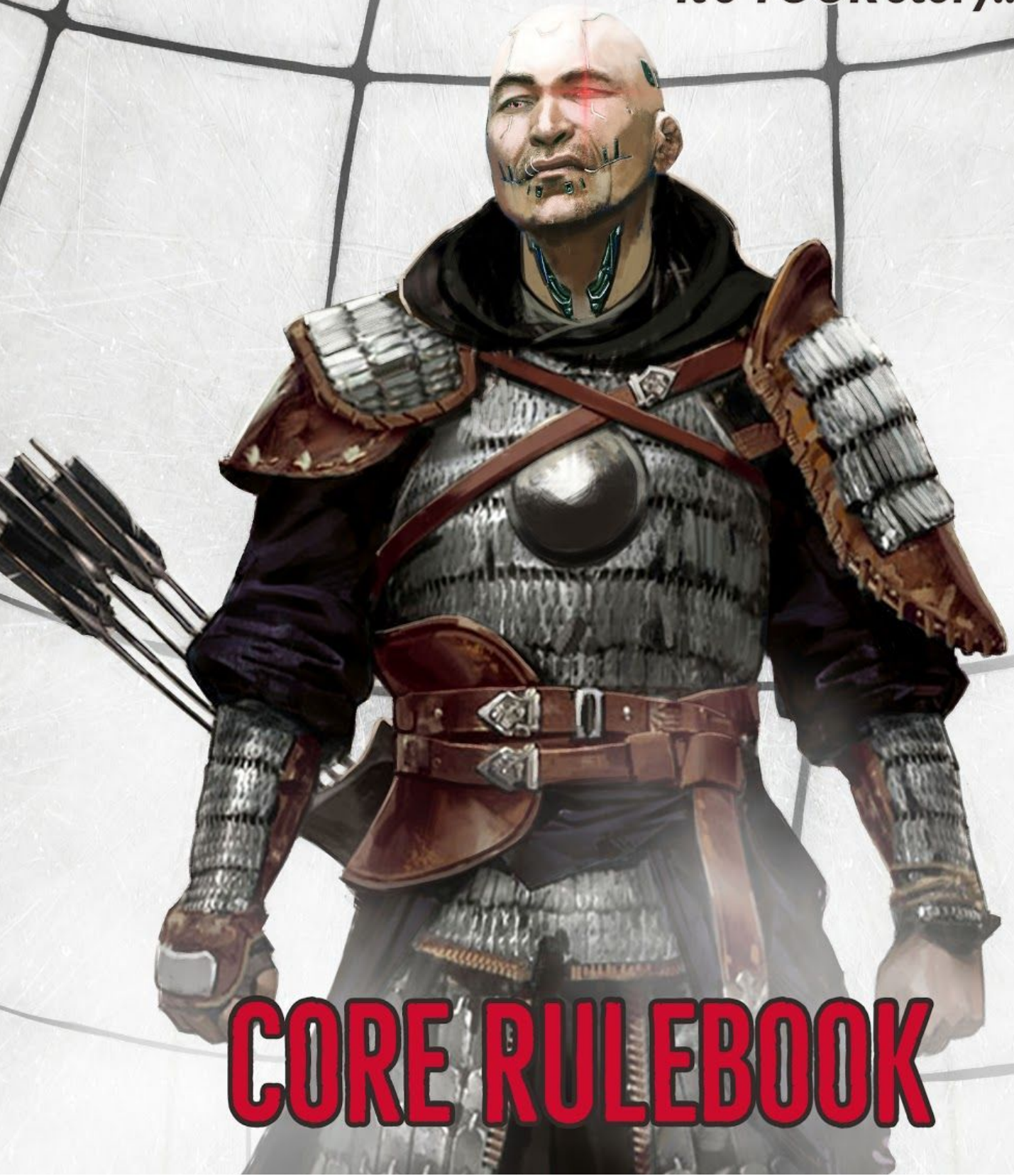


TWILIGHT HISTORIES

It's YOUR story...



CORE RULEBOOK

Twilight Histories RPG Handbook BETA V6.0

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Introduction

“YOU are a hero sent to strange and exotic lands.”

At least that’s what the brochure said. Honestly, you feel more like a sucker than a hero and this dump is hardly what you’d call ‘exotic’.

After journeying all the way to the crumbling Central Asian city of Urumqi, you discover the Twilight Histories is a sham. The old compound looks like a recycling plant and there’s not much recycling going on.

But you’ve come this far. You might as well go in...

Welcome to the Twilight Histories Role Playing Game (RPG), an interactive adventure based on the podcast.

The Twilight Histories offers you an infinite variety of worlds and your imagination is your only limitation. Some adventurers seek out violence and war. Others wish for a vacation. Archaeologists search for lost secrets, while treasure hunters hunt for gold.

Will you join a band of Aztec jaguar warriors as they fend off the conquistadors? Or will you enter the capsule of an Imperial Japanese rocket as it launches to the moon? The Twilight Histories system is designed to give you and your party limitless options to explore, solve puzzles or fight.

The First Split

Mira Karlovsky moved to Hourston with her father when he took a job at Red Star Transport. This was during the early days of the company’s wormhole experiments. She grew up immersed in the culture of Red Star, living in a fortified compound. All her friends were the children of Red

Star employees. Later, she studied wormhole engineering and planned to follow in her father's footsteps.

But being a single child of a broken marriage and following her father to a different continent, she also had a rebellious streak. Her studies led her to ask heretical questions about the nature of the universe. Most importantly, she wanted to know what would happen if a wormhole didn't bend space, but puncture right through it. What was on the other side?

For her PhD thesis, Mira Karlovsky risked her life. She steeled her nerves, stepped on the platform and allowed a small Red Star wormhole to funnel her into the great unknown. It was an act of bravery in the name of science and she fully expected to die. How could she possibly have known that on the other side of the universe would be another universe? And this universe not only had a version of earth, but also breathable air and human beings.

She was spat out in a strange city where everyone dressed in odd costumes that looked Roman and spoke a language that sounded like Latin. The trip across the boundaries of her universe disoriented her so badly she was unable to remember who she was. At first, she thought she was from that world and had lost her memories, and only slowly did they return. When the city erupted in violence, she found her way to a river and climbed into the city sewers for safety. That's where she stayed for over a year, only sneaking up to the streets to steal food.

Thankfully she had installed a tracking app on her chip, one that was used by search and rescue workers across the Colonial Network and it didn't need access to the digital web. The wormhole eventually opened and she crossed back home. She returned dishevelled and putrid. But she was also ecstatic. She had crossed into another universe and survived!

Mira Karlovsky was convinced at that time she had discovered time travel. It didn't make sense, and she still believed it was theoretically impossible, yet what could explain how she landed in ancient Rome? She needed to try again.

The next time she entered the wormhole, Mira, (now Dr Karlovsky) was better prepared. She had a tailor make a costume based on Roman clothes. She procured a bag of Roman coins. And since most of her chip's apps were useless, she stripped them out and focused on what she needed most, a tracker and a powerful language translator app that didn't require the cloud.

When she went through again, she discovered she had in fact not traveled through time, but had entered a completely different universe. She had traveled to a point in time very soon after its point of departure when it had split from her own world.

It was the first century BC. Julius Caesar had avoided assassination and continued his conquest into Asia. When he finally died of complications related to aging, his wife Cleopatra and their son Ptolemy inherited the Roman Empire. The street violence she witnessed was the volatile transition of power from an indigenous Latin senate, to an Egyptian queen.

Founding the Twilight Histories

Dr Karlovsky realized she had made a great discovery and she believed it was worth a lot of money. She needed a partner, someone with a bond that brought seed money.

She left Houston for native Tel Aviv. She met up with a wealthy childhood friend, Boaz Zar, who had built a mildly successful business catering to tourists who wanted to explore different planets through wormholes. Boaz Zar was fascinated by her technology. As he was a lover of archaeology, he saw the potential not just to open up new worlds, but to find treasures unknown to history.

They started with the particle accelerator from Zar's tourism company, and ran some worlds off the side they marketed as 'Cleopatra Caesar' based on Karlovsky's first split.

All went fine until one day a journalist in a tour group leaked a story that a tourist had gone on a murder spree. While this wasn't a big deal outside the Sky Cities, it was definitely a problem within them. The tourist was put on trial. Even though there was video footage of him committing the murders, he was acquitted because his crimes happened in a different universe. He literally got away with murder.

It may have been the serial killer that was in court, but it was the Twilight Histories that was on trial. The story made waves in the news feeds of the Sky Cities and the outrage was real. It even got the Sky Lords involved and soon the Twilight Histories was shut down.

Move to Urumqi

Dr Karlovsky and Zar searched for potential accelerators all over the world, but after the trial, none would lease to them. They eventually found one in the Central Asian city of Urumqi. Once a large and powerful metropolis, its Sky City was destroyed by rebels in the early days of the Civil War and lay blasted and battered, its cratered surface visible for miles. Its once bright walls and delicate rooms became home to vagrants and the battlegrounds for gangs who competed to strip the great hulk of its treasures.

Urumqi survived, but it was partitioned by numberless gangs. Karlovsky and Zar leased the particle accelerator from one of these gangs on the outskirts of Urumqi. The gang offered security against roving bands of vagrants, rebels and Islamists who would love nothing more than to break down the walls and plunder the compound.

The particle accelerator had been used by the Chinese to access the inner planets of the Colonial Network. The underground ring was small at only 25km in circumference and was not very powerful. Thankfully, puncturing a hole through the multiverse wouldn't require much power

and the facility was able to produce wormholes just large enough to move a handful of tourists at a time.

The business partners were devastated to find the facility was in extreme disrepair. The yard was full of rusting pipes, garbage and vast families of rats. Bullet casings scattered the grounds from some old battle and the walls were raked with holes.

After losing their Tel Aviv business, there wasn't much money left. Boaz Zar insisted on getting the lobby tidied up for marketing, while Karlovsky installed clean white paneling around the worm chamber.

There were quite a few rooms in the main building. As the company grew, they slowly reclaimed these rooms. They became places where their contractors could work, rest, research and store their tools.

On the second floor, they found a large conference room they converted into an office. This was shared by the two partners before Dr. Karlovsky went missing. Dr Boaz since filled it with the many exotic treasures he collected over hundreds of splits. As it's located above the worm chamber, he has access to his own platform at the far wall of his office. While the majority of tour groups leave through the main worm chamber, Boaz Zar will occasionally invite a distinguished guest or two to depart through the platform in his ornate office.

Disappearance of Dr. Karlovsky

Dr Mira Karlovsky disappeared during one of her splits. After a fruitless search through the multiverse, she was deemed lost and ownership of the company passed to her partner Boaz Zar. It is hoped she is still alive somewhere, though no one can say for certain where she is.

To prevent more disappearances, Boaz Zar introduced a number of safety measures. Most importantly, all tourists are now required to insert a custom made chip with very limited functionality. It's primary software is a tracking beacon that allows the Twilight Histories to locate tourists in the multiverse. The only other function on the chip is a language translation app.

Character Sheet

Before you create your character, it's important to speak with your GM. He or she may have a specific mission in mind that requires a particular mix of characters. For example, if you're on a treasure hunt, or if you're trying to rescue someone, your GM may be looking for mercenaries glittering with cybernetics. On the other hand, if you're simply exploring a world, your GM may prefer your group to be as discreet as possible so you blend in.

There are some parts of your character sheet that should be filled out by you, and there are other parts that will be filled out during your Orientation with the help of your GM once gameplay begins. Some GMs prefer to build characters as a group experience rather than separately alone, so make sure you speak with your GM about this.

When you fill out your character sheet, it's recommended you do it in the following order:

1. Core Stats
2. Profession and Discipline
3. Additional Skills
4. Dominant Trait
5. Cybernetics (check with your GM)
6. Basic Stats (First Page starting with Level and XP)
7. Background (Third Page)
8. Attachment

Gameplay will begin with your Orientation. A Guide character played by your GM will help you complete the rest of your character sheet in the following order:

1. Your cover name and names of your tour group (top of first page)
2. Your costume
3. Weapons (if any)
4. Currency (if any)
5. Items (if any)

Core Stats

Your core stats determine where your character is weak and strong. There are six main categories: **Intuition, IQ, Lead, Power, Agility and Grit.**

Here's an idea of people and characters who embody each of these traits. Having tourists strong in a variety of different areas can create a powerful team ready to meet any challenge.

Star Trek Next Generation	Game of Thrones	Typecast Actors
Intuition: Troi IQ: Data Lead: Picard Power: Worf	Intuition: Tyrion IQ: Littlefinger Lead: Daenerys Power: The Mountain	Intuition: Matthew McConaughey IQ: Rick Moranis Lead: Edward Olmos Power: Michelle Rodriguez

Agility: Tasha Yar Grit: Riker	Agility: Arya Grit: The Hound	Agility: Bruce Lee Grit: Clint Eastwood
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Core stats can be assigned in one of three ways. Ask your GM which one your group will use:

- Roll 7 D10 (dropping the lowest role) and distribute them as you like
- Distribute 33 points however you like among the six core stats
- Distribute them according to these numbers: 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4

To determine the secondary skill (such as Learn, Sprint or Sneak), take the core stat and multiply it by 10. So for example, if your Intuition score is 7, then your base Empathy score will be 70.

As a bonus, take your Learn score, divide it by two and distribute those points wherever you like. For example, if your Learn score is 70, you will have 35 points to distribute throughout any of your core skills.

Keep in mind that the goal is to role lower than these numbers during gameplay. So if your Empathy is 40, you'll need to role 39 or lower for a successful role. The higher the stat score on your character sheet, the more likely it will be for you to succeed. 1 is a critical success. 100 is a critical fail.

Intuition: 1-10 Empathy: 1-100 Sense Threat: 1-100 Perform: 1-100 Creativity: 1-100 Judge Character: 1-100	IQ: 1-10 Learn: 1-100 Investigate: 1-100 Memory: 1-100 Navigate: 1-100 Puzzle: 1-100	Lead: 1-10 Inspire: 1-100 Authority: 1-100 Trust: 1-100 Seduce: 1-100 Intimidate: 1-100
Power: 1-10 Brawl: 1-100 Lift: 1-100 Throw: 1-100 Climb: 1-100 Sprint: 1-100	Agility: 1-10 Shoot: 1-100 Sneak: 1-100 Sleight of Hand: 1-100 Eyesight: 1-100 Balance: 1-100	Grit: 1-10 Stamina: 1-100 Courage: 1-100 Temptation: 1-100 Composure: 1-100 Toughness: 1-100

Additional Skills

Additional Skills are specialties or hobbies your character has that can be used in more specific situations than your core skills. All characters get two additional skills. Others skills may be added because of your profession or discipline.

To determine your skill score for specialties or hobbies, use the number associated with its related core stat. For instance, Deep Listen falls under Intuition. If your Intuition is 7, then multiply that by 10 to get 70 for your Deep Listen score.

Some professions will give you additional bonuses for your skills, so make sure to factor those in.

<p>Emotion Create Art Deep Listen Understand Relationships Animal Communication Build Trust Spiritual Calm Musical Instrument Sing Dance</p>	<p>IQ Engineer Science Wilderness Survival Astronomy History Forensics Religion Strategy Games Anthropology Debate Fix Robot Accounting</p>	<p>Lead Public Speak Delegate Teach Manners Negotiate Tell Joke Acting</p>
<p>Power Axe Sword Pole Weapon Hike Swim Row Grapple</p>	<p>Agility Carpentry Cook Sew Burglary Acrobatics Archery Knife Guerilla Combat Martial Arts Action Games Pilot Snow Sports 1st Aid Surgery</p>	<p>Grit Control Rage</p>

Skill Rolls

During gameplay, you will often roll for your skills. Rolls are done with a D100. The roll consists of the following steps:

1. The player says or will be asked to perform an action using a skill
2. The GM will add or subtract 'advantage' depending on the ease of difficulty of the situation
3. The player will roll the D100 and compare it against the skill +/- advantage
4. If the roll falls under that number, the player succeeds. If above, it's a failure.
5. If the player rolls below a 5, it's considered a critical success regardless of the skill total. Likewise, rolls above 95 are a critical failure.

Skill Stacking in Game Play

Think of someone who excels. You'll probably notice they're combining a number of skills. This is called skill stacking.

Picasso was a great artist. But his success came from stacking his art with his abilities to network, persuade, negotiate and public speak. Bruce Lee was a great martial artist. But his success came from combining that with acting, charm, business and a willingness to think outside the box about his craft to create something new.

How can you stack your skills in game play to maximize your potential outcome?

Perhaps you want to intimidate an enemy. You could roll just for Intimidation. But why not also throw off your shirt to reveal your cybernetics and then pick up a bolder (roll Lift)? Even if you drop the bolder by accident, you'll still scare your adversary more than if you just rolled Intimidation.

Or how about if you want to win over a crowd? You could just roll Inspire. But if your character is a strong leader, why not stack it with Public Speak and Seduce? In the best case scenario, you could build the crowd into a roaring frenzy of adoration.

Professions.

The following is a list of Professions and their Disciplines. When creating your character sheet, apply these to the Characteristics section on the first page. For instance, Artist is a profession, while Chef is a Discipline.

Apply the modifiers to your skills list. The Profession will have a list of base modifiers. The Discipline will have additional modifiers that can be added to these. Apply both.

Your occupation in the 24th century may equip you with useful skills. As an example, if you are a paramedic, you will find it straightforward to amputate a leg on a Roman battlefield, or apply phosphorus to a wound after a Nazi blitz. Your GM will consider your profession and discipline when drawing up your cover story for you.

Artist (Profession)

There are a number of ways to express yourself through art. In the ever increasing desire for novelty, some artists have discovered that splitting worlds will help them gather inspiration from other universes. As world splitting is not cheap, the artists that can afford it either have very lucrative bonds within Sky Cities, or in some cases they have gone viral through the streets and pick up mass royalties.

All Artists receive the following adjustments to their character sheets:

- +5 Creativity
- +3 perception
- +3 investigation
- +3 Inspire
- +5 perform
- +3 Inspire
- 3 all Power skills

Digital Artist (Discipline)

Most visual and auditory art in the 24th century is digital. Artists will work separately, or come together to create mixed media with the help of AI software. These works of art are digital experiences that stimulate multiple senses at once, such as hearing, sight, even taste and touch.

Digital artists will often request to bring a recording device to gather samples from other worlds they can later mix into their art. Digital artists may have a specialty, such as script writing, music mixing, or holographic painting. While the details may not be relevant, the digital artists will have a keener perception than most people.

After adjusting your character sheet for an Artist, apply these to your character sheet for an Digital Artist:

+5 Eyesight

+Add Create Art to your skills

Analogue Artist (Discipline)

Though most art is achieved through software, there is still a desire for old traditions. Ballet, guitar, piano... there is nothing more quaint than going to a Greek restaurant and having a real human come out playing a traditional bouzouki.

Analogue artists will pick up local instruments, learn traditional dances, and chat with locals about their art. They sometimes request to bring objects that help them create their art, such as a small instrument, dance shoes, or portable paint set.

After adjusting your character sheet for an Artist, apply these to your character sheet for an Analogue Artist:

+5 performance

+Pick one Performance based skill, such as Dance, Musical Instrument, Carpentry, etc.



Chef (Discipline)

Culinary art is fiercely competitive in the 24th century as chefs experiment and explore new ideas to delight the rich in their sky cities. Enterprising chefs will split worlds to gather inspiration from the multiverse. Chef's are highly prized both within Sky Cities and beyond the walls.

Chefs can make culinary wonders out of any foods they find. They know what is safe to eat, what is delicious, and how to impress. A good chef can survive in a forest or dazzle a king

in a palace.

Apply the following to your character sheet:

+Add Cooking to your skills

+Add Delegate Task to your skills

+Add Wilderness Survival to your skills

Bloodsport Athlete (Profession)

It's been a long time since the Olympics faded into obscurity. People got bored of watching clean athletes, especially since the best in the world modded and juiced themselves into living superheroes. A company out of Belgium called Bloodsport captured the eyes of the world when they not only brought these superheroes (and villains) into the cage, but encouraged them to kill each other on live video feeds.

The list of Bloodsports is ever expanding, and so too are the body choppers that compete in them. What's common to all is a cybernetic and drug arms race that in some cases makes the athletes look downright alien. They live fast and die young. If they don't die in the cage or on the track, they burn out in some hotel in Bangkok.

Bloodsport Athletes are divided into weight classes not according to how much they actually weigh, but by how much they've been modded with cybernetics. Here are the weight classes and how character sheets should be updated.

Here are the base modifiers for a Bloodsport Athlete:

- +1 Power
- +1 Grit
- 1 Intuition
- 1 IQ

There are different cybernetic 'Weight' classes for Bloodsport Athletes.

Blood Weight: No cybernetics. All juiced-up muscle.

Copper Weight: 1 metallic cybernetic

Bronze Weight: 2 metallic cybernetics

Iron Weight: 3 metallic cybernetics

Steel Weight: 4+ metallic cybernetics

Check with your GM before adding a weight class. Your GM may feel a weight class with many unconcealed metallic cybernetics would not be a good match to the world he/she is sending you to. Generally speaking, tourists that are highly modded with metallic cybernetics will be sent to worlds where it is not important to conceal pipes and pistons.

If that disappoints, keep in mind an athlete in the Blood Weight category will likely be the most athletic human in that world, especially in low tech worlds without genetic modifications.

The Bloodsport owners are considering either placing restrictions on cybernetics to stop the race to giant robotic monsters, or simply creating a new unrestricted weight class and let it fly. Commentators have noted that if modding is not stopped, eventually it will lead to giant robots the size of sky cities... cool.

Strongman (Discipline)

The current World Champion Strongman in the Steel Weight class is held by a cyborg that is nine feet tall and 99% metal. Only a bit of brain makes it somewhat human. It can lift twenty tonnes. By contrast, the World Champion in the Blood Weight class is a juiced up Mongol with 350 pounds of steroid injected muscle. He can't scratch his head, and neither should you.

Strongman competitions do not require any combat, but simply feats of strength like lifting or throwing big things. Strongmen optimize their bodies and brains for strength. The only trivia they know is who won the last Strongman, and what mods or juice got them there.

Here are the modifiers for the Strongman:

+Add Metallic Cybernetics to match your preferred Weight Class

+Add +5 to Lift



Bloodball Player (Discipline)

Bloodball was inspired by the ancient Aztec ballgame and they've kept the stone age aesthetics. Although there is no human sacrifice at the end, Bloodball does tend to get very bloody, and there is almost always a death.

Bloodball players are fast and deadly. They have the endurance of a runner, and the brutality of a mixed martial artist. Bloodball players like to get up close and personal in a fight. Because they're big, Bloodball players find it hard to blend in with a crowd. Due to all the death and violence in their games, they tend to be emotionally closed off.

Apply these modifiers to your character sheet:

+5 all Agility skills

-5 all Intuition skills

+Add Metallic Cybernetics to match your weight class

Health Worker (Profession)

Health Workers have long hours. When they're off, they either play hard or crash. While Health Workers are extremely intelligent, the high rolling surgeons and doctors that come to the Twilight Histories tend to have large egos and dark secrets, while Therapists can receive secondary trauma from their clients.

All Doctors get the following adjustments to their character sheets:

+1 IQ

-1 power

Cyber Surgeon

Cyber Surgeons mod bodies with cybernetics and synthetics. This is one of the more lucrative professions and they tend to own private clinics. As a specialty, they require a vigorous multidisciplinary knowledge of robotics and organics. Cyber Surgeons tend to be flashy egotists with a televangelist's charm, but they can also be mean in private thanks to their huge egos.

After adjusting for the Doctor's bonuses, apply these to your character sheet:

- +5 Trust
- +3 Lie
- +3 Sleight of Hand
- +5 Mechanics
- 2 for all Power skills
- +Add Haggle to your skills
- +Add Assert Alpha Dominance to your skills

Cyber Surgeons tend to wear their own flashiest products, sporting them like a fancy watch. Add one unconcealed cybernetic mod and 2 concealed cybernetics.

Therapist (Discipline)

The world is a troubled place filled with violence, poverty and moral disintegration. As a Therapist, you guide your clients through their maze of hurt to the sweet relief of healing.

After adding the general modifiers of a Health Worker, add these additional modifiers for a Therapist:

- +1 Intuition
- 3 for all Power skills
- 2 for all Agility skills
- +Add Build Trust to your skills
- +Add Deep Listen to your skills
- +Add Understand Relationships to your skills

Paramedic (Discipline)

Shooting, Stabbings, falls and impailings are boxes to check for every paramedic's day. It's time for a vacation!

Add the following stats to your character sheet in addition to a Health Worker's core stats:

- +10 Composure
- +10 Trust
- +Add First Aid to your skills

STEM Worker (Profession)

STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) jobs are the rails the 24th century runs along. STEM workers build the machines, the cybernetics, and the software that makes the world work. Engineers build and maintain the particle accelerators that connect the Colonial Network. Farmers are both scientists and jack-of-all trades. Supervisors look after the robots that mine asteroids on other planets.

STEM workers tend to be very intelligent and very well organized. They work hard. Some are well connected with large teams on huge projects. Others spend years in isolation on distant planets with only robots to keep them company. Others work deep underground and never see the sun.

Adjust your character sheet with these base updates for an Engineer:

- +1 IQ
- 1 power

Colonial Mining Supervisor (Discipline)

The Colonial Network has hundreds of planets and thousands of asteroids in its operational database. Specialized engineers are sent out to these distant bases to supervise the mining operations with only robots for friends. It's a lonely job. It tends to attract recluses who are very intelligent and good with their hands. Because they spend so much time in their heads, they tend to have vibrant imaginations and they love to hobby.

After adding the general modifiers for an Engineer, add the following to your character sheet:

- +5 Mechanics
- +5 Science
- +5 Sleight of Hand
- +2 Eyesight
- 5 all Intuition skills
- +Add Delegate Task to your skills
- +Add Repair Robot to your skills

Cybernetic Designer (Discipline)

Cybernetics are the tattoos of the 24th century. Instead of getting a dolphin on her ankle, a young woman beyond the walls may get a set of cybernetic feet with their own built-in high heels. Cybernetic Designers work with product teams to create cutting edge designs that are not only stylish, but functional. The designers are creative, perceptive and good with people. They tend to make good leaders.

Add the following modifiers

- +3 Inspire
- +3 Perform
- +3 Creativity
- +Add one unconcealed cybernetic

Farmer (Discipline)

24th century Farmers are multidisciplinary engineers who need to know the read the PH levels of soils just as well as how to fix a broken circuit board on a robot. Farming tends to be a solitary job where everything is automated. Even the buying and selling is done digitally, though it requires a special degree of skill to maximize profits.

Farmers are in tune with the world. They see the moon and sun as dials in a great clock. They have an understanding of the space they inhabit, their environment and how it works. They can run their hands through the soil and tell a story. Because of this, they are excellent at finding their bearings in the wilderness and knowing which plants to eat. Farmers tend to be the reliable bedrock of any tour group.

Add the following modifiers for Famers:

- +5 Nature
- +3 Mechanics
- +5 Resilience
- +5 Perseverance
- +5 Patience
- 10 Lie
- 10 Trust
- +Add Calm Animal to your skills

Sky City Maintenance (Discipline)

Sky Cities are self-contained ecosystems. While they import much of their luxuries, they were originally designed to be completely self-sufficient. Sky City Maintenance staff view the human inhabitants of Sky Cities as an intricate part of a complex biological and mechanical system. Everything must be in balance and that balance rests on a razor's edge.

Inhabitants of Sky Cities tend to view the maintenance staff with scorn, but the feeling is mutual. To the maintenance staff, inhabitants are the most obnoxious and unpredictable components of the ecosystem and are a constant headache.

Add these modifiers to your character sheet for a Sky City Maintenance worker:

+5 Investigate

+5 Science

+5 Mechanics

-3 all Emotion skills

+Add Engineer skill

+Add Navigate skill (note: this will only apply underground or in tunnels)

Mercenary (Profession)

With bio rejuvenation therapy, a retired soldier can be returned to the youthful springiness of the raw recruit, but with all the experience and grizzledness of the seasoned veteran. When a soldier retires, there are few opportunities that match their unique skill set more than that of a soldier of fortune.

Mercenaries will often be hired by rich tourists as protection on their journeys. Sometimes, a team of mercenaries will be sent in to a world to recover some precious object. Mercenaries with experience splitting worlds are the most common group to be selected as Agents by the Twilight Histories.

Add these base modifiers for a mercenary:

+1 Power

+1 Agility

+1 Grit

-3 Intuition

Sniper

Snipers are the masters of long range combat. A good sniper with a modern rifle and cybernetic optics can pick off a moving target beyond the curvature of the earth. But they are also trained to construct simple range weapons out of common objects from any environment.

Add these modifiers to your character sheet:

+10 Shoot

+5 Eyesight

+5 Sneak

-15 Empathy

+Add one unconcealed cybernetic

+Add Wilderness Survival to your skills

Killer

Generalized soldiers who leave the army are hired as 'Killers' by mercenary outfits. They're rough fighters skilled in ending a life with a bullet, knife or a few brutal hits. They're also skilled survivalists who know how to live off the land.

Add these modifiers to your character sheet:

+10 Kick/Punch

+5 Ignore Pain

-15 Empathy

+Add one unconcealed cybernetic

+Add Martial Arts skill

+Add Knife Handling

Business (Profession)

The 24th century is recovering from a long period of conflict and chaos. Most governments are weak and their business environments are unregulated. Shady business dealings filled large doses of bribes and murders are the norm. They call the business world the 'Colosseum' and its sands are soaked in the blood of dead companies (and their employees).

There are a wide range of people who work in business, from office workers to entrepreneurs.

Here are the basic modifiers for a Business worker:

+1 Intuition

-1 Agility

Entrepreneur (Discipline)

There are as many Entrepreneurs as there are companies, but they all share a common trait, a ruthless drive to succeed. Only the most machiavellian survive in the cutthroat streets.

Those Entrepreneurs that come to the Twilight Histories tend to be looking for something that will give them an edge over the competition. This could be a new technology, a lost treasure, and in one rare case an Entrepreneur had Ghengis Khan kidnapped to try and make him CEO of one of his companies. It did not end well.

Add these modifiers:

- +5 Judge Character
- +3 Inspire
- +3 Lie
- +3 Trust
- +3 Courage
- +3 Resilience
- 15 Sneak
- 5 Lift
- 5 Run
- 5 Kick/Punch
- +Add one concealed cybernetic
- +Add Haggle skill
- +Assert Alpha Dominance skill
- +Add Delegate Task skill

Salaryman (Discipline)

The world is full of lonely office workers standing at the windows of office towers and wondering what it would feel like to fly... or fall. Salarymen perform a range of jobs, but most are unproductive, subsidized by governments trying to keep unemployment numbers down. The life of a Salaryman is long and disheartening, like a prison sentence that drags on, decade after decade, but instead of bars, there are beige cupicals.

Salarymen often blow a year's income on a splat to escape this soul sucking drudgery. They're often out of shape and have sore backs from sitting in office chairs staring at blank screens and pretending to work. They may at first come across as dull and sad, but witnessing the metamorphosis of a salaryman into a hero or warlord can be a miraculous thing to see. With nothing to lose, they may strive for the world... and sometimes they even achieve it.

Salarymen are almost always extremely unhappy with their world and are desperate to live in a different one. Mark your initial Attachment at 70 or higher.

Add these modifiers:

- 1 Power
- +Add Build Friendships skill
- +Add Controlled Rage skill
- +Add an additional skill as a hobby for a bored Salaryman

Professor (Profession)

Professors are highly educated individuals who teach and conduct research at universities. They often visit the Twilight Histories on research grants where they hope to test their theories. Professors who visit the Twilight Histories follow many disciplines, and many more.

Add these modifiers:

+1 IQ

-1 Power

+Add Public Speaking skill

Choose a subject below and mark it as your Discipline. This is also a uniquely powerful skill which you can mark down under your skills. Add +10 to this skill above what it would normally receive within the IQ trait. So for example, if your IQ is 8 and you picked Biology, this would receive an 80 + 10 for a total of 90.

Anthropology, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Cybernetics, Engineering, Geography, Geology, History, Physics, Mathematics, Medicine, Mining, Psychology, Philosophy

Gang

The general running of the world beyond the walls of the Sky Cities is mostly left to gangs. Even the fledgling empires are laced with gang ties that run deep into the fabric of their social structures.

Chapter Boss (Discipline)

Chapter Bosses are tough. They have to be. They lead up to a few hundred gang members, many of whom would love to take their job. Doing so is as easy as challenging the Boss to a fight to the death... and winning. Gang life is a Darwinian world.

Bosses that come to the Twilight Histories want something different than a party on the beach. They want to challenge Ghengis Khan to a duel.

Chapter Bosses have an Attachment of 20 or less.

+1 Power

+1 Grit

+10 Intimidation

+10 Authority

-1 IQ

-20 Empathy

-20 Creativity

- 10 Trust
- +Add three metallic cybernetics
- +Add body film
- +Add one Skill from Power

Advisor (Discipline)

Chapter Bosses surround themselves with advisors. These are the smartest people bosses can find in their area and they often work under extreme stress. If they offer bad advice, they could lose a limb, wife or child, or simply be thrown into a pad of wet cement. Advisors are smart in a particular area, but tend to be physically weak. They dream of escape.

Add an Attachment of at least 80.

- +1 IQ
- +1 Intuition
- +10 Composure
- 1 Power
- 1 Lead
- +Add two additional skills

Street Thug (Discipline)

Street Thugs do the dirty work. They're tough. They brag about their scars. They're proud of the hurt they inflict on others. They're often covered in full body film that flares up when they're angry. They have ugly metallic cybernetics designed to inspire fear.

Add an Attachment of under 20.

- +1 Power
- +1 Grit
- +10 Intimidation
- +5 Shoot
- +Add one Skill from Power
- 1 IQ
- 20 Empathy
- 20 Creativity

Dominant Trait

The very first thing you will do when creating your character is discover your dominant trait. This trait will help you refine many other aspects of your character, such as profession, background and the types of skills your character will focus on.

For example, if your dominant trait is Vulgar, your character may live outside a Sky City and will be better suited to professions found in the streets. Your character may be attracted to professions such as a mercenary, or perhaps a street cybernetics medic.

But of course, mixing traits and professions in unexpected ways is half the fun. So you could even be a cursing street Therapist, if you wanted to go in that direction.

To determine your dominant trait, roll a D100 and match the number to the trait below, then note any modifiers:

1. Addict (-1 Grit)
2. Adventurous (+5 Courage, +5 Inspire)
3. Aggressive (+5 Brawl, -10 Empathy)
4. Agile (+5 Learn, +5 Balance)
5. Aimless (-1 Lead)
6. Alert (+5 Investigate, +5 Eyesight)
7. Ambitious (+5 Intimidate)
8. Anxious (-10 Courage)
9. Arrogant (-10 Inspire)
10. Athletic (+5 all Power skills, +5 Ignore Pain)
11. Bookish (-5 all Lead Skills, +5 all IQ skills)
12. Boorish (-5 Inspire, -5 Perform, +5 Brawl)
13. Bold (+5 Courage)
14. Bloodthirsty (-1 Intuition, +10 Brawl)
15. Calculating (+2 all IQ skills)
16. Calm (+5 Composure, +5 Investigate)
17. Champion (+2 all Grit skills, +5 Inspire)
18. Charismatic (+2 all Lead skills)
19. Civilized (add Manners skill)
20. Competitive (+3 Ignore Pain, +3 Courage)
21. Considerate (+2 all Lead skills)
22. Confident (+5 Temptation)
23. Contemplative (+2 all Intuition skills)
24. Cool (+5 Inspire, +5 Seduce, +3 Trust)
25. Cooperative (+5 Inspire)
26. Cowardly (-5 all Grit skills, -10 Perform)
27. Cruel (-1 Intuition)
28. Cultured (+5 all IQ skills, -5 all Power skills, add Manners skill)
29. Curious (+5 all IQ skills)
30. Determined (+5 all Grit skills)

31. Dependent (-5 all Lead skills)
32. Depressed (+5 Ignore Pain, -5 Balance)
33. Devoted (+3 Seduce, +5 Trust)
34. Dexterous (add Acrobatics skill)
35. Easygoing (add Build Friendship skill)
36. Elegant (add Manners skill)
37. Energetic (+5 Stamina)
38. Envious (-2 all Intuition skills)
39. Bored (-2 all IQ skills, -3 Intimidate)
40. Fierce (+3 Intimidate, +3 Ignore Pain)
41. Fit (+5 Stamina)
42. Fanatical (+5 Ignore Pain, +5 Intimidate)
43. Flexible (physical) (+5 Balance, add Acrobatic skill)
44. Flexible Thinker (+2 all IQ skills, -10 Brawl)
45. Friendly (add Build Trust skill)
46. Glutinous (-1 Agility)
47. Gorgeous (+5 Seduce, -5 Brawl)
48. Graceful (+5 Sneak)
49. Greedy (-3 all Intuition skills, -5 Inspire)
50. Gullible (-5 all Intuition skills)
51. Hoarder (-10 Temptation)
52. Humorous (add Tell Joke skill)
53. Impatient (-5 Composure, -3 Ignore Pain)
54. Impulsive (-5 Temptation)
55. Independent (+3 Authority, +5 Composure)
56. Indulgent (-5 Temptation)
57. Intuitive (+5 all Intuition skills)
58. Introspective (+5 Empathy, +5 Composure)
59. Jealous (-1 Intuition)
60. Kleptomaniac (-10 Inspire, +5 Sneak, Add Burglary skill)
61. Lazy (-1 Grit)
62. Light Footed (+10 Sneak, +5 Balance)
63. Metacognitive (+3 all Intuition skills, +5 Learn)
64. Meticulous (+5 Investigate, +5 Sleight of Hand)
65. Nervous (-1 Grit)
66. Neurotic (-3 all Intuition skills, -10 Composure)
67. Obsessive (-10 Temptation, +10 Learn)
68. Open Minded (+5 Creativity, +5 Learn)
69. Paranoid (-10 Courage)
70. Patient (+5 Learn, +5 Temptation)
71. Perfectionist (+5 Puzzle, -5 Creativity)
72. Persuasive (+10 Trust, Add Debate skill)
73. Philosophical (+5 Puzzle, +5 Investigate)
74. Power Hungry (+5 Intimidate, -10 Empathy)

75. Psychopath (+10 Composure, +10 Authority, -30 Empathy)
76. Quick Witted (Add Tell Joke skill)
77. Quiet (+5 Sneak, -5 Perform)
78. Reflective (+3 all Intuition skills)
79. Relaxed (+5 Creativity, -5 Stamina)
80. Remorseless (-1 Intuition, +10 Brawl, +10 Intimidate)
81. Responsible (+10 Authority)
82. Risk Taker (+3 Creativity, +3 Learn, +5 Courage)
83. Secure (+2 all Grit skills)
84. Self-Actualized (+3 all Intuition skills)
85. Selfish (+3 Seduce, -5 Courage)
86. Skeptical (+3 Investigate, +3 Learn, +3 Puzzle)
87. Shy (-10 Intimidate)
88. Smart (+2 all IQ skills)
89. Squeamish (-10 Composure)
90. Stoic (+1 Grit, -1 Intuition)
91. Street Smart (+3 all Intuition skills)
92. Strong (+3 all Power skills)
93. Stutterer (-10 Inspire)
94. Superstitious (-1 IQ)
95. Timid (-10 Intimidate)
96. Thuggish (+5 Brawl, -5 Ignore Pain, -10 Empathy)
97. Tolerant (+5 Empathy, +5 Balance)
98. Tough (+5 all Grit skills)
99. Unstoppable (+5 all Grit skills)
100. Vulgar (-5 Seduce, -5 Composure, +5 Brawl)

Character Background

The more you know about your character before you start your game, the more fun it will be.

The Twilight Histories universe will influence your character's backstory. Age, nationality or ethnicity, wealth, if the character is from a Sky City... for all these things, you will need to know a bit more about the universe. You can find a brief summary here, and more in depth descriptions are found at the end of this book if you want to do deeper.

Age

You will notice on your character sheet there are two categories for your age called *actual* and *appearance*. Many people in the 24th century, and certainly almost all who can afford to split worlds, have had some form of body modification. They may have organic tissue and organ rejuvenation therapy, synthetic upgrades, or even metallic cybernetics. A person's appearance may not have any bearing on their actual age.

If your character is from a Sky City, they may be up to 200 years old. If they're from the streets, they're much more likely to look closer to their actual age. Rejuvenation therapies and synthetic mods are very expensive and not widely available outside Sky Cities.

The new exception is a small number of people who split worlds through the Twilight Histories. From the perspective of the staff, a tour group will enter the worm room and within an hour they're back out, sometimes looking years older. And they often are.

Although it's not advised, some hardcore travellers will do multiple splits in a single day. A young traveller entering the reception area in the morning might leave in the evening with white hair and a face full of the years of life. After a week in rejuvenation therapy in Almaty, Khasakstan, they'll be back at the Twilight Histories looking spry and young.

Cybernetics

In the 24th Century, cybernetics, body and genetic modifications are common. In the higher strata of society, people spend a great amount updating their bodies and are usually more heavily modded. That said, the golden standard of wealth and status is to look as natural and beautiful as possible. Visible body modifications are seen as low status and cheap. Walking the sky cities, one could be mistaken for believing they were strolling the halls of heaven. Everyone looks perfect.

In the lower strata of society, down in the streets, body modifications tend to be highly visible. They amplify the powers they offer. People in the streets tend to prefer steel and titanium cybernetics to the soft synthetic skin of the sky cities.

Gang members, soldiers and street thugs often have a polymer tattooed into their skin called a 'body film'. This film has artistic designs that change in vibrancy depending on the mood of the wearer. For instance, when someone with a facial body film goes into battle, they will radiate like a fluorescent fire, their faces appearing to morph so they look like dragons, tigers or other creatures of local lore that may intimidate their enemies.

Body film is not just a means of intimidation. It's also a form of expression. A barber may cover his body in radiating artistic designs to match his fashionable hair and trendy clothes. A street

cleaner may have a body film of her dead father's face that glows when she feels sad. An exotic dancer's skin may sparkle with the scales of a snake.

Synthetic Modifications

If your character lives in a Sky City, it is expected they will be heavily modded with Synthetic cybernetics that replicate human skin and other organics. Following Plato's concept of the ideal form, Sky City dwellers aim to perfect themselves, each striving to be the most beautiful being. Though the pressure is great to conform to the highest standards of beauty, this does not mean everyone in Sky Cities is unreasonably vain. While some certainly become obsessed with body modifications, most have genuine interests that occupy their time.

Synthetic body modifications are not nearly as powerful as the steel and titanium cybernetics of the streets, but they do offer some major advantages. They will make your character more beautiful, perhaps even angelic. This will inspire others to follow you. The modifications will also allow you to heal much faster if wounded, and they will make you immune from poison. Sky City dwellers are in fact immortal, unless they have a serious accident.

All characters who do not have synthetic blood will be required to have a blood transfusion before splitting worlds. It's in the contract and is part of the payment for the split. While synthetic blood this won't give you the knitting powers of synthetic skin, it will improve healing times and offer immunity to most poisons and diseases.

Highest Quality Synth Mods (Sky Lords)

Sky Lords always have full body modifications and they are always synthetic. However, these characters are very rare and you probably won't play one or even encounter one. It is possible for an extremely wealthy character like a CEO or successful entrepreneur to have this full body procedure done. This is what it would look like if applied to your character sheet:

Head: +10 Seduce, +5 HP

Torso: +10 HP

Left Arm: +5 HP, +2 Climb, Throw and Brawl

Right Arm: +5 HP, +2 Climb, Throw and Brawl

Left Leg: +5 HP, +2 Sprint, +1 Brawl

Right Leg: +5 HP, +2 Sprint, +1 Brawl

Each Eye: +5 Eyesight, +5 to Shoot

For people who live and work in Sky Cities, but who aren't elite, you will tend to have less expensive and less fulsome synthetic body modifications. Your character may try to replicate the more expensive procedures but using 'knock-off' brands. While those on the street may not

know the difference, the elite can sniff a phony a mile away. Sometimes a Sky City dweller with cheap synthetic mods will be said to look plastic.

Quality Fake Mods (Sky City Dwellers)

If your character lives and works in a Sky City at the mid level, here are the cheaper knock-off synthetic modifications available to you. The amount of synthetic modding a character has had depends on their wealth and status. Synthetic modding is extremely expensive.

Head: +2 HP, +5 Inspire

Torso: +5 HP

Left Arm: +2 HP, +1 Climb, Throw and Brawl

Right Arm: +2 HP, +1 Climb, Throw and Brawl

Left Leg: +2 HP, +1 Sprint, +1 Brawl

Right Leg: +2 HP, +1 Sprint, +1 Brawl

Each Eye: +4 Eyesight, +4 to Shoot

Cheap and Fake Looking (Streets)

Some characters with little money will get extremely cheap street synthetic knock-offs. These often look face and plastic, but they do at least extend the character's life:

Head: +1 HP, -5 Inspire,

Torso: +3 HP

Left Arm: +1 HP, +1 Climb, Throw and Brawl

Right Arm: +1 HP, +1 Climb, Throw and Brawl

Left Leg: +1 HP, +1 Sprint, +1 Brawl

Right Leg: +1 HP, +1 Sprint, +1 Brawl

Each Eye: +3 Eyesight, +3 to Shoot

Metallic Cybernetics

Metallic cybernetics are the mods of the streets. Walk through an open market and you'll see a vast array of pipes and pistons, cat's eyes and titanium spikes.

Not all cybernetics are just for show. Life on the streets in most cities is dangerous. It's less expensive to replace an arm or leg that's been torn up in a drive by shooting with a cheap cybernetic than to regrow it using synthetics. Most people don't even have access to synthetic clinics located deep in Sky Cities.

Cybernetics can be an asset for many labour jobs. Employers will seek out modded individuals who don't have gang body film.

Of course, Cybernetics are also a must have for anyone involved in violence. Soldiers, security, gangs, bounty hunters, thugs, blood spot players and gang members are all heavily modded with metallic cybernetics.

Cybernetics: Human Proportion

Each Leg and Arm

Agility +3 to each skill

Power +3 to each skill

Stamina +3

HP +5

-10 Concealment

Exoskeleton

-5 Concealment HP +10

Each Eyes

+2 Eyesight

+2 to Shoot

-10 Concealment

Cybernetics: Large

Each Leg and Arm

Agility +6 to each skill

Power +6 to each skill

Stamina +5

HP +10

-20 Concealment

Exoskeleton

HP +20,

-20 Concealment

Cybernetics: Huge

Each Leg and Arm

Agility +8 to each skill

Power +8 to each skill

Stamina +7

HP +10

-20 Concealment

Exoskeleton

HP +20

-20 Concealment

Basic Stats

Level

Experience can be done individually using specific XP points or by team-based milestones. Find out from your GM what level your character should be at to determine your initial XP.

XP to reach next level

1. 100
2. 250
3. 500
4. 1000
5. 2500
6. 5000
7. 7500
8. 10000
9. 12500
10. 15000
11. 17500
12. 20000
13. 40000
14. 60000
15. 80000
16. 100000
17. 250000
18. 500000
19. 750000
20. 1000000

Levelling up

When a character advances to a new level, they are awarded points to distribute among their kills. The amount of points is determined by taking half of the character's Learn skill score. For example, if a character's Learn is 70 then they have 35 points.

On every 5th level, your character may add one extra point to a core stat of your choice, or take one additional skill.

Health Points (HP)

Your character's maximum Health Points (HP) are calculated with the following formula: $(8 + (\text{Stamina} / 2) \times \text{Level})$.

Just in case you're bad at math, here is an example of how you would calculate a level 2 character with a Stamina of 40:

$$\begin{aligned}(8 + ((40 / 2) \times 2)) &= \\(8 + (20 \times 2)) &= \\(8 + 40) &= \\48\end{aligned}$$

During combat, your character's health will drain. When they hit 0, your character is deemed incapacitated or unconscious meaning they can't compete in combat for the rest of the fight. If your incapacitated character takes 10 more damage, they are dead.

Initiative

Initiative is the roll used to determine the order characters do things. It's most often used for combat, but GMs will also use it for a variety of non-combat situations that require characters to do things in order. The most notable example is during the orientation when all characters will roll for Initiative to determine the order in which they will receive their costume and cover story.

To determine your Initiative score, add your Authority to your Courage and divide by ten.

Concealment

If your character has been modded in any way, they may stand out in the crowd. Creepy synthetic skin or creaky metal arms can give a character away. If your character looks strange, they may at best receive strange looks and at worst be condemned to the stake. It all depends on the local culture.

All Concealment scores start at 80 (you're always going to seem a little off with your strange ways). Each mod with a Concealment score will cause a penalty.

Let's say your character has a couple human proportioned mods and has a Concealment score of 60. If your character is talking to someone at a tavern and your GM thinks your identity is compromised, that character will roll against your Concealment. If they roll 59 or lower, your mods go unnoticed. If they roll 60 or higher, the other character notices them.

If a Concealment roll is a fail, you will have to roll for Intimidation and the other character will have to make a Composure check to see if they can hold in their emotions.

If you have a cybernetic arm and your shirt is ripped revealing it, it will be immediately revealed and you will have to roll Intimidation.

If you're jacked up with heavy cybernetics and your Concealment is 0, you'll have to go through this process every time you encounter another character. You're just naturally very intimidating. But of course that's why you got jacked up like a junkyard, isn't it?

Movement

Movement is how far a player can move in each round of combat. Here are the formulas to determine movement:

Metric: $\text{Agility} \times 3 = \text{meters}$

Imperial: $3 (\text{Agility} \times 3) = \text{feet}$

If you're bad at math, here's how you calculate the movement of a character with an Agility of 6:

Metric: $6 \times 3 = 18\text{m}$

Imperial: $3 (6 \times 3) = 56'$

Attachment

Character who come to the Twilight Histories do so for many reasons. Some come for the adventure, others for an exotic vacation. There are a few who pull their chips out and never return.

Your character's Attachment level will determine how much they want to stay in this world. It will show how much they care about the people, civilization and culture. A character with a very low Attachment level will not care much. A character with a very high Attachment level will care so much they may pull their chip and stay.

Here's a general guide to Attachment:

1-10 You don't care what happens to other worlds. Burn, rape, murder. Fun!

11-20 A death here and there won't hurt your conscience

21-30 You'll take the treasure, but you don't want to hurt anyone

31-40 You wish you had your video camera app

41-50 This should be interesting, but your home is your home

- 51-60** You want to immerse yourself and see what happens
61-70 You need a break from your own world
71-80 You're desperate to escape your life even for just a few years
81-90 Your entire world is broken. You want a new home.
91-100 If you have to return you'll have a nervous breakdown. Pull the chip!

To determine your initial Attachment score, think about your character's background and why they've come to the Twilight Histories. You may choose your own initial Attachment score.

As the gameplay progresses, your GM may notice you act in a way that either pulls you towards this world or repels you from it. For instance, a character with a very low attachment score might stop a thug from murdering a local. This would show a change in the character's Attachment and the GM might ask you to raise it by a certain amount.

Roll Attachment

From time to time, there may be a situation when your group or your character is asked to roll Attachment. For example, a thug at the next table might pull a knife on the bar maid. Your GM might ask your group to roll Attachment to determine how much each of your characters care.

Roll a D100. If you roll under your Attachment score, you care. If you roll above your Attachment score, you don't care. So if you roll a 1, you care a huge amount. You leap from the table and pull your sword. If you roll a 100, you can't be bothered. You lean back in your chair and watch with a morbid curiosity.

Carry Weight

The average carry weight for a player is calculated as (Power + Stamina + Level) = kg. If you're using Imperial, multiply this number by 2.2 for lbs.

If you're bad at math, here's an example of how you would calculate a character's Carry Weight. In this example, the character has a Power of 5, Stamina of 45 and they're level 2.

$$(5 + 45 + 2) = 52\text{kg}$$

...or for imperial:

$$2.2 (5 + 45 + 2) = 114 \text{ lbs}$$

Combat

Attack rolls function similar to skill rolls but are governed by the Brawl and Shoot skills. If the character has an advanced skill such as Martial Arts, they can use that.

If the skill roll is a success, the player rolls for an attack. Roles are now based on the weapon.

The damage is calculated by the formula $\text{Attack} - \text{Armour}$. If they succeed a resist roll, the damage is halved.

Example Weapons

Melee Weapon

Weight: 1kg/22lbs

Range: Short

Single: +10

Rapid: -20

Damage per Attack: D10 + 3

Extra effect: Concealable (+20 to conceal roll)

Ranged Weapon

Weight: 2kg/4.4lbs

Range: 300m/1km

Single: +20

Rapid: -40

Damage per Attack: 2D10 + 5

Extra effect: Rusty (Critical Failure means weapon breaks)

Example Armour

Light Armour

Weight: 0.5kg/1.1lbs

Encumbrance: +10 (add this to Stealth rolls)

Armour: 3

Extra effect: Streetwise (bonus to stealth when blending into crowds)

Heavy Armour

Weight 7kg/15lbs

Encumbrance: -30 (add this to stealth rolls)

Armour: 12

Extra effect: Concealable (+10 to concealment roll)

GM - Leading an Adventure

As the GM, you will need to prepare your Twilight Histories adventure for your group of tourists. The Orientation is the first thing you will do with your group. This is a fairly standard procedure you will probably recognize from many of the Twilight Histories podcast episodes.

The Journey to the Twilight Histories (not part of the game play)

The characters' journey is the backstory, how they got to the Twilight Histories and their processing once they arrived. All of these things happen before the GM says a single word, so it is entirely preliminary and is only to satisfy your curiosity.

Before the orientation begins, the tourists will have travelled to Urumqi located in Western China (usually avoiding flights over China because of the Civil War). The Twilight Histories recommends tourists arrive a few days early in case there are any issues. This tends to result in a few terrified days in a hotel listening to gunfire in the streets below.

On the day they're set to leave, the tour group will be assembled at the Twilight Histories compound beyond the city limits, usually arriving in some bullethole riddled self-driving taxi.

The first thing they will see is a long cement wall capped with rusty barbed wire and broken bottles. Beyond the gates, they will discover to their horror that the Twilight Histories is nothing like what they saw in the brochure. Old rusty pipes, spools of wire, and sheets of scrap metal litter the yard. They may see a scruffy looking maintenance worker with an arc welder, a family of rats sifting through garbage, or an ancient forklift struggling with a loose pile of pipes.

Once they enter the main building, all this will change. The lobby is crisp and clean with a desk behind which is an attractive woman with a warm smile. There are posters on the walls and if the tourists look at them, they will trigger their chips to play virtual advertisements of different worlds before their eyes.

The receptionist will ask the tourists to complete an intake form. This is to waive responsibility for death or dismemberment from the company. Another form will grant permission for the Twilight Histories to run a synthetic blood transfusion and again waive the responsibility from the company should this go wrong. These forms are completed virtually and no physical paper is present. Any tourist who knows the law may pick up that these forms carry no legal weight, Urumqi being in a legal dead zone.

The receptionist asks each of the tourists for their chip and will put it in a safety deposit box behind her desk. She will then hand them a new chip that is plain grey. As the tourists pop them into the back of their skulls, she will explain that there are only two apps on these new chips.

One is a custom made tracking app so the wormhole knows where to open at journey's end, and the other is a languages app that will give the tourists access to all known languages in the vast database, plus the ability to learn new languages quickly.

She will explain that using this simple chip is for their own safety. It has happened in the past that tourists using their own chips have had software interfere with the tracking device and resulting in them getting stuck in a different world with little chance of rescue. This stripped down chip may be simple, but it is also very stable and secure.

Tourists will usually panic at this point. It's very strange to not have a chip full of memory, screens, videos, games, messengers and all the millions of apps they normally have access to. It is a strange world indeed. The woman will tell the tourists they may come to enjoy their experience more in the raw than if they experience it through a myriad of screens, though there is often a period of withdrawal.

As the tourists grumble at their new chip, she will lead them down a grungy hall to an even grungier room. Here, she will ask the tourists to sit in old lounge chairs made of ancient cracked leather. Each has a beeping machine with pipes and wires coming out of it. A man with a rat tail and yellowed fingers and mustache from smoking will inject needles into their arms and start the blood transfusions.

The woman will try to calm the tourists by saying it's perfectly clean and that she has gone through the process herself. They are about to have military grade synthetic blood injected into their bodies capable of reducing the chances of poisoning and increasing the speed of healing.

She says the transfusion will take three hours, so get comfortable. She points to the side of the chairs and says there are pocket books to read. Usually tourists will balk at the suggestion of reading a real physical book, but the woman will remind them their chips have no apps they'll find interesting, unless they feel like exploring the language files. She will then leave the grumbling tourists to themselves.

Three hours later, she will return with glasses of water and energy bars and ask the tourists how they feel. Most will admit to a strange energetic sensation. They will feel stronger and more alive.

The woman will ask them to follow her down the hall. The tourists will notice a humming sound that keeps growing louder. If they ask about it, the woman will explain it is the particle accelerator warming up for their adventure.

She will lead them to a large steel door and says this is as far as she goes. She wishes them well on their adventure and she'll see them again when they return. She then opens the door. The hall is flooded with a white light from the room, and the sound of humming is much louder.

The tourists step through the door and the story begins.

Orientation

This is where the GM begins speaking.

The orientation is a scripted event, not just for the GM, but for the Guide who is speaking to the tourists. Every Guide follows a standard orientation that includes the following:

1. Welcome
2. The hook: a glossy introduction to the world they will explore
3. Ask the tourists to get their costumes on
4. Give details about their mission and contacts
5. Look over each costume
6. Ask the tourists to step on the platform and offer them a parting word of advice

Welcome

The Tourists will enter a room that's very different from the rest of the building. There are clean white panels on all the walls and even the floors are white and seem to gleam with an inner radiance. The only features in the room are a raised platform on the far side that seems to have a glowing ball that wavers almost like the northern lights above it, and on the other side of the room are a few folding privacy screens behind which the Tourists can see hangers with costumes poking out. They will hear a gentle hum.

The Guide will greet the Tourists saying something like this below, though each Guide will bring their own personality.

If you are recording your adventure, you may now start.

"Ah, there you are. I'm so glad you made it. Welcome to the Twilight Histories. I trust you had a comfortable stay in Urumqi? By the looks on your faces I would assume that's a no? Well, considering the Civil War, we do our best with what we've got.

"From your forms, I learned you are all from very different walks of life and your interests are sprawling. It was difficult to find a world that perfectly matched all your needs, but I did find something very special for you. A world I think you will all enjoy. Well. Enjoy. That might be optimistic. The one common theme was that you all requested an adventure, and adventure usually means danger. And danger you will have.

"Let me tell you about the world we're sending you to..."

At this point, describe your world. Approach your description like a funnel, starting with the broad sweeping description and slowly bringing it down to street level. When you're done the description, say this:

"Your costumes hang on those hooks. Please put them on now while I finish your orientation."

Give a short pause, then continue. In this next section, your Guide will describe the contact the Agent has set them up with as well as a job, if they have one.

"I had an Agent visit this world ahead of you to set things up. When you arrive, make your way to the centre of town. There you'll find a construction site where they're building the emperor's palace. You'll find a tent. Go into the tent and tell the construction manager you want to work.

Next, you'll ask the Tourists to show themselves so you can look them over. Greet them one by one as they step out from behind their screens. Ask them to roll for initiative to determine which order they will be introduced in.

"Ah, I see our first Tourist has got her costume on. Samantha, let's have a look at you. Yes, very authentic. Your blacksmith's apron looks like it's probably for someone bigger, but you certainly look natural enough. Thick boots, cotton shirt, leather gloves. Oh, and if you look in your satchel you'll find a pair of shaded goggles, tongs and a hammer.

You will then ask the player to write these things down on their character sheet. For costume, tell them to put in 'blacksmith's clothes'. Because the outfit has some sturdiness to it, 'blacksmith outfit can be added to the Armour category below. The hammer can also go into Weapons category and you'll give them the traits. Put the goggles and tongs under possessions.

Next, tell the player their cover name and story. Ask them to write this down. Ask the other players write the player's cover name at the top of their character sheet. They can write them in the same order as you introduce them.

"Samantha, your cover name is Xunthul, and that is the name you will be using throughout your journey. You are a blacksmith from the city of Blag. Like many across the empire, you have journeyed here to help build the emperor's palace. I know you are a maintenance worker at a sky city in Istanbul and not a blacksmith, so I hope you can pick your trade up quickly. The Agent has assured me you can apply as an apprentice.

"In your pocket you will find a small purse. Oh, I see you've already found it. Inside, you'll find nine tin Smackers. This is the currency of this world. The Agent says this should be enough for you to get by until your first pay period."

Instruct the player to fill in the character sheet with this information. Continue on to the next character.

Once all the characters have received their individual briefing, you can then end the orientation.

“You have all had a blood transfusion and your bodies are filled with military grade synthetic blood. This blood will help you heal faster and is resistant to illness and poison. You have all had a shot of meds that will pause the aging process while you are gone. You have a new chip inserted in the back of your heads. For your safety, these chips only have two apps installed. One is a sophisticated language translation tool that will allow you to speak and understand any language in the database, while also learning new ones through exposure. The other app is a tracking device that will allow us to find you. You are probably disappointed there are no games on your chips. But trust me, you will have plenty to keep you busy.

“Now, if you’re ready, everyone, please step on the platform and we’ll get you on your way. Yes, that’s right, head straight into the strange glowing orb. It won’t hurt you. I’m revving up the particle accelerator now.”

Note: this is all done digitally through the Guide’s chip. There are no mechanical levers in the room.

“You may feel nauseous and you might not remember where you are at first. This is normal. You will be passing through the fabric of the universe into a different world and this journey is very taxing on the mind and body. Don’t worry. This feeling will go away.

Note: end your orientation with a word of advice or warning.

“Oh, and one more thing before you go. In this world, we’ve had many customers return branded as slaves. It’s something you can fix with a little plastic surgery, of course, but I’ve heard the branding is very uncomfortable when it happens. If you ever see a posy of slavers, run.”

Introduce your world

This is a very fun part for everyone. The players will slowly become aware of their surroundings. This is a time for you to give them juicy details. Describe all the smells, sights and sounds as these come into focus. Once your initial description is done, allow your players to just have fun exploring this new world. If there’s a market, let them go to the market and buy some local foods. Let them learn how their currencies work. Give them a feel for how the language rests on their tongues. Let the tourists get to know each other. They’ll probably want to joke around a bit. In other words, you don’t have to dive right into the mission right away. This early moment of exploration and bonding will set your team up for a great adventure.

World Building

The Twilight Histories stories you love the most likely follow a formula when it comes to world building. The formula is:

(Famous Thing) + (relevant Famous Thing) + Conflict =

Here are some shows that follow the formula:

Classical Greece + Leonardo Di Vinci tech + Conflict = The Winged Victory

Ancient Hominids + Proto-Civilization + Conflict = The Blood Ape

Egypt + Ice Age + Conflict = City of Pyramids

Aztecs + Steel Weapons + Conflict = Aztec Steel

Carthage + Mars + Conflict = Hannibal One

The most iconic worlds are those that would make a really awesome book cover. They have what's called 'anachronism' which means 'out-of-time'. They make people go "Oooohh."

When you're creating a Twilight Histories world, don't get lost in the weeds. Don't worry too much about the point of divergence or all the details that built out of it. Don't worry about the names or the dates. Start first with the big picture. Create a broad sweeping and exciting world.

Think of yourself as the marketing department for the Twilight Histories. You're selling worlds to tourists. Tourists don't need details. They need a hook. They need an image, an idea that's so compelling that they're willing to fly out to Urumqi, leap onto the platform and risk their lives to get to your world.

Start by brainstorming ideas. Write a list. Include famous objects, people, events and places. Then start playing around with them. Put them into the formula until you get a few really interesting and unique ideas for worlds. Pull one out and build your story from it.

The Twilight Histories World

Before you start your game, you should know something about the Twilight Histories universe. This will help you build characters and know some terminology about the world. These are things your characters will bring with them into whatever world they visit.

You should note these are part of the backstory and should not necessarily form a large part of your game. You may notice in the podcast there are hints about a larger world. You may have heard little snippets about Sky Cities, chips, military grade blood, Red Star Transport and the Colonial Network, but the focus is always on the world you've travelled to.

Most people who visit the Twilight Histories are looking for escape from their troubled world. They want to forget. They want to immerse themselves in a different world. And these are not

small trips either. Hardcore regular travellers usually sign up for an allotment of years and they buy in bulk. Many are in search of a new home and eventually they settle down and are lost to the multiverse.

However, there are also some clients who are on a specific mission and a tight timeline. They may be looking for treasure, technology or knowledge to enrich themselves. There are some who look to fight wars or murder a famous ruler. These tourists may not care about the worlds they visit or the people they hurt. They're in it for the adrenaline and the wealth. They want to know what power, love, riches or murder feels like and then they leave. These characters tend to be more engaged with their home world and less caring of the worlds they visit.

With that in mind, here is what the landscape of the Twilight Histories world looks like.

Sky Cities

Sky Cities are massive buildings that can house hundreds of thousands of people. Located in the heart of many of the world's largest urban centres, Sky Cities can tower thousands of feet into the sky and span hundreds of city blocks. They're surrounded by a vast defensive perimeter separating them from the squalor of the streets below.

Sky Cities rose when the Gilded Age came to an end and ruin, poverty and death spread through the world. The Sky Cities became capsules of civilization. They were a place where the lucky few could escape with all the knowledge, technology, treasure and art of their lost world. But as gangs rose from the rubble to consolidate into proto-states, the residents of these great monoliths came to fear the rising power of the outside world. Fear soon turned into war.

Sky City residents are divided into three main castes. Occupying the top floors are the most wealthy and powerful who are often referred to as Sky Lords. These are the trillionaires. They collectively own 95% of the world's businesses and resources and they lay claim to everything in the cosmos. They generally leave the operations of their various businesses to CEOs leaving them to practice a culture of leisure. Because they are hermetically sealed in the top levels of the Sky Cities and rarely leave, they spend most of their time in the virtual world where they are gods.

On the floors below the Sky Lords can be found all the people who help make the Lords' lives work, including the CEOs who run their companies, right on down to the people who do their hair who live near street level.

Beneath the ground in the subterranean floors live the Sky City maintenance staff. These are intelligent but generally very odd people who are at once highly technical, but also tend to have superiority complexes feeling themselves to be the true masters of the Sky Cities. The residents above ground tend to avoid these strange molish people.

Virtual World

The virtual world was once a very democratic and expansive place open for all to explore and this was a welcome relief in a troubled world. But as wealth concentrated, the power of the Sky Lords became so great that they simply took over. Regular players were swept aside.

It is still possible for non-Lords to explore the virtual world, but it's extremely difficult to go undetected and being caught could have real world ramifications. The virtual world is the playground of the Sky Lords. It is where they spend their time, meet with their peers, relax, explore, play and build. It's also where they argue, debate and plot. To have anyone below their caste peer into this private world is not only considered unsavory, but a real security threat.

There have been instances where non-Lords infiltrated the virtual world and were able to extort Sky Lords in various ways. This is the main reason why the Lords banned together to lock it down. Security within the virtual world is just as tight as it is around the Sky Cities.

Political Systems

According to those living in Sky Cities, there are two ways of life: order and chaos. Within the Sky Cities there is order. Beyond the Sky Cities there is chaos. That's how the Sky Lords like it.

The Sky Cities are a plutocracy. Shares of each Sky City are owned by the resident Lords. Shares equal votes. Votes equal power.

Residents in the lower floors rely on the patronage of the Lords. These relationships are called 'bonds'. It's common for Sky City residents to greet new people with the question "who is your bond?" The quality of the bond is a good indicator of status, though it's not always an indicator of power. It's possible to have a weak bond with a strong family. For instance, a CEO with a strong bond to a weak family would have more power than a hairdresser with a weak bond to a strong family.

The Lords themselves are never involved in this process which they consider tedious, but rely on hired 'bondsmen' on lower floors who manage their relationships for them.

Bonds are the main way for Sky City dwellers to receive security beyond the perimeter of their Sky City. If a resident leaves the perimeter, he or she can only call in security if there is an established bond relationship. The stronger the bond, the more access to security they will have. While a CEO could have whole streets evacuated with snipers on every roof, a cleaner from a Sky City might only receive a drone long after he's dead.

The streets beyond the walls run a copycat bond system run through gangs or families that have grown in power. These families, clans or organizations usually have a connection to the Sky Lords, which act as an informal bond. But because of this informality, connections between Lords and gangs rarely result in security sharing. Sky Lords leave the management of security beyond the walls to itself. In fact, they prefer gangs or clans to war among themselves. A divided people are a weak people.

The level of 'chaos' is generally in line with the strength of the power brokers beyond the perimeter. Strong centralized gangs can grow to something resembling governments. Occasionally, a strong gang or family will consolidate a monopoly of power and form a ruling dynasty extending power over vast lands. This occurred with the Free State of Texas, and there are powerful families running Japan, Poland and a vast empire called Ottoman 2. These powerful families become dynasties take on the traditional trappings of power, with names for their leaders such as sultan, president, king or emperor. However strong these rulers may become, the true power still rests with the Lords in the Sky Cities. This may change.

Chinese Civil War

The only time the bond between the Sky Cities and the outside world was challenged was in China when a revolution spread across the land. This resulted in a long Civil War in which some of the Sky Cities and much of the countryside were destroyed. This war is still raging today. Sky Cities beyond China have looked on in horror and fear at what they feel could happen to them. While some Sky Cities have sent security to help their Chinese counterparts, most are too concerned with their own safety.

At the time your adventure takes place, all the coastal Sky Cities north of Shanghai have been destroyed including those in Beijing, Qingdao, Shijiazhuang, Dalian, as well as all the interior Sky Cities in Xi'an, Chengdu, Chongqing, Kunming, Nanjing, Wuhan and Urumqi. This leaves only Shanghai, Hangzhou, Dongguan, Hong Kong and Taipei in the hands of the Sky Lords.

While this might seem an uneven fight, the coastal Chinese Sky Cities that survive are some of the largest and most powerful in the world and they have put up a formidable fight. They dominate the skies over China and force the rebels to rely on primitive guerilla tactics.

Those who want the Sky Cities to fall are very conscious that every day that passes makes the Lords more powerful. That's because the resources of the galaxy are beginning to weigh.

The Colonial Network

Expansion throughout the cosmos is the great game changer the world is anticipating. When it was finally discovered how to harness the power of the wormhole, planets, moons and asteroids could be colonized without the need for expensive and slow moving liquid rockets.

The Colonial network is the name given to all objects connected through wormholes that are either colonized, or are scheduled to be colonized.

Colonization at this early stage involves resource extraction and all this is for the benefit of the Lords of the Sky Cities who own the businesses and the objects beyond the Earth.

The Lords have learned their lesson about relying on human labour. Therefore, most of the colonists are robots. But there are still many professionals that oversee the operations. These are mostly highly skilled engineers, mechanics and supervisors, as well as other support workers. Only professionals with strong bonds to Lords are given permission to fan out across the colonial network. Those without bonds beyond the perimeter are banned from travel beyond Earth.

Because of the immense scale of the resources available and due to the devastating consequences of refining those resources on earth, all smelting and manufacturing occurs on the moon. The moon is therefore of huge importance. It lights up at night like a giant interconnected city, but this city is mostly populated by robots and the lights come from sprawling industrial fields.

There are a number of access points to the Colonial Network. The main one is in the free state of Texas and is run by an incredibly powerful company called Red Star Transport that also runs the state. But there are others. There are even some in China that were taken over by the rebels. While the rebel particle accelerators are sometimes bombed by the Sky Lords, the rebels make every effort to fix them so they can spread their rebellion through the Colonial Network.

Most analysts believe the only chance the rebels have of winning is for them to choke off the Earth from the Colonial Network and stop the immense production power of the cosmos to swarm the Earth with weapons.

The Future

The way things are is precarious. While once the Lords of the Sky Cities were safe behind their walls from a world of chaos, now great states and even empires are beginning to surround them. With open rebellion in China and the fall of some Sky Cities, there is fear within the walls that they will be next.

There is one hope for them. The Colonial Network gives them access to unlimited resources and production potential from which they can build the security apparatus needed to annihilate all resistance and dominate the world.

But this is not a guarantee. The rebellion is under control for now, but it could spread fast. Also, the Lords are split between those who wish to wait for their power to overwhelm the world and those who wish to share more power with the rising empires. With stakes this high, a schism between the Lords is likely to erupt in violence at any time, a Civil War between the penthouse suites of the Troposphere. Spies are carefully observing how their arguments progress in the virtual world.

As the world polarizes into increasingly deadly camps, many believe there are only two options. If the Lords win, they will destroy the rising dynasties and raise their empires back into the ash of chaos. They will cover the planet in swarms of security drones and perhaps even commit mass genocide to reduce the human population, a topic that's openly debated in the virtual world.

The other extreme is for the rebels to seize power and destroy the Sky Cities. The planet would then run much the same as it always has in history with authoritarian rulers battling each other for empire, but this time with nuclear weapons funneled through wormholes.

There is a third way. It is a power sharing model endorsed by some of the Lords. This would allow for more social mobility between the Sky Cities and those outside, and end the hermetically sealed isolation of the Lords. Because the power structure of the world is united at the top, these Lords believe they could unify all humanity within the same order enjoyed by the Sky Cities. The entire world would be like one great Sky City.

The Twilight Histories

Red Star Transport supplies the colonial network through its massive particle accelerators located in the Free State of Texas. These particle accelerators create wormholes that allow instant transit between different places in space such as moons, asteroids and planets.

In the early days, the wormholes were used exclusively for shipping between Red Star warehouses around the globe drastically reducing the cost of transport. But some corporations saw a different application: space mining. They built a particle accelerator on the moon as a proof of concept. This worked perfectly and instant transport was made between the Earth and Moon. Soon, they expanded to Mars, and as the particle accelerators increased in size, they spread across the solar system from the moons around Jupiter and Saturn to the far away Kuiper Belt.

The next great leap happened when Red Star expanded its network to the nearby stars. At the time of your adventure, the Colonial Network spans hundreds of extrasolar planets.

The Moral Conundrum of Splitting Worlds

Just as the early mariners from the Age of Discovery had all the technology needed to cross the Atlantic, what they needed was an individual with the imagination and courage to set off into the unknown.

But just as the early explorers saw the New World as a place beyond the borders of civilization, God and law, those who first explored the multiverse soon discovered their own actions beyond the shell of their universe were not subject to the laws of their universe. Crimes could simply disappear into the vastness of the infinite multiverse, and even if they were caught, murderers and rapists couldn't be prosecuted.

Any vices imaginable could be expressed to the maximum extent without anyone knowing or even caring back home. Serial murder, rape, theft, destruction... an adventurer could set fire to Florence just to watch it burn. There would be no consequences back home.

While the technology of wormhole travel wasn't banned (it couldn't be as it was being used by the Colonial Network), the Twilight Histories lost its business license for its application of splitting worlds. Karlovsky and Zar searched for another particle accelerator, but none connected to a Sky City would take them.

Eventually, the Twilight Histories found its home in a lawless China at its far western extremity at Urumqi. China was in a civil war. But there was also enough pre-war infrastructure still lying around that the Twilight Histories found both the machinery and the legal black hole it needed to set up shop.

The Twilight Histories does not encourage moral outrages. Nor does it monitor for them. It is something that is repugnant to some staff and there have been times when it's been suspected that they've even murdered a nasty customer in some distant world, or at least turned a blind eye to their death. But there are also some contractors who have bad habits of their own.

Physics of the Multiverse

Imagine you're blowing bubbles into a cup through a straw. From out of that small opening at the bottom appear hundreds of bubbles rushing to the surface.

Now imagine you never stop blowing even for a short breath. And instead of hundreds of bubbles, you're able to blow trillions. That is how the multiverse expands from the beginning of time to the end, from one world to many, infinite variations of the universe expanding out, each its own entirely self-contained universe.

But that is not all.

Each of these new universes, once born, immediately begins to expand with their own variations. Trillions compound by trillions compound by trillions to create a truly awesome and expansive universe of universes. The sheer mind-boggling size of this greater multiverse is the expression of infinity. The infinity of worlds. And for those with an imagination, the infinity of possibilities.

While blowing bubbles out of a straw works as a basic metaphor, it begins to break down in application. Within the physical space of a universe, mass will be displaced so the bubbles will radiate out. Bubbles will keep expanding. A bubble created by a bubble created by a bubble might be pushed far away from the original bubble. But between universes, this is not the case. The laws of physics are different between universes. In the multiverse, the furthest point is as near to you as the closest point. Dimensions curve in on one another in an infinite loop.

All the universes in the multiverse touch each other. This means that instead of having access to just the few similar worlds that would be able to fit around the fabric of a universe, it is possible to access all the infinite variety of worlds in the multiverse.

And not only that, but these universes can be accessed from any point in space. An explorer would have to fly out to some distant part of the inky blackness of space to find just the right spot where the fabric of the universe touches another. But that is not the case. Any universe can be accessed from any universe at any point in space.

While that is a blessing in one respect, it is a challenge in another. If every universe can be accessed from the exact same point, it makes it extremely difficult to know which universe the wormhole will puncture through to.

The Twilight Histories was able to solve this challenge by discovering a variation in frequencies between the strings of each universe. As with the vibrations of a gong, if you know how hard it was hit, you can triangulate your way back to when it was hit by measuring its wavelengths. So too with universes. It was discovered that the point of divergence of a universe could be determined by the resonance of its strings. The resonance of a universe's fundamental particles is entirely unique to that universe and so this can be used as a signature. To reliably enter a particular universe, the Twilight Histories simply has to calibrate the wormhole to its unique resonance.

This led to a second discovery, which is that universes with similar resonances are similar. This is why the Twilight Histories is able to sell the same experience multiple times. While the worlds may seem exactly the same, they are in fact slightly different, sometimes as different as a single electron re-appearing in a different spot around its atom.

But, of course, this type of precision is only as exact as the instruments being used. The Twilight Histories is not able to reliably predict a universe down to individual electrons. They can often get the right age, culture and historical figures, but may miss a war, famine or asteroid strike.

The problem the Twilight Histories is trying to solve is how to discover particular worlds that a client might request. Without actually splitting through and exploring, there is no way to know what is on the other side. It's mostly reliable for worlds that are very similar, but it doesn't take long for the butterfly effect to compound changes beyond prediction. Even a universe with a resonance that's just slightly off could be vastly different and in ways that are not predictable.

The method the Twilight Histories is currently employing is brute force. They're exploring as many worlds as possible to build a database. The hope is that with time, and by applying a sophisticated AI down the road, they'll be able to discover patterns that will make discovery more predictable. But this is physics beyond the cutting edge and the Twilight Histories only has so many resources to devote to theory. So for now, the Twilight Histories is only able to offer its customers worlds available through the database.

Time Travel Paradoxes

Very early on, the obvious question arose about time travel. It certainly seemed like it as though it worked, at least between universes. It also seemed possible to visit the same universe at different times. However, what was soon discovered was that the moment a wormhole split through to a position in time prior to a previous split, a new universe would be born. The explorers would enter that world instead of the one they were trying to enter.

It was not possible to detect the birth of this new universe directly because the instruments the Twilight Histories uses are not sophisticated enough. However, it was possible to test the theory through experimentation and get an approximate idea of how it works.

Dr Karlovsky went to a particular location at a particular time. On her next split, she went to the same location, but moments before. She waited, but she never saw herself waiting. The results of the experiment suggested that either the wormhole was not calibrated with enough precision, or that a new universe was born and she entered that one instead. If that's the case, then it would prove that it's not possible to split to an earlier version of a universe where one has already spent time. This is speculation and will require more precise instruments to prove.

Another question Dr Karlovsky had was to do with the reliability of wormholes to split through to the same universe. One theory is that wormholes create a kind of divot or rut in the fabric of the universe that gives them memory of past splits. Even though they can't be calibrated down to the electron, they are nevertheless able to split to the same world. This is especially useful if a tourist is stuck in a world and needs to be rescued.