

The Chronicles of **FUTURE EARTH**

Player's Guide

**Cosmic Fantasy Roleplaying
in the Post-Historical Age**

by Sarah Newton

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**The Chronicles
of Future Earth
Roleplaying Game
Player's Guide**

**COSMIC FANTASY ROLEPLAYING
IN THE POST-HISTORICAL AGE**

BY SARAH NEWTON



DEDICATION

To Chris, the Brown Dirt Cowboy, Harper of Payorian, who passed beyond the Veil before this book could be published, but who always believed;

To Paco, who first discovered the Venerable Autocracy with us, and who understood the Ages of the Earth;

To Jason and Garry, who kept the flame during the Time of Darkness when I was fighting my way back from the Underworld;

To Mil, who brought me back from the Lands of the Beloved Dead, and played Payorian's Harp until I smiled again;

To Graham, whose constant and gentle encouragement helped me see that I could still write;

And to all of you who backed the Chronicles of Future Earth Kickstarter, who had faith that we would return bearing this tome;

To you I dedicate this book and this world. Neither would exist without you. I salute you all, and all of you who go on to sing and adventure and continue to write...

...these Chronicles of Future Earth.



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FOREWORD

The game you're reading now is the fruit of a labour of love extending more than twenty-five years. Back in 1999, I first put pen to paper to create a world that had been brewing in my mind for longer still.

I'd always dreamed of the strange worlds of the future. Not of gleaming rocket ships, of interstellar empires, of bright-eyed explorers—but of what happened after, when those star-spanning glories were lost far in the distant past. From H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, to the works of Clarke Ashton-Smith, Gene Wolfe, Jack Vance, Michael Moorcock, to the timeless cover art of Bruce Pennington, I'd been raised on dreams of the Post-Historical Age—when so much time had passed, when so much history had happened, that nothing seemed new any more, and the world slumbered in senescent dreams of a tumultuous past.

From those dreams came the world of Future Earth. Maps, first, then sketches, histories, legends. I first wrote *The Chronicles of Future Earth* as a campaign for the 3rd edition of a very popular roleplaying game, back in 1999. Then, in the early 2000s, it entered an incarnation powered by the wonderful Basic Roleplaying, and there was even a supplement published by Chaosium in 2009. After that, I fell in love with the Fate system, and in 2014, after the publication of *Mindjammer* 2nd Edition, I began to wonder how Fate Core could handle gaming in this huge, deep, mysterious world.

This book—and its game engine, Cosmic Fate—is the result. Kickstarted in 2018, it's been much-delayed due to unavoidable personal tragedy in my life, but I'm so proud to bring it to you at last, thanks to the patience of a wonderful community of gamers and Kickstarter backers, and to the friendship and support of some very special people: Jason Juta and Garry Harper, who I'm now working with in Typhon Games to bring you the *Chronicles* today; Graham Spearing, who championed my work during my dark days and gave me the operational support and encouragement I needed to get writing again, and who is a key part of our Typhon work today; Paco Jaen, who enthused so wonderfully when he joined us to play *Chronicles* in its very first incarnation, a quarter century ago; and to Chris Birch, who first gave me my publishing break in 2008, and who has been tirelessly supportive of my mad ideas ever since, as friend, publishing guru, and distributor, making sure that they get into stores the whole world over.

This game is for all of you. Welcome to the Fifth Cycliad of the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara, oldest of the Springtide Civilisations. A new world for gaming, but one of unfathomable richness and antiquity. Welcome, at last, to the *Chronicles of Future Earth*...

*Sarah Newton
Normandy, France, Spring 2024*



Introduction

Welcome to the Springtide Civilisations! To the far future of Earth, where the stars have been won and lost, where technological civilisations have risen and fallen, where history has crumbled into forgotten dust. It's an age of decadence, when ancient technologies rust in ruin, when superstition fuels strange cosmic powers, when monsters roam a world grown strange with time. Humanity itself totters on the brink of extinction. Yet all is not lost...

WHAT IS FUTURE EARTH?

The world of the farthest future is unimaginably old, diverse, sophisticated, with more history than anyone can remember. It's a world of ancient traditions that say "this is how things have always been done", where innovation is feared, where the old ways have saved the cosmos in the past and where everyone hopes they will again.

Imagine a world that looks back on a lost greatness it's sure it can never achieve again. Where magic and gods are real, where ancient technology survives in incompre-

hensible relics, yet where the true nature of reality is understood like never before. A world like ancient China, Rome, or Byzantium, beset by barbarians, chaos, and destruction, with no idea how to defend itself except to fall back on ancient solutions which no longer apply...

Imagine scholars and philosophers, learned generals and canny priests, teeming masses in decaying cities so vast they feel empty. Imagine taverns filled with twinkling-eyed rogues, thieves stalking streets in nights illuminated by mysterious lights in the sky. A world where humankind shares stage with other intelligent species. A world terrified of change, yet suddenly faced with a dangerous, unpredictable future.

And then there's you. You're mavericks, misfits. You know something needs to be done to save the world before it's too late...

Maybe you're the Heroes of the Age. Maybe you can save the world from the sins of its past. Maybe...



WHAT IS THE VENERABLE AUTOCRACY OF SAKARA?

The Venerable Autocracy of Sakara is the greatest empire on Earth. Fifteen millennia old, it occupies what was once western Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. But that world is gone; the lands once known as Europe are covered in the glaciers of a new Ice Age, and ravaged by the hordes of Entropy. Sakara itself is a temperate land, cold in the north, subtropical in the south. Ancient, decadent, sophisticated, its society is a little like Europe in the early 18th century, but with one huge difference: long since stripped of resources, there's almost no metal, no fossil fuels, nothing to permit industry to be reborn. The world would be condemned to spartan misery, were it not for three things: the poorly understood remnants of an ancient, hyperadvanced technology; strange biotechnological organisms replacing metal and machines; and magic...

Yes, magic. The gods are real. You can wield their powers, learn sorcery, summon demons. Using these arcane resources, the Springtide Civilisations have created a flourishing society—but at the expense of innovation. Long ago, in a mythic age, the gods saved the world from destruction, and fossilized its societies in a deep conservatism. Now innovation is frowned upon, even forbidden, lest the world face annihilation again. Yet innovation is so badly needed, to face a terrifying foe...

WHAT IS "THE CHRONICLES OF FUTURE EARTH"?

The Chronicles of Future Earth is a cosmic fantasy roleplaying game, powered by a unique incarnation of the *Fate Core System*. This *Player's Guide* gives you the core rules for creating characters and adventuring with them in the lands of Future Earth, and background information for players to orient themselves in this deep and fascinating world. Its companion books, the *Guide to Future Earth* and the *Chronicler's Guide*, provide detailed descriptions of the world and its realms, and lots of information for Chroniclers to run games and create adventures, including an extensive bestiary and details of ancient artefacts.

But what do we mean by "cosmic fantasy"? Well, at its simplest, *The Chronicles of Future Earth* is a fantasy roleplaying game, replete with fantasy tropes: you'll find magic and monsters, enchanted items, trackless forests, ancient and adventure-filled ruins, smoky taverns with mysterious patrons, treasure, and more. If you're a fan of swords and sorcery roleplaying games, you'll feel right at home here.

But it's also more than that. It's a game which deals with epic themes: strange dimensions, other worlds, mighty cosmic entities with terrifying inhuman agendas. It describes ancient technologies, alien artefacts, and elements commonly found in the trippiest of science-fantasy fiction. It's a game that will grow with you and your players, getting bigger in scope, more awe-inspiring in theme, and taking you anywhere in this vast and mysterious cosmos you want to go...

WHAT IS THE "POST-HISTORICAL AGE"?

The Springtide Civilisations are so old, history seems to have lost all meaning, dwarfed by the weight of what has gone before. People live lives little different from those a thousand years ago—or two thousand, or five, or ten! Nothing ever seems to change, nor has done since anyone can remember. Some buildings are older than the world is said to be, dating to a Golden Age that was destroyed in the War of the Gods described in the ancient scripture of the *Helemoriad*.

This has a big effect on people's mind-sets. Not yours, necessarily—you're a hero, maverick, misfit, determined to make a difference, to change things. But most people can't even conceive of the world being different from how it is today—it's the way things have always been.

And that's a big theme in this game. You're not just fighting against a threat that might destroy the world—you're fighting against a society *that doesn't know it's asleep and needs to wake up*.

SO WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE GAME?

This is a big game. You can play almost any kind of game you want, within the cosmic fantasy genre. But we're presenting a handful of default assumptions to keep things digestible—if you're looking for a quick way into *The Chronicles of Future Earth*, we suggest you start by playing this way, and then, as you get used to the world and its rules, you let your own games take flight. Let's start with the basics.

To begin with, let's assume you're playing the "good guys". You've realised the world is in deep trouble, and you're trying to do something about it. Maybe you're keeping it small, looking after your local community; maybe you're looking a little larger, working within your temple, legion, or sorcerous college. Temples like Regos, Lord of War, or Unthar, Lord of Time. Legions like the Legion of Lord Regos, Indomitable. Guilds like the Respectful Explorers of Antiquity (colloquially known as Tomb Robbers).

You've got together with a band of like-minded individuals in the city of Glorious Kados, capital of the empire, or in the province of Korudav just to the north, where the huge city of that name has just suffered the devastation of the Firecloud, the province overrun by ravaging entropic monsters. You share the views of Jakai Tellisan, Autarch of Korudav, who's trying to hold the northern provinces together under savage pressure. You're "troubleshooters" trying to keep chaos and corruption at bay.

Here are some character concepts you might choose:

- A mystical non-human martial artist with an inhuman worldview.
- A sorceress from the Autocracy's Heartlands.
- A priest of the war god, with a bound demon!
- A princess of thieves, with a handful of magical cantrips.
- A near-human scholar with awesome psionic powers.
- A devious artificer, looking for ancient artefacts to repair and re-use.

SO THIS IS A FATE CORE GAME, RIGHT?

Yes, it is. But hold on! This is Fate Core, but not as you know it. The *Fate Core System* is immensely flexible, and we've devised a version to fit the "cosmic fantasy" of Future Earth. We've adjusted a lot of Fate Core's "dials" towards a game-play which is epic, lethal, and fascinating. We're calling it *Cosmic Fate*.

It's Epic

The "Zero to Hero" path is integral to *The Chronicles of Future Earth*. You begin with decent abilities, facing challenges without dying horribly; but, as you advance, you become more powerful, eventually becoming an epic hero capable of saving the world.

The Chronicles of Future Earth does this in a special way. Advancement isn't just a matter of becoming individually more powerful, getting higher skill levels, more stunts and fate points, and so on. Instead, you become more capable of affecting the world around you—influencing and commanding communities, leading legions and temples, extending your abilities into deepening relationships with other people and organisations. Advancement is (pardon the pun) multi-dimensional: not only do you advance vertically, with higher skill levels and so on, but also horizontally, broadening the scope of your abilities and the focus of your actions. It's up to you how you advance, but expect to become more epic as you do.

It's Lethal

The challenges you face are dangerous, let's make no bones about it. The world is in peril, the dangers are real, and characters will die. You'll find rules customisations that make it easier for your character to suffer serious damage and death. There's everything to play for.

This means you'll want to play tactically. You can't simply save up all your fate points and chuck them at the Big Boss in the final scene. Instead, you're going to be retreating before impossible odds to fight another day, preparing your attacks carefully, working out ways to do things that deepen the story you're telling and your exploitation of what these rules will let you do. To begin with, that'll mean a gritty style of play, but also, we hope, one that's satisfying, exciting, and which makes the fruits of victory all the sweeter.

It's Fascinating

This is a deep game. The background might look a little daunting, but don't worry: approach *The Chronicles of Future Earth* like you were playing a traditional fantasy roleplaying game—one which is gritty, epic, and dangerous, to be sure, but, let's face it, you know the territory, your instincts will hold true. Then, as you play, you'll find mysteries, setting details and rules relationships ripe for exploiting. As your character advances, you'll interact with these specifics in amazing ways. Maybe you found a dormant Planing Machine in a lost undercity? Well, now you've developed the ability to repair it—or developed a relationship with a person, temple, or other organisation (maybe even a demon!) that can repair it for you. And so you open a gate to... where? Do you know where you're going? Can you control where the Planing Machine takes you? And what will you do when you get there?

So WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

The Chronicles of Future Earth Player's Guide is modular, gradually introducing the game world and rules. Have a flick through, check out the contents pages, index, and the glossary. Look over the maps.

Then, when you're ready, take a read through **Chapter 2: Welcome to the Venerable Autocracy** and **Chapter 3: The Basics**. These will introduce the world and setting, and the essential rules. You can play a simple game just with those few pages! After that, you'll be guided through how to create characters, and then given a full presentation of the game system—the *Chronicles of Future Earth* version of the Fate Core rules. Finally, we'll show you how to advance your character, how to create relationships with other characters, and how to use magic, including introducing one or two temples and schools of sorcery.

What you won't find in this book is all the secret stuff—descriptions of monsters, treasures, mysterious places, uncanny artefacts, and deadly dangers. That material is presented in the companion volumes to this *Player's Guide*—the *Guide to Future Earth*, and the *Chronicler's Guide*.

We hope you enjoy your adventures in *The Chronicles of Future Earth*. The world cries out for heroes!



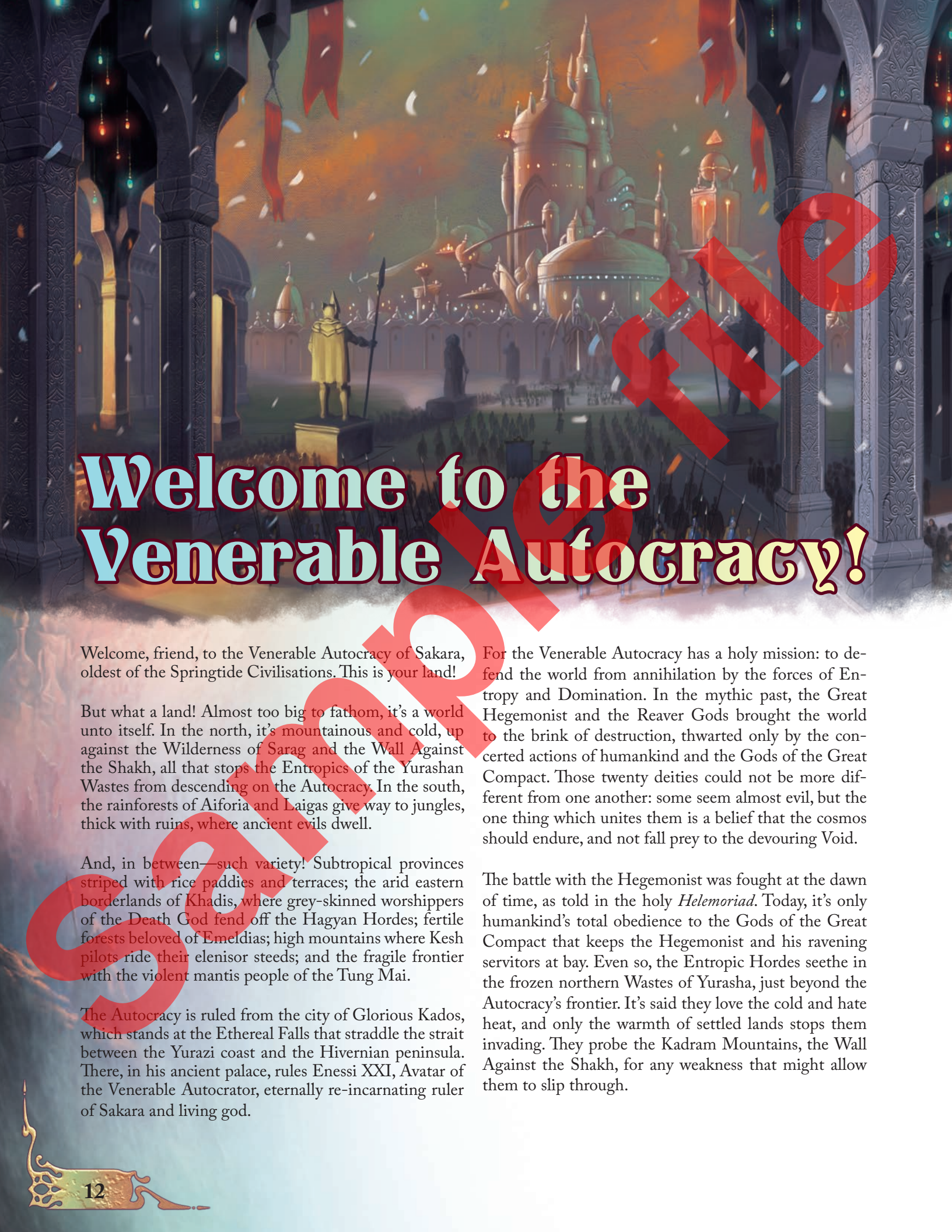
How Does The Chronicles of Future Earth Differ From Mindjammer?

You'll see parallels between **The Chronicles of Future Earth** and **Mindjammer**, the transhuman science-fiction roleplaying game, both in rules and setting. This, however, is a very different game, and the new **Cosmic Fate** rules work in different ways. Here are some of them:

- **Scores, Modifiers, and Scales:** We've broken out of the Fate Core convention of referring to everything in terms of the "ladder", ie "Great (+4) Melee Combat", "Good (+3) difficulty", "Fair (+2) size". For simplicity of presentation, you'll find skills like *Melee Combat 4*, difficulties like *difficulty 3*, and scales like *Large (2)*.
- **The Bonus Cap:** We've introduced a cap on the bonuses you can apply to a dice roll, linked to your skill. You can't just spend a bunch of fate points to get a humongous bonus in your fight against the Big Bad. Watch out—this is a major, and potentially lethal, change!
- **Buils:** We've expanded on **Mindjammer's** concept of "buils" to produce a flexible, modular approach to character creation and advancement. It's not prescriptive, but it helps define the boundaries of what characters are capable of, providing you with pick-lists of skills and other abilities. Your character may start with buils like *Hibernian homeland*, *Holy Warrior occupation*, and *Temple of Regos community build*, which you can use to quickly build a character. Thereafter, you can navigate through buils as you advance, and even create your own!
- **Relationships:** Relationships are a big deal in **The Chronicles of Future Earth**. In **Mindjammer**, they were called "extras", but we've refined that definition to refer precisely to how you can draw on the abilities of other people and organisations to help your character. Relationships are important for beginning characters, but become more so as your game advances.
- **Equipment:** We've rebuilt the equipment rules, bringing them more in line with fantasy roleplaying game tropes. You can buy things with treasure, make and sell gear, and keep lists of stuff to use in play. The Fate Core tropes still apply, but you no longer have to spend valuable character points when you pick up a magical item and want to use it in play.
- **The Cosmic Fate Dice:** In keeping with the wild, dangerous, and unpredictable cosmic fantasy genre, we use D6–D6 instead of Fate Dice as the core dice roll mechanic. This increases swinginess, giving random chance a greater role. You'll no longer roll mostly +1, +0, or -1, and nothing can be taken for granted, even for the greatest hero!
- **Criticals and Fumbles:** Again part of the wildness of cosmic fantasy play, we've introduced critical successes and failures to create moments of exciting and amazing victory and devastating defeat. Game play feels epic and dangerous at all levels!

There's lots more to discover. We're excited about this new **Cosmic Fate** incarnation of the Fate Core System, and hope it'll give you rip-roaring adventures at your table!





Welcome to the Venerable Autocracy!

Welcome, friend, to the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara, oldest of the Springtide Civilisations. This is *your* land!

But what a land! Almost too big to fathom, it's a world unto itself. In the north, it's mountainous and cold, up against the Wilderness of Sarag and the Wall Against the Shakh, all that stops the Entropics of the Yurashan Wastes from descending on the Autocracy. In the south, the rainforests of Aiforia and Laigas give way to jungles, thick with ruins, where ancient evils dwell.

And, in between—such variety! Subtropical provinces striped with rice paddies and terraces; the arid eastern borderlands of Khadis, where grey-skinned worshippers of the Death God fend off the Hagyan Hordes; fertile forests beloved of Emeldias; high mountains where Kesh pilots ride their elenisor steeds; and the fragile frontier with the violent mantis people of the Tung Mai.

The Autocracy is ruled from the city of Glorious Kados, which stands at the Ethereal Falls that straddle the strait between the Yurazi coast and the Hivernian peninsula. There, in his ancient palace, rules Enessi XXI, Avatar of the Venerable Autocrator, eternally re-incarnating ruler of Sakara and living god.

For the Venerable Autocracy has a holy mission: to defend the world from annihilation by the forces of Entropy and Domination. In the mythic past, the Great Hegemonist and the Reaver Gods brought the world to the brink of destruction, thwarted only by the concerted actions of humankind and the Gods of the Great Compact. Those twenty deities could not be more different from one another: some seem almost evil, but the one thing which unites them is a belief that the cosmos should endure, and not fall prey to the devouring Void.

The battle with the Hegemonist was fought at the dawn of time, as told in the holy *Helemoriad*. Today, it's only humankind's total obedience to the Gods of the Great Compact that keeps the Hegemonist and his ravaging servitors at bay. Even so, the Entropic Hordes seethe in the frozen northern Wastes of Yurasha, just beyond the Autocracy's frontier. It's said they love the cold and hate heat, and only the warmth of settled lands stops them invading. They probe the Kadram Mountains, the Wall Against the Shakh, for any weakness that might allow them to slip through.

Several times in the incomprehensibly long history of Earth, during and following the tens of millennia before the Empire of Tlan and the Time of Snows which came after its fall, mortals tried to circumvent the iron rule of the Gods, and each time the forces of Entropy and Domination surged in to almost ruin all of existence again. Even in the Five Cycliads of Autocracy history after it emerged from the Snows, battles against the Entropics caused untold harm, such as the Nightmare Siege of Kados which began the Wars of Entropy eight millennia ago.

It's now the year 2993CV, the very end of the Fifth Cycliad, and the Doom of the World is upon us. Mere months ago, foul entropic monsters breached the Kadram Wall and descended on the Autocracy, killing or mutating all in their path. How and why they broke through is unknown; but the incursions could not have come at a worse time. For the Autocracy is divided against itself, the Avatar Enessi XXI so obsessed with intrigue and persecutions that he seems willing to ignore the northern provinces of Elikan and Korudav, and the Amadorad Protectorate, in their hour of need. Enessi has always been divisive; since his war against the False Avatar, Aglaya, a century ago, he has persecuted the followers of Belorias the Storm Lord in both Ellib, now an abandoned wilderness, and Amadorad. He has weakened the Autocracy, perhaps fatally.

LIFE IN THE AUTOCRACY

Many cultures, kindreds, and religions call the Autocracy home. Most are human; many are not. Some are the *jeniri*, the Cousins of Humankind, who were changed by unfathomable science before time began to adapt them to strange lost worlds: the psionic Virikki, the red giant Magigi, the troglodytic Maggot Men, and many more. Others are stranger still, the *esteri*, the Not-Humans of Earth, who originated on alien worlds yet who adapted themselves—or were adapted—to share the Earth with humankind: the violent Tung Mai mantis people, the monstrous Hsun spider folk, the herd-folk of the Paladoi Consensus—and, again, many more... All share one thing: a belief that blind obedience to the will of the immortal Autocrator keeps the world from ruin.

Life in the Autocracy is conservative with a small “c”. People live much as they’ve always done, following their parents’ beliefs and occupations, living in the same houses, handing down tools, clothes, slaves, books, furniture, from generation to generation, until all talk of origin is gone. It’s an old world; sometimes just thinking about how old can feel like an unbearable weight. Happy are the very young, who for a brief butterfly moment think they invent the world anew.

Much of the world is hard to understand. There are strange lights in the sky, as well as the Five Planets and the Green Moon. The Pentalogiat drifts across the star-scape every night, lighting up the heavens with a word in an unknown tongue. And there are secrets; so much time has passed, that every stone tells a thousand stories, steeped in blood and ancient evil.

Because it's a violent world, too. Ancient conflicts are never far away. Unhappy kindreds of *jeniri* or *esteri* beyond the Autocracy's borders, who feel only blind hatred for its people. Rivalries between houses, temples, kindreds, that break out into feuds and minor wars. And a constant rot within the Autocracy itself, where fools and traitors sell tomorrow for fleeting glory and power today, and enslave themselves to the pernicious Void Cult and the dominators of the banished Hegemonist.

But you're not defenceless! The Gods of the Great Compact gave humankind magic. Temples teach it to their priests; sorcerous schools cast arcane spells; and demons from Beyond the Veil, servitors of the Gods, provide their aid. *Jeniri* and *esteri* contribute, too, the Virikki bring their psionic powers, the Hsun Spider Folk their zoans, artificial life forms enhancing bodies and replacing lost and malformed limbs.

Science, too, remains. Even though the earth is depleted, the knowledge of how its resources were once exploited can still be understood, if sometimes poorly. Artificers employ ancient artefacts, jealously guarded or recovered from the Rust Marshes or the undercities of the archaeopolises.

A Map of the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara





Avladoo Range

GASHTAK RIFT

PRIDE OF TLAN

TRANSMISSION POINT

VLADOOOL

Tyrant Queendom Of Night

ZGOV

The Wall Against The Shakh

Kadrami Mountains

Wastes of Kastalon

AMADORAD

Osso

ANDALAS

CHANTU

Amadorad Protectorate

Illisab River

GANDAREEN

Timosia River

SAPEDRA

Korudav Province

Osso SKYLANCE

ANATINE GRAVE CIRCUIT

The Falais

Helespere Mountains

REM BREAKER POSTILION

SHAFUL

KORUDAV

KA

Landusi River

HON

MOLOKH

CALAMIS

JIBARA

A Map of Hivernium

TANOC

KADOS

0 Kilometres 50 100

THE GODS!

Among all these essentials which permit the Autocracy to survive, it is the Gods that are the most important. Their influence is everywhere, determining how you're raised, what occupation you choose, how the calendar tracks events from day to day, year to year, century to century...

Twenty gods pledged themselves to the Great Compact that saved the world in the *Helemoriad*. From peaceful Konfu and bounteous Emeldias, through warlike Regos and bloody Dafur, to deathly Belom, provocative Qal, and uncaring Pline. The Autocracy depicts them with human or near-human forms, but they're greater than mere physical form can encompass, and direct the motive principles of the cosmos itself.

Against the Great Compact are ranged a handful of gods. Foremost is the Great Hegemonist, the almost irresistible force of domination that would control, command, and wield authority over all things. The Easy Dark Path of the Hegemonist is always a temptation to mortals, however much his cult is forbidden and purged by fire wherever it takes root.

Alongside the Hegemonist are arrayed the Reaver Gods. It's unclear if they're gods at all; perhaps they're demons, or indescribable cosmic forces. They stand for the destruction of all that exists, in shrieking terror, horrifying pain, or silent breathless snuffing-out into non-being, forever.

Myths and Monsters

For all its size and sophistication, the Venerable Autocracy doesn't control its world. The Springtide Civilisations are sparsely populated—perhaps forty millions call the Empire home, leaving a vast wilderness that has known neither plough nor footfall for millennia. And there be monsters...

Some are wild animals. Others are jeniri or esteri, implacably hostile. Others still are uncanny beings, perhaps mutated by magic or science, perhaps from other worlds, other dimensions.

The Autocracy's myths promise ancient treasures, too, mighty items of magic and sorcery, powerful artefacts of the lost sciences. Out there, in the howling, monster-infested wild...

WHAT JUST HAPPENED IN KORUDAV?

All is not well in the Venerable Autocracy. For millennia, life slumbered peaceably, growing senescent, quietly decaying. Recently, however, forces have gathered to hasten its fall; ancestral feuds of religion and allegiance have weakened the Autocracy's defences; Entropics have probed the Kadram wall; and, rumour says, ancient machines have begun to stir in the blasted wastes of the east.

A few months ago, a devastating explosion in the archaepolis of Korudav, the like of which had not been seen since the Bright Death of Larum an age ago, sent Hivernium into panic, just as an Entropic incursion from beyond the Wall fell upon its lands. Chaos has reigned since, and fear and bloodshed are everywhere. No one knows what happens next.

Lord Jakai Tellisan, Autarch of Korudav, had tried to prepare for disaster. Interpreting omens, seeing how vulnerable the Autocracy had become, he allied in secret with Barayan-san-Samith, Duke of Amadorad, to create the New Northern Army, dedicated to protecting the Autocracy's northern frontier and bolstering the the Che Kwa jeniri who have garrisoned the Kadram Mountains since time beyond memory. He did this in defiance of the Avatar's orders; for whatever reason, Enessi XXI had forbidden the creation of armed forces in Hivernium. Since then, the Avatar has condemned the New Northern Army, arrested Barayan, and sent his own hand-picked force of the Legion of Dafur to seize Amadorad. The New Northern Army has splintered into factions, weakened by internal fighting just as it's most needed to fight the Entropic Horde. And black smoke from the pyres of human sacrifices mark the Protectorate wherever the Dafuri go.

TABLE 2-1: THE GODS OF THE GREAT COMPACT

DEITY	MYSTICAL PRINCIPLE OF...	COMMENTS
Ankadar	Law	Bringer of Order From Chaos, Venerable Autocrator, Great Springtide.
Babisiya	Darkness	Crone, Night Hag, the Maid of Darkness.
Belom	Death	Lord of Death, Decay, and Corruption; Destroyer of the Undead.
Belorias	Turmoil	Lord of Storm, Turmoil, and the Winds.
Dafur	Change by Fire	Lord of Flame and the Fire Beneath the Earth; God of Earthquakes, Volcanoes, and the Forge.
Emeldias	Growth	She Who Springs Forth From the Earth, Goddess of Growth, Light, and the Spring.
Entos	Animality	The Horned God.
Eshtikar	Fate	Horse and Rider, God of Fate.
Khosht	Realisation of the Will	The Great Architect, Builder of Cities.
Konfu	Wisdom	God of Healing, Master of Zofi, Listener to the Silent Song.
Madiz	Destruction	Lord of the Iron Legions, God of Vengeance, the Temple Laid Low.
Minisia	Narcissism	The Empty Smile, Goddess of Winter, Ice Queen.
Nimur	Cyclicity	Moon Goddess, Mistress of the Ebb and Flow, Mother Ocean.
Payorian	Passion	God of Love and the Vine, Bard and Archer.
Pline	Void	The God of Empty Spaces.
Qal	Unification of Opposites	The Two-Faced God, the Light That Is Darkness.
Regos	Command	Lord of War and Rule, the Conqueror.
Staros	Eternity	God of the Ages, the Everlasting.
Unthar	Time	Chronicler and Timekeeper.
Vareltias	Communication	God of Trade, Traveller and Mediator.



WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?

As if that wasn't enough, people everywhere talk and fret about an Empire suddenly coming apart at the seams. In the wilderness of Ellib, followers of Aglaya, the False Avatar, martyred by Enessi when he seized power a century ago, move openly and try to ally with their fellow Storm Worshipers in Amadorad. In the Autocracy's heartlands, followers of the Bright Trinity talk of using armies of undead to quell the unrest; and everywhere the People of the Sword and the Storm oppose them, and civil war seems a heartbeat away.

Other Lands

Although the Autocracy alone is bigger and more complex than anyone can comprehend, it's just one of the Springtide Civilisations that cluster around the Middle Sea.

Beyond the Autocracy's southeastern borders lie the jungles of Qamraan, invested with scorpion men, rotten with ancient evil. To the east lie the wastes of the Rabaq Hor and Rabaq Nun, blasted in prehistory, populated only by raiders. Somewhere beyond them lie the dreaming lands of Shai Nub and Abishin.

To the northeast are more civilized lands, still strange in their foreignness. Chinis and Egipet, and beyond them the mythical reaches Far Shuash and the wetlands of the Ing Shu.

And, finally, to the west... endless ocean, beyond which lie the cursed ruins of Nayarak, City of Sorcerers, where the heretics of Demos once brought the world to its knees. And, at the End of the World, the Caliphate of Ornia, ruled by Zangelis, Lord Sunset himself.

Finding Out More About Future Earth

The second volume of The Chronicles of Future Earth, the Guide to Future Earth, provides maps, gazetteers, histories and descriptions of the Venerable Autocracy and other realms of the Springtide Civilisations, and even beyond. But even in this Player's Guide, you can find out more about this vast and complex world:

- **Chapter 5: Homelands and Kindreds** describes the Autocracy's main cultures and the jeniri and esteri kindreds that share it with humankind.
- **Chapter 6: Occupations** describes the professions practiced in its societies.
- **Page 320** gives you a description of the temple of the god Regos, Lord of War.
- **Page 38** introduces the houses and bloodlines of the Autocracy, according to which its social hierarchy is formed.

You'll also find lots of other information about the Venerable Autocracy and its peoples, landscapes, and denizens throughout this book.



The Basics

Now you know a little about the world of *Future Earth*, let's look at how the game works and how to play.

A TABLETOP ROLEPLAYING GAME!

So, we're assuming you already know what a tabletop roleplaying game is! If by remarkable chance you've got this far *without* knowing that, then—congratulations, and welcome to the party! Before you go any further, let us direct you to the internet for countless articles and videos explaining what RPGs are—just search for “What is a tabletop roleplaying game?” and have a read, look, or listen. Come back here when you're ready. We'll wait!

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Like most RPGs, *The Chronicles of Future Earth* doesn't require a huge amount of stuff to play. Here's the minimum:

- **A copy of the game:** At least one person should have this book, and have read the key parts and know where to look for rules and background materials. Start with this chapter! And, although you can play the game with just this *Player's Guide*, we recommend you also have its companion volumes, the *Guide to Future Earth* and the *Chronicler's Guide*, for maximum game fun!
- **Some six-sided dice, preferably of different colours:** *The Chronicles of Future Earth* uses six-sided dice, abbreviated “D6”. You need at least two, and ideally of different colours (or sizes). For the best experience, every person playing should have two differently-coloured D6.
- **Some scratch paper and pencils:** Every player should have at least one sheet of paper and something to write on it with.
- **Several people with a few free hours, looking for a great game!** Although you can play solo, we recommend at least 2 people should play the game, and ideally between 3 and 6. (You can play with more, but it can get a little unwieldy if you're inexperienced.) Get yourselves around a table (real or virtual) for at least 2-4 hours and prepare for adventure!

We also recommend the following optional items:

- **Some character sheets:** The game works more smoothly if every “player” (see below) has a copy of the game’s “character sheet”, and probably one copy of the “relationships sheet” (kind of like a character sheet second page). You can photocopy the ones at the back of this book (page 353), or print copies from the digital version. You can find downloadable versions at www.typhon-games.com.
- **A couple of dozen tokens:** These are great for keeping track of “fate points” (page 28), one of the game’s expendable resources. You can use coins, chits, beads, or even bits of paper; custom-made fate point tokens are available online or at your favourite local game store.

PLAYERS AND GAME MASTERS

The Chronicles of Future Earth has a traditional approach to “game-mastering”, ie refereeing and guiding the game. One person playing the game takes charge of guiding the story you’re telling together, describing the world, the adventurous and perilous situations you find yourselves in, playing the roles of characters you meet (called **non-player characters** or **NPCs**), and adjudicating the rules. We call that person the **Chronicler**, and each **adventure** or **scenario** you play together a **Chronicle**. You can take turns to be **Chronicler**, or one person can assume the role for a whole **campaign** of multiple **Chronicles**. You can find out more about **NPCs**, adventures, scenarios and campaigns in the *Chronicler’s Guide*.

The other people playing are called **players**. Each plays the role of a person in the world of the Springtide Civilisations, called a **player character** or **PC**. You can play more than one character, which can be fun in games where you only have one or two players. Each PC may also have one or more sidekicks that they’re responsible for or who travel with them—more on this below.

The Example Game

In this book we refer to an “example game” to help explain the game rules. It’s played by Sarah, the Chronicler, and five players: Chris, Paco, Rika, Sharma, and Vitas. They’ve got together to play in the Venerable Autocracy of Sakara, the default “home base” for your games (start here if you’re new to the game). Say hi, everyone!

THE CHARACTER SHEET

You use a character sheet to jot down all the relevant information you need for playing your character. Check out the sample character sheet on page 22, filled out for Zabet Karja, one of the characters from the example game. Don’t worry too much about the specifics—we’ll explain how to create characters in the next chapter, but for now let’s take a quick look at what the sections on the character sheet mean.

1. Name and Personal Details

This is where you write your character’s name, and information like where he comes from, what he does, and so on. **Homeland**, **Kindred**, and **Occupation** are also what we call **builds**, pick lists of abilities used in character creation and advancement. The “Builds” entry here just lists all the builds available to your character for ease of reference. See page 36 for more.

2. Aspects

Aspects are an important part of the game, short phrases describing something significant about your character. Aspects get used in lots of cool ways; sometimes they help you; sometimes they cause you hassle. And the best aspects do both!

Every character has six “personal aspects”: **Origin**, **Essence**, **Shadow**, **Blood**, **Doom**, and **Companion**, described on page 39. There are also two **Game Aspects**, which are the same for every PC in your game.

Other things have aspects, too. Your **weapons**, **armour**, and **equipment** can have aspects, as can your **relationships**. Even the **consequences** you suffer in conflicts are aspects. See below for more on all these.

3. Skills

Skills represent your character's areas of competence, what he's good at, by inclination, natural ability, or training. They're sometimes called **mundane skills**, in contrast to **power skills**, which measure magical ability and are dealt with in the magic chapter (page 271). All skills have a numeric **score** or **level**, and range from 1 (basic) to 5 (expert). Skill levels can go higher, but anything above 5 is extraordinary.

You usually start play with **ten skills** with levels between 1 and 4, organized in a kind of pyramid, meaning that you may never have more skills of a certain score than you have at the score below it. So, if you have two level 3 skills, you can't have more than two skills at level 4, and so on. Skills are written using the skill name followed by its level, like "Melee Combat 1".

When you attempt an action whose outcome is in doubt, you roll dice and add your score in an appropriate skill (say, Stealth, if you're trying to hide from someone), and compare it to a numeric **difficulty** to see if you **succeed** or not. See page 193 for more on these dice rolls.

4. Stunts and Special Abilities, Spells and Cantrips

This part of the character sheet contains information about the special things you know how to do, including amazing feats and magical powers.

Stunts

Stunts are cool ways to break or bend the rules. Maybe you can make trick shots with your bow, or you're an expert in a particular field of knowledge. You start play with up to 5 stunts; many derive from your skills, and there are also **power stunts** which derive from your magical **power skills** (if you have any). Stunts don't just derive from skills, though—you can get them by belonging to builds like legions, fighting schools, and so on. See page 137 for more.

Special Abilities (and Constraints)

Special abilities are a type of stunt that represents an inherent talent or physical capability. Human beings don't normally have special abilities, as they're the default from which other character **kindreds** are measured. Instead, special abilities are usually the preserve of non-human characters, and especially monsters. See page 51 for more.

Constraints are the flipside of special abilities, disadvantages your character incurs because of his physical nature. Again, it's usually non-humans that have constraints—they may be especially large, small, clumsy, or have difficulty communicating with or relating to humans, and so on. See page 52.

Spells and Cantrips

Magic is a big part of *The Chronicles of Future Earth*, and there are many ways to use it. As well as magical **power skills** and **power stunts**, characters also learn sorcerous **spells** (page 268), and every character with a power skill can automatically perform minor magics called **cantrips** (page 267), which you can note down here.

Gods and Temples

*As you read in the previous chapter, the gods are real, and provide power to their worshippers. Your character may be devoted to one of these gods—he may be a priest or holy warrior of its "temple", and so on. Often you note this as part of your occupation ("Priest of Regos") or an aspect (Wandering Minstrel Initiated to Payorian). You can see a write-up of an example temple on page 320, and your Chronicler has information on many more in the **Chronicler's Guide**.*

The Chronicles of FUTURE EARTH

Name: ZABET KARJA
 Homeland: Hivernian
 Kindred: Human Female
 House: Chain of Heroes
 Social Class: Middle (1)
 Occupation: Legionnaire
 Native Language: Low Sakaraiic
 Size: Human-sized (0)
 Age & Birthdate: 20 (2973 CV)
 Consequences: 3 personal + 3 social
 Builds: Hivernian, Legionnaire, Legion of Lord Regos
 Relationships: Blue-Claw (Chelother Mount)
Legion of Lord Regos

PERSONAL STRESS

Fate Points 5
 Refresh: 5
 Advancement Points
 Treasure 4T
 Encumbrance 4
 Max: 5

SKILLS

Level 5+: _____
 Level 4: Melee Combat
 Level 3: Notice, Ride
 Level 2: The Legions, Physique, Ranged Combat
 Level 1: Athletics, Contacts, Provoke, Willpower

ASPECTS

Doom: We Stand to the Last Against the Entropic Horde!
 Essence: Legionnaire-Errant of Lord Regos
 Shadow: The Death of the Age is Upon Us!
 Blood: I Follow in the Footsteps of Family Heroes
 Origin: Called to Adventure in the Battle of the Firecloud
 Companion: Zimiri Tegus Makes Sense of the World Gone Mad
 Game Aspects: Nothing Ever Changes, The World's Going to Hell in a Hand-Cart

STUNTS & SPECIAL ABILITIES SPELLS & GANTRIPS

FORMATION FIGHTING: +2 skill level in Melee Combat defend actions when fighting in formation with formation weapons.
 INDOMITABLE DEFENCE FIGHTING STYLE: When using fighting style weapons, if you don't retreat, spend 2FP on a successful attack to create "Indomitable Defence" aspect.
 KILLING STROKE: 1/scene, pay 1FP to increase a physical consequence you inflict by 1 step.
 LORE SPECIALIST (HIVERNIUM): +2 Lore skill for questions relating to Hivernium.
 MOUNTED CHARGE: On a successful Ride roll, rush a target 2-3 zones away and make a Melee Combat or Ride attack in same exchange.
 Improvised: _____

WEAPONS

	SI	RG	Notes	Enc
Broadsword	+3		Slashing Wpn	0.5
Lance	+5		Mounted, Impale	2

ARMOUR

Scale Hauberk (-3, Good Protection Against Blunt Attacks), Round Shield (-2, Carrying a Shield), Plate Greaves (Difficult to Sprint), Leather Vambraces, Open Helmet
 Enc: 3.5 SR: -5

EQUIPMENT

Clothing marked with Chain of Heroes symbol and golden sceptre of Regos

The Chronicles of FUTURE EARTH

RELATIONSHIP

Blue-Claw Chelother Mount **Size:** 1

Aspects: Sudden Excess of Violence

Skills: Physique 3

Stunts & Special Abilities:

INTEGRAL WEAPONRY: Hooves and Claws SI+3
LARGER SIZE (S1)

TRAMPLE: Use Physique to attack smaller targets in the zone you're entering. 2 SD targets, 4 S-1 targets, etc. Special success is a knockdown.

Stress

Physical: (1) (2) (3) (4) **Status:** ● ● ● ●

Mental: (1) (2) ● ● **Wealth:** ● ● ● ●

Consequences: _____

RELATIONSHIP

Legion of Lord Regos **Size:** _____

Aspects: House of the Chain of Heroes

Skills: Resources 1

Stunts & Special Abilities:

Stress

Physical: (1) (2) (3) (4) **Status:** (1) (2) (3) (4)

Mental: (1) (2) (3) (4) **Wealth:** (1) (2) (3) (4)

Consequences: _____

RELATIONSHIP

Size: _____

Aspects: _____

Skills: _____

Stunts & Special Abilities:

Stress

Physical: (1) (2) (3) (4) **Status:** (1) (2) (3) (4)

Mental: (1) (2) (3) (4) **Wealth:** (1) (2) (3) (4)

Consequences: _____

RELATIONSHIP

Size: _____

Aspects: _____

Skills: _____

Stunts & Special Abilities:

Stress

Physical: (1) (2) (3) (4) **Status:** (1) (2) (3) (4)

Mental: (1) (2) (3) (4) **Wealth:** (1) (2) (3) (4)

Consequences: _____

5. Personal Stress and Social Stress

This is where you mark down the wounds, embarrassments, and other stresses and consequences your character suffers in **conflicts**—combats, battles, debates, social clashes, and so on. When you take a “hit” in a conflict, you suffer one or more points of **stress**, and must fill in one of your **stress boxes**. Armour or other protections can absorb stress, but sometimes it affects you directly. Stress usually represents superficial damage you recover from quickly, and your stress boxes clear again after every **scene** (page 26). But, if you take too much stress, you suffer **consequences**, more serious and harder to recover from.

There are four types of stress, grouped into two categories. **Physical** and **mental stress** is **personal stress**, and can lead to physical wounds and mental trauma; **status** and **wealth stress** is **social stress**, and can lead to damage to your reputation and social standing. You automatically have two stress boxes in each of the four types of stress, and may have as many as four—some skills let you withstand more stress.

When you suffer points of stress, you must mark off one (and only one) stress box equal to that number. So, if you suffer 2 points of physical stress, you must mark off your 2-point physical stress box. If your 2-point physical stress box is already filled in (from a previous hit, say), you must mark off the **next highest** stress box. If you incur stress points higher than your highest available stress box, you're in trouble, and sustain more significant harm—what are called **consequences**.

Consequences

Consequences represent **lasting** harm—physical wounds from combat, confusion, breakdown, or trauma from mental attacks, and so on. Usually consequences require treatment before they can be removed; while they exist, they act as **aspects** which can cause you problems in play.

When you suffer more points of stress than your highest available stress box, you suffer a consequence. A consequence buys off a certain number of stress points. There are three levels of consequence, each of increasing seriousness: **mild**, **moderate**, and **severe**. A mild consequence absorbs 2 points of stress, a moderate absorbs 4, and a severe absorbs 6. You can take one consequence of each level; some characters can take more than one (it's a skill and stunt thing...). You can take more than one consequence at a time. For example, if you take 8 points of physical stress from a hit in combat, you may use your mild and moderate consequences to absorb 6 points of stress (2 and 4 points respectively), and then also mark off your 2-point stress box.

There are two categories of consequence: **personal consequences**, and **social consequences** (corresponding to the two categories of stress). You can sustain mild, moderate, and severe consequences in each category. Yes, that means that when you suffer physical **or** mental stress, you use the same personal consequences to absorb it; and when you suffer status or wealth stress, you use your social consequences.

If you're ever in a situation where you've taken 3 consequences of a particular category, and you've marked off all your available stress boxes, and you still take more stress and can't put it anywhere, then you're **taken out**. This means you've suffered so much lasting damage that your character is no longer playable, perhaps permanently. If you're taken out in physical combat, for example, this could mean your character is dead. See page 215 for more.

6. Fate Points (and Refresh)

Fate points are an important resource. You start play with a certain number, and spend them during play. They're used for various things, but the most important is for **invoking an aspect**—we'll go into what that means below (page 28).

In play, your fate points will fluctuate—usually downwards, as you spend them, but you can earn them back, too. You can note the number on your character sheet, but as it changes frequently, we recommend you use **tokens** instead.

Whenever you start a new session of play, your fate points reset to their initial number, referred to as your **Refresh**. The only time this doesn't happen is if you've finished the previous session with more fate points than your Refresh (you can earn fate points, too, remember). Resetting to your Refresh never lowers the number of fate points you have.

The default Refresh for a character is 10 points, which means you start each session of play with 10 fate points. However, each stunt and special ability your character has reduces your Refresh by 1 point. So, if you have 4 stunts and 2 special abilities, your Refresh will be 4, meaning you start each session of play with 4 fate points. Most characters (especially human ones) start with 5 stunts and a Refresh of 5.

7. Weapons, Armour, and Equipment

You automatically start play with all the equipment listed in the various **builds** you have access to, which may include things like weapons, armour, riding animals, and even special items like **zoans** and certain lower-powered **artefacts**. You can buy additional gear during character creation using a money budget derived from your wealth stress track.

Equipment can have statistics; weapons can increase the physical stress you inflict in combat, armour can reduce stress from attacks against you, and many items have aspects you can use in play. You get access to all these statistics just by owning an item, whether you acquire it when creating your character or during play.

Encumbrance

Encumbrance rules for equipment are for times when that's important. Often it won't be, but if you're deep in the wilderness or in a dangerous ruined undercity, it can be important to know whether you can physically carry the items you want to. You can carry a certain number of **encumbrance points**; write down your **maximum encumbrance** and **current encumbrance** on your character sheet for when you need it. See page 192 for more.



Treasure

Treasure is important, from the coins you carry, to gems worth a certain amount, to valuable artefacts, magical or technological. Treasure can be spent to buy new gear, or to get bonuses on dice rolls to acquire something out of the ordinary; see page 171.

8. Relationships and the Relationships Sheet

Your character doesn't exist in a vacuum; you're a member of society, and maybe of a tightly-knit religious, professional, or social community, and you have friends, allies, dependents, and even riding animals and summoned creatures who you can draw on for favours, getting them to use some of their abilities on your behalf. And they sometimes ask for favours in return! **Relationships** (page 241) are how we quantify this; on your main character sheet, you list your relationships by name. If you need to note down the skills, stunts, aspects, and other abilities you can get the target of your relationship to use on your behalf, you can use a dedicated **relationship sheet** (page 354). You develop your relationships as you play; it's a key part of advancing your character (see page 264).

TAKING ACTION

Let's take a look at how you can use your character in play. Here's a summary of the core game rules.

What's a Scene?

Your Chronicler has lots of information in the *Chronicler's Guide* for managing and measuring what we call **game time**. A **scene** is one such measure, and you'll see the term a lot. Simply put, a scene is the amount of time it takes to resolve a single significant situation in play—perhaps a conflict, or an encounter, or a series of actions in a place to attain a single limited goal. There's no exact time it takes to play out a scene, but usually they range from a few minutes to an hour or more.

How to Roll the Dice

As mentioned above, you play the game by having your characters **take actions** in a series of **scenes** to respond to the situations presented to you by the Chronicler. Many actions are simple and self-explanatory, and you can just say you do something and then do it. "I open the door" doesn't require any more attention than that. Sometimes, though, there'll be an element of uncertainty about an action. Maybe that door is locked—can you pick the lock? Or it's jammed—are you strong enough to force it open? Maybe it's hidden—can you find it?

In these cases, we use a **dice roll** to determine whether your character can do what you want him to. To make a dice roll, take two six-sided dice of different colours, and designate one the **Hero Die**, and the other the **Doom Die**. Now roll both dice, and subtract the value of the Doom Die from the value of the Hero Die. Now add your skill score in a relevant skill to the total; that's the **result** of your dice roll. Sometimes, your Chronicler may even ask you to roll more than one Hero Die or Doom Die. We call this process **rolling the Cosmic Fate dice**.

Next, compare the result of your dice roll to a **difficulty**. Difficulties may be set by the Chronicler, or they may be fixed and unchanging, or they may be equal to the dice roll of an opponent. It depends on the context. If the result of your dice roll is higher than the difficulty, you succeed at what you're trying to do. If it's lower, you fail. If it's exactly the same, the result is a tie—and that can mean various things (see page 197).

The Ladder

You might see a pattern in the way *The Chronicles of Future Earth* handles numbers; most skill levels fall between 1 and 5; the Cosmic Fate dice produce results between -5 and +5; and so on.

In fact, all numerical scores in the game exist on the same spectrum of numbers. A skill level of 1 is the same power as a Cosmic Fate roll result of +1, both of which give you an idea of how difficult a difficulty 1 task is. This spectrum is called **the ladder**, and lets you compare the relative magnitudes of skill levels, dice roll results, difficulties, and even the bonuses and penalties you sometimes apply to rolls.

TABLE 3-1: THE LADDER—WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

NUMBER	WHAT THAT NUMBER CAN REPRESENT
-5	A disastrously bad dice roll—most likely a fumble!
-4	An abysmal roll.
-3	A terrible roll.
-2	A very poor roll.
-1	A poor roll.
0	The difficulty of an easy task; an average dice roll; an unskilled character attempting a mundane task.
+1	A straightforward task performed without pressure; a moderately decent dice roll; an apprentice-level skill.
+2	A somewhat challenging task, or a straightforward task performed under pressure; a fair dice roll; a competent-level skill.
+3	A challenging task; a good dice roll; a professional-level skill.
+4	A very challenging task; a great dice roll; a journeyman-level skill.
+5	A difficult task; a superb dice roll—most likely a critical success; a master-level skill which is the maximum achieved by most people.
+6	A very difficult task; an advanced master-level skill achieved by exceptional individuals.
+7	A daunting task; a champion-level skill.
+8	A very daunting task; a heroic skill level.
+9	An utterly daunting task; a legendary skill level.
+10	An almost impossible task; a superhuman skill level.

The main numbers on the ladder are shown in Table 3-1: The Ladder—What the Numbers Mean. Note though that the ladder is open-ended; there are numbers above and below those shown.

Interpreting the Results

The amount by which your dice roll result exceeds the difficulty of the task you're attempting is called **shifts**. If you roll a result of 3 against a difficulty of 1, you generate 2 shifts. Shifts are used in many things—not only do they determine the magnitude of your success (or your failure), they also determine how much stress, for example, you cause your opponent in a conflict (page 201).

Some results have particular significance. A result with 5 shifts or more is called a **special success**, and can produce special effects, especially in conflicts. A roll of 6 on your Hero Die and 1 on your Doom Die is a **critical success**. This may have several effects: its most important is that it bypasses **stress reduction** (page 174) in conflicts. Conversely, a roll of 1 on your Hero Die and 6 on your Doom Die is a **critical failure**, also called a **fumble**. The most important effect of a fumble is that you may not re-roll the dice by invoking an aspect (page 198).

SCORES, MODIFIERS, AND SCALES

We use the following conventions to make it easy for you to differentiate between skill and difficulty scores, modifiers, and scales.

Scores

Scores are simple numbers that designate skill levels and difficulties, as well as the results of a dice roll. *Examples: Lore 4 (a skill), difficulty 3 (a difficulty), and result 9 (a dice roll result).*

Modifiers

Sometimes you modify a dice roll result upwards or downwards. These **modifiers** are written with a + or a -. For example, a weapon may give you a **Stress Increase (SI)**, increasing the shifts of stress you inflict when at-

tacking with it. Similarly, armour may give you a **Stress Reduction (SR)**, reducing the shifts of stress you suffer when someone hits you in combat. Additionally, **invoking an aspect** (see below) can give you a modifier of +2 to a dice roll. *Examples: Broadsword (SI+2), leather armour (SR-1).*

Scales

Scales measure the relative magnitude of your character's capacity for action. Rules for using scales are given on page 235. The main scales are **Size**, representing physical size, and **Social Class**, representing the caste systems of the Springtide Civilisations. Scales differ from scores by being fixed "bands", and often have a descriptive **label**. *Examples: Human-Sized (0), Noble (3).*

FATE POINTS

Fate points have several uses—see **Chapter 7: Aspects and Fate Points**. Here are the most important.

Invoking an Aspect

Invoking an aspect is the main use of an aspect. Remember, aspects are short phrases describing something important about a character, situation, condition, or even an item of equipment. When an aspect seems immediately relevant to the situation you're facing, you may **invoke** it for an advantage.

To invoke an aspect, you describe precisely how it's relevant to what you're trying to do, and then pay a fate point. The Chronicler must agree that your proposed invoke is reasonable—sometimes you might be tempted to stretch the use of an aspect a bit too far! Assuming the Chronicler accepts, you subtract a fate point from your total, and get either a +2 bonus on your dice roll, or re-roll the dice roll entirely. An invoke happens **after** you roll the dice; you don't have to invoke and **then** roll to see what your result is.

.....
 For example, Zabet Karja is fighting a horde of entropic beasts overrunning a small border village. She's just rolled a dreadful -3 result on her attack roll. However, she has the Essence aspect Legionnaire-Errant of Lord Regos. She spends a fate point to invoke that aspect, describing how devoted she is to the defence of Hivernium's provinces, and re-rolls her attack. Hopefully she'll do better next time!

Declaring a Story Detail

You can spend a fate point to make a minor narrative tweak to your situation. This can be very powerful. For example, if you're unarmed and surrounded by thugs in a debris-filled alleyway, you can spend a fate point to declare that there **must** be some heavy, lumpy item lying around to use as a cudgel. The Chronicler must agree with your **declaration** (it's not a license to trash a carefully prepared Chronicle!), but otherwise you spend the fate point and suddenly you're armed again!

Accepting a Compel

Sometimes aspects cause you trouble. But, hey, you're an adventurer, you're looking for trouble in the first place, so what better than trouble that means something to you personally? What's more, when you let an aspect cause trouble for you, you get a fate point to add to your total! This is called **compelling an aspect**—see page 128 for more!

.....
 Zabet is at a swish dinner hosted by Jakai Tellisan, Autarch of Korudav, where she's hoping to pump her legion superiors for information. Word suddenly comes that the northern frontier is being attacked by entropics, and several heroic types leap to their feet and declare they're leaving immediately to fight them! Zabet has the Origin aspect Called to Adventure in the Battle of the Firecloud. Her player, Sharma, knows this is a call to action—who knows where it may lead? Zabet abandons her plans to quiz the legion brass, draws her broadsword, and yells "For Korudav!" Sarah, the Chronicler, smiles and hands Sharma a fate point to add to her total. Time for adventure!

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

As your character adventures, his abilities improve and he gets more and more awesome. This is called **advancement**. You can find full details on page 258; for now, suffice it to say that during play you'll pass **milestones** where the Chronicler will award you **advancement points (AP)**, which you can use to buy increases in skill levels, new stunts and other abilities, and even new aspects, relationships, Refresh points, and more.

Your Advancement Point Pool

You don't have to spend your advancement points immediately; you can save them up to spend on bigger purchases. In particular, because AP can buy **relationships**, magic-using characters often keep a pool of AP to spend on temporary relationships like **summonings**. For example, if you want to summon a demon or elemental, you'll need AP to spend on its abilities. When that demon or elemental departs (or is killed), you get those AP back, and may spend them on something else (maybe another summoning...).

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now you know the basic rules! You can go right ahead now and play a simple game using just this information. Try it!

Probably, though, you're ready for more detail. Here's where to look.

To find out how to create your own characters, read **Chapter 4: Creating Your Character**. To see which places or species your characters can come from, check out **Chapter 5: Homelands and Kindreds**. To read more about the rules, see **Chapter 10: How to Do Things**. If you want to find out more about how magic works, see **Chapter 13: Magic**. If you want to read about gods, temples, and the fascinating world of Future Earth, see the *Guide to Future Earth*. And, if you want to read about being a Chronicler, check out beasts, artefacts, and more, see the *Chronicler's Guide*. Adventure awaits!

