspired mind is tougher, a Genius' life contains far scarier things than the social games of young girls, and they often have different subconscious instincts to mere mortals. Unless a player declares the symptoms of their character's particular insanity cause them to seek approval from a more popular girl they are immune. However the Alpha *can* order all the other girls in her Clique to shun the Genius, which will remove or reduce her dots in Clique Integration (depending on the gender ratio and how much the boys will follow the girl's lead).

An alpha bitch can also become a Clockstopper. If so her abilities will synergise with the Void Brotherhood of Righteousness, doubling the number of people called into the mob if she

uses it in her domain but also significantly skewing the gender ratio towards women (what effect, if any, that has depends on gender roles in the local culture).

Noble Alpha Bitches

A Princess can fill a social niche as easily as any mortal. The court of Mirrors loves the limelight and with their supernatural abilities they rarely have trouble outcompeting schoolgirls. Other courts usually avoid claiming the school throne. Radiant usually do so by becoming School Saints; a very common merit among the Nobility. The Courts of Tears and Storms usually have other concerns that keep them from accruing popularity.

A Noble who becomes the Alpha of her school uses the same mechanics. She has one significant disadvantage compared to mortals, her Sensitivity is triggered when she puts other girls down. This problem is not insurmountable, Specchio offers ways to deal with Sensitivity and a Princess can stab a woman behind her back and avoid being close enough to witness the worst of her pain.

While the rules leave open the possibility of an Alpha Bitch who uses her powers for good, that opportunity is balanced by the risks that rivals will take advantage of her good nature. Since Princesses can protect themselves with magic that balance is broken, therefore it's recommended that players only place their character on the throne if they intend to at least dabble in the archetype of the evil cheerleader. A Princess who wants to hand out Plastic Experiences for the good of all must first change the culture of the school to something with healthier social dynamics, this can be the focus of an entire story.

A Princess cannot become a Beta Bitch, the convictions of her Belief are far too strong for her to fade into another's shadow. Even if a Princess believes in duty and service, she's still standing for her Beliefs rather than hiding behind a stronger personality. Sworn can become Betas, if they serve a Princess who is not the Alpha they are immune. If they serve a Noble Alpha they gain a free wisp the first time they take a Plastic Experience in a session.

Of the Outer Dark's servants, both Darkened and Mnemosyne can become Alpha Bitches. They gain no unique mechanics, but are sure to have no end of ways to abuse the normal power of an Alpha Bitch.

Alpha Men

Everyone knows that the idea of an alpha wolf is a myth that came from observing wolves in captivity, but there is a type of creature that does have alphas: Primates. In the animal kingdom there are primate species like orangutans where the dominant male grows unique features to display their status. Among humans the alpha male may be recognised by titles such as: King, Caesar, Chief, or Football Captain.

Whereas the role of Alpha Bitch is a social niche any woman can find herself within should she become too popular, Alpha Men require a combination of nature and nurture. An Alpha, or Chad, is born not made, but his condition only has minor effects — higher levels of

testosterone and a tendency to seek status in a tight knit group — unless he finds himself as the dominant member in a closed social circle.

An Alpha Male doesn't have to be the dominant jock, he just needs to be dominant, but their natural advantages are better suited to team sports than solitary intellectual pursuits so most potentials gravitate in that direction. It's not uncommon for all the potential Alphas in school to join the team, Chads are competitive but also graceful losers to a man in their tribe who they respect. Contrary to the words of bitter Geniuses remembering their bruises, Chads are not actually unintelligent, just dumb in a highly specific socially enforced way.

Alpha Men are an entirely mundane phenomena.

Powers and Abilities

A dormant Alpha activates his potential by having the highest Clique Integration in his group (outside of high school Status may be used instead). Clique Leadership will not do, he needs both authority and immersion. In a tie the highest Presence wins, if that ties it's the highest Strength, and if that ties the Storyteller calls it. Note that women are counted in this contest, an Alpha Man who is socially outranked by a woman, or a man with Clique Leadership, remains dormant.

Once a Chad unlocks his potential he gains a pool of Masculinity Points, he may have up to Strength + Presence points. One point may be spent each turn, on one of the following advantages:

- Increase his Strength by one for a turn. If he has a Condition or Tilt representing anger he can increase his Strength until the Condition or Tilt ends, and may stack this advantage until his strength increases by half his natural dots (round up) to an absolute limit of eight.
- Increase his Presence by one for a turn to an absolute limit of six.
- Apply the Swooned condition to a woman by making a move, the condition appears before the first dice roll. This doesn't guarantee romantic or sexual success, but gives the usual advantages to social rolls (and bribes players with beats). Lesbians and asexuals are immune, as are people who he's previously been with and who are so over him. Nerds often like to think they're immune to "caveman football captains" but they're not, a hostile relation between their cliques or a disagreement between their head and their heart might stop hormones progressing into a relationship though.
- Apply the Swooned condition to a gay or bisexual man by making a move. Nothing stops a Chad being gay or bisexual, but for the purposes of this power only the target's sexuality is relevant. Obviously the Chad's sexuality will be a huge influence on who he flirts with. A player may declare their character uses this accidentally when they were aiming for platonic male bonding as a prelude to a journey of self discovery, or to set their jerk character up with a reason to focus on a new victim.
- As a substitute for Willpower when using Small Unit Tactics (they can also double their Presence for the purposes of Small Unit Tactics by spending a point of Masculinity and Willpower in the same turn).
- Become immune to being Beaten Down for a scene. Or for the duration of a Tilt or Condition representing anger.

- Immunise up to Presence followers from becoming Beaten Down for a scene by giving them some form of encouragement.
- To automatically succeed on a breaking point caused by inflicting or suffering violence. This only applies to mundane violence.

Alpha men are not unintelligent, in fact they're likely to be intelligent if only because smarts are an advantage for outcompeting other men, and because being generally healthy is good for the brain as well as on the football pitch. However they do tend to make a lot of meatheaded decisions, because they regain masculinity by:

- Once per session, when the Chad does something with negative consequences or a significant risk because he was challenged or because not doing so would make him look afraid, he regains a point of Masculinity. If the risk is severe (at least a Persistent Condition or Tilt) add another point. Add another point if he is watched by one or more of: A girl he is in a romantic or sexual relationship with, a girl he is currently pursuing, or an Alpha Bitch.
- Once per session, when the Alpha Male wins a significant contest such as a football game against a rival team he regains one point of Masculinity.
- Once per story, when the Alpha Male wins an extremely significant contest, such as the football championships, he entirely refills his masculinity pool.
- Once per session, an Alpha Male can regain a point of masculinity by having sex. Homosexual sex counts if he swings that way.
- Once per session, when the Chad is publicly acknowledged as having scored with another person for the first time he regains a point of masculinity. He doesn't actually have had to have sex, if the peanut gallery is impressed that he got to first base then that is sufficient. Lies or misunderstandings count too if it wins him respect. Homosexuality also counts, if the crowd will be impressed rather than bigoted.
- Once per session, an Alpha Male regains a point of Masculinity if an Alpha Bitch publically shows him romantic or sexual affection.
- Once per session, an Alpha Male can regain a point of Masculinity by winning a fight, if the fight has the risk of turning lethal this increases to refilling half his pool. If he is defending a woman's safety or her honour he doubles the gain.
- Once per session, an Alpha Male can regain a point of Masculinity by bullying a physically weaker male. This increases to two points if he bullies a Nerd.

An Alpha Man can also lose points of masculinity in the following ways

- Once per session, if he loses a fair contest like a football game he loses a point of masculinity. This remains one point no matter how significant the contest is, after all losing the championship match is far less shameful than losing in the qualifiers.
- Once per session, if the Alpha Male chickens out of a challenge he loses two points of masculinity. This decreases by one point if accepting the challenge risks serious consequences, at least a Persistent Condition or Tilt, but increases by one if there is a woman watching. The exception is that he can freely refuse to fight women or children (two age bands or more below him, see the section: Conflicts across age gaps).
- Once per scene a Chad loses a point of Masculinity if he is insulted and accepts the insult. Friendly banter does not trigger this.

- If the insult is from another man the Chad can prevent the loss by defeating them in combat, extracting an apology, or successfully intimidating them into backing down, before the scene ends.
 - If the insult is from a woman the Alpha can prevent the loss by successfully seducing her or by getting an apology from an appropriate man on her behalf before the end of the scene. Appropriate men include: Boyfriends, friends, relatives, and anyone she is currently hanging out with. The Alpha must target the man with the strongest relationship to her currently present, not the weakest man.
- If the Alpha Male fails to win a fight he may lose masculinity. Add up the following factors to a maximum of -0:
 - -1 masculinity if he lost rather than tied.
 - -1 masculinity if the failure means he loses a valuable material possession.
 - -1 masculinity if a woman's honour or safety was at stake. If he is in a romantic or sexual relationship with her this becomes -2.
 - -2 masculinity if he was fighting a girl.
 - +1 masculinity if there is no way he could reasonably be expected to win, such as a teenage football captain fighting a championship boxer. This changes to +2 masculinity if winning the fight was beyond impossible, such as fighting a gorilla, tiger, or werewolf with his bare fists.
- Once per session, if the alpha male is publicly rejected by a woman he loses a point of masculinity unless he was rejected for being "too manly". If it's obvious that he was rejected because of actions that regain masculinity points, such as having a long string of ex-girlfriends, there is no penalty. This rises to three points if the rejection is particularly humiliating such as being dumped in favour of another less popular man. If he asks a lesbian who is out of the closet the penalty applies, he set his manliness a challenge it couldn't overcome. But if she's in the closet, that's a mistake anyone could make and the peanut gallery will understand, if he outs her.
- Once per session an Alpha Male loses five points or points equal to his Masculinity Pool, whichever is higher, if he is cheated on. Increase the penalty by one if the other man (or woman) has at least two fewer points of Popularity. Also increase the penalty by one if the other man (or woman) is a Nerd.
- In schools where homosexuality is accepted or tolerated, an alpha male loses points if they're publicly rejected by a man using the same rules as above. This includes being rejected because he propositioned a heterosexual man; a malfunctioning gaydar is a mark against any alpha gay or bisexual man.
- Once per session, in schools that are culturally homophobic a Chad loses a point of masculinity if he is seen doing something that is perceived as gay no matter how stupid the association is, if people think wearing an ironed shirt is gay it costs a point.
- In schools that are culturally homophobic, if a Chad is outed doing something that actually is homosexual, like passionately kissing his boyfriend, he loses all his masculinity points or half his maximum, whatever is higher. (This may result in other consequences, possibly including loss of Clique Integration and his position as the Alpha)
- Wearing women's clothes drains one point of masculinity, and another point every hour. If combined with a full makeup and wig this effect doubles.

If an Alpha Man cannot pay the lost points by the end of the scene he faces a Breaking Point with a -2 penalty per point of masculinity debt. This clears the debt.

Gender Bending

A Chad who is supernaturally transformed into a woman, whether that transformation is a convincing illusion or a true change, can no longer spend Masculinity points. They lose five points upon transformation and a further five points twice a day. This will not send him plummeting down to Integrity zero, he'll lose the Alpha Man template long before then.

Usurpation and Transension

Alpha Men can lose the template in one of two ways. The first is if he is no longer the dominant man of a tight social circle his Alpha-ness goes back into dormancy. This is not inherently a Breaking Point. It often is if another man challenges and overcomes a Chad, but changing school, changing clique, or graduating is rarely traumatic.

The second way is for an Alpha Male to become truly secure in his masculinity. There are no actual mechanics to dictate when this happens, but when it does the template is removed. While the loss of his special powers will make a character less capable, this should be seen as an artefact of the game mechanics. Within the setting a man finding true self confidence doesn't actually make him physically weaker or less successful at attracting girls. The Storyteller may consider offering experience points and a free dot of Integrity. Another possibility is to give the player a forth long term Ambition of achieving self confidence, and all the beats from that Ambition are paid out in one lump sum when it is fulfilled.

An Alpha Male who doesn't transcend is not doomed to become the Hollywood cliché of a former high school star growing into a washed out loser coasting on memories of his glory days. But self confidence and self respect are always an advantage in life.

Inspired Alpha Men

Are *extremely* rare. Whereas an Alpha Bitch is a social niche any woman can fall into under the right circumstances, Alpha Men's enhanced social abilities operate purely on the level of instincts, subconscious body language, and pheromones. Geniuses just don't relate to their fellow man in the same ways.

Even if he was born with the right genes, a mad scientist trying to study and replicate the phenomena is more likely to end up with Exelixi or Epikrato wonders than to become a Chad himself. An Alpha Man who becomes Inspired is more likely to bring his Clique along as beholden, or get demoted as a mortal takes his old throne. Assuming he doesn't alienate everyone during the breakthrough or by becoming bitter at his loss of status.

That said, it's entirely possible for a Clockstopper to be an Alpha Man and they gain one unique advantage. Their ability to immunise followers from becoming Beaten Down for a scene expands to cover an entire mob summoned by the Brotherhood of Righteousness and

lasts for the duration of that Void's effect. Mechanically this means the roll to see if the mob flees or turns murderous becomes a rote action.

Emasculation Rays (Katastrofi •• Inference)

Action: Instant

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Firearms or Dexterity + Weaponry or Brawl - Resolve

Duration: Lasting

Construction Skill: Academics

Mania Cost: 1

Spark Cost: 1 Spark

A Scholar of Katastrofi can build a wonder to drain Masculinity, leaving the target feeling insecure and vulnerable. This works identically to, and is a variant of, a Will Drainer. Masculinity cannot be reduced below zero points.

If used on anyone other than an Alpha Male this inference has similar but milder effects which are regulated to pure roleplay, there is also a risk of havoc. If used on a transwoman the wonder provides mild and temporary relief from symptoms of dysphoria. However using the Axiom of Destruction as psychiatric medicine is just begging for Havoc.

+1 Spark: The Wonder does not require the target to be grappled or bound before being used.

+1 Spark: Every point of Masculinity drained becomes one point of Mania which can only be spent on powering Exelixi wonders that make the beneficiary more likely to succeed in manly activities or Metaptropi wonders that make something more manly. If unspent these points vanish at the end of the scene.

Noble Alpha Men

Blossoming doesn't change a Prince's DNA and only strengthens his connections to his fellow man. Many freshmen will idealise themselves as the senior they see leading the football team to victory and getting admiring glances from the prettiest girls, and a Prince transforms into his idealised self.

By that logic there should be nothing stopping a Prince also being an Alpha Man, but one must also consider the themes. An Alpha Man is outwardly strong and confident, but inside he is always looking over his shoulder for fear that his judgemental peers will revoke his man card. A Prince is secure in his Beliefs, willing to stand up for his ideals even if they're unpopular or "unmanly".

For this reason only Princes from the Court of Mirrors can become Alphas, and even then the drawbacks of Specchio have significant thematic overlap with the rules for Alpha Men so storytellers and players should decide if they need both systems at once.

When calculating who is the Alpha Man, a Prince adds his Fuoco (the Invocation that best matches the positives of a rugged masculinity) to his Clique Integration. Even if he can't be

the Alpha he can outrank the other men through the power of setting a positive example, ensuring nobody is trapped by the Alpha mindset.

Mnemosyne cannot be Alpha Men either, the Darkness has taken away too much of their ability to relate to other men. However Darkened still can. A Darkened Alpha has no special mechanics but may take the following Umbrae:

Umbrae: Alpha Douche

The Darkened is a toxic influence on their squad. So long as he is the Alpha and with at least three other male members of his clique he and nearby members of his clique are all considered to be standing within a Tainted Place. The severity is calculated as normal based on the crimes the squad have committed together (minimum of one). There is only one Tainted Aspiration, and the Alpha chooses it as he chooses any of his Aspirations.

Drawback: Maintaining this supernatural corrupting aura requires a lot of energy, and the fuel is his masculine vigour. If the Darkened ever suffers a Breaking Point from losing Masculinity make a mark on his leftmost Shadow regardless of the outcome. Marked Shadows provide no benefit whatsoever but are still counted when rolling to gain more Shadows via Sadism.

If all the Darkened's Shadows are marked he is emasculated: He loses one dot of Strength or Presence every Stamina days to a minimum of one. It takes five points of Masculinity to unmark a Shadow, so long as his clique sees him as a leader it's not too late to pull himself back from the brink.

Experience points are not automatically refunded, instead they are banked. If the Alpha Douche has at least one unmarked shadow he takes one beat from the bank each time he gains a beat from actions which are both cruel and fit the stereotype of an Alpha Man. If he is cured of being Darkened he instead takes a beat from the bank when he earns a beat from actions that represent growing a healthier relationship to masculine leadership, or that represent coming to terms with his new weaker body.

Charm: Untoxic Love (Connect ●)

Action: Instant

Cost: 1 Wisps

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion

Duration: Lasting

With a few words of encouragement a Princess reassures her man he's just fine the way he is.

This charm does not require a Princess to be in a romantic or sexual relationship with the target, but if she is in a relationship with one Chad then using it on any other drains Masculinity as though she had cheated on him. This says more about the

Alpha mindset than the charm. The charm also fails automatically if the Noble is the wrong fit for the Chad's orientation.

Dramatic Failure: The Princess damages the Chad's confidence. He loses Inner Light + Striking Looks dots of Masculinity.

Failure: Nothing happens.

Success: The Chad gains one point of Masculinity per success, this charm has no effect on characters without a Masculinity pool.

Exceptional Success: The Chad also gains the Inspired condition.

Nerds

So if intelligence in itself is not a factor in popularity, why are smart kids so consistently unpopular? The answer, I think, is that they don't really want to be popular.

If someone had told me that at the time, I would have laughed at him. Being unpopular in school makes kids miserable, some of them so miserable that they commit suicide. Telling me that I didn't want to be popular would have seemed like telling someone dying of thirst in a desert that he didn't want a glass of water. Of course I wanted to be popular.

But in fact I didn't, not enough. There was something else I wanted more: to be smart.

- Paul Graham, Why Nerds are Unpopular

The third of Hollywood's high school power trio can be found at the bottom, not the top, of the popularity totem poll. Whereas Alpha Bitches are a social role anyone can fall into, and Alpha Manhood is genetic, Nerds are a personality type and thus are a mix of both nature and nurture.

The distinction between nerds and geeks varies across time and location, and can be fuzzy even in one place. But in this document a nerd is a student who cares more about being smart than about being popular, a geek cares more about indulging in and mastering a niche and uncool hobby or hobbies, and a swot cares more about getting good grades and approval from authority. And a Nerd, Geek, or Swot with a capitalised letter refers to a student who takes the above tendencies far enough to earn this Template. A single student can be more than one at the same time, and all three groups share the same mechanics.

There is a fourth group who uses these mechanics, called Losers for reasons that will be self-evident. Whereas the first three lack Popularity because they are distracted by something they want more, Losers lack Popularity because they suck. A Looser gains all of the template drawbacks but none of the advantages and cannot buy any of the special Merits. They can sometimes be found hanging out with other Nerds, but they are at most tolerated.

Powers and Abilities

Yes, I am a nerd

Bookworm, I'm studious

From my cerebral cortex to my gluteus

Back in kindergarten I aced my college entrance exam

Now, I'm no rocket scientist

Oh wait, I am

- *Rhett and Link, Nerd vs Geek*

Nerds have access to their own form of experience called Brain Beats, which can be accumulated by:

- Ignoring an opportunity to increase your social status in order to pursue your interest.
- Overcoming a significant challenge by using your mental acumen.
- Gaining a Beat from an Ambition that is in line with your Nerdy, Geeky, or Swotty nature also grants a Brain Beat.
- Downgrading a failure on a Social roll to a dramatic failure (for a total of one regular and one Brain Beat).
- If you manage to convince someone who is not a Nerd, Geek, Swot, or Loser (large or small letter for the first three) to try your lifestyle and they have a positive experience, take a beat.
- Asserting your intellectual superiority, asserting your mastery of your hobby, or trying to impress or learn from an authority figure, when doing so risks creating a significant problem. (This option can be used once per session)

Brain Experience may be spent on: Intelligence, Mental Skills, clique asset skills, Mental Merits, Nerd Merits, and the following Merits: Aloof, Clique Integration, Clique Leadership, Delightful Child, Mentor, Refuge of the Damned, Teacher's Pet, Tutor, Wallflower.

As you likely have realised, Nerds are not a supernatural phenomena.

Social Relationships

Jimbo: Hey, he's learning on his own!

Kearney: Get him!

- *The Simpsons, The Last Temptation of Homer*

You can't join Mathletes, it's social suicide!

- *Damian, Mean Girls*

Nerrrrrrrrrrrrds!

- *Ogre, Revenge of the Nerds*

Nerds are at the bottom of the hierarchy, always. Their Popularity is capped at zero. Even associating with a Nerd is harmful for a character's social status. Any character who is publicly seen being too friendly to a Nerd loses a dot of Popularity. This can happen once a day (no matter how many Nerds they are seen with) and lasts one day per dot of the Nerd's Clique Integration. Multiple penalties reset the timer and stack up to a maximum of the Nerd's Clique Integration, but cannot reduce Popularity below zero.

If a Nerd joins a Clique everyone's Popularity is permanently decreased by one per Nerd in the clique, to a minimum of zero. For this reason Nerds usually have their own exclusive Cliques, the Storyteller and player decide which Cliques they are: Are the band geeks actually band Geeks? For Cliques with a popularity cap of one or two this takes place quickly. With a cap of three or four a Nerd has a week to change his behaviour and stop being a Nerd before the others are affected. A Clique with a popularity cap of five can safely

harbour a single Nerd, so long as they're trying to change him or give the impression they are doing so.

Nerds do not have any effect on the Popularity of other members in a Secret Clique, providing the group is a well kept secret.

Alpha Men who regain a point of Masculinity by bullying a weaker male gain two points if they pick on a Nerd, Alpha Bitches who gain a Plastic Beat for humiliating a female Nerd take a second for free and they can humiliate male Nerds for a single Plastic Beat. Finally, anyone who gains Willpower from a Vice by picking on a Nerd also increases the benefit to two Willpower points.

Gaining Popularity

There are three ways Nerds (and mad scientists) can escape their low Popularity. The first is by throwing an awesome party. The temporary Popularity provided by a party applies to Nerds in full, and it cannot be reduced by hanging out with other Nerds. What's more, while a Nerd has some popularity they ignore all the rules governing a Nerd's social relationships.

The second is if one of the Alpha Bitch is part of their Clique, an unlikely but not strictly impossible situation. When the Alpha Bitch joins the Clique's popularity cap rises to five and any Nerds within calculate their Popularity as normal. This is a temporary situation, given time their Nerdyness will drag the Clique and even the Alpha Bitch down by association. But they have time to indulge in Popularity, and decide if they want to change their lifestyle to keep it. If the Alpha Bitch distances herself from the Clique the Nerds popularity will vanish a lot quicker, but not instantly.

The third way is of course to use a metanormal solution. This is easier for mad scientists, who can treat Popularity (or Clique Integration with a Popular clique) as a merit to be manipulated with a wonder capable of Asset Manipulation but there are other supernatural effects that can be used. Storytellers are encouraged to be *creative* with side effects of manipulating Popularity with Epikrato.

If a Nerd gains more than one dot of Popularity it goes to their head and they take a Condition representing this. They're not guaranteed to crash and burn, destroying their new Popularity before it expires. Nor are they guaranteed to change their attitude and stop being a Nerd. But those are the two most likely outcomes.

Inspired Nerds

The majority of mad scientists are more interested in their research than in accruing Popularity and no small number prefer being smart to being liked by mere mortals. In short, by the above definitions the Inspired are a society full of Geeks and Nerds.

A Nerdy Genius cannot gain Brain Beats, the Inspired already have their own mechanics to model learning quicker than mortals and social ostracisation. However the mechanics under Social relationships *do* apply to the vast majority of non-Director, non Ditzzy Genius, mad scientists.

The Inspired may also buy Nerd Merits using regular or Scientific Exp.

A Clockstopper may not be a Nerd, for no Clockstopper sees value in the human intellect. Nor may a Clockstopper be a Geek, for Hollow Men have no spark of passion. A Clockstopper *can* be a Swot, thoughtlessly following orders from authority and diligently memorising answers to exams without truly learning. They can also be a Loser.

Hollow Men hate Nerds second most after the Inspired, a distant second. Even Clockstopper Swots are disgusted by mortal Swots who enjoy thinking about what they learn.

Noble Nerds

A Noble can be a Nerd (Swots are actually more common) but they have to *really* not care about popularity since even a partial effort from a Princess is usually enough to make lots of friends.

But just as magic helps a Princess make friends, it can help her study. Therefore Princesses have two ways to gain access to Nerd Merits. The first is to take the Nerd template with all its attendant drawbacks (if the template only applies to her mundane form she can still use the merits while Transformed). The second is to have Acqua equal or higher than the merit's dots, treat Princesses of Diamonds as having two extra dots of Acqua. Sworn and Beacons are treated as regular mortals.

Darkened and Mnemosyne can also be Nerds (only Darkened can be Geeks or Swots, Mnemosyne are too selfish to respect their teachers and evil for evil's sake does not qualify as a geeky hobby). They may use the Homebrewed Technology merit to create equipment that support of Caligines, it takes an Availability ●● purchase to build a device that grants +1 to a specific Caligine tree and an Availability ●●● purchase to build a device with a +2 bonus. (The discount for homebrew technology is included in the above price). These devices cannot be used by anyone without the relevant Caligine (though a Genius could research them for Mania or Scientific Beats).

Targeting a Nerd gives no advantage to accumulating Shadows.

Nerd Merits

Area of Obsession (●●)

Prerequisite: Resolve ●● and one Skill Specialty

Your character is uncommonly specialized in one area. Choose a Specialty to assign to this Merit. Forgo the +1 bonus afforded by a Specialty, in exchange for a +3.

This cannot be combined with Area of Expertise. This still only provides two dots to a skill when a genius is calculating Sparks. This merit may only be taken once.

Contagion (●●)

Oh, I get it. Like C-3PO... What happened to me?

- Penny, The Big Bang Theory

Prerequisite: Mortal

Whenever your character rolls an exceptional success using a social skill you make a mark against the character they are interacting with. When they have a number of marks equal to Integrity - the most appropriate Mental Skill they gain the Nerd template or the Weregeek template, this is a permanent change. Which template they gain depends on how they feel about it. If they embrace their new nature they become a Nerd, Geek, or Swot (whichever one or ones your character is). If they embrace it but try to hide it to avoid social ostracization, or if they reject their new tendencies, then they become a Weregeek.

Characters also add a mark after Composure hours of consistent social interaction with a contagious Nerd. People are subconsciously aware of this and will usually remove themselves from the situation before the time is up if they have the option, and sometimes when they technically do not such as storming out of detention or a group study. Characters can only get one mark in a scene.

Depending on the individuals in question and the themes of the story; catching the contagion could represent a mundane moment of self discovery when a character finally sees past the Geek's awkward exterior and realises they like hanging out with him and playing computer games. An invitation for comedy as a popular cheerleader tries and fails to hide her new compulsive nerdy outbursts. Or it could be a traumatic experience when a character finds themselves experiencing powerful cravings for things they once detested and finds themselves unable to speak easily to lifelong friends. A Breaking Point may be appropriate.

With the Storyteller's permission you may nominate merits Nerds can purchase with Brain Experience, anyone who catches Nerdiness from your character immediately buys those merits and goes into experience debt if they cannot afford them. You can nominate Contagion.

Anyone with a Potency trait, who is already a small or large letter geek or nerd, who has matured past the jungle of high-school, or who has two dots of the Nerd Liaison merit or the School Saint merit is immune to the contagion.

Gadgets Galore (●●●)

Prerequisites: Resources ●

Your character loves their toys and usually has the right thing for the job. Once per scene you may declare you have a small item on your person, or a larger item if you're at home, purchasing it with Resources as normal.

The items you pull from gadgetspace must be for entertainment as their primary purpose. However you could pull out a Star Wars model set just to make use of the packaged glue.

Genre Savvy (●●)

Your character has read enough stories about situations like this one to avoid the obvious mistakes. Functionally this Merit duplicates Common Sense at a one dot discount, but it only applies when dealing with one type of supernatural phenomena chosen when buying this merit. A type is defined as all creatures associated with one Chronicle of Darkness gameline.

Homebrewed Technology (●●●●)

Your character can put together equipment with incredible skill and speed. Pick a piece of equipment from the stand equipment list and Roll Dexterity + Crafts once per hour as an extended action requiring five successes per dot of Availability + one success per point of size. Only equipment with an availability of ●●● or less can be built with this merit.

Equipment built with this merit has a maximum size of eight, a motorcycle or large go-kart is about as big as things get. While it functions identically to stock equipment it looks visibly homemade and has a Durability of zero.

Finding parts and components either requires scavenging or making an Availability purchase of one dot lower than the equipment you are trying to replicate.

Intellectual Superiority Complex (●)

This merit functions identically to Hypercompetitive, except that it can be applied to any roll using Intelligence or a Mental Skill that is also a clique asset skill, and does not need to be used in a formal competition.

Library Lover (● - ●●●)

This Merit provides the exact same benefits as the regular Library, and also provides the benefits of Good-Time Management when performing extended actions to do research with your Library.

If your character already has Good-Time Management they gain no extra benefits.

Omni Technician (●)

When rolling to use, understand, or repair technology your character never faces penalties for unfamiliarity. This does not apply to wonders but does apply to devices created by an Ambassador to Machines.

School-Smart (●)

Once per session when your character is being taught in a formal setting by an adult they may take the Informed condition relating to the topic of the lesson. Resolving the Condition grants a Brain Beat rather than a regular Beat.

Snivelling Appeasement (●)

Whenever your character helps another by using their intellect or one of the unique Nerd merits, that character treats them as a normal person rather than a Nerd for calculating any benefits from being cruel to them for the remainder of the session. Nerds with this merit and the Teachers Pet merit gain the same benefit against their teacher every time they run an errand for him.

Characters who regularly take tithes from a Nerd with this merit should take the Nerd Liaison merit themselves.

Student of the Blade (●●, ●●●)

Prerequisite: Firearms or Weaponry ●●●

While other students were partying, your character studied the blade. Whenever you are in a crisis situation where combat is a useful and relevant skill, and you are armed appropriately, raise your dots of Presence to equal your dots in Firearms or Weaponry (choose one when taking this merit).

You may use Firearms or Weaponry instead of Presence to qualify for Merits with a Presence prerequisite, however you can only use those Merits when your Presence is boosted and meets the prerequisites.

This Merit costs three dots, or two dots if you have Firearms or Weaponry as an asset skill from Clique Integration or Professional Training.

Science Fiction Aficionado (●●●)

Prerequisite: Integrity

Your character is a huge sci-fi Geek which gives them a wealth of context to understand and explain wonders. Sometimes they can grok a wonder's purpose by recognising which story a Genius stole the idea from. You gain two bonus dice to Breaking Points that are caused by Mad Science rattling your understanding of the world or purely from exposure to mania. In addition you reduce the -Rank dice penalty for using a wonder by one and gain an Exceptional Success on three dice when Investigating a mystery with a mad scientist at its heart.

Numerologists, The Hermetic Order of the 28 Spheres, and other Geniuses who do not practise mad science bypass this merit.

Drawback: Your knowledge of how to use sci-fi devices gives you even more opportunities to cause havoc, adding an extra die to all Havoc checks. This is in addition to extra dice from technical or scientific expertise.

Super Study (●●●●)

Your character is a savant of studying. Give them a book, scroll, or other source of written information, and some time and reference materials and they will crack its secrets. If they find mysterious cuneiform engravings beneath their all-American high school they will be able to translate it with an extended roll at a -5 penalty, as opposed to it being outright impossible for anyone without highly specialist training or metanormal advantages.

This merit doesn't provide any advantages to cracking deliberate encryption, mundane or metanormal. Nor does it protect them from the effects of reading metanormal texts. If they study a Genius' writing they will gain the usual Breaking Points from exposure to mad science, as well as learning something useful like the Genius' plan or his wonder's fault.

Urkellite (●)

Whenever someone tries to harm your character with cruel words directed at them you may add your character's Wits to your contesting roll, or if the roll is not contested you may subtract your character's Wits from their roll. This does not apply against metanormal effect.

A genius with this merit uses it as normal, unless they become Unmada in which case the two delusions merge into one, instead of the above mechanics subtract two successes from the roll when someone is trying to harm your character with their words. Negative successes become a Dramatic Failure. This still does not protect against metanormal effects.

Drawback: Your character does this by using those wits to rationalise and spin whatever insults are said to them into something positive or at least neutral. Thus, as a roleplaying consideration your character is going to make some big social blunders at best and may become a harasser at worst (adjust the severity of their willful blindness to the individual character and the mood of your game).

Non-Giving-Up School Guys

And once, on a night of full moonlight, the air-raid warning was given while Chips was taking his lower fourth in Latin. The guns began almost instantly, and, as there was plenty of shrapnel falling about outside, it seemed to Chips that they might just as well stay where they were, on the ground floor of School House. It was pretty solidly built and made as good a dugout as Brookfield could offer; and as for a direct hit, well, they could not expect to survive that, wherever they were.

So he went on with his Latin, speaking a little louder amid the reverberating crashes of the guns and the shrill whine of anti-aircraft shells.

- James Hilton, Good-Bye, Mr. Chips

Some humans come to embody the institutions that employ them. They draw strength from the stones of the school building, from the dedication of its teachers and the energy of its students. On their watch no student shall play truant, no rule shall be broken, there shall be no back chat, texting, or fidgeting. Who knows, people might even learn something?

Non-Giving-Up School Guys are more properly called Avatars of Order. They are created when a Spirit representing a mortal institution vests a portion of its power in a mortal,

connecting him to their organisation. It takes a powerful spirit like the spirit of the American Educational System itself to turn a human into a supernatural entity, but such royal spirits can delegate the ability to subordinates like the Spirit of an individual school.

Becoming an Avatar does not directly change someone's personality, though it does create incentives that encourage growing into a more rigid and workaholic mindset over time. However the Spirits that can create avatars may have more direct ways to reshape someone's mind. Non-Giving-Up School Guys are human, capable of empathy, nuance, or prejudice. The Spirits who create them are not, and must be treated with caution.

Some Geniuses consider Avatars of Order to be barely distinguishable from Clockstoppers, a thoughtless force of conformity that resents and crushes exceptional individuals. This is nonsense. Hollow Men oppose creativity, Avatars of Order champion human institutions. Clockstoppers are harmful beings who destroy the works of man. Avatars work to preserve man's society and are as helpful or harmful as the laws of man they enforce.

In contrast the Nobility usually see Avatars of Order as a positive thing. The Court of Hearts are especially fond of them, but the Court of Diamonds are not far behind. The Courts of Clubs, Spades, and Swords usually think they're too rigid and inflexible, but still respect their dedication to public service.

Neither a Genius or a Princess can become an Avatar of Order. Nor can an Avatar become Darkened unless Taint is spreading through their community and facilities.

And yes, the Inspired really do call them Non-Giving-Up School Guys, they got the name from Bart Simpson. Princesses got the name from the Inspired.

Tenure

Tenure is the power vested into Avatars of Order. Like other Potency traits Tenure is rated one to ten. To raise tenure School Guys must become a fixture of the school environment, parents and students must recognise them and know they're sticklers for the rules (only institutions that enforce clear rules can produce Avatars of Order). The further their reputation spreads and the more solid it is, the higher Tenure they qualify for.

However Tenure is capped by the size of the community the School Guy represents. Five dots is the default and available to any school faculty. Organisations known around the world such as Harvard and Yale (or the New York Police Department for a non educational example) increase the limit. Ten dots is extraordinarily rare, it would take being a fixture of global society to qualify. Someone like Queen Elizabeth II (who was not an Avatar of Order) would be able to reach ten dots of Tenure.

When Non-Giving Up School Guys are the subject of social manoeuvring to persuade them to bend or break the rules they add Tenure as extra doors, and as a rule a simple roll will never persuade them to bend or break the rules unless they're already inclined to. Only opening or forcing Doors will do.

Tenure also helps Non-Giving-Up School Guys blend into mortal society. They may roll a Clash of Wills against metanormal powers that will reveal their supernatural nature like an Apokalypsi Scanner. The roll is Tenure + a Skill core to their job, such as Intimidation for getting rule breakers back into line.

As a Potency trait, Tenure is also added to all rolls to resist supernatural influence. It is also added to Breaking Point rolls if the Breaking Point was experienced in the course of fulfilling their duties.

However Tenure has a catch. A School Guy takes Tenure as a penalty to all rolls when they are trying to break the rules or encourage others to do so. The penalty is reduced by two if they're merely bending the rules.

Dictums

Avatars of Order may purchase Dictums, supernatural abilities that draw from their connection to the institution to which they belong. They may buy as many Dictums as they have the experience points to afford, but no Dictum may have dots higher than their Tenure.

Some of these Dictums can be applied as is to Avatars for other institutions, but most will need to be modified or replaced with something more suitable for avatars outside the field of education.

Disciplinarian (●, ●●●)

- : The Non-Giving-Up School Guy becomes a powerful force of discipline and order, they use a Rote Action when rolling Intimidation on a student.

- : The avatar's aura is so powerful that any student must spend a Willpower point and succeed on a Resolve + Composure - Tenure roll before they may misbehave in the avatar's presence. Geniuses add Inspiration to the roll when their misbehaviour is a symptom of their madness (which means any roll by a Befreit). If the Dictum blocks a bout of Jabir the genius gains a Condition instead, as though they were affected by a Trigger.

In Loco Parentis (● - ●●●)

The students may think he is a strict and joyless ogre, but the Avatar is dedicated to their wellbeing and education; even to the cost of his own life.

- : When a student the Avatar is formally responsible for is in danger he gains a point of general armour and Stamina until the danger is over.

- : The bonus increases to two points of armour and Stamina. The Avatar gains three automatic successes to leap in front of a bullet, or take some other action that will transfer imminent harm from a student to himself.

- : The bonus increases to three points of armour and Stamina. So long as the avatar is trying to draw attention to himself and away from the students nobody can intentionally

attack any student. This is mind control and can be contested with appropriate defences. Against other threats the automatic successes remain at three.

Relentless Pursuit (● - ●●●)

The Non-Giving-Up School Guy is as tireless as the stones that make his institution of learning.

- : The Avatar adds his Tenure to Stamina so long as he is in pursuit of a rule breaker or dragging the rule breaker back to his office.
- : While pursuing a rule breaker all situational modifiers representing mundane obstacles, from a slippery floor to walking through a raging river, are reduced by Tenure.
- : For the duration of the pursuit the School Guy does not need to eat, drink, or breath, his body draws energy directly from the community he serves.

Omnipresent (● - ●●●●●)

As an Avatar of his institution the School Guy is always present where he needs to be.

- : While on school grounds the Avatar can spend a willpower point to teleport up to Tenure*10 yards. This is mostly useful for bypassing locked doors, or appearing directly behind kids who're breaking the rules.
- : The range increases to anywhere on school grounds.
- : The Avatar no longer needs to be on school grounds, he can teleport from anywhere in the world to his facility. In addition he may choose to permanently transform whatever he is wearing into his standard work attire, objects in his pockets remain safe.
- : The Non-Giving-Up School Guy can teleport to the presence of any member of his school community. He can only do this if he has a legitimate school related reason to appear next to them, like catching a truant student, and if they are not on private property; unless that private property belongs to the school or is hosting the school.
- : The Avatar may choose to clone himself instead of teleporting, becoming truly omnipresent within his institution. Clones vanish at the end of the scene but may spend Willpower to sustain themselves at a rate of one per scene. An Avatar and his clones are the same person. They share a common Willpower and Health pool, Conditions affecting one affect all, what one knows all knows. Under ordinary circumstances they suffer no drawback from multitasking, though if one clone is in real danger the others may be unable to focus on ordinary tasks.

SKIINNERRRRR!

While the rules are written from the perspective of a teacher enforcing order onto a student, you can easily tweak them to cover a head teacher enforcing order onto his

staff or the superintendent cowering the principals in his district (or both for the price of one). This works especially well if you are playing the teachers.

Swans

Madison was a shy, awkward, inwardly beautiful teenaged girl just like you.

- Brandon Specktor, entry to the 2013 Lyttle Lytton Contest

It's a common fantasy to imagine that one day someone will come along and turn your dreary life around for you. Swans, like the proverbial ugly duckling, are nothing special to look at. They have no passions or hobbies to make them interesting. No matter how ugly or beautiful their physical features are, they appear to be withdrawn, plain, and easy to overlook. And yet supernatural beings are drawn to them, they can see the beautiful swan inside and feel called to let it out.

Like their namesake, that beauty is often skin deep; beneath their appearance of featherwhite purity, Swans are usually self-centred, instinctually manipulative, and surprisingly dangerous when defending their nests. For when you rely on someone else to complete you, there is no room for the parts of them that don't fit you.

Powers and Abilities

By themselves Swans have little that marks them out. Outside a relationship they ignore all but their first dot of Presence, ignore any Striking Looks, have no Specialties, and take the Wallflower and Unseen Sense merit for free. The player chooses if their character's Unseen Sense applies to all supernatural creatures capable of romance or a chosen subset, either way it manifests as the physical sensations of arousal. A Swan is capped at two dots of Clique Integration or Floater, and cannot take Clique Leadership or School Saint. They are not reviled, but usually overlooked.

The one thing that makes a Swan in duckling mode stand out is their innate attractiveness to supernatural beings. All supernatural beings covered by a Swan's Unseen Senses have an Attraction Factor equal to the higher of a merit representing their social status among their kind and their potency trait (the Peerage and Enlightened rarely have such merits due to their diffuse societies but Swans are especially attractive to Vampire princes, Mage hierarchs, and similar). When a Swan tries to attract the attention of a supernatural being, from writing love letters to shooting them longing looks, they add his Attraction Factor to all dice rolls.

When they are in a relationship a Swan gains access to all their paramour's specialties (but not the Area of Expertise or Interdisciplinary Specialty Merits) as they begin to mirror his interests. They also unlock their full Presence dots and any locked merit dots, if they have more than one this blocks access to Wallflower. If their boyfriend has access to touchstones the Swan automatically becomes a touchstone and provides twice the usual benefits.

Swans gain access to Romantic Beats while they are in a relationship. They can earn one by:

- Getting into danger by trying to live their paramour's supernatural lifestyle.
- Getting into danger because someone is trying to get to their paramour through them.
- Separating their paramour from an obstacle to the relationship such as a romantic rival or a disapproving parent, or making significant progress in doing so.
- Getting themselves into danger in order to get their paramour's attention.
- Starting interpersonal drama to get their paramour's attention.
- Marrying their paramour grants a full point of Romantic Experience.

Romantic Experience can be spent on Presence, Manipulation, Persuasion, Subterfuge, Swan Merits, Striking Looks, Allies or Contacts in their paramour's supernatural society, and any skill they are mentored in by their paramour.

If a Swan has multiple paramours they gain access to all of their specialties and greater flexibility in acquiring and spending Romantic Experience, the self evident drawback is the risk of interpersonal strife.

A Swan in a relationship adds half her paramour's Attraction Factor to all breaking point rolls that arise from experiencing a normal part of his existence. However a Swan that has previously been in a relationship but has broken up takes a -2 penalty to *all* Breaking Points until they find a new supernatural paramour. If they break up with multiple paramours the penalty remains at -2, and is removed when they get together with a new (or old) supernatural paramour.

Swans are a supernatural phenomena that occasionally arises from a certain personality type, though they're only barely supernatural. For this reason Nobles and Geniuses cannot be a Swan (the other reason is of course that neither can possess the right mindset). Swans can be Darkened, and apply the Attraction Factor to all Caligos and Umbrae to emotionally manipulate supernatural beings. They also gain 8 again when rolling to gain Shadows from hurting their boyfriend.

Swan Merits

Bound by Guilt (●)

Whenever your character's paramour hurts your character, physically, emotionally, accidentally, they automatically take the leveraged condition.

Codependent Support (●●)

When your character's paramour risks losing self control due to their supernatural nature (Triggers, Jabir, Sensitivity, and equivalents for other supernatural entities) you can roll Manipulation + Persuasion. On a success add or remove a dice the paramour's roll, your choice. On an exceptional Success you may increase the effect to two dice or you may avoid the drawback.

Drawback: The next roll the paramour makes to retain control against their supernatural nature is modified by one die. This is not the opposite direction to the Swan's choice, but always makes it harder to retain control.

Drama Deflection (●●)

Whenever your character's paramour is angry at you, for a good or a bad reason, you add his Attraction Factor to all rolls to deflect his anger onto a third party.

Notice Me (●●●)

Once per session, when your character fails a Breaking Point or takes a point of Lethal Damage, your paramour will regain (10 - your Integrity) points of Willpower. This happens as soon as they witness your suffering.

If they have a merit like White Rabbits or some other attunement to significant events then your hurt will trigger their sense at the earliest possible opportunity and in doing so it grants the Willpower.

Sapiophile (●)

You don't need to understand science to know that smart is sexy. A Swan with this merit is immune to Contagion from Nerds and does not face Breaking Points from exposure to Mania, any Mania that enters their mind is transformed by their supernatural nature into arousal. Roll the Breaking Point they would have had, on a failure they are Swooned on a success they are still aroused but not enough to take a Condition. This also means that they cannot become Beholden.

Without this Merit a Swan in a relationship with a Genius is likely to become Beholden quickly — Swans want a cool supernatural boyfriend to change them — and as a Beholden their reflected passion and interest in their boyfriend's research will compete with their interest in romance, in short they will lose the Swan mindset and template. Some would consider this an improvement.

Protectee (●●)

When rolling to intimidate someone your character may use their paramour as a threat and substitute his dots in Intimidation for her own. The target must know of their paramour and find him intimidating.

If her paramour has a Merit representing social status in a supernatural community, and their status makes them extra intimidating to the target, add that merit's dots to the roll.

Weregeeks

Before you know it, I'll be playing cauldrons & caverns, learning stupid yo-yo tricks, and sneaking into sci-fi conventions in my spare time. And then one night, when the moon is full...

- Vince LaSalle, Recess; Big Brother Chad

Peer pressure can make any schoolkid or young adult repress their true tastes and personality to fit in, and peer pressure can just as easily cause someone to internalise an identity as Other. Your character experiences this more strongly than most, flipping between an gregarious outgoing personality and an introverted awkward geek seemingly at the drop of a hat.

Neither the popular or nerdy personality can precisely be called the real one; but then, what makes a personality “real”? Suffice to say that both personalities are the product of external forces moulding a young mind in the way all young minds are moulded by the people and culture that surrounds them. The Inspired usually think of the geek as the repressed true self, but that’s just bias.

Weregeeks usually find it becomes harder to transform as they grow older and their personality begins to settle. Eventually they will remain in one mode permanently. Which personality they settle in depends on social pressures, not choice or willpower. As a Weregeek is aware of their shifting behaviour and may have a strong preference for one of their identities (more likely, both personalities prefer themselves) this can result in a desperate scramble to control their surroundings and ensure they remain in the personality they prefer, and possibly a conflict with a society that’s indifferent or actively hostile to their psychological needs. Merging both personalities is also possible, but much harder. It requires a journey of self discovery and self acceptance from both personalities, as well as standing up to and overcoming social pressures. Any character who succeeds gains all the advantages of both modes and none of the drawbacks; unless you consider the personality changes to be a drawback, which is unlikely for anyone who chose to pursue a merger.

Wonders can “cure” a Weregeek. Using a Katastrofi mental eraser or an Epikrato identity controller to blank one personality will result in the other personality taking over full time, this is of course murder. An Apokalypsi consciousness transferal wonder can also be used to give each personality their own body, if a spare body happens to be available. If transferred into an inhabited body the Weregeek is treated as a normal invading mind with no special rules. The Nobility lack the Inspired’s abilities to tamper with a mind, though they can bring one personality to the Dreamlands and leave the other with the body.

In more lighthearted games the Weregeek phenomena is a comical exaggeration of the way people show different sides of their personality in different circumstances and characters fear being subsumed by the other personality only to the extent that they fear abandoning the pretence and admitting to enjoying their uncool hobbies, in the end the defeated personality is not a sentient being consigned to death but an embarrassing phase the victorious personality went through. In darker, more horrific games both personalities find the other to be an invading presence in their mind, an alien force eating away at their very identity and react to it with all due seriousness.

Traits and Abilities

All Weregeeks have a trigger that causes them to flip from their default personality to their geeky side and they turn back when the trigger is removed or when a different trigger is activated. A Weregeek may transform as soon as their mother forces them to wear ugly prescription glasses and revert by taking the glasses off. Whenever they’re with their

Dungeons & Dragons buddies. In more light hearted games the trigger could be the full moon or they could change upon tasting doritos and turn back when they try a manly protein shake.

When a Weregeek transforms, transfer a number of Social Attribute Dots and Social Skill Dots to Mental Attributes and Mental Skills (the dots move in the exact same way every time). Naturally the geeky personality uses the Nerd rules, they are able to gain Brain Beats and the unique Nerd Merits. A Weregeek may have separate merits and belong to separate cliques in both forms. Weregeeks start with seven merit dots in each form, and buying a merit dot provides a separate dot to each form unless logic dictates a merit applies equally to both.

Weregeeks have a different set of Ambitions for both forms. And while it's not obligatory, many have a Persistent Condition representing suppressed desires to indulge in their trigger or a fear (justified or otherwise) about their other half being discovered. The player, or the storyteller for NPCs, decides if their character remembers their actions in their other identity or not.

Is this a metanormal phenomena? It's debatable and changes with the themes of the game.

Were*

The themes and concepts behind the Weregeek splat are of course not limited to geekery; though the association between science and weirdness in *Genius: the Transgression*, and Hollywood's choice to make nerds the standard outcast in classic school or college movies, makes a geek persona especially suitable for the were-form.

But for that same reason there's also potential in reversing the dynamic, with outcast geeks betraying their tribe for a hint of popularity or nerds proud of focusing on scholastics over fashion and gossip discovering they're dumbing themselves down around cute guys or girls. If you want to adapt the mechanics to werejocks, werecheerleaders, or any other possibility simply assign one of Mental/Physical/Social to each identity and if necessary design some appropriate new Conditions to reward appropriate behaviour. Adapting the weregeek mechanics for identities that cannot be pigeonholed into Mental/Physical/Social is an exercise for the reader.

Weregeek Merits

Physical Transformation (•••)

Prerequisite: A supernatural merit that can justify shapeshifting, like *Mane* or *Biokenesis*

When your character switches between their two forms they change into a physically different person, which can be useful for stealth or subterfuge. You may swap any number of Merit dots representing innate traits while transforming but as always you make the same changes every time you transform.

Chapter Three: Setting

Building a School

Attitude

Standard

This is the high school Hollywood is thinking of every time it makes a new film. The jocks are barbaric brutes, the cheerleaders are worshipped despite their cruelty, and most other people are pretty normal.

Mean

This school is vicious, everyone sticks to their own and looks eagerly for any chance to put others down. If the teachers don't prevent it you can expect actual violence to be a daily occurrence.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Bully for you, Bully:** A character who inflicts the Victimised Tilt gains +1 Popularity until the Tilt is removed. This caps at a maximum of five.
- **Everyone is Complicit:** All characters take a penalty to social rolls to provide support to someone with the Victimised Tilt equal to the Tilt's severity -1, and a penalty to any friendly interaction equal to the Tilt's severity -2. Characters with a Merit representing a positive relationship with the victim such as Allies or Clique Integration are immune, as are School Saints, Good Teachers, and Princesses.

Supportive

A healthy and sympathetic school environment is rare in Hollywood, where is the drama in studying for exams and avoiding conflict by talking out problems in a mature and respectful manner? The answer is that the drama comes from an external source, the kids stand united against a threat like strict teachers or the high school student's natural predator: Slashers.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Blitz Spirit:** Every time a tragedy befalls the school all students gain a dot of Allies covering every other student, up to a maximum of five dots. These dots last for the remainder of the story. The Storyteller defines the threshold of a tragedy, in a lakeside summer camp with a Slasher problem it could be a death. In a comic game of kids vs teachers it could be as low as a detention.
- **Unacceptable Targets:** Any character with a persistent Condition representing a mental or physical disability is off limits to bullies. Any character who is caught targeting one permanently loses a point of Popularity. This may or may not include mad scientists, who do have mental health problems, but give others very good reasons to avoid them.

- **A Real Man Protects:** Alpha Men cannot gain Masculinity by picking on a weaker man. A Chad who wins a fight to protect the safety or honour of a character with a persistent Condition representing a mental or physical disability doubles the masculinity gain, as though he were defending a woman. This bonus does not stack if he is also defending a woman. Once again you decide if this applies to mad scientists.
- **A Queen's Benevolence:** Alpha Bitches can earn one Cheerleading Beat a session if they help a character with a mental or physical disability overcome a social problem. As always they share this with their Betas.
- **Nerd Tolerance:** Nerds are capped at popularity one, not zero, and they do not lower other's popularity by association. It is advised to remove the merit Contagion from the list of options. If you need an alternative drawback to being a Nerd, place a -3 penalty on all social rolls with non Nerds.

Educational Value

Going Through the Motions

In my high school French class we were supposed to read Hugo's Les Miserables. I don't think any of us knew French well enough to make our way through this enormous book. Like the rest of the class, I just skimmed the Cliff's Notes. When we were given a test on the book, I noticed that the questions sounded odd. They were full of long words that our teacher wouldn't have used. Where had these questions come from? From the Cliff's Notes, it turned out. The teacher was using them too. We were all just pretending.

- Paul Graham, Why Nerds are Unpopular

The default setting for a high school story ignores the actual schooling. Lessons are rarely on screen and when they are it's only to support the story's real issues. Students can be assumed to learn enough to pass tests, but if they learn anything actually useful in life it's not relevant to the story. For Geniuses and Nobles (especially Princesses of Diamonds) the curriculum is too basic to be of much use.

Even Worse

Not only is the school unable to teach anything useful, its incapability is relevant to the story. A school like this may be part of an impoverished municipality, where its uselessness is a potent barrier to the protagonist's quest to escape poverty. It might be an ultra-religious school that teaches scripture and forbids science, a glorified daycare centre, or something of that nature.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Nobody Learns:** All Mental Skills and Specialties cost one extra experience point unless you have a Mentor or Tutor merit representing a teacher (in or outside the school) who can actually teach. Princesses buying Transformed Dots and Geniuses are immune to this, supernatural power can substitute for bad teaching.

Wizard School

The school teaches students how to use their metanormal powers. While any school could have an older and more experienced supernatural being hidden among the teachers, janitors

or in the basement. This school is a magnet known for its supernatural curriculum. If it has any mortal students they're probably in the know, and learning to be beholden, sworn, or just liaisons between mortal power structures and the supernatural.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Finishing School:** Instead of three skill dots, every dot of Tutor provides six points of experience which may be spent on Skills or Charms (the Charm Catch a Falling Star is included for free). A Princess may use her Tutor's charms while being coached by her tutor. For simplicity assume Tutors buy all charms at out of affinity rate and automatically meet Invocation prerequisites. Though a Tutor who knows Twilight Charms should be a double edged sword for the protagonist.
- **School for the Gifted:** Instead of three skill dots, every dot of Tutor provides six points of experience which may be spent on Skills or Axioms. A Genius may build or kitbash wonders using their tutor's Axioms while they are being coached, but this may only increase their Axiom dots by one in each Axiom.

Teacher Authority

Student Government

In this section you can replace teachers with prefects, hall monitors, or whichever group of students enforce the rules. The relevant fact is how well the relevant authority enforces the rules, not who that authority is.

Background Scenery

Teachers are powerless to enforce good behaviour, and probably not so interested in doing so either. This doesn't mean that students are hapless prey for bullies and violence is regularly seen in the corridors. The student body may be more interested in learning than causing trouble, but if they do get into a conflict with another student don't expect a teacher to intervene or even notice.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Justice is Blind:** No teachers will see rule breaking. The moment someone breaks the rules it turns out the teacher's back is turned or they've left the room. It might be unbelievable for a teacher to ignore a fight in the middle of class, but it will happen no matter what.
- **Snitching is pointless:** With this rule the snitching mechanics described in chapter one are ineffectual, no matter how much evidence you provide the teachers they will do nothing. Other students will still shun you for trying.

Authoritative

This is the default option and what you would see in a typical well run school in the real world. The teachers are neither superhuman nor comically inept, and will enforce a firm even handed discipline to the best of their abilities and personal biases.

Paptinonicon

Principal Prickly: According to this, the SAL 4000 model will be available in just eighteen months, and look. Every student gets his own bar-coded restraint bracelet.

- *Recess, Schoolworld*

The teachers are omnipresent, they will spot almost any rule violation though they may elect to ignore misdiscreions if they're playing favourites. They may have cameras everywhere, metanormal powers, or just really good intuitions.

A paptinonicon school can tie into the core themes of self discovery through antagonism. The teachers can and will be a practical threat every time the players seek to steal lab supplies or get revenge on being shoved into a locker by turning the football team into gossip obsessed grandmothers. Even if the teachers want to support some healthy youthful experimentation, their ability to show up every time means there's no space to do it. If teenagers push at the boundaries to find their own identities, in a paptinonicon the rules push back hard.

Optional Mechanics:

- **All Seeing Eye:** Every time the players attempt to break the rules they must state how they wish to remain hidden and roll a suitable dice pool (Dexterity + Stealth for sneaking, Intelligence + Science + Core Modifier to disable cameras with a wonder) vs six dice. If a teacher or other threat is present in the scene the school itself joins forces in a teamwork action.
- **No Place for Liberty:** The school's strict rules press hard on any Befreit present. They must fulfil their Catalyst condition at least once a day or make a Transgression roll at their current Enlightenment as their emotional turmoil stokes the fires of Inspiration.
- **Grating Surveillance:** The strict rules and demanding social expectations mean mad scientists take a one die penalty to all Composure rolls while on campus.

Anarcho-Tyranny

In this school the teachers do have power and authority, but they use it exclusively to ensure that students remain a law unto themselves. Perhaps they are trying to create a darwinist jungle where only the strongest survive as an educational tool, or perhaps the school is run by Geniuses for Geniuses and the teachers feel it's best to focus their limited resources on hiding the school from the outside world rather than starting conflicts with their own badly behaved students; conflicts they might lose.

Expect teachers to come down hard on any student who asks for help from parents, police, or other authorities like The Peerage. Depending on the school they may also clamp down on escape attempts or consider a successful escape to be a graduation. The school may also approve of or forbid any form of student government that brings law and order to the jungle.

Integration

Separate Worlds

The school is its own isolated community separate from the characters' lives. It takes something extreme like a death on campus to bring the two worlds together. This could be because the school is a dumping ground for problem kids (read: normal problem kids or any kids touched by the metanormal) whose job is to keep students out of sight and out of mind. A school run by the Peerage that helps young mad scientists keep their parents happy and ignorant. Or just because of apathetic parents and demoralised teachers who avoid the extra work that comes with trying to reach out.

The separate worlds could be a real phenomena that serves as a metaphor to describe how Genii feel about their moral peers, a hallucination based on those same feelings, or literal; with the school being a bardo in the middle of town and protected by some metanormal effect that clouds men's minds. Step through the gates and you'll find the popularity pyramid is a literal feudal hierarchy, or an indoor jungle where human children become animal men until the school day is over. Only a transgressive mad scientist dares ask why society insists on sending their children somewhere that devolves them like this.

You can invert it too. With the school being a bastion of intellectualism against a small minded outside world.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Two worlds, two souls:** Characters have two sets of Virtues, Vices, and (if applicable) Touchstones, they swap between them when entering or leaving the school. Mad scientists may be exempt to emphasise how they only fit into one world or neither, but even then consider having separate Touchstones in both domains. Since Breaking Points are based on social expectations and past experiences, characters with Integrity can have different Breaking Points in each world. A sheltered middle class girl who'd face a breaking point if someone gave her a black eye in the real world might see nothing odd about leaping atop another girl to settle a romantic rivalry with tooth and claw at school.
- **Merit Compartmentalization:** Merits representing social links like Allies, Contacts, or Mentor only apply to inside school or outside school. The Storyteller may allow characters to buy two merits dots for the price of one, one dot for each world.

Parent Teacher Conferences

The default setting emphasises the separation between school and elsewhere. Most things will not cross the school gate but parents will notice a student coming home with black eye and teachers will notice a student arriving with one. However there are regular points of contact between the two worlds; report cards and parent teacher meetings that are signposted well in advance and require players to think about what big secrets might be about to cross the divide; and how to prevent or prepare for them.

Full Integration

With this setting school and home cannot be separated. Perhaps the players are at boarding school, but more likely their school and social circles are highly integrated. And important events will spread across the teacher/parent grapevine before the school bell rings. The bully's father employs the player's father and can use that to strike at home. If the school is part of some sinister metanormal conspiracy, it is just one link in a wider web of control. When this is active the storyteller may choose to have some or all optional rules apply everywhere, not just in school.

Teacher Favouritism

Against You

The teachers are quite simply, unfairly, biased against the players. This may be because of something the player characters or their parents have done in the past, because the player characters don't fit into the local culture such as a collaborative of science nerds in a bible thumping town, or just a plain irrational prejudice.

Optional Mechanics:

- **No Justice for Thee:** Whatever level of teacher authority you have selected, apply the optional mechanics you choose from the Background Scenery section instead when teacher intervention would help the player characters.

Unbiased

The default option is for teachers to be more or less impartial. They will like some students more than others of course, but they'll try their hardest to be fair and impartial when they need to deal with a conflict among students.

Your Ally

Over the years I've adopted a, should we say, flexible attitude to the laws of the land. I've turned a blind eye to smuggling, insider trading, the production and distribution of illegal substances, racketeering, and even hostage taking.

- Miss Fritton, *St. Trinians* (deleted scene)

School stories normally star the outcasts and losers. Teenagers often feel misunderstood and restrained by adults and Hollywood is happy to pander with unfair and antagonistic, or just ineffectual, teachers. Why not flip this around and have the teachers on the players side?

This could be because the school is a place where teachers like hard working nerds and try to shelter them from the trials of puberty until they can be safely sent off to college and bright futures. The staff and students could have a common foe, such as a school for the metanormal that must keep itself hidden from fanatical hunters or clockstoppers outside the gates. Or perhaps you are playing the popular cheerleaders and athletes, either because the outcast nerds are actually dangerous mad scientists, or because you want to play the story's bad guys.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Handouts:** All players get two merit dots they may spend on: Mentor (who must be faculty), Lout Licence, or Teachers Pet.

Actualisation

Full Support

In this school no matter your ambition the teachers will support it. Want to be a lawyer, that's great. Want to be a drug dealer? An entrepreneurial spirit is something to encourage, and everyone knows The Man created drug laws to keep the people down. Expect to hear buzzwords like "student led learning" used in ways no sensible real life educator would ever support and teachers resembling left-wing caricatures, they might even be manes based on those exaggerated stereotypes; if the staff room still has tie-dye wearing hippies after 1980 they're probably manes.

This doesn't mean that the school has no rules; though this option does go well with minimal Teacher Authority. Rather, it means that the staff will generally turn a blind eye to any rule breaking that helps fulfil an Ambition, Magnum Opus, or similar; as well as recommend any educational opportunities the school can arrange to help achieve ambitions. This permissiveness does not inherently extend to harming other students, but it can flavour the reasoning for allowing harm in a school with extreme levels of teacher favouritism.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Extracurricular Finance:** Once per session a student can make an Intelligence or Manipulation + Persuasion roll to convince the school to fund a single Availability • (at Sufficient Funding) or •• (at Endowed Funding) purchase that will help achieve an Ambition.
- **Inspiration Enablement:** A mad scientist who makes use of an optional rule like Extracurricular Finance to get teacher support for an activity that leads to a Transgression takes a -2 penalty to that Transgression roll, since the sane society that is supposed to serve as an anchor against Inspiration is instead acting as an enabler.
- **We Never Shame Self-Expression:** The school operates on a policy that kids should be allowed to explore anything so long as it's consensual. If a student turns up with a broken arm from trying parkour the teachers might suggest professional instruction, but they certainly won't stop the student trying again and breaking their arm again. The downside is that bullies and other ne'er-do-wells can get away with anything if they can make their victim say they're consenting. This requires Social Manoeuvring or mind control; and depending on the level of Teacher Authority it may require hiding the blackmail or be as easy as zapping them with a hypnoray in front of the teacher who enquired about their black eye.

Flexible

Supt. Skinner: The board of education has no control over what goes on in people's minds, hard as we may try.

- *Recess, The Story of Whomps*

The school is generally willing to go along with what the students want, providing it is reasonable and doesn't require too much effort on their part. If you want to study hard and go to college that's great, if you want to learn to fix cars and work in your father's garage after graduation that's great too. But if you want to be a drug dealer they'll call in a scared straight program.

Schools like this range from glorified daycare centres whose only goal is to keep the kids from causing trouble to good schools where the teachers are open minded, within reason. A good rule of thumb is that if it won't get the student or the school in trouble with the law, parents, or the board of education they're ok with it.

Repressive

The school has an idea of what it wants its students to be, and it doesn't care if the students share their views. Whether that's a standard high school that wants every student to get good grades and go to college, a religious institution that wants to instil dogma, or a fancy finishing school that wants to turn out proper ladies and gentlemen.

Repressive schools rarely go beyond detentions, lectures from teachers, letters to parents, or at worst turning a blind eye to student-led bullying of kids who don't fit in.

Brainwashing Camp

Although the classroom was warm, she found herself shivering. Everyone in the room was scribbling busily, and she was suddenly sure they had all just written, 'The magnitude of the sun is -29.6.' Thirty little robots, all obediently writing down the same things, things that had been put into their heads for them.

- *The Demon Headmaster*

If a repressive school is the kind of place strict but reasonable and loving parents might send their children for their own good, a brainwashing camp is the kind of school where an autocrat might force his subjects to send their children for the regime's good. If a repressive school aims to create productive employees for factories and offices or recruits for a well trained professional army, a brainwashing camp aims to turnout obedient worker drones or mindless soldier drones.

A Brainwashing Camp doesn't have to be brutal or evil, in a more comic game a school doing perfectly ordinary things like having a uniform policy and making students sit standardised tests every few months could turn people into obedient machines. But of course such a school could be played for horror, with the school using all sorts of physical or psychological abuse to break the students and turn them into loyal citizens, livestock for vampires, pawns in a mad scientists' plot for world domination, or test subjects for her pedological research.

Most of these schools rely on mundane techniques—though they may be more effective, more precise, in the world of darkness than in reality—if only because blasting students with Epikrato identity modifiers during orientation leaves player characters little agency to escape or burn down their prison. Other options include the player characters being part of the control group, a designated alpha class that other students are being taught to obey (how do

they feel about this?), the only immune students in school, or even the teachers running the whole thing.

Optional Mechanics:

- **The Spartan Way:** Whenever a character loses Integrity from a Breaking Point that was caused by school sanctioned activities, from a brutal hours-long detention running laps to unofficially sanctioned bullying, they take a Condition that can be resolved by acting as the school wishes instead of a Condition representing mental trauma. A Dramatic Failure makes the Condition persistent. If you wish to take this rule even further, a Dramatic Failure that drops Integrity below (10-Willpower) may make you Beholden to the school's value set, or apply the Weregeek template. Just replace the geek part with whatever the school is trying to create. Characters that don't use Integrity are immune to this effect.
- **A Deal With the Devil:** Students being groomed for a position of power—such as Geniuses or mortals being prepared for Inspiration in a school that's aims to create successful mad scientists and loyal beholden—who lose a point of Integrity or equivalent by helping the faculty against students gain a free point of Experience. It is encouraged, but not required, to spend these on Social Merits representing their growing position in the hierarchy.
- **The Slope is Very Slippery:** Students being groomed for a position of power who face a Transgression or equivalent for participating in school sanctioned activities against another student automatically fail the Transgression roll; even if they're doing so with the explicit goal of protecting those students from something worse.
- **Heroism is Unbreakable:** Geniuses with the Science Hero merit and any Noble may add their Inspiration or Inner Light to all rolls to resist being forced to act against their own ethical code. From a Wits + Empathy roll to avoid being deceived to a Resolve + Stamina roll to resist torture. If Inspiration is already being used to resist mind control, science heroes add it twice.
- **Belief is Inspirational:** Any mortal, including Sworn, with the Inspired Condition from a Princess' echo, gains an Automatic Success in addition to the other benefits when resolving the Condition to stand against the school.

Virtues

Fashion and Football

This is the school we've seen in a thousand Hollywood comedies. Popularity is everything, the athletic men and pretty women who have it flaunt it, and amuse themselves by heaping scorn on those at the bottom of the pecking order.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Jock Jurisdiction:** Boys with Athletics 4+ gain (Athletics -2) dots of Merits to represent subordinates or sycophants.
- **Plastic Popularity:** Girls with a dot of Striking Looks representing beauty gain a free merit dot to represent subordinates or sycophants. At Striking Looks 2 they gain

three merit dots. The exception is Beta Bitches, they do not get subordinates, they are the subordinates.

- **Ashley Assimilation:** Pick one Clique (probably the Plastics). Every girl with Striking Looks representing beauty or similar is automatically a member. Any girl who gains Striking Looks — a makeover, Metaptropi, winning the puberty lottery over summer — refunds her dots in Clique Integration and gains a dot of Integration in her new clique. Strangers will assume she always was a Plastic, her old Clique of nerds will kick her out in envy or anger at her “betrayal”. Unless they don’t, and she takes the Secret Clique merit.
- **They Look The Same from Down Here:** When using rules for cross-clique interactions listed under The Social Web, all Jocks, Cheerleaders, and Plastics are treated as having Clique Integration four by everyone outside their own clique. Unless they have five dots of Clique Integration or Clique Leadership. Optionally this rule applies to other athletic or fashion conscious cliques like Skaters or VISCO girls. (This pairs well with Ashley Assimilation).

Balanced

Molly: You guys don't even care about school.

Triple A: No, we just don't only care about school.

- Booksmart

A balanced school still has a strong social hierarchy, this is the highschool of teen movies, but there is no underlying theme to who is on top and who is on the bottom. Skill and success are respected, regardless of whether that skill is in computers, sports, fashion, or even playing the stock market. Which cliques have the highest popularity depends on individual factors like who has a cool successful leader than any common themes.

Nerd Paradise

In this setting the school and students value intellectualism above all. The students with the highest grades are elected prom king and queen, while teachers read out failing grades in front of the whole class for collective mockery. Typical Geniuses are school royalty, teachers and students will overlook a bout of Jabir or Havoc in the same way that the most popular boy in a high school TV show can shove people into lockers and remain the most popular boy in school.

Optional Mechanics:

- **The nerd shall be king:** All characters with Intelligence 4+ get free Merits Dots representing relationships to sycophants (including Beholden) equal to their Intelligence -2. Geniuses and Princesses of Diamonds forgo the -2. Characters with intelligence 2 or 3 get one free Merit dot per Mental Skill they have at 4+.
- **Sane Smarts are Popular:** As the previous rule, however Geniuses are excluded unless they successfully pass as normal.
- **Popularity Privilege:** Geniuses face no consequences for Jabir on school grounds, and any conditions like Notoriety are suspended while at school.
- **Upside-down Land:** Nerds do not have a popularity cap of zero, but calculate Popularity like any other character. Characters do not gain extra Willpower,

Masculinity, or Plastic Experiences from picking on a Nerd. But Nerds can gain a second Brain Beat or Willpower Point if they gain one by asserting their intellectual superiority over an Alpha Male or Alpha Bitch. You decide if this also applies to the Inspired or if madness is still alienating.

- **Intellectual Intimidation:** When attempting to inflict the Victimised Tilt through social manoeuvring, publicly defeating another character in a mental contest (a science trivia quizz, a game of chess, etc) opens a Door.
- **No Physical Intimidation:** It becomes impossible to apply the Victimised Tilt with physical force or threats of it.

The Ballad of Letterman Chad

While intellect and technical or academic experience are key components of a breakthrough they are not strictly required. It is entirely possible that Inspiration spreads like a virus through the school sports team and leaves the scientifically minded students untouched; resulting in Inspired football tactics and training regimes. Being a sporty kid is transgressive in a nerd paradise school, which helps compensate for a lack of scientific skill, a little. If you want to try something different, play inspired athletes in a school where the nerds are the popular hollywood bullies.

Romance

Innocent

The easiest way to play romance, and inevitable for pre-teen characters. With this option nobody goes further, or wants to go further, than hand holding. Choosing this option usually means you're choosing not to portray romance at all, there's more exciting things to focus on like hunting down a metanormal threat.

Optional Mechanics:

- **Courtly Romance:** Instead of restoring masculinity via sex, Alpha Men only need a kiss on the cheek or small gift like a friendship bracelet.

Realistic

Relationships depend on the characters involved with no overarching theme.

Dramatic

In this option relationships resemble a soap opera with characters frequently getting into relationships, falling out of relationships,

Optional Mechanics:

- **The Cheerleader Effect:** Any girl with a dot of Striking Looks representing beauty can roll Presence + Persuasion + Striking Looks to apply the Swooned Condition to a man. A rival girl with Striking Looks can subconsciously choose to block or allow other girls to use this ability if she is in the room, dating the target, or has already applied the condition to the target this session. Blocking the condition requires contesting the roll with the same dicepool.

- **All Girls Want Bad Boys:** A girl who sees a boy with Striking Looks and any condition representing inner turmoil for the first time must roll her Composure - her Empathy. On a failure she takes Swooned. If she succeeds on the roll she must roll again if the boy reveals his sensitive side.
- **That was your cousin?:** A character in a relationship who sees their partner with another person and there is the slightest chance they're cheating must roll Composure. On a failure they take the Green Eyed Monster Condition.
- **I can Explain!:** Any character accused of cheating must succeed on a Composure roll, otherwise they are unable to defend themselves. No matter how simple and sensible the explanation can be, they will twist their words or act irrationally until they look guilty. A situational modifier may be applied, removing dice the more genuinely suspicious they look.

Condition: Green Eyed Monster

You're seen your partner with someone else, are they cheating on you? You're not thinking rationally enough to check before you do something stupid.

Resolution: Embarrass yourself trying to prove your partner is cheating or by trying to separate them from whoever you think they're cheating on you with.

Merit: Aromantic (●●)

The Inspired have a noticeably higher rate of alternative sexualities than mere mortals. Around one in ten Geniuses' experiences a change in sexuality during the Breakthrough, this can happen to geniuses of any persuasion but the law of large numbers means this results in an overall increase in the amount of alternative sexualities.

Of Geniuses who change their sexual identity during the breakthrough, roughly seven out of ten become some combination of asexual, aromantic, or technically sexual but too focused on their work to ever pursue it. Two out of ten end up with an identity that's well established in mortal society, even vanilla heterosexuality. The remaining ten percent end up with something exceedingly rare or outright impossible for humans (usually but not always as a side effect of some physical transformation). Genii who are unhappy with changes to their sexuality (or their natural sexuality) may use Epikrato identity editors.

For the nobility things are simpler. Blossoming cannot change the sexuality of their mundane identity, though it makes the emotions stronger. The transformed identity has whatever sexuality she idealises herself as having; though a repressed Princess is more likely to idealise herself as free to be herself. It's hard to convince someone they're defective when their soul has lifetimes of memories proving otherwise.

Normally aromanticism would not require a merit, but when you're playing a game with Dramatic romance it provides a potent mechanical advantage: Total immunity to all the optional rules above. It also provides a rote action when rolling to resist Epikrato or other supernatural effects that invoke lust, but it doesn't grant Prostasia wonders with any special advantage.

Mixing it Up

The gendered effects in these optional rules were designed to recreate the clichés of high school films and television. Feel free to mix it up with male “cheerleaders” and “bad girls”, especially when it comes to LGBT characters whose role in these clichéd dynamics is less defined.

Appendix One: Z-Splats

The Embassy to Maniacs

You're not going to Libby's party, she's only inviting you so she can prank you.

Informal Names: Pennies, Igorinas

The Nobility and the Inspired have a lot they can offer each other. A Genius is more likely to be insane than willfully evil and could benefit from a skilled and empathetic nurse, one with supernatural patience and enough magic to *make* them step away from the doomsday device when they lose the capacity to listen to reason.

As for Princesses, sometimes you just need a good doomsday device to scour the Dark World beneath your hometown.

Igorinas specialise in keeping Geniuses as mentally healthy as an Inspired can be but they can also be found where the Nobility are in the most dire straits, bringing a well managed mad scientist or powerful wonders into the fray.

Marks and Requirements

Princesses who join the Embassy often have a personal connection to mad science, a friend or relative among the Inspired who they focus their efforts on. Those who do not often come into the Embassy after weighing up the costs and benefits and deciding that gaining access to wonders would be an efficient way to dedicate their time. Graces are the most common calling by far. Menders are less common because Inspiration cannot be treated with medicine or magic, only managed with social acumen. The most common court is Clubs, as they are known for their unshakable patience and when you cannot cure Inspiration the next best thing you can do is help a Genius find harmony with a world too prosaic for their ideas. Diamonds come second, drawn by a love of technology.

A Penny's regalia helps her fit in among mad scientists. Which is to say they look geeky. Most Igorinas retain a distinctly feminine flair to their heraldry, with cute anime shirts and fashionable sticker covered electronics. When they go more for a professional look Igorinas tend to look like laboratory assistants and sidekicks rather than scientists in their own right.

The key Attribute and Skill is Composure and Socialize.

Secretary Privileges

Talk Geeky to Me

A penny can talk shop about even the most complex, craziest, theories that mad science can come up with. By spending a wisp they can substitute Socialize for any mental skill when they are talking about the skill. They couldn't program a Computer with Socialize, but with

even zero dots of Computer they could contribute and have a good time in a debate on the merits of various Linux distributions. This also allows them to serve as a secondary actor in teamwork rolls.

User Manual

A genius can teach Transformed Igorinas how to use their wonders. This takes a minimum of one hour per dot of the wonder's rank, and a genius can delegate teaching to a Beholden if their dots of Beholden Education are equal to or exceed the wonder's Rank. A penny who has been taught to use a wonder suffers the same penalties to use it as her teacher, which is usually none.

Pennies can also convert Wisps into Mania but must spend any Mania they create to power wonders as soon as they make it. It costs two Wisps per point of Mania and they may convert Wisps as fast as their per turn limit allows, they may spend wisps over multiple turns.

Give him a Chance

By spending a wisp and encouraging someone a penny can give them +2 to Composure rolls when interacting with a genius for a day. While under this effect mortals are treated as supernatural for the purposes of Jabir.

Consul Privileges

Emergency Override

While Transformed the Consul gains access to a Genius' deconstruct technology attack, substituting Wisps for Mania. Whereas Geniuses analyse technology and target weak points, Pennies' magic guides them to the sort of obvious solutions mad scientists overlook, like pulling the power plug or just punching it really really hard.

If the Princess is targeting a wonder and she knows its creator well she can use Socialize as the skill for deconstructing technology, rather than using technical skill she relies on what she's learned from the genius personally.

Maniac Management

A Consul can spend a wisp to nullify a genius' Jabir or Trigger check. They must be present alongside the genius and able to freely talk him down. However if the source of the check is not promptly removed — if the genius continues trying to lecture about their wonder's operating principles, or the genius' bully continues mocking their dead mother — this privilege will not be able to protect the genius a second time.

Ambassador Privilege: Don't think, Do

An Ambassador who has been trained in the use of a wonder can spend a wisp to pass that training on permanently to another. Mortals are treated as supernatural beings and everyone reduces the -rank penalty to the Princess' penalty, which is usually none.

The wonder still requires bound mania, that is to say it requires regular tinkering and upkeep from a genius or else it faces havoc for detachment. But imagine how much good can be done for science if a team of sane astrophysicists had even one month to hop around the solar system faster than light.

Kidz Club

Fact: when Bernard tried to warn his family about a monster under his bed he was ignored and the whole family were eaten. Fact: When Susie asked her friends for help with a ghost haunting her, her friends and teachers excommunicated her. Susie later died from possession. Fact: the pressure society puts on kids (and adults) to stop them investigating, prodding, or even acknowledging the supernatural—while strict enough to verge into outright cruelty—saves countless children (and adults) from harm and even death, it helps far more than it kills. But don't tell this to Kidz Club, a Fellowship of kid geniuses who see a vast conspiracy among teachers, parents, and child development psychologists to turn children into obedient drones by draining the curiosity and wonder from the world.

Now a conspiracy that size remaining secret might not make much sense, but geniuses never needed an idea to be sensible before they took it too far. Geniuses in Kidz Club recruit a gang or team of young mortals, before the so-called conspiracy gets to them, and brings them on secret operations to find wonder in the world and stop adults from getting their banal hands on it. They investigate paranormal mysteries, defeat metanormal threats, and bring down “evil” adults like strict parents and science teachers who explain why something amazing isn't possible. In other words reckless child endangerment. At their best Kidz Club are young detectives who—while risking their life and the lives of other kids—are protecting against metanormal dangers that the town's adults are too mortal to oppose and taking down genuine child abuse. At their worst they are the metanormal danger: Mad scientists pointing their wonders at ordinary parents and teachers for nonsensical reasons. Most of the time the same kid genius is both.

Aesthetic

Kidz Club's wonders are built on a child's budget and it shows. The Fellowship adheres to a variant of Trash Praxis called “Treehouse Technology” which focuses on repurposed household goods, large elaborate designs, and lumber for structural work. The Club is particularly strict about this aesthetic and even members who have access to funding or resources are expected to build on the cheap, otherwise their research would be too expensive for other members to replicate.

Catalysts and Foundations

Staunen , Befreit, and Neids make the most common Catalyst. Staunen are driven to find and share the world's hidden wonder. Befreit focus on freedom from adult authority, while Neids are haunted by adult society turning against them when they spoke up about some supernatural phenomena. Hoffnung with visions of creating a kidocracy with no schools or chores, or eliminating ageing forever are also present; as are Grimm who catalyzed from some injustice perpetrated upon children. Furcht in the club often share similar origins to Neids but express their trauma differently, other Furcht Catalysed in fear of growing up and

devote their research to anti-aging techniques and dodging the Club's mandatory retirement policies. Only Klage are rare, and those who do join are considered damp rags for their constant alarmism about leading kids into danger.

Since its reformation the Peerage no longer blackballs groups like Kidz Club. Better they sit inside the tent where (hopefully) someone will notice a genius trying to tear down the masquerade, leading kids into danger, or "rescuing" kids from mental hospitals and maybe even step in before it all goes too far. Kidz Club finds "the adults" sudden change of heart to be suspicious and have opted to remain as a Rogue Fellowship. However Navigators (for whom "reckless endangerment" might as well be called "Tuesday") and Etherites (who live and breathe conspiracy theories) can be found among the membership.

Scholarship Requirements

Not applicable, Kidz Club does not have the funding to offer scholarships.

Fellowship Requirements

Inspiration 2

Laboratory 1-

Crafts 3

Occult 1

Scrapheap Challenger 2

Must be biologically prepubescent and chronologically below thirteen years of age.

This unique Fellowship requirement means that Kidz Club members (inspired or otherwise) must leave and submit to mandatory memory modification on their thirteenth birthday. This is actually a major part of the Club's master plan (so much as it has one) for destroying the adult conspiracy. By seeding society with former mortal Club members who have subconscious memories of investigating the paranormal the Club hopes to eventually degrade the social conventions against acknowledging paranormal or wondrous events that gives the conspiracy its power. Plenty of geniuses escape the memory modifications or just casually reverse it later; many of whom eventually grow up to realise that there is no conspiracy (opinions on breaking the masquerade and child endangerment are more mixed. We are talking about mad scientists after all, and not all metanormal phenomena are memetic hazards like Mania), these "traitors" only add to the Club's institutional paranoia.

Geniuses in Kidz Club may buy a variant Laboratory Merit (call it Treehouse) that provides all the usual benefits but remains a one dot Laboratory for the purposes of how many wonders the genius can fund. Naturally this variant will never disqualify them from the Fellowship's requirements.

Wonders

Kidz Club applies their syllabus to any wonder that can be built on a child's budget. In practice this means that any one dot Wonder qualifies.

Syllabus Benefits

Syllabus ●●: Members of Kidz Club do not suffer Jabir when interacting with children (prepubescent and chronologically below thirteen years of age); as though every child was a metanormal being. Outside a pre-existing antagonistic relationship a Trigger roll caused by something a child says or does never results in a member of Kidz Club seeking revenge against that child. More likely they'll try to recruit them to join the next adventure.

Syllabus ●●●●: Children using a wonder built according to the syllabus are treated as though they were metanormal beings for the purposes of Havoc. It is not a coincidence that Kidz Club shares this benefit with The Path of the Damned, the Kidz reverse engineered it from orphaned wonders in abandoned safehouses.

Quote

"Mr Autumn has been teaching his science class that Arrakian rock worms are not physically possible. I say we tie him up in the quarry until he confesses his lies! We move out next week, when Suzie is no longer grounded."

The Path of the Damned

By 1918 public schooling was mandatory for all American children. Was this a Lemurian plot, or did Lemuria just try to take the credit? Either way it is certain that Lemuria wound its coils around the public school system from its inception, its lidless eye watched every student for signs of brilliance to be acquired or snuffed out. Any child whose performance on standardized tests caught the serpent's gaze was damned, they could never again return to normal life.

The Path of the Damned was the Peerage's response: An underground railroad transporting children to safety in peerage controlled territory. Though its critics say it was no better, that the only difference between it and its lemurian foes was which side of the invisible war they were conscripting students for.

Students would travel from school to school, hiding in the basements and safehouses by night, travelling by weekend, and attending schools by day (it turned out Lemuria's surveillance system was alert to kids vanishing from the system but blind to kids changing schools) until they were beyond Lemuria's reach.

Since the end of the invisible war the Fellowship has been on life support. Most of the network has been decommissioned, leaving empty basements and access tunnels beneath schools across the length and breadth of America. In some schools the infrastructure has been passed down from kid genius to kid genius as a legacy to help them escape bullies and havoc. In others a mad scientist has taken up residence (it's rent free accommodation if you agree to mentor mad scientists in your school, and nobody checks if you're actually doing that). A few places still run an underground railroad moving mortals away from persecution, however the madman in charge defines it.

Aesthetic

The underground railroad had to remain hidden and so their wonders had to blend in. Most looked like things you could find in a science classroom, with a strong focus on chemistry.

From papier-mâché volcanoes spewing out don't-notice-me pheromones at every tunnel entrance, to test tube grenades, the path of the damned relied on whatever was at hand when Lemuria came knocking.

Catalysts and Foundations

Klages and Furcht make the most common Catalysts, their more cautious nature is invaluable when you're hiding mad science beneath a school. Hoffnung are especially rare as The Path of the Damned, then and now, is about surviving the dangers of high school not challenging them at the source.

Artificers dominate the fellowship, no other Foundation were remotely as capable of staying put and staying quiet in a basement until the time was right; the Artificer's skills at running an underground railroad shows that the New Makers affinity for the clandestine has more precedent than you might expect.

The other Foundation with strong ties to the Fellowship is the now defunct New American Artisans. Artisans controlled plenty of Lemurian free territory where the railroad could terminate, they were better than most mad scientists at blending in, and a faction of the artisans idolised the rambacious all American boy challenging foes above his age with ingenuity and can-do spirit.

Scholarship Requirements

Stealth 2

Crafts 1

(Invisible War era)

Three dots between Stealth and Subterfuge

Drive 1

Fellowship Requirements

Stealth 2

Crafts 3

Inspiration 2

(Invisible War era)

Three dots between Stealth and Subterfuge

Drive 2

Metaptropi 1

Skafoi 1

Wonders

The Path was paved by wonders that help a genius blend into or survive an ordinary school. This includes Metaptropi disguises, Epikrato someone else's problem fields, Apokpalypsi bully warning systems, Exelixi to help with school work or socialising, and of course Prostasia to reinforce those bunkers and tunnels.

Syllabus Benefits

Syllabus ●●: Members gain the Refuge of the Damned merit for free. In addition they can quickly and easily acquire any number of two dot Alternative Identities for themselves or others, providing their identity is a school student or a member of faculty such as a janitor or substitute teacher who can plausibly turn up one day without raising alarm bells. (Other identities are within their capabilities but not a perk of membership, you can use the Allies merit to get them as a favour)

Syllabus ●●●●: Children using a wonder built according to the syllabus are treated as though they were metanormal beings for the purposes of Havoc.

Quote

We think it originally started as a spy bunker, real cold war stuff. Some kids found it in the early eighties and each year, it got passed on to worthy students. It will keep you safe, let you work on your "extra credit" assignments without fear of reprisal. You have to keep it secret, and return it better than you found it at the end of the year.

Appendix Two: Playing the Breakthrough

Middle Man: *This has all the taundry stench of a mad scientist, it's a rare opportunity to confront one while still in her nascent stage.*

- *The Middleman, The Ectoplasmic Panhellenic Investigation*

The Breakthrough is perhaps one of the most dramatic periods of a mad scientists life, a time where old certainties fall away, new discoveries shake the foundations of her worldview, and with new terrifying abilities she shakes free of the limits of mortality to make her mark on God's domain, and soon discovers the limits of Inspiration.

The rules below provide a set of mechanics to track a mortal's progress to Inspiration and gamify that most dramatic event. Though they fit the themes of self-discovery and the mood of being a fish out of water (especially if the nascent genius is driven to madness by some threat or problem with a ticking clock) these rules can be used for characters of any age.

Inspiration in The Young

Inspiration does not strike at random. It requires a maniacal emotional impetus to push a person to challenge the walls of human cognition, and education provides the tools to break through those walls. The fleeting passions of childhood struggle to provide the focus needed for a breakthrough, while learning requires time and thus age.

This means that kid geniuses are rare but not unknown. 14% of Geniuses are under the age of eighteen, including 2% under the age of thirteen.

There is no accepted lower bound for a breakthrough with documented cases of kids as young as one breaking through. This is incredibly rare, and thankfully so, as no known genius under the age of three has avoided Illumination. The Peerage does not expect its members to swallow their ethics and "do what must be done" to a baby. That task is left to time travellers who can prevent the breakthrough or heartless sociopaths. The actual process that leads to a baby reaching Inspiration is extremely poorly understood, it is unlikely to be the same as an adult mad scientist.

Three to five years is the earliest in which a Genius has a chance of avoiding Illumination. This requires an exceptional aptitude for managing mania in addition to the exceptional ability to grasp Inspiration needed to break through so early (these two traits are negatively correlated), as well as a dedicated support network of both geniuses and touchstones.

The odds get steadily better every year from three years to eleven, climb rapidly during puberty, then continue growing steadily until the early twenties. After that they remain steady, with ten percent of adult geniuses falling to Illumination during or shortly after the Breakthrough and another ten percent falling at some point in their lives.

There are no mechanics for this, but any attempt to accurately roleplay the impulsiveness of children should result in plenty of Transgressions. The above naturally assumes that the genius in question is a normal human. There's all sorts of ways a genius can possess an adult mind and a child's body, but being born as a normal human and breaking through early is not one of them.

The Catalyst

The first question you must answer is why is your character acting irrationally. The breakthrough isn't something that happens to a person, a sudden flash that changes everything (well it can be, but that's rare and not the path to Breakthroughs that these rules model). A Breakthrough requires hard effort as the genius pushes and pushes against the limits of mortality and sanity until they break through.

So why is your character trying? Why are they breaking into school to steal lab supplies, ignoring the experienced scientists telling them their preliminary results must be faulty equipment, slipping homemade drugs into their little sister's juice as an experiment?

Pick whatever reason you like. If you envisage your character turning into a cool ghost buster maybe they're being haunted by a dangerous poltergeist, or their favourite teacher recently died and they are trying to contact her in the afterlife. You can keep it vague or be specific, maybe you just say your character has a stalker and let the Storyteller decide if it's your insane headmaster determined to prove you did play truant that day, yourself from an erased timeline trying to replace you, or just the entitled football captain who won't take no for an answer.

Once you know what is pushing your character, decide how they react to it. Does having a stalker make them angry and want to fight back? Afraid and looking for a safe spot to hole up? Are they perhaps thinking of how a "tragic backstory" will be useful for their political ambitions — just because your character is not a Genius yet does not mean they're normal or mentally healthy. People rarely have just one emotional reaction, so you're just picking the most dominant. This will be your future Catalyst (feel free to change if you learn more about your character and think another fits better).

Next choose your Pre-Catalyst Condition. You can use one of the standard Catalyst conditions if they fit. As a rule a Pre-Catalyst condition causes your character to move towards inspiration. Being afraid of a stalker is a sane response, so it will have to be a separate Condition that grants regular beats, if it is a Condition at all. Obsessively glueing pieces of plastic to yourself because "my stalker wouldn't be interested in me if I were a sexless robot" is not a sane response, it can isolate your character from sane society, and provides ample opportunities to behave like a mad scientist as you get closer to Inspiration and progress from inert plastic towards working mad-cybernetics.

The Breakthrough

Mechanically becoming a mad scientist through these rules is extremely simple. Earn three to five points (adjust depending on how long you want to play pre Inspiration) of Scientific Experience and buy your first dot of Inspiration. Pre-geniuses can earn scientific beats in one of the following ways:

- Once per scene, award a scientific beat when your pre-Catalyst Condition causes a significant complication or setback.
- Failing a Breaking Point grants two scientific beats in addition to all other effects.
- Once per scene, award a scientific beat when you do something immoral or risky that you can justify as working towards a solution to your catalyst. At first this can be awarded for actions that are not specifically mad science like illegally buying a gun to protect yourself from a stalker, but once you have two Scientific Experience only weird and scientific actions will grant beats.
- Whenever the character spends experience to buy a dot of a Mental Skill or a specialty in a Mental Skill relevant to solving their catalyst, they gain a scientific beat.
- Award a scientific beat, in addition to the regular benefits, when the player downgrades a regular failure to a dramatic failure if doing so will sabotage a logical and sensible solution to their catalyst. Such as ranting and raving at the police instead of calmly asking for help. This option is lost once you have two Scientific Experience; at that point you shouldn't even be attempting sane solutions.
- Award two scientific beats if a logical and sensible solution to the catalyst fails for reasons beyond the characters control — the police side with the popular football captain despite clear evidence he's breaking the law, or the police turn out to be powerless against a metanormal threat. This option is also lost once you have two Scientific Experience.
- Award a scientific beat if the character loses a connection to mundane humanity represented by a merit: Her stalker scares off an Ally, she alienates that Ally with erratic behaviour, or even attacks them in a fit of paranoia.
- Award a scientific beat the first time a pseudo wonder you built is useful in a plot relevant fashion.

Once you have sufficient Scientific Experience all that remains is to pick a suitable moment and roleplay your transformation into a Genius. This doesn't have to involve overcoming whatever drove them to madness with new power, it probably won't if that something is intended to be a lifelong nemesis or a grand project like solving global warming. The breakthrough scene can be something small and personal, like a marathon lab session where the genius monologues about how everything is now clear to them and they know what to do. It probably shouldn't involve combat — though a solitary monologue in the aftermath of their first victorious battle is eminently suitable — since the focus is on the mad scientist's mindset, not his actions.

Three Stages to Orbit

The breakthrough is a three stage process. First a problem forces them to think beyond the safe boundaries of human sanity. Then new ideas reveal the truth behind those little illusions that make day to day life bearable: That the world is fair or just,

that you can get on with your life and ignore children dying of bone cancer, or ignore the inevitability of death. Finally the mad scientist constructs a new maniacal illusion grand enough to fool even a genius.

However the mechanics above create a two stage process: Gather the Scientific Exp, then spend it. Players have two options.

Blend the first and second stage: With this option you roleplay your character's gradual loss of illusions and growing lucidity every time you get a scientific experience. At zero experience she tries to find a solution to her stalker within the confines of sanity, she buys a gun or calls the police, yet internal and external forces push her to seek more drastic solutions. At one to two experiences her trust in society's limits and safeguards falls, she explores new options the NRA would recoil from. At three to four experiences she can no longer pretend the problem is one stalker and is looking for a way to protect herself from any threat at all. At five experiences she's an incoherent lunatic, she *knows* there is no way to create perfect safety. That every time she walks down a crowded street any person could pull out a gun and kill her there and then. Her wall is metaphorically or literally covered with string connecting her stalker to evolutionary psychology, to the dawn of agriculture, to game theory, and more as she frantically races against her own mind looking for some grand solution for safety that she cannot discredit. And then she finds the Magnum Opus.

Merge the second and third stage: This is a better option if you want to focus on the adventure caused by the problem behind the breakthrough. Simply build up the experience points, sprinkle in some foreshadowing of the eventual Magnum Opus, then roleplay both the onset of lucidity and retreat into mania in one event, preferably after something big gives your character the final push. If you prefer to skip straight to the Magnum Opus to make a more focused rant justify it as the second stage falling into repressed memories.

Neither of these styles is a more correct representation of what's actually happening within the fictional world and it's easy to imagine both occurring to different geniuses in the same collaborative.

One Foot in the Laboratory

To represent the thematic connection between Nerds and mad scientists, a Nerd undergoing the Breakthrough can turn Brain Beats into Scientific Beats at a 2:1 ratio.

Leaning In and Out

Avoiding Inspiration isn't actually that hard. At least it isn't that hard for a player who can declare their character's actions without living the internal struggle required to make the sensible choice.

For this reason it is best to lean into the madness, to actively pursue Scientific Beats rather than try to remain sane. If this produces erratic and inconsistent behaviour, that's quite fitting for a mad scientist. However if you want a character who tries to

hold themselves together, pick a threat they cannot ignore and cannot solve through normal means. Either one that is unsolvable and sure to drive them to eventual Inspiration (if it doesn't kill them) or one balanced so the challenge becomes solving it before you go mad.

After-Effects

Once a character has been Inspired it's time to adjust their character sheet to reflect their new status. Record their first dot of Inspiration, Catalyst, Catalyst Condition, Triggers, a full Mania pool, and their dots of Enlightenment. Enlightenment is not Integrity under another name, trauma is only an indirect effect upon Enlightenment, so by default all Geniuses begin at Enlightenment seven. You may adjust this downwards based on how transgressive a genius has been during their breakthrough but this is optional.

A genius does not begin play with Axioms, those must be learned, though they do begin with Favoured Axioms so assign yours now.

Next, assign a Magnum Opus. This doesn't have to be directly related to a Genius' goals or the impetus that drove their Catalyst, rather it should be emotionally related. A Hoffnung who broke through looking for a special edge to help his football team reach the top can easily have a magnum opus based around winning the superbowl, but they could also have anything that is at heart about fame and glory.

Optionally you may change your characters Virtue and Vice, declare your character has undergone subtle, drastic, or total personality changes, and rearrange Attribute or Skill dots. Skills representing knowledge and experience are less fluid than skills that can be linked to personality (which is to say Social skills are the most flexible). Physical attributes cannot be changed by the breakthrough itself but can be affected by lab accidents or self experimentation in those final chaotic moments. Finally add the three extra free merit dots that Inspired characters gain over mortals. The free dot in Laboratory is added when the Genius sets up his first workspace.

The amount of personality changes a Genius experiences is unique to each individual but there are trends. Hoffnung and Staunen tend to have the least traumatic breakthroughs and most consider themselves to be the same person as before. Befreit have a tendency to either extreme and Furcht have a higher rate of drastic changes. Regardless of a Genius' Catalyst there is a strong correlation between their behaviour during the breakthrough and the final result. The more Breaking Points they experience, the more Breaking Points they fail, the more significant changes they are likely to experience. The correlation between Breaking Points during the Breakthrough and a genius' long term mental stability is far weaker.

Pseudo-Wonders

Once a nascent mad scientist has gained their first point of Scientific Experience they can create pseudo wonders. A pseudo wonder is a regular piece of equipment including

supernatural equipment (that means ouija board, salt circles, tarot cards, and other widely available equipment) with one twist such as:

- A rifle, except it's actually a crossbow that shoots wooden stakes.
- An ouija board, except its Christmas lights and letters on the wall.
- A flashlight, except its light makes blood glow.
- A skateboard, except it works on all terrain.
- A tape recorder, except it records ghosts in twilight.
- A lockpicking kit, except it doesn't look suspicious.

As a rule pseudo wonder should be a sidegrade to a standard piece of equipment. The stake shooting crossbow isn't better than a rifle, it uses the same stats, but it has unique advantages against vampires. Being hand made also avoids any legal or financial obstacles standing between a teenager and acquiring a gun. Sometimes the only difference between a pseudo-wonder and regular equipment is that it's cheap: Top of the line medicine, except made out of household supplies.

Mechanically the player selects any equipment with an Availability of three or less, that can be brought on the open market or acquired with a Status of two or less in a mundane institution like the police or military. The pseudo wonder uses that equipment's stats as is, aside from the twist.

The first pseudo wonder costs one scientific beat, the second costs two, the third costs three, and so on. These beats can be refunded at any time, which takes the pseudo wonder out of play but this does not reduce the cost of future pseudo wonders.

Building a pseudo wonder takes the same amount of time as an equivalent wonder, though you may treat adding a twist to a large piece of equipment (my car, except it's all terrain) as a size two wonder. The roll is Intelligence + the appropriate mental skill.

Pseudo wonders can suffer havoc as though they were a rank 1 wonder, however they never turn orphans and only explode if they're made of highly volatile stuff. Most of the time they just don't work, when a mortal student attempts to open the teacher's lounge with your lockpick that looks like a pen, it works as well as an actual pen and is now useless.

A Pseudo wonder which is damaged or exposed to havoc can never be repaired, nor can replacements or duplicates be built, a naccast genius does not have enough control over their mania to precisely duplicate an effect. The closest they can accomplish is building a different device with similar effects.

Mr. Possible: *(chuckling) Chasing bad guys, switching brains... high school sure has changed since my day.*

- Kim Possible, Mind games