



# FIFTH SEASON



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ROLEPLAYING  
IN THE STILLNESS

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QUICKSTART



# FIFTH

## SEASON

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### ROLEPLAYING

## QUICKSTART

BASED ON THE BROKEN EARTH  
TRILOGY BY N.K. JEMISIN

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# THE WORLD OF FIFTH SEASON

**N**.K. Jemisin's acclaimed *Broken Earth* trilogy and the *Fifth Season* role-playing game take place in the Stillness, the world's only continent. For most, life is harsh, even under the best of circumstances. Fear of Fifth Seasons looms over every conversation. These natural catastrophes could strike at any moment. During last century's Choking Season, Mount Akok erupted, immolating 200,000 people and plunging the world into five years of darkness and ashfall. The perpetual night caused worldwide crop failures and famine, and the exceptionally fine ash bypassed or overwhelmed air filters, killing hundreds of thousands.

To protect themselves from Seasons, humanity has lived by stonelore's tenets for the last three thousand years. Originally three stone tablets' of occasionally cryptic advice, stonelore teaches disaster preparedness, social order, and Season survival techniques. Abiding by stonelore's rules makes life during good years more difficult, but these challenges are nothing compared to facing a Season unprepared. So, people grow food—not just to live through the next winter, but to survive in case a Season steals the sun for years. Storecaches of food, medicine, and other supplies are standard features of most homes and every comm, from tiny villages to cities of millions.

Of course, Seasons aren't the only way Father Earth shows his hatred of people; most of the Stillness is seismically active. The Western and Eastern Coastals regions suffer frequent typhoons and tsunamis. Earthshakes, sinkholes, and other tectonic dangers regularly befall the Nomidlats and Somidlats. The Arctics and Antarcotics regions face still greater seismic threats and in frigid weather. Only the Equatorials have peace from Father Earth's outbursts.

The Equatorials' safety is no accident. Three millennia ago, the Old Sanze Empire conquered the world and dedicated every resource they could conscript to seismically stabilize their home: the city of Yumenes. Without frequent disasters and other disruptions, Yumenes flourished, becoming the wealthiest comm in the Stillness. Now, the Yumenescene Leadership's fortunes are unfathomably vast, enough to buy every advantage, up to and including the Imperial Family, granting them supreme political control.

Their secret to quieting Father Earth's tantrums? The Fulcrum, an organization of orogenes, people born with more powerful "sessing" than others. Where most can sess an earthquake a few seconds before the shockwave strikes, orogenes can sess vibrations as small as footsteps. Orogenes can also act on this information, drawing heat from magma, calming tectonic plates, and reshaping terrain. Not all orogenes join the Fulcrum, but "ferals" are even more feared and hated than their Fulcrum kin. Long ago, Fulcrum orogenes, their Guardian handlers, and Imperial geoneers created a node network that protects the Equatorials region from seismic activity. The exact nature of the node stations is a dark secret for another book.

Naturally, the Stillness' past gave rise to its own societal structure. People are born into use-castes that they inherit from their same-gender parents. The major use-castes are briefly described under **Character** on page 4. Use-castes are as essential to society as comms, with both serving as parts of people's name. For example, the Resistant use-caste member Essun of the comm Tirimo introduces herself as Essun Resistant Tirimo. Well-educated Innovators often specialize in fields that don't neatly map onto our world, such as biomesstry, which overlaps with Earth's biology but also covers Seasonal mutations. Similarly, large civic works are designed not by engineers but geoneers, reflecting the importance of earthworks in a world that distrusts metal construction.

Though the Stillness shuns structural iron, conductive metal and its use for electricity is well-studied. Larger comms often have a power generator of some kind, typically geothermal or hydroelectric, lighting the streets and powering pumps for sanitation and irrigation. Nuveen, this QuickStart's comm, is not so fortunate; Nuveen has hot spring water but no geo turbine yet.

# FIFTH SEASON

## ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

### WELCOME TO FIFTH SEASON ROLEPLAYING

"Everything changes during a Season."

Telling stories is one of humanity's oldest technologies, a way of preserving and passing along knowledge, information, and culture long before the invention of writing. Together, with this book and some friends, you are going to tell a story—one about the Broken Earth and the people who survive there in spite of its harshness. A story of the *Fifth Season*. In this story, most of you play characters, much as you might in a video game, but with pen, paper, and dice.

The *Fifth Season Roleplaying* game is designed for you to play out adventures and stories set in the world described in the *Broken Earth* trilogy of novels by N.K. Jemisin—a world where constant and unstable tectonic and volcanic activity threaten all life; a world whose peoples have learned to adapt in order to survive. It is a world where everyone learns that Father Earth hates his children and is always trying to kill them, where metal rusts and even stone crumbles, and the best you can do is be prepared for the next disaster. In the world of the Broken Earth, community—the comm—is everything, because in community there is support and a chance to persevere.

This book is a "quick-start"—a set of condensed rules, pre-generated characters, and an adventure designed to introduce you to the game. Everything you need to start playing right away. We hope you and your friends will visit the Broken Earth and give *Fifth Season Roleplaying* a try! In a full-fledged *Fifth Season* game, you would all create a comm of your own, determine its history, resources, and challenges, and then decide what sorts of adventures you want to embark on. For this quick-start we've simplified matters, giving you ready-made characters (find them at the end of this book) and a ready-made adventure.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

The *Fifth Season Quickstart* has four parts. The first is a condensed guide to the *Adventure Game Engine* or *AGE* system game rules that power the game. The second is a brief overview of the world of *Fifth Season* and the comm of Nuveen. Nuveen serves as the setting for the third part: an introductory adventure called *Stress Fractures*, wherein the characters help to solve several serious problems threatening their comm. The fourth is a collection of printable handouts: six pre-generated characters for the players, referred to as **player characters** or **PCs** for short, and a two-sided quick reference sheet players can keep handy during play.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

To play this quick-start you'll need at least two people, though four to seven is best. One person takes the role of **Game Moderator (GM)** and the others are **players**. You'll also need at least three regular, six-sided dice (abbreviated **d6**). Ideally, one of the dice should be a different color or size from the others. You'll need copies of various parts of this quick-start, but more on that later. Pencils or pens and paper, or electronic means of recording information at the game table, are also necessary.

### IF YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED AN RPG BEFORE

If you're interested in trying out this game but have no idea what tabletop roleplaying is—that's great! Roleplaying is some of the most fun you'll ever have with your friends, but teaching all of the basics of roleplaying is a bit beyond the scope of this quick-start. Start by going online and searching for some basic info. The Wikipedia page "*role-playing game (pen and paper)*" is a little dry, but a decent starting point. Better yet, check out online videos of people playing tabletop RPGs (there are a ton of them) or track down a friend who's done this kind of thing before and ask them to show you how it's done. The full *Fifth Season Roleplaying* game also introduces more on the concepts of roleplaying and gives advice to GMs. Trust us, you're going to *love* it.

### BEFORE YOU PLAY

Before the group gets together to play, the GM should read the entire quick-start, print out at least one copy of each pre-generated character, and print out enough copies of the **Quick Reference** sheets so each player can see the rules and learn about the *Fifth Season* setting. If you're working from a printed copy of the quick-start, you can download a free, printable PDF copy from *greenronin.com*. Other players can read the rules section of the quick-start if they want to but shouldn't read the adventure (spoilers!).

### ABOUT THE RULES

The condensed rules presented in the *Fifth Season Quickstart* cover the basics, but you should be aware that some rules included in the full game have been left out. None of the character creation rules are included, for example, nor have systems for the creation of comms or the like. Many rules have been simplified or narrowed for use in this single context to help ease you into the system. If you run the sample adventure *Stress Fractures* with the full *Fifth Season* rules, expand any opportunities you see in the adventure to work with them.



# CHARACTER

Everything a player needs to know during the game can be found on their **character sheet**. Let's start a tour of the *Fifth Season* character sheet by looking at its backbone: the nine **abilities**.

- **Accuracy** measures aim, precision, and ability to hit targets with ranged or thrown weapons.
- **Communication** covers social skills and generally making friends and influencing people.
- **Constitution** is your character's overall health, fortitude, and resistance to harm, illness, and fatigue.
- **Dexterity** covers deftness, agility, and reaction time, affecting how quickly and gracefully you move.

## FOCUS LIST

For your reference, here is the full list of focuses found in the *Fifth Season* rulebook. In these quick-start rules, a character never needs a specific focus to attempt a test.

- **ACCURACY:** Bows, Bowling, Light Blades, Staves, Slings, Thrown.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Animal Handling, Bargaining, Deception, Disguise, Etiquette, Expression, Gambling, Investigation, Leadership, Performing, Persuasion, Seduction.
- **CONSTITUTION:** Rowing, Running, Stamina, Swimming, Tolerance.
- **DEXTERITY:** Acrobatics, Crafting, Initiative, Legerdemain, Lock Picking, Riding, Stealth, Traps.
- **FIGHTING:** Axes, Bludgeons, Heavy Blades, Spears.
- **INTELLIGENCE:** Cryptography, Evaluation, Geneering, Geomery, Lore, Medicine, Navigation, Tinkering, Trade.
- **PERCEPTION:** Empathy, Hearing, Intuition, Searching, Seeing, Sessing, Smelling, Tasting, Touching, Tracking.
- **STRENGTH:** Climbing, Driving, Intimidation, Jumping, Might.
- **WILLPOWER:** Courage, Faith, Perseverance, Self-Discipline.

**GEOMETRY:** Earth sciences, particularly plate tectonics, seismic events, and non-biological Seasonal changes.

**SESSING:** A sixth sense providing advanced warning of seismic activity.

**GENEERING:** Design and construction of buildings, roads, and other infrastructure.

- **Fighting** is your character's capability in close combat, ranging from a brawl to wielding weapons.
- **Intelligence** measures a character's reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and overall knowledge.
- **Perception** is the ability to pick up on and notice things using any of the character's senses.
- **Strength** is sheer muscle power and the ability to apply it, from lifting heavy things to feats of athletics.
- **Willpower** measures self-control, self-discipline, mental fortitude, and confidence.

Abilities are scored on a numeric scale from -2 (quite poor) to 4 or more (truly outstanding). Your character's ability scores provide an overview of the areas where your character is extraordinary, above average, average, or poor, and you use these scores to determine the outcome of most actions in the game. A score of 1 is considered average for player characters, who are, after all, the main characters of the story. A score of 0 is average for everyday individuals, the sort of folks with the good sense to avoid adventures and all the troubles they bring.

Some abilities have one or more words in their box. These are **focuses**, areas of expertise that fall under that ability. Most focuses are self-explanatory. For example, characters with the Persuasion focus are especially good at using their Communication ability to persuade someone. That said, some focuses are unusual or unique to *Fifth Season*. These include Legerdemain (sleight of hand), Cryptography (reading secret messages), Geneering (constructing earth & stone structures), Geomery (knowledge of stones), and Sessing (detecting tectonic activity).

It's important to note that characters don't need to have a focus in order to try something. A focus is just an added benefit for characters with special aptitude or training. For example, characters without the Persuasion focus can still try to persuade people. They simply use their Communication score without any added bonus. It's just that characters with the Persuasion focus are better at it.

When abilities and focuses are written out in the rules, or an adventure, the focus follows its ability. You might read "Communication (Persuasion)" or "Perception (Seeing)," for example.

Next, you'll notice some other numbers on the character sheet.

- **Speed** governs how fast your character can move. The Run and Move actions (see the **Actions** section) use Speed to determine how far you can go on your turn.
- **Defense** is the number your opponent needs an attack roll to hit your character.

- **Toughness** subtracts from the damage of incoming attacks. It's usually a combination of natural ability and any armor or protection your character might have or wear, although armor is fairly rare on the Broken Earth.
- **Fortune** is a measure of your character's luck or good fortune, among other things. Fortune can be used to ward off damage, preventing your character from being seriously hurt. It can also help you out in tough situations when your character might otherwise fail. Use it wisely! You've only got so much and, sooner or later, your luck runs out.
- **Relationships** are special emotional connections with other characters and with the comm. These give your character extra motivation to succeed. You can draw on your Relationship once per game session to gain extra stunt points (SP), which you can use even if you don't roll doubles. (More on stunt points in a bit.) Some characters have "Player's Choice" listed in their Relationships, which means the player chooses which character (player or non-player) that Relationship is with at the start of the adventure.

Furthermore, each character has a **caste**. Your character's caste is their calling or place in the society of the Stillness. While people in the Stillness recognize a number of different castes, five primary ones show up in and influence most comms:

- **Breeder** caste is concerned with the legacy and long-term survival of the comm, including the bearing, raising, and educating of children, and creating strong families.
- **Innovator** caste is devoted to invention, creativity, and the various technical skills that benefit a comm.
- **Leadership** caste directs and guides others to make the comm as peaceful, productive, and successful as possible.
- **Resistant** caste develops the ability to survive in the often-harsh Broken Earth and uses their resistance to help care and look after others.
- **Strongback** caste promotes physical strength and prowess, necessary for laborers as well as hunters and even soldiers when the comm has a need.

Each character's caste is listed on their character sheet and caste promotes certain abilities, focuses, and talents. Each character's drive is also listed and described on their character sheet.

# FIFTH SEASON

ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

AGE \_\_\_\_\_ HEIGHT & WEIGHT \_\_\_\_\_

COMM \_\_\_\_\_ 1

CASTE \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIALIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ACCURACY	<input type="checkbox"/>	
COMMUNICATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	
CONSTITUTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	
DEXTERITY	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
FIGHTING	<input type="checkbox"/>	
INTELLIGENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PERCEPTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	
STRENGTH	<input type="checkbox"/>	
WILLPOWER	<input type="checkbox"/>	

EQUIPMENT	SUPPLIES
9	

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

10

LEVEL

11

MOVE	RUN
4	
IN METERS	IN METERS

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	FORTUNE
○	○	○ 3	AR	○	
ARMOR TYPE					

TALENTS & SPECIALIZATIONS

5

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
6		

RELATIONSHIPS

7

DRIVE & PERSONAL CHALLENGES

8

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

12

- PERSONAL DETAILS:** The basics of who you are.
- ATTRIBUTES:** Your physical and mental abilities.
- COMBAT STATISTICS:** Your physical reflexes and resilience.
- MOVE & RUN:** How fast you can walk and run.
- TALENTS & SPECIALIZATIONS:** Your specialized skills.
- WEAPON STATISTICS:** Your ability to cause harm.
- RELATIONSHIPS:** Your connections to people and places.
- DRIVE & PERSONAL CHALLENGES:** Your psychological makeup.
- EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES:** The gear you carry, and have access to.
- DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:** Your physical and behavioral quirks
- LEVEL:** Your level of experience.
- CHARACTER BACKGROUND:** Your personal story.



## OROGENE?

Orogenes are people born with a stronger than average sensing ability, granting them some control over heat, cold, and the earth itself. Long ago, they were just another use-caste. Now, most orogenes are Ferals—untrained in their abilities—making them dangerous to themselves and others. Few of these orogenes openly display their abilities, and even fewer survive the consequences of doing so. Most people will never knowingly meet an orogene, though they still fear and mistrust what they do not understand.

## CHARACTER TYPES

*Fifth Season Roleplaying* doesn't have the character classes used in many other roleplaying games (including its "cousin," the *Fantasy AGE RPG*). Instead, each character is defined by their use-caste, their drive, and a specialization chosen by the player during character creation. For efficiency, there is a sample character of each primary caste with a diverse set of abilities:

- **Foh-Bak Innovator** is a scientist and inventor who keeps their friend Pashum's secret.
- **Jahni Leader** is an up-and-coming community organizer, skilled at finding the right place for people.

- **Kokoi Resistant** is a hardy expert of plants, medicine, and comm sanitation.
- **Moasi Strongback** is an expert forager and hunter who's wrestling with guilt over a near-tragedy.
- **Pashum Resistant** is secretly an Orogene torn between wanting to fit in and embrace her powers.
- **Zuhanchi Breeder** is a loving co-father and caretaker at the crèche with a talent for furniture-making.

You can find their character sheets at the end of this quick-start. Note that each of these characters can have any name, gender, or background you want; their descriptions are just suggestions. Feel free to change them to better suit your game.

## LEVEL

Over time, characters can increase in **level**, improving their abilities and gaining other benefits, a process often referred to as "leveling-up" in RPGs. The pre-generated characters are level 1 characters.

## TALENTS

Characters also have **talents**, giving them specific benefits based on natural aptitude or specialized training. Talents come in three degrees (Novice, Expert, and Master). The pre-

generated characters' talents, their degree with each, and their benefits are explained on their character sheets.

## STARTING RELATIONSHIPS

The sample characters are all at least acquainted and care about their comm and its well-being. The characters all have a Relationship with their comm as well as other relationships listed on their character sheets, often as (Player's Choice), allowing the player to choose which character, PC or NPC, is the focus of that Relationship. The players can use these Relationships during the adventure for bonus stunt points, as detailed under **Relationship Stunts** in the rules.

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) use all the same rules as player characters, unless otherwise noted. In *Fifth Season* stories, NPCs are described with **stat blocks**, listing their abilities and focuses. Potential combatants also have Speed, Defense, Toughness, Fortune (if any), and attack statistics. NPCs can also have a Favored Stunts entry, and some have special stunts only they can use. These are suggestions to help the GM keep things moving along briskly, but the GM is free to choose other stunts for them.



# TESTS

The *AGE System* for *Fifth Season Roleplaying* uses three six-sided dice (3d6) for **tests** of characters' abilities. One of the dice should be differentiated from the other two by color, size, or simply rolled separately. The differentiated third die is known as the **Drama Die**. You make tests to find out whether your character succeeds or fails when a chancy situation comes up in the game. Tests come in four main forms: basic, opposed, advanced, and challenge.

## BASIC TESTS

To make a **basic test**, the most common kind, roll 3d6 and add the relevant ability score. If you have an appropriate focus for that ability, add +2 more. For example, when attempting to dodge around an obstacle, you roll 3d6, add your Dexterity score, and add +2 if you have the Acrobatics focus. A character may only add one ability score and one focus bonus per test. Appropriate focuses for a given test are listed in parenthesis after the ability the test calls for. For example, "an Intelligence (Medicine) test." However, you don't need to have the focus to attempt a test.

The sum of your die roll, ability, and focus bonus are compared to a **target number** (TN) that represents the difficulty of the test. The harder it is to succeed, the higher the TN. If the sum of your roll equals or exceeds the TN, then you pass the test and succeed! The target numbers for various tests are given in the rules and in the text of the adventure in this *Quickstart*.

**3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS (+2)  
VERSUS TARGET NUMBER**

Sometimes the circumstances of a test make it easier or more difficult than normal, giving a **bonus** or **penalty** to your total. Such bonuses are rarely greater than +3, and penalties rarely worse than -3. Typically, if circumstances make a test easier or harder, the Game Moderator adjusts the target number rather than the total of your roll.

## OPPOSED TESTS

Sometimes you pit your character's ability against another character's ability. This is called an **opposed test**. In an opposed test, all parties involved roll tests simultaneously, but rather than comparing their results to a target number, the character with the highest total wins the test. If there's a tie, the character with the highest Drama Die number wins. If it's *still* a tie, the highest ability score wins (after which you can flip a coin or roll two more dice as a tie-breaker).

The parties in an opposed test sometimes use different abilities. For example, a char-

acter attempting to sneak past a sentry rolls Dexterity (Stealth) against the sentry's Perception (Hearing). If one character has an advantage over their opponent that's not already reflected in their ability or focus, those circumstances may provide a bonus or penalty to the roll. Such modifiers are usually no worse than -3 or better than +3. So if it's dark, the sneaking character might get a bonus to slip past the guard unnoticed.

## ADVANCED TESTS

A test might be so complicated or time-consuming it is inappropriate to resolve it with a single roll. Examples include doing in-depth research, navigating through difficult conditions, or competing with another speaker or performer to win a crowd's approval. These situations involve an **advanced test**. Advanced tests are basic or opposed tests that require a series of rolls before success can be achieved. Each individual roll is carried out just like a basic or opposed test.

On a sufficient roll—one that meets the TN or exceeds the opponent's result—the result of your Drama Die is added to a running total. On an insufficient roll, nothing is added. (For an opposed advanced test, your opponent adds their Drama Die to their total.) Keeping track of running totals is usually done by making tally marks on paper (online players may prefer digital counters or simply type the running total in chat). Success at the advanced test is achieved when the running total meets or exceeds the advanced test's **success threshold**, which usually ranges from 5 to 20. Each roll represents a certain amount of time—a round, a minute, an hour, or any other increment—depending on the test, so an advanced test can also be used to determine how long a task takes. Each roll might also consume some amount of resources. So, usually, an advanced test can be failed only if time or resources run out, or if—in an opposed advanced test—your opponent wins the test first.

## CHALLENGE TESTS

Some actions in *Fifth Season Roleplaying* impose consequences or setbacks when characters don't do them well enough. These **challenge tests** can be thought of as advanced tests with added risks.

As with an advanced test, the Game Moderator determines a difficulty and success threshold and how much time each roll represents. The GM also decides on the ability and focus for the test, and may vary them, or require different abilities or focuses in succession. Unlike an advanced test, a challenge

test has consequences for each failed roll, beyond just wasting time and resources. These consequences come in three levels—minor, moderate, and major—and the test determines how many times characters can fail at a challenge test before increasing the level of the consequences. Specific consequences are detailed along with the challenge test.

## THE DRAMA DIE

You roll three dice when making a test, with one die differentiated from the other two. The differentiated die is known as the **Drama Die** and has several uses in the *AGE System*. In particular, it is used to measure degrees of success or failure, to break ties, and to generate stunt points (SP). When you see a reference to the Drama Die, just remember it's the differentiated die you roll with ability tests.

## DEGREE OF SUCCESS

Most of the time, you only need to know if an ability test succeeds or fails: Did you accomplish the goal or not? Sometimes, it's important to know to what *degree* you succeeded. This is one of the uses of the Drama Die. Check the dice on your ability test and note the number on the Drama Die. The higher the value, the greater the degree of your success: A 1 on your Drama Die means you barely pulled it off, while a 6 (or better, due to modifiers to the Drama Die) means you did it flawlessly. Note that if you failed the test, the result of the Drama Die is generally irrelevant.

The Game Moderator tells you when the degree of success is important and will ask for the Drama Die's value as well as your test total in those cases. This usually makes it a good idea to leave the dice on the table as you rolled them until your test is complete, just in case you need to refer to them again.

**EXAMPLE:** *Your character is doing a quick repair job. The GM asks for a test to see if you can do it, but also asks for the degree from the Drama Die to see how well you do. With just a 1, the repair might not even last for the whole encounter while, with a 6, it's almost as good as new!*

## STUNTS

There's a difference between accomplishing something with a test and really accomplishing it with *style*. That difference comes into play in the *AGE System* with **stunts**.

When you roll dice for a test and any two or more of your dice show the same number, that test generates **stunt points** (abbreviated **SP**) equal to the value of the Drama Die. If



the test is successful, you can use these points to enhance the results, pulling off some special maneuver, trick, or flourish, beyond just the benefits of success. In fact, you *must* spend any stunt points you generate on a test or else they disappear at the end of your turn. The kinds of stunts you can achieve depend on the type of action and encounter. See the **Encounters** section for specific examples of stunts you can perform during Exploration, Social, and Action encounters.

As a general rule, only *active* tests generate stunt points, such as when your character is trying to accomplish or achieve something. Tests you make in response to something else, such as a test to resist an effect, or a follow-up test required by another action, do *not* generate stunt points. This includes tests required when performing stunts themselves. Tests that do not generate SP are designated **simple tests**.

**EXAMPLE:** *In your test chasing after someone, you roll 3, 3, and 4 for a total of 10. You also have two matching numbers on the dice (two 3s), so your test generates stunt points. With a result of 4 on the Drama Die (the last die listed), you get 4 SP to spend immediately. Maybe you clear the obstacles so effectively that you're also able to put something into the path of your quarry, helping you to catch up.*

## RELATIONSHIP STUNTS

In addition to getting SP by rolling doubles, once per game session you can get as many SP as your Relationship intensity to perform any stunt that would be in-character when it comes to that Relationship. You choose this after you see if you succeed on a test and how many SP the test generates (if any). You can combine Relationship stunt points with the stunt points you earned on the Drama Die of a test.

## FORTUNE

Characters in *Fifth Season Roleplaying* have a resource called **Fortune**, which represents a measure of survival instinct, good fortune, determination, pure luck, whatever you want to call it. Essentially, Fortune means the character is *important* in some way. The character you portray starts off with a certain amount of Fortune, which improves with experience, as your character becomes more and more important in the series. Likewise, some characters controlled by the Game Moderator have their own Fortune scores. Fortune is measured in **Fortune points** or **FP** for short. Characters can use their Fortune points to improve the results of their tests and mitigate the effects of damage.

## IMPROVING TESTS

You can spend Fortune points on tests to make one die show the value of the number of FP you spend, up to 6. For the Drama Die, this costs *twice* the usual amount, so the die shows the value of *half* the number of FP you spend, rounded down. You can only modify one die out of a roll using FP.

**EXAMPLE:** *You roll the dice for a test and get 1, 3, and 3 on the Drama Die, which is a total of 7. Not great, especially since you know you need at least a total of 10 in order to succeed. So you tell the Game Moderator you're spending 4 Fortune points to make the "1" die into a "4" (the die now showing the value of the number of FP you spent). Since you also have double 3s, your roll generates stunt points equal to the Drama Die, or 3 SP. If, on the other hand, your initial roll was 3, 3, and 1 on the Drama Die, you would need to spend twice the number of FP to increase the Drama Die to a 4 (8 FP total) but would also get 4 stunt points out of it rather than 3, since you still have double 3s, but the Drama Die now shows a 4.*

## MITIGATING DAMAGE

You also expend FP to mitigate the effects of damage, as detailed in **Action Encounters**. Essentially, your Fortune allows you to avoid injuries, wounds, and other potential conditions caused by damage—at least until your luck runs out. In practical terms, you need to balance your use of Fortune to improve your chances of success with the potential need to spend FP to mitigate damage during an encounter or adventure. When you're at 0 Fortune, you're vulnerable and many attacks and hazards can injure, wound, or even kill your character outright.

## RECOVERING FORTUNE

Characters in *Fifth Season* recover spent Fortune points in two ways: Taking a breather and resting.

- **BREATHER:** After an encounter, characters get a breather, a moment to recoup and catch a short break. This is typically a few undisturbed minutes and, when the breather is complete, the characters regain 1d6 + Constitution + Level in Fortune points, up to their usual Fortune maximum. Characters can only take a breather after an encounter and only once per encounter.
- **RESTING:** If a character rests for the equivalent of a full night's sleep of about eight hours, they recover 10 + Constitution + Level in Fortune points at the end of their rest.

If a breather or a rest is interrupted before it is complete, the character does not gain its benefit. This makes it challenging for characters who are pressed with encounter after encounter and little or no time to rest or even take a breather to recover.

# DAMAGE & CONDITIONS

Father Earth hates his children, so there are any number of things, from the cut of a glassknife to a fall into a crevasse or stumbling into a boilbug nest, that can injure, wound, or kill people. All of these potential sources of harm cause **damage** in *AGE System* terms. Damage is measured in damage points, usually rolled on one or more dice. Each pre-generated character and NPC stat block lists the damage caused by each of their weapons or attacks, and the adventure describes any other potential sources of damage. If a character takes damage, roll the damage dice and add them up, plus any modifiers. Once you've determined the damage, figure out what effect it has on the target:

- Subtract the target's **Toughness** score—including armor, if any—from the damage.

- If damage remains, you have the option to spend **Fortune** to eliminate some or all of it on a 1-to-1 basis: 1 Fortune point removing 1 damage point.
- If damage remains after that, take an **Injured** or **Wounded** condition to account for remaining damage. Each condition removes 1d6 damage points. See **Conditions**, following, for details.
- If any damage remains, the target is **taken out** of the encounter. The source of the damage may impose any one condition that is reasonable for the type of attack which takes out the target, usually Unconscious or Dying.

## CONDITIONS

During game play in *Fifth Season*, a number of **conditions** can affect characters. Conditions are imposed by damage, hazards, and so forth. Some are merely bothersome, others far more serious, perhaps even potentially fatal. Recovering and removing one or more conditions usually takes a certain amount of time.

The following is a listing and description of the conditions characters may acquire, including how they recover from them. If the recovery line says "Based on circumstance," then the Game Moderator decides how and when the character recovers from the condition, based on what caused it and how long

that affects the character. For example, if a character is Impaired due to some distraction, the GM decides the condition no longer applies once the distraction is removed. Effects that impose conditions usually describe the recovery conditions as well.

## DYING

A Dying character is in danger of perishing. A Dying character loses 1 point of Constitution score each round at the start of the character's turn. When the character's Constitution score reaches -3, the character dies.

**RECOVERY:** A TN 11 Intelligence (Medicine) test applied to a Dying character stabilizes their condition, making them Helpless, Unconscious, and Wounded instead.

## FRIGHTENED

You are afraid of a particular person, creature, place, or object. While you are Frightened, you cannot move any closer to the source of your fear and suffer a -3 penalty to all ability tests for any actions other than defending yourself or escaping from it.

**RECOVERY:** In some cases, you may be able to eliminate being Frightened with a Willpower test. In others, the condition may remain so long as the source of your fear is present.

## HELPLESS

A Helpless character is incapable of doing anything. The character cannot take any actions.

**RECOVERY:** Based on circumstance.

## IMPAIRED

An Impaired character is at a penalty, usually -1 to -3, to ability tests. In some cases, the condition may apply only to tests with specific abilities, or even with specific ability focuses.

**RECOVERY:** Based on circumstance.

## INJURED

An Injured character is hurt. The character has a -1 penalty to all tests and is unable to take the Charge or Run actions. An Injured character who receives an additional Injured condition becomes Wounded.

**RECOVERY:** Make an advanced TN 11 Constitution (Stamina) test each day. If you are under medical care, your physician can make an Intelligence (Medicine) test against the same TN and you can use the better of the two rolls. Track the result of the Drama



Die for each successful test. At a success threshold of 5, remove the Injured condition.

## PRONE

You are lying on the ground. Prone characters can only crawl 1 + Dexterity (minimum of 1) meters as their Move action. Other characters get a +1 bonus to close combat attacks against Prone targets, but have a -1 penalty to ranged attacks against them.

**RECOVERY:** Unless something keeps you Prone, a Move action allows you to stand and move up to half your Speed.

## RESTRAINED

A Restrained character's Speed becomes 0 and they effectively cannot move. A Restrained condition may prevent a character from taking certain other actions as well, defined by the nature of the restraint.

**RECOVERY:** Based on circumstance.

## STUNNED

Your ability to act is significantly impaired. You lose your major action and can only take a minor action on your turn each round.

**RECOVERY:** Based on circumstance.

## UNCONSCIOUS

An Unconscious character is unaware of their surroundings or the passage of time. The character falls Prone and is Helpless, unable to take any actions.

**RECOVERY:** Make an advanced TN 11 Constitution (Stamina) test every minute. At a success threshold of 5, you remove the Unconscious condition and regain consciousness. In some cases the GM may vary the time interval and success threshold for your recovery.

## WOUNDED

A Wounded character is severely injured. The character has a -2 penalty to all tests, their Speed halved, and they cannot take the Charge or Run actions. A Wounded character who receives an additional Injured or Wounded condition becomes dying.

**RECOVERY:** Make an advanced TN 11 Constitution (Stamina) test every day. If you are under medical care, your physician can make an Intelligence (Medicine) test against the same TN and you can use the better of the two rolls. Track the result of the Drama Die for each successful test. At a success threshold of 15, you can replace the Wounded condition with the Injured condition.





## ENCOUNTERS

*Fifth Season* stories are broken down into **encounters**, which come in three types: exploration, social, and action:

- **Exploration encounters** involve the characters seeking out information, whether they are investigating a mystery, exploring a new territory, traveling through dangerous terrain, or delving into a deadly ruin.
- **Social encounters** are interactions between the player characters and various non-player characters, usually aimed at achieving particular ends.
- **Action encounters** are when things are happening fast and the characters are often called upon to make snap-decisions to deal with challenging or even life-threatening situations, like a fight or a chase.

## EXPLORATION ENCOUNTERS

Exploration encounters involve exploring or searching an area, investigating a mystery, making or modifying things, and doing pretty much anything where the focus is on places, objects, and information, instead of action or social exchanges. But there's no strict division between encounter types, so exploration encounters often flow into action encounters, or are punctuated with social situations.

Exploration encounters can feature a variety of events and challenges. These usually don't happen round by round, but over periods of time determined by the GM. The most common events include the following.

## HAZARDS

Exploration encounters may also involve encountering some **hazards**—potential risks from the environment. Characters in a *Fifth Season* campaign may need to contend with shakes, lava blows, boiling geysers, rockslides, fires, poisonous gas, choking ash, and more. A hazard might have a test to avoid harm, such as a Dexterity (Acrobatics) test to avoid a fall, or an Intelligence (Tinkering) test to fix a mechanical problem. The hazard's effect may be a certain amount of damage—ranging from 1d6 for a minor hazard to 6d6 for a truly deadly one—or imposing certain conditions as detailed

## EXPLORATION STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1–3	<b>ASSIST:</b> Your action assists an ally. That character gains a +1 bonus to their next test per SP spent.
1–3	<b>BOOST:</b> You gain a +1 bonus per SP spent on your first test in your next turn.
1–3	<b>WARINESS:</b> You remain alert for the outcome of your actions. You gain a +1 bonus per SP spent to the next test to avoid any negative consequences of your action. For example, if you used this stunt while breaking into a building, the bonus would apply to hiding from guards.
2	<b>EFFICIENCY:</b> Your action takes half as much time or resources (your choice) as normal. In action time, you gain +2 to your initiative score for the remainder of the encounter.
2	<b>INSIGHT:</b> When performing an action that logically follows this one (such as in an investigation) you gain a +1 bonus on the test and, if specialized knowledge is required, you can act as if you possess that knowledge, so long as it is not too specific. Even then, you might make a lucky guess, in the GM's estimation.
2	<b>TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM:</b> When you successfully avoid a trap or hazard, but an ally does not, you can choose to take the damage for that ally, leaving them unscathed.
3	<b>COMPENSATE:</b> While performing the task you learn how to work with your surroundings. You ignore environmental penalties to further tests in the same location for the rest of the encounter, so long as conditions remain the same as when you performed this action.
3	<b>EXTRA INFORMATION:</b> You gain an additional piece of information related to your action. If you are examining a clue, you get an extra lead from it.
4	<b>READY FOR ACTION:</b> If an action encounter breaks out in the location where you acted, you gain an extra minor action you can use before anyone else acts, regardless of initiative. You can also take your usual actions when your first turn comes around.

under the **Damage & Conditions** section. A hazard can be momentary—a sudden fall or an explosion—or can last, such as the dangers of suffocation or a raging storm.

## INTERACTING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Your *Fifth Season* character may be called upon to sneak past guards, walk across a narrow ledge, or pick a lock. If the challenge is another person, an opposed test is called for. Otherwise, a basic test against a TN representing the difficulty of the action is typically what you'll use to see if you succeed or fail. Use abilities and focuses that fit the task—Dexterity (Legerdemain) to pick a pocket, for example. The GM has the final word on which tests, abilities, and focuses to use. The higher the number on the Drama Die, the better you did, whether you rolled doubles or not.

## INVESTIGATIONS

An investigation is a catch-all term for any action where you're trying to get information. Generally, if you need to find a lead or clue to go forward in the adventure, like footprints leading in the right direction, the GM should provide it. You'll usually use Perception and Intelligence tests, and focuses related to the lead, to get more information—but you can always just try to guess. When you succeed, the GM gives you a clue: a fact about what's going on. You can also use investigation tests to find out information that isn't directly related to the adventure but that may help you in other ways. In those situations, you don't automatically find the lead. You must make an appropriate test to discover it in the first place.

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Social encounters work much like exploration encounters, except the focus is on interacting with other people rather than with the environment. Social encounters normally use basic tests when you want to make a general impression on a group, or opposed tests when you're trying to influence someone to do or say something that would inconvenience or embarrass them, or seems somehow counter to their interests. Social actions usually use the Communications ability and its focuses, and in opposed tests is often resisted by Willpower and its focuses. In situations where you're trying to get results through threats, you may use Strength (Intimidation) to sway an NPC. Social actions intended to find things out can use the same lead and clue format as investigations, at the GM's discretion.

### QUICKSTART RULES

## SOCIAL STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1–3	<b>IMPRESS:</b> Gain a +1 bonus per SP spent to your next social test involving the same target during this encounter.
1	<b>CARDS ON THE TABLE:</b> If you were completely honest when making this test, your target must be completely honest in the next social test they make against you during this encounter. This doesn't stop either of you from omitting information or offering misleading truths.
1	<b>READ THE SITUATION:</b> Unless others are trying to hide their Attitudes, you can tell what they are. Each SP spent tells you the Attitude of one person in the vicinity.
2	<b>AND ANOTHER THING (EXPLORATION OR SOCIAL):</b> Your insight and acumen allow you to immediately make a second roll related to a successful test. In action time, this occurs as a free action, but cannot be an attack roll. In an advanced test, you may make the bonus test during the time increment in which you made the initial test.
2+	<b>CROWD APPEAL:</b> Your social action affects one additional person per 2 SP spent, as long as their Willpower score is equal to or less than your Communication. This does not allow social stunts to affect more than their listed targets, however.
2	<b>HIDDEN MESSAGE:</b> Your social action conveys a simple, secret message to one other person, which might be your target or a bystander. Others can detect this subterfuge with a Communication (Empathy) test with a TN equal to your test result.
2	<b>TAUNT:</b> You insult or distract one target of your choice within 10 meters who can hear you. Make an opposed test of your Communication (Deception) vs. the target's Willpower (Self-Discipline). If you win, the target suffers a -1 penalty to all opposed tests until the end of the current social encounter, or until they successfully taunt or undermine you. If used in combat, the target suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls on their next turn.
3	<b>SPOT TELL:</b> Your interaction gives you a sense of how your target might deceive you. The TN for their next test to lie or otherwise trick you is the standard TN or opposed roll, or the successful social roll, whichever is higher. This benefit lasts until the target fails in an attempt to lie or the encounter ends, whichever comes first.
3	<b>PAY ATTENTION:</b> Your interaction reveals information about your target above and beyond even what you might have been looking for. If you're pursuing an investigation, you gain an additional lead.
4	<b>DOMINATE:</b> You compel an opponent to feel intense fear, confusion, or distraction. Select a target who can perceive you and has a Willpower no greater than your Communication. You impose your choice of the Confused, Defenseless, or Frightened conditions on the target, which lasts until the end of your next turn.
4	<b>SWAY:</b> Your social gesture is especially potent. You shift your target's Attitude an additional step in the direction of your choice.
4	<b>INSPIRE:</b> Your social action inspires allies who witness it. Each of them gets +1 to all of their tests until the beginning of your next turn.

## ATTITUDES

In situations where an NPC's attitude toward the characters matters, the GM decides what it is (or rolls on the table below if they don't feel like picking) and applies the listed modifiers to Communications tests to get them to aid or usefully interact with the player characters.

If an opposed test is necessary, the NPC rolls Willpower, with the focus depending on the situation. Willpower (Faith) would be used in situations where the NPC is being asked to set aside their beliefs, for example, while Willpower (Courage) could resist attempts to frighten the NPC. However, if the NPC would be forced to do something self-harming or something they find immoral or disgusting, they automatically win an opposed test to resist the suggestion.

## ATTITUDES

3D6 ROLL	ATTITUDE	INTERACTION MODIFIER
3 or less	Very Hostile	-3
4–5	Hostile	-2
6–8	Standoffish	-1
9–11	Neutral	+0
12–14	Open	+1
15–17	Friendly	+2
18+	Very Friendly	+3

Player characters cannot be swayed by social ability tests; players decide how their characters feel and choose to act. Still, you can always make tests and use the results as advice to help players decide how their characters might act.





## ACTION ENCOUNTERS

When things get tense and it matters exactly who does what when, and in which order, it's time for an **action encounter**. Action encounters are most commonly used to handle fights and other forms of combat, but have other uses as well. Essentially, anything that would be considered an action scene in a movie can be handled as an action encounter. During an action encounter, an order of **initiative** is determined once, at the beginning of the encounter, and then all of the characters take **turns** in that order. Each cycle of all characters taking their turn is called a **round**. When each round ends, a new round begins, using the same initiative order.

## INITIATIVE

At the beginning of an action encounter, each character rolls an opposed test using Dexterity (Initiative). Rather than one character winning, however, all combatants' test results are ranked in order from highest to lowest. Combatants then take their turns in that order. Ties are broken the same way as other opposed tests. The GM usually rolls separately for each important NPC, but rolls for minor NPCs in groups who all act at the same time, to keep things simple.

## ACTIONS

On their turn a character takes one **major action** and one **minor action**. If the player wishes, however, their character may take two minor actions instead. A character may also decline either or both actions and choose to do nothing.

The most common major and minor actions are listed here. The GM can adjudicate other actions, using these as a guide.

## MAJOR ACTIONS

### DEFEND

Focusing on defending yourself, you gain a +2 bonus to your Defense until the start of your next turn.

### MELEE ATTACK

This is a close-range attack on an adjacent opponent with a weapon such as a fist, knife, or sword. Roll a basic test of Fighting and the appropriate focus for the attack with a TN equal to the opponent's Defense. If the test succeeds, roll the attack's damage.

### RANGED ATTACK

This is an attack with a bow or other weapon that's shot or thrown. Roll a basic test of Accuracy and the appropriate focus for the attack with a TN equal to the opponent's Defense.

Attacks on enemies farther away than a weapon's Range (but no farther than 1.5 Range) suffer a -2 penalty. If the test succeeds, roll the attack's damage.

### RUN

You move up to double your Speed in meters. You must already be in a standing position to do this. If you are running after someone who is also using this action, or they are running after you, you have a **Chase** on your hands (see **Chases**, following).

## MINOR ACTIONS

### ACTIVATE

You start using an ability, device, or something else that requires a moment of concentration, or continue to maintain such an ability.

### AIM

You carefully plan your next attack. If your next action is a melee attack or ranged attack (even on your next turn), you gain a +1 bonus on that attack roll.

### MOVE

You move up to your Speed in meters. If you limit your travel to half your Speed, you can also drop prone, stand up, or mount or dismount a mount or vehicle as part of your Move.

## ACTION STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	<b>ADRENALINE RUSH:</b> You regain Fortune equal to the SP spent.
1-3	<b>BOOST:</b> You gain a +1 bonus per SP spent on your first test in your next turn.
1-3	<b>DODGE:</b> You gain +1 to Defense per SP spent until the start of your next turn.
1-3	<b>TAKE COVER:</b> If there is cover available in your immediate vicinity, you gain a cover rating equal to SP spent, up to the maximum rating available.
1-3	<b>SKIRMISH:</b> You can move yourself or the target of your attack 2 meters in any direction for each SP you spend.
1	<b>RAPID RELOAD:</b> You can immediately reload a ranged weapon as a free action.
2	<b>DOUBLE-TEAM:</b> Choose one ally to make an immediate attack on your target, who must be within range and sight of the ally's attack.
2	<b>GRAB:</b> You grapple with your target. You and your target make opposed Accuracy (Brawling) rolls. If you win, they can't move from where they are until the end of your next turn. If you successfully grab a target you have already grabbed, you can choose to pin them, imposing the Defenseless condition until the beginning of your next turn. Neither you nor your target can move unless you choose to release the target as a free action. Once you have pinned a target, you can maintain the pin as a minor action with a successful Accuracy (Brawling) roll against your opponent.
2	<b>INJURE:</b> If your target has lost half or more of their Fortune, your attack imposes an Injured condition so long as its damage exceeds the target's Toughness. This condition does not reduce the attack's damage.
2	<b>KNOCK PRONE:</b> You and your target roll an opposed attack roll. If you win, you knock your enemy Prone (see <b>Prone</b> under <b>Conditions</b> ). Alternately, you can knock your enemy's weapon out of their hand. It flies 1d6 + your Strength meters away in a direction of your choosing.
2	<b>OVERCOME TOUGHNESS:</b> Against this attack's damage, the target's Toughness is considered to be half its normal value, rounded down.
3	<b>LIGHTNING ATTACK:</b> Make a second attack on your turn, either against the same target or a different target within range. You must have a loaded ranged weapon to make a ranged attack with this stunt.
4	<b>KNOCK OUT:</b> If your target has lost half or more of their Fortune, your attack imposes an Unconscious condition so long as its damage exceeds the target's Toughness.
4	<b>SEIZE THE INITIATIVE:</b> You move to the top of the initiative order until someone else seizes the initiative. You may get to take another turn before some others act again.

### PREPARE

You postpone your major action. You declare one major action and your choice to Prepare it. Afterwards, your turn ends, but at any time until the beginning of your next turn, you can interrupt another character and take your prepared action immediately. If you don't use the prepared action by the start of your next turn, you lose it, although you can choose to Prepare the same action again.

### READY

You draw a weapon, pull out a tool, or otherwise get ready to use some stowed item on your person. As part of this action, you can also put away something you already had in hand.

### FREE ACTIONS

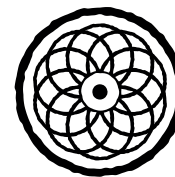
Actions even less substantial than the minor actions listed here are **free actions**. Examples include saying something simple or glancing around. A character can take as many free actions as they wish as long as the GM agrees they have time.

### CHASES

When one character chases another, an advanced TN 13 Constitution (Running) test is required from each participant. Track accumulated points from the Drama Die for each roll. The character with the highest Speed adds

+1 on top of the Drama Die result for each successful test.

The first character to hit 10 accumulated points in an indoor or urban area, or 15 points in an outdoor or suburban area, may choose to end the chase, either escaping or catching their quarry. If two people in a chase are within 2 points of each other, they are virtually neck and neck. Vehicles and mounts may also be involved in chases, though they use their own ability focuses, and get bonuses against slower participants.



## FURTHER ADVENTURES AWAIT!

Hopefully this quick-start whets your appetite for more adventures in the *Fifth Season*. If you have questions, or want more, the *Fifth Season Roleplaying* core book is your next stop. It contains everything you need to run adventures for characters of levels 1-20, including an introductory adventure designed to suit many different campaigns. You'll also want to check out the *Fifth Season Game Moderator's Kit*, which comes with a reference screen for gameplay, stunt reference cards, and an additional adventure.





## NUVEEN

**N**uveen is a small comm in the Midlats, only about a kilometer from Lake Sana, a moderate-sized body of fresh water. Nuveen lies between an uprising escarpment to the north and west and the lake lowlands to the east, with an Imperial Highway cutting between the comm and the lake before snaking its way north and east around the escarpment. Much of the terrain around the area, particularly towards the south, is wooded. The next closest comm is Savyn, Nuveen's principal trading partner, about twenty kilometers away, or half a day's walk. Savyn is a bit of brawn to Nuveen's brains. The Breeder caste members of the two comms encourage some intermarriage but there's also a bit of rivalry in terms of who lives where.

### CULTURE

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Yullen Innovator Nuveen was the “founding mother” of the comm, a brilliant Innovator and University-educated. She particularly encouraged diversification in the comm's knowledge-base and studies. Nuveen is a relatively new comm, just over one hundred years old, but has generally done well for itself due to an emphasis on innovation and valuing knowledge.

Innovators are particularly well-respected in Nuveen. Breeders often pick them for their intelligence and creativity, and there's a tendency for bright young people to want to change castes to become Innovators. This has created a bit of friction with the other castes, who sometimes think Nuveen neglects the practicalities of their roles over the Innovators' flights of imagination. Sometimes Innovator proposals and interests are impractical and need solid guidance from other castes to keep them focused on what matters. Ironically, some of the descendants of Yullen Innovator Nuveen have changed their caste to Leadership to maintain their influence within the comm, although they're still known as quite intelligent.

Nuveen holds an annual winter “Idea Market” where anyone in the comm can present their new ideas to Leadership. It is dominated by Innovators, of course, but open to all, and some comm members end up joining (or leaving) the Innovator caste because of it. Nuveen Leadership believes the Idea Market encourages growth and innovation within

the comm. Winning ideas proposed and demonstrated during the winter market are often implemented come spring and summer.

The notion of being University-educated, like their famous founder, is prized in Nuveen. But the comm knows full well that such a hope is only for a select few in any generation. It has been many years since anyone from Nuveen went to University, so there are a number of youngsters (and their families) nursing such dreams. Each of them hoping the comm will be able to raise enough funds to send their best and brightest off to be educated in the hopes they'll return to bless the comm with the benefits of their hard-won knowledge.

Other use-castes are relatively equally represented in Nuveen. The comm is too small for professional soldiers, so most of the Strongbacks are laborers, hunters, and part-time guards. There's a cursory guard duty placed along the wall and the gate to keep watch. Resistants and Breeders tend to care for children and the infirm, and work at various crafts. The Leadership caste of the comm is the smallest in number and strongly aligned with the Innovators. Nuveen Leadership tends to bridge the gap between the sometimes lofty and impractical Innovators and the real-world needs and priorities of the comm as a whole.

### STRUCTURE

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Physically, Nuveen is pretty unremarkable for a comm. It has a decent and strong stone wall around it, three meters high, with removable platforms



The *Fifth Season Quickstart* presents Nuveen as a complete and ready-to-use comm for the accompanying characters and adventure. The full *Fifth Season* role-playing game, however, provides an entire system whereby the players first create the comm their characters belong to, detailing its traits, qualities, and history, then create characters. This provides a good basis for character ideas and concepts, ensuring they fit with the comm and the overall direction of the campaign.

Comms have traits based on the primary use-castes: Strength (Strongback), Resistance (Resistant), Innovation (Innovator), Leadership (Leadership), and Resilience (Breeder). Those traits can have focuses, much like character abilities, so a comm known for its skill in hunting game and providing a harmonious environment at-home would have the Strength (Hunting) and Resilience (Harmony) focuses, for example. Comms also have three secondary traits: Size (ranging from a small settlement to a large city), Cache (the comm's stored resources), and Stability, similar to a character's Fortune. The players cooperate to assign these traits and focuses.

Players also decide different qualities about the comm: Its geography, history, culture, status, features, and secrets, answering question prompts such as "Who is the highest status family in the comm?" or "What is the most popular event or time of the year in the comm?" These fill in details about the comm to help bring it to life and may prompt the players to come up with ideas connected to their characters: Maybe one of them is from the highest status family, or the comm's most important event of the year is a part of their backstory.

Game play in *Fifth Season* also plays out on two different levels: the comm level and the character level. The comm level plays in seasons, normally four per year (barring the dreaded Fifth Season). Each season may feature a seasonal event, which affects the comm — and the people in it — in different ways. The last part of creating a comm is "The Year Before," determining the seasonal events and effects of the year prior to the start of the game and the story.

The character level plays out in the more traditional *AGE* system scenes, encounters, and action rounds, and looks at the day-to-day lives of the characters, including their opportunities to intervene in seasonal events. For example, the Game Moderator may plan an adventure around the "Mysterious Stranger" seasonal event wherein the characters interact with the visitor to their comm and help to unravel the mystery surrounding them. Rather than rolling the usual comm Leadership test for the event, how the characters perform in the adventure determines whether or not the comm gains a bonus activity or suffers a loss of Stability as a part of that season.

In this way, a *Fifth Season* game might pass one or more seasonal turns, looking at how things progress in the comm, before shifting focus back to the character level, as the characters deal with the events of the past months and perhaps have an unrelated story or intervene in the events of the current season. Like characters, comms can lose and regain Stability, gain conditions (like Afflicted or Disrupted), advance and improve, and even face the possibility of assimilation or dissolution if their traits or Stability drop too low.

Of course, there is also the ever-looming possibility of a Fifth Season, a geological event leading to an ecological catastrophe the comm must struggle to survive. In this case, the rules change and seasonal events differ, the comm's prosperity and survival are more difficult, and tests to maintain the comm are more challenging. Stories at the character level are often about survival and intervening to help ensure the comm and make it through to whenever the Fifth Season will end, but only the Game Moderator knows for certain.

that can be raised up to provide watch-posts (or sniping positions) but also lowered and wheeled back away from the wall to make it harder for anyone climbing over it to find a place to climb down on the other side. These wagon-mounted watch-posts are rotated in position regularly for the sake of security, something the comm children often enjoy watching.

Much of the building construction is sod-covered domes, offering good insulation to keep the interiors warm or cool compared to the outside temperature, and even providing extra green space to grow simple herbs and similar fare. Semi-circular windows, often with curved eaves over them, let in some light, but can be shuttered or blocked off with curtains as desired. Much of the interior construction is clay along with some stonework, although furnishings and fixtures are primarily made of wood.

There's a good-sized green within the walls, and Nuveen's storecache is a broad concrete bunker stacked with shelves and bins. Nuveen grows akaba, apples, corn, greens, legumes, mela, mushrooms, oranges, wheat, and yams. There's a smaller concrete well-house and geothermal tap that draws upon hot sub-surface water that is run through pipes into the buildings to heat them and provide hot water. Next to that is a central bath-house with waist-deep pools of steaming water. Most of the comm uses it rather than having bathing facilities in their homes beyond a basin, running hot water, and wash-cloths. Rain barrels around the comm collect and filter rainwater and there is also water available from both Lake Sana and the nearby stream that feeds into it as well.

The comm has a creche where the children are cared for and taught, just across from the green. Although education is prized in the comm, that hasn't prevented various trade roles from remaining filled. Nuveen has a baker, a butcher, a skilled carpenter, a cooper (barrel-maker), several fine stoneknappers, and a regionally-famed glass smithy. Some members of the comm gather reeds from Lake Sana and weave them into baskets and other containers. The comm's weaving and leatherwork are a bit limited, and they trade for textiles and fine leather goods. Metalwork is surprisingly good, as Nuveen is indulgent enough toward

Innovators that some have bothered to study metallores, primarily for making jewelry, ornaments, or small items.

## RECENT HISTORY

The past year has been difficult for Nuveen in some regards. A traveling lorist visited last Spring, bringing news and stories from along the road and far-off comms toward the south. Some feel the visit led to a slackening of work within Nuveen, but they're mainly just looking for someone or something to blame. The Summer came on hotter and drier than usual, and some of the crops failed or underproduced during the drought. The nearby stream dried up and more work was needed to haul water to the comm from the lake. Fortunately, Foh-Bak Innovator had recently started a filtration project that allows some water recycling.

The Winter was lean due to the poor harvest, and Leadership instituted careful rationing of food stocks. Hunters ranged wider from Nuveen in search of suitable game, but a hunting party instead ran afoul of some hungry predators in the winter months and some of them were killed, others injured. Nuveen Strongbacks organized a larger party to hunt down and kill or chase off the predators before they became a more serious threat. The Strongbacks succeeded, resulting in a small celebration within the comm (and weeks of some Strongbacks strutting about proudly, whether they had earned the accolade or not).

The harsh Winter put a damper on the annual Innovation Fair and shifted its focus to be a bit more practical than usual. Some improvements to hunting snares and traps were approved and implemented, with Innovators working with Strongback hunters, which also soothed feathers ruffled by Strongback boasting and fireside stories. As Spring approaches, Nuveen rallies and hopes for a better and more prosperous year, with plans to supplement their plantings and livestock with some added hunting and gathering out in the wilderness.



# STRESS FRACTURES

**S**tress *Fractures* is a two-part scenario designed for starting characters and players new to *Fifth Season Roleplaying*. The first part introduces players to the setting and mechanics, while the second part increases the pressure as the players apply the knowledge they've learned in a higher-stakes situation.

Characters are residents of Nuveen brought together to investigate disturbances and ensure community welfare. They're initially dispatched to look into recent crop thefts, as well as to keep the peace in the face of mob justice. After a brief whodunnit, the characters conclude their investigation and bring the thief to the headwoman's office. They arrive to a scene of panic; someone was murdered. Once again, it's up to the characters to get to the bottom of things, this time with much greater stakes. Especially when a furious mob claims that one of the suspects is an orogene.

## CONTENT WARNING

This scenario contains descriptions of dead people, physical combat, and violent mobs.

## BACKGROUND

The past year has plagued Nuveen with poor growing conditions, thanks to a scorching summer and related drought (see **Recent History**). Although the water reclamation project lessened the drought's impact (see **Foh-Bak: Innovator**), everyone's hungry, food caches are at the lowest they've been in over a decade, and nerves are wearing thin. While everyone has at least briefly entertained the idea of taking more than their share of food, actually acting on that dark impulse would undoubtedly bring worse consequences than going hungry.

Every comm punishes food theft harshly, even during normal seasons. During crisis, every scrap of food means a better chance of survival for the entire community. Put bluntly, ration thieves put the survival of the entire comm in jeopardy. And it's even worse if the comm discovers the stolen food before they uncover the thief. When people realize that a trusted member of their society has betrayed them, suspicions and tempers flare, destroying loyalties and sending the comm on the road to bloodshed.

And that's exactly what Headwoman Tan'esh is looking to avoid. For the past week, she's been receiving isolated reports of damage to crops. Taken individually, these reports are little more than the usual problems with harvest and farm work. But this much minor damage in such a short span of time can only mean someone has been stealing crops from the fields. Tan'esh and the farmer Bomari have agreed to keep things quiet to prevent vigilante violence. In the meantime, they need people who can keep their mouths shut and work quickly because it's only a matter of time before someone else figures it out.

The suggested backstory and entry point for the characters is that Headwoman Tan'esh recently (about two months ago) organized the characters as part of an impartial investigation team. The original idea was to handle some of the bickering that is inevitable when people live in close quarters under stress. Even if several of the characters are related, this concept holds up, as the selection was completely random; if characters on the team are kin, it was simply luck of the draw.

## CHARACTERS

All characters presented below also have the comm name Nuveen, which would be used among outsiders (e.g. Tan'esh Leadership Nuveen). In casual conversations, some residents omit title and caste names (e.g. Tan'esh).



## HOME IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

*Stress Fractures* assumes that you're playing in the comm of Nuveen, however you can adapt this scenario to any comm in *Fifth Season Roleplaying*. The first part of the story assumes your comm has a farm, which is likely true. The murder mystery centers on a glass smithy, which might not exist in your comm. If so, it can be substituted for any other labor-intensive shop or work crew, such as builders, foresters, knappers, etc.

If you're adapting *Stress Fractures* to fit your comm, be sure to adjust the character names and possibly their descriptions; Nuveen is a relatively cosmopolitan comm, with citizens of heritages from across the Stillness. If your comm is more homogenous, you'll want to ensure the people are portrayed as such.

- **BOMARI STRONGBACK:** Bomari is a farmer at the comm's crop fields. He's gruff and bad with people, thanks largely to working long hours alone at the farm. He's been stewing on his anger over the thefts all day and would love to take it out on someone.
- **CHAGO RESISTANT:** Chago is a sanitation worker, responsible for keeping the area around the glass smithy clean, as well as making sure that the somewhat toxic water in the quenching pool doesn't leak. He heard the fight between Danit and Mino and reports the likely death of Danit to Tan'esh.
- **JOURNEYER DANIT STRONGBACK:** Danit starts the scenario (off-screen) as a grumpy and argumentative glass-smith. By **Scene 4**, he is Nuveen's first murder victim in a generation.
- **FOREMAN FUHAR INNOVATOR:** Fuhar is the only non-Strongback at the glass smithy. He's responsible for the intensive math and analysis that goes into creating the strongest glassware and sharpest tools, as well as managing the opinionated workers within the smithy. He has gotten used to keeping things civil, but today will test him.
- **KALIT BREEDER:** Kalit is a stonelore teacher at Nuveen's school, making him one of Peko's instructors. He's also Danit's half brother. Although he regularly lectures children on staying calm and working things out with their words, it will be hard for him to heed his own words when he learns his half brother has been murdered.
- **KANNA INNOVATOR:** Kanna is a crop scientist at the farms. She's responsible for analyzing soil and weather conditions and planning crop planting and harvesting cycles, which sometimes puts her at odds with the more hands-on farmers. Although she has a flippant attitude among people, she takes her job seriously.
- **MINO STRONGBACK:** Mino is the older of the two apprentices at the glass smithy, having worked there for the better part of a decade. She's been on the wrong end of a one-sided feud with Danit for most of that time.
- **NO'O RESISTANT:** No'o is a new worker at the farms. After a small outbreak of crop-eating insects last year, Tan'esh appointed him to ensure that neither insects nor any other form of contamination would spoil or blight Nuveen's food supply. After his transfer from working in the middle of the comm to essentially being alone, he's grown a bit resentful.
- **OHOJ STRONGBACK:** Ohoj is the other apprentice at the smithy and is just barely old enough to have a use-name. She is a young woman and has a secret infatuation with Mino.
- **PEKO:** One of the older and larger children in Nuveen, Peko is also one of the hardest working. In addition to learning stonelore at school, he's been working as a laborer for his parents, leading him to also be one of the hungriest people in the comm as well as its first crop thief in a decade.
- **JOURNEYER SADI STRONGBACK:** Sadi has been working at the glass smithy for nearly three decades and is a deeply competent woman. This means that she's the most experienced smith willing to train the apprentices, a fact that has put her at odds with Danit in the past.
- **HEADWOMAN TAN'ESH LEADERSHIP:** Tan'esh is the first person that the characters will meet in the scenario. She is the elderly leader

## STRESS FRACTURES

## DON'T START NO SHIT

Although the confrontations in this scenario can be solved through violence, doing so is a poor idea and players should be aware of this. Everyone in the scenario lives in the same comm as the characters and is someone they will undoubtedly meet again. Not only does permanent injury or death weaken the comm as a whole, it also makes it far less likely anyone will trust the characters with anything important. After all, who wants to be friends with a skull-cracking brute who looks to violence as a first resort? Solving *Stress Fractures*'s tense situations without hurting anyone demonstrates that the characters care about their comm and the people who live in it.

This does not mean that the characters can't be aggressive or that an additional death is a game-ending event. It simply means that there are deep social consequences for allowing the situation to get out of hand (as detailed in **Epilogue**, p. 29).

of the comm, deliberate and fair. Her age and injuries impair her mobility, but not the respect she commands.

- **WEIMI STRONGBACK:** Weimi is a member of the forestry team that ensures the comm is safe from outsiders and has fresh protein from wild game. She's also Danit's wife and has been hearing about every mistake (real or perceived) that Mino has made over the past few years. As a result, she does not like Mino and will be quick to anger when suspicion of her husband's murder falls onto her least favorite member of the smithy.

## SCENE 1

## BRIEFING

### SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Two months ago, Headwoman Tan'esh had the adults of Nuveen draw straws to create an independent investigation team: the characters. As Tan'esh has difficulty moving around the comm, forming this team allowed her to gather facts about disputes without needing to spend most of her days hobbling around. Today, the investigators are called to deal with a grave problem: the first case of food theft in a decade.

If you're short on time, you can start the characters at **Scene 2: The Fields** and have Bomari explain how badly crop theft disrupts comm life. If you're *very* short on time, you can start the characters at **Scene 4: New Problems**, completely skipping the introduction to the setting and mechanics of *Fifth Season Roleplaying*.

## HEADWOMAN'S OFFICE

The Headwoman calls the characters into her office and swears them all to secrecy before she'll tell them why. Once assembled and sworn to silence, she explains that someone in the Comm has been stealing crops and that they need to investigate it quietly and discreetly, bringing the culprit to her so she can figure out how to deal with them. Under no circumstances are they to allow Bomari to mete out justice in the fields.

## SOCIAL INVESTIGATION

Both of *Stress Fractures*'s Investigation scenes blend social aspects into their leads and clues. In addition to the stated unlocking methods, you can provide clues to the players for asking insightful questions, roleplaying through the witness interviews, or simply jumping to the correct conclusion.

In fact, if your group prefers to stay in character, you and your players might roleplay through the questioning of witnesses, unlocking clues entirely through conversation, instead of pausing to roll dice periodically. Alternatively, you can keep the conversational roleplaying to a minimum, relying entirely on the unlocking methods detailed in each of the leads to advance the investigation.

### TAN'ESH — HEADWOMAN

ATTITUDE: +2

**GOAL:** Swear the team to secrecy & send them to the farm

**THOUGHT:** "This could crack our village's peace."

Tan'esh is the elderly Headwoman of Nuveen. She's held the position for the past forty years, longer than most of the residents can remember. For most of Nuveen, Tan'esh is the Leadership use-caste. Though her olive-brown skin is a little weathered these days and she finds getting around difficult, even with her cane, she's still the most well-known and respected person around. Over the course of her life, she's faced a great number of challenges; she knows exactly the kind of strife that can result from a comm finding out that a trusted member has been stealing food.

She'd like to impart decades of knowledge to the characters before they make their way to the scene of the murder, but she knows that's impossible. She also knows that overloading them with advice is only going to make them panicky when they need to be at their sharpest, so she's sending them off as soon as she can. She'll answer questions if she must, but she doesn't know much more than the bare facts: there are damaged crops that suggest crop theft out on the farm, and it could be anyone in the comm.

*"Good, you're all here. Shut the door and lock it. We have much to discuss."*

*Tan'esh's husky voice normally cuts through the noise, as loud as anyone else you could think of. It occurs to you that this is the first time you've heard her speak quietly.*

*"Before we begin, I'll need your word that you will not discuss this with anyone besides Bomari and myself. Not spouses. Not parents. No one. This is deadly serious. Over the past five days, crops have been damaged. Not vandalized or trampled as though careless children blundered through, but as if someone has been taking the comm's food for their own."*

*"You might remember twelve years ago when this happened last. A week's worth of cachebread went missing, and the quartermaster on duty was nearly torn to pieces before we discovered what had happened. And that was during a good harvest year. This year? With the drought and poor harvest? Someone's going to die if we don't handle this."*

## SCENE 2

### THE FIELDS

#### EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

As the characters arrive on the farm, Bomari is on hand to greet them. Although he's not much of a people person, he's fiercely protective of the plants and wants to see someone punished for the damage done to them. The other farmhands Kanna and No'o aren't far off, and the investigators can easily get the three farmers in one spot to interview them all if they like.

Despite the heavy suspicion on No'o, he's not to blame, a fact that will shame Bomari and Kanna, although the investigators will have to learn that first.

## INITIAL LEADS

At the beginning of the scene, the investigators don't have many leads. They know that Bomari asked for help, so talking with him is an obvious first step, but Kanna and No'o are also available to speak with. Although they were informed of the **Dead Corn**, the characters weren't told where the damaged stalks are. If they decide to search for corn without help anyway, one of the farmers finds them before they spot the damaged corn.

### BOMARI—FARMER

ATTITUDE: +0

**GOAL:** Make whoever hurt his plants pay

**THOUGHT:** "No'o must've stolen them. That greedy kid!"

*Bomari has dark brown skin and short, straight black hair. He's barefoot, although that fact clearly doesn't bother him. You've heard that he's been working the fields of Nuveen since he was a child, and he's nearly 40 now. Even though farm work takes a lot of hands and can be a social activity, he doesn't seem to have too many friends. Maybe because he spends most of his time away from the other Strongbacks of the farm, caring for the crops and soil.*

*Because of this, he's a little gruffer than the other farmers. On a good day, he might treat unwited guests to the farm—like you—brusquely. Today? He's been stewing in his anger over the damage to the crops all day long and is looking to take it out on someone.*

Bomari has mixed feelings about the characters. On one hand, he appreciates that the Headwoman has sent out someone to help. On the other, he feels that it's his job to mete out justice on behalf of the farm and doesn't want these investigators to get in his way. As far as his fellow farmhands, he could take them or leave them. When the group meets the farmhands, Bomari glares at No'o, providing the investigators with the lead **Bomari & No'o**. Even if they don't officially have the lead, there's nothing stopping them from asking Bomari (or any of the farmhands) about their co-workers.

### DEAD CORN

If asked, Bomari takes the investigators to the corn (see **Dead Corn** under **Crops** on p. 20) and complains bitterly about how early harvesting has killed the two stalks and may have ruined the remaining ears, leaving the comm short on food during this already rough growing season.

### BOMARI & KANNA

Bomari distrusts Kanna's education and believes she doesn't understand farming, growing increasingly frustrated with her leadership. Although he has no reason to think that she'd steal the apples and corn, he certainly doesn't like her.

### LEAD: BOMARI & NO'O

No'o irritates him, and he thinks of the crop nurse as a stupid child. Observant investigators may notice that he's holding back something, although they're not sure why since he clearly doesn't like the man.

**UNLOCKING METHOD:** TN 10 Communication (Persuasion) or Perception (Empathy)

*"I'm not trying to be a gossip like that loudmouthed kid Chago, but I've heard that No'o's eaten food that wasn't part of his share before. I don't have details or any proof, but that kid's dumb enough that it's probably true. What kind of a rusting idiot eats food that's not theirs?"*

Bomari lays out his suspicions, giving the investigators the lead **No'o's Past** (see **No'o — Crop Nurse**).



## RUNNING AN INVESTIGATION SCENE

**Investigations** on p. 11 provides the basic rules of investigations—the GM provides **leads**, the characters try to decipher the leads, and if the characters succeed the GM reveals the associated **clue**. For *Stress Fractures*'s mysteries, many leads and clues are provided for you. These investigation scenes also explain the underlying facts of the cases, in case you or the players do something unexpected. For example, the Exploration Stunt **Extra Information** provides an extra clue, which you can improvise on the fly or take from another lead.

**The Fields** and **The Smithy** have sections for the witnesses and physical evidence, allowing you and your players to focus on one part of the scene at a time, but you don't have to. If your players would rather split their characters up to investigate everything at once, there's plenty for everyone to do, although you'll want to switch between players frequently to ensure that no one gets bored.

Each witness has a short biography that explains their current Attitude to the investigators, goal for the scene, and a thought that drives their actions. Following the witness bios is a list of their responses to common questions that may come up when the investigators question them. Many leads in *Stress Fractures* come from these conversations.

The team can solve some of these during the conversations, but most leads have their own section. These sections have at least one suggested **unlocking method**—a test or other factor that provides the lead's clue. Don't feel limited to the suggested unlocking methods; if a character successfully tries a tack that seems reasonable to you, feel free to award the clue.

Several of these leads create chains of evidence, where one lead unlocks the next lead, which unlocks the next, and so on. Don't be afraid to skip ahead in these chains if the players or their characters make good guesses or leaps of insight.

The basics of each investigation are generally simple enough and the tests easy enough that—by the end—the characters should understand what happened. That said, bad luck and paths left untaken may mean that the characters don't fully understand *why* the events happened.

### KANNA — CROP SCIENTIST ATTITUDE: +1

**GOAL:** Learn why the investigators are here and help  
**THOUGHT:** "No'o's clumsiness is probably to blame here."

*Although Kanna is an Innovator, you know she loves her work in the fields. You've never seen her outdoors without her broad-brimmed cane hat and its distinctive notch cut out of the side. You've seen her use it to keep the sun out of her ocher-brown face, occasionally rotating her headwear so that sun can shine through to illuminate whatever she's examining up close. Though thin for someone of Midlatter blood, she stands just as tall as anyone else on the farm. Her job is to monitor conditions on the farm and make calculated decisions as to planting locations, times, and methods. Rumor has it that her Innovator perspectives on farm management have caused friction between her and Bomari.*

Kanna is flippant, but earnest in her desire to protect the crops and keep the comm safe. She is not initially aware of the crop theft, although she does know about the damaged corn. She's also smart enough to ask the investigators why they're at the farm, even as she mentally connects the dots and figures it out on her own. If they lie to her, she says the following and her Attitude drops to -1.

*"Don't insult me. There's a pattern of damaged corn stalks, and you're here looking even more inquisitive than you were when you handled my cousin's disputes with her neighbor's fence. If I'm under suspicion because you must follow all logical paths to their conclusion, so be it. But don't lie to me."*

If she is accused of the theft, she becomes angry, although she will not try to shift the blame to someone else; she believes that whatever evidence is present in the field and orchard will point to the real guilty party. When suspicion falls onto No'o, she assumes that he ate the food, but that it was just a mistake. She doesn't think that he's selfish enough to do it deliberately, but believes he's thoughtless enough to have done it accidentally. If Bomari is blamed, she will be near-certain that the characters have made a mistake and will say so.

### KANNA & BOMARI

*"I have a leadership role here on the farm and take an analytical and math-driven approach to farming. Which is to say that Bomari hates half of everything I say. I appreciate his candor and honest criticism, though. Which only makes him angrier at me. Honestly, that man is a bit high strung."*

Although Kanna and Bomari regularly butt heads, she doesn't take it personally and mostly just sees the old farmhand as a yappy coworker.

### KANNA & NO'O

Although Kanna believes that No'o's probably to blame, she's reluctant to throw him under the cart and will simply say that he's a good kid, albeit absentminded.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 10 Communication (Persuasion)

*"Please understand that this is just a hypothesis, not fact or even a strongly held opinion. But there's a non-zero chance that No'o accidentally damaged the crops and then ate them to prevent waste. I've heard Bomari make oblique insults that suggest that something like that might have happened before in the past."*

As Kanna's quick to point out, she has no evidence that No'o is behind the crop damage, and she doesn't believe it was done out of malice or greed. She is fairly certain that she's correct, though, which gives the investigators the lead **No'o's Past** (see **No'o — Crop Nurse**).

### CROP DAMAGE

Kanna thinks she can save the ears with care, although taking care of them will take time away from her other duties. Ordinarily, she'd delegate it to No'o, but she doesn't trust him as much as she'd like to at the moment. She's more than willing to take the investigators to inspect the **Crops**, especially since she'd like another opportunity to examine the corn.

### NO'O — CROP NURSE ATTITUDE: +1

**GOAL:** Find out who the thief is and clear his name  
**THOUGHT:** "Oh! Investigators. How exciting!"

*No'o is the farms' newest worker and only Resistant use-caste member. His relatively light skin has gotten quite a bit tanner over the past year that he's been working in the fields, though still not nearly as dark as Bomari or Kanna. You used to see him working in the center of the comm, tending to the sick, as well as clearing out all sorts of waste and infectious substances. Despite no longer having to deal with sewage, he doesn't seem happy being assigned to the farm. Having met the brusque Bomari and the witty Kanna, you can guess why. You're trying to take this into account as he bounces up to you, excited to chat. But is his excitement because he hasn't had enough social interaction or something else?*

No'o enjoys working with Bomari and Kanna, although it's rare that he gets to spend more than a few minutes with either as he patrols the fields looking for signs of pests, blight, or other dangers. He was the first

to notice a stalk of corn damaged (where an ear of corn was removed), although his attention on the crops is more their overall health, so he completely missed what this meant, writing it off as accidental laborer damage, instead of deliberate theft. If the topic of missing corn comes up, he'll be able to put two and two together and realize what happened. He'll likely blurt it out, making him sound guilty. He did not notice damage to any of the other crops.

Complicating his reputation, he was in charge of disposing of the beetle-ruined crops last year. Not wanting to waste the grains and fruit—or carry them all the way to the compost bins, he simply ate the crops. He wasn't supposed to, but it was no longer technically food, so not actually against the rules. Tan'esh *did* say she didn't care how he got rid of it. This history of eating food outside of his share will come up, casting more suspicion on him. He will not bring this fact up without direct questioning about eating food he wasn't supposed to.

### NO'O & BOMARI

No'o believes that he gets along well with Bomari, although he admits that getting a word out of Bomari can be a chore.

### NO'O & KANNA

Between his two coworkers, he vastly prefers Kanna, mainly because the two are closer in age and she always has something interesting to tell him. He almost never understands what she's talking about, but he thoroughly enjoys hearing her speak passionately about her interests.



### LEAD: NO'O'S PAST

If the investigators ask No'o about the rumors about his past that Bomari's heard, his smile immediately drops from his face, and he looks betrayed and shamed. He does not, however, offer why without further prompting.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Communication (Persuasion)

*"Yeah. It's true, OK? I ate food outside my share last year. But I didn't make that call on my own. Headwoman Tan'esh told me to dispose of a few pounds of diseased grain, so I did. By eating it. I wasn't stealing from the comm; it wasn't the comm's food anymore. Rusting Earth, it didn't even still count as food. If anyone besides a Resistant had tried eating it, they might have died."*

If Bomari or Kanna overhear this admission or are told of it, they immediately apologize and realize that the crop thief isn't one of them.

## CROPS

By examining the corn and apple crops, the group spots tracks that point to an outsider. The investigators can start with **Dead Corn** after speaking with any of the farmhands.

### DEAD CORN

The farmer leads the characters to the corn fields, pointing out two torn stalks. The heavy foot traffic around the stalks makes it impossible to identify who's been to these plants recently.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 10 Perception (Searching or Tracking)

**REVEAL:** The investigators spot a trail of indistinct footprints running perpendicularly through the neat rows of corn instead of following the well-worn paths between the rows. Although the trail's owner is unclear, they lead directly to the **Wounded Apples**.

### WOUNDED APPLES

Three of the apple trees have broken branches near eye-level, signaling missing fruit.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Intelligence (Evaluation) or asking a worker about these trees

**REVEAL:** These apples are immature. The crop thief picked them a few weeks too early, suggesting they don't know much about growing food, meaning it's unlikely that any of the farmers are to blame. The team also spots suspicious tracks leading away from the farm. If the investigators ask any of the farmers about that, they learn that none of the farmers live in that direction.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Once the characters learn that the crop thief isn't a farm worker, Bomari will insist on lying in wait to ambush the thief. If the characters try to trace the footprints beyond the farm, the tracks get lost in the heavy foot traffic. It seems likely that catching the culprit in the act is going to be the best option.

Thanks to the density of the bushes, the characters think they could hide here until the thief shows up and surprise them. At this point, the characters can send the farm staff away if they want to; otherwise, they'll all volunteer to participate in the stakeout. If the characters ask the staff to leave, Kanna and No'o will do so without issue, but persuading Bomari to stay away requires a successful **TN 13 Communication (Persuasion)** test.

## SCENE 3

# THE STAKEOUT

## SOCIAL/ACTION ENCOUNTER

With an hour or so to select and prepare hiding spots, the characters will have an easy time concealing themselves. Doing so is a **TN 12 Dexterity (Stealth) advanced test**, with a success threshold of 5 and enough time that they can improve their positions for as long as they'd like.

Shortly after dusk, Peko travels to the farm. If Bomari is present, he breaks cover and aggressively confronts the youth. Hiding for hours has done nothing to improve his temper; he's been imagining confronting the thief the entire time he's been waiting.

Peko has never been in any real trouble in his young life, let alone beset by a team of people hunting him. It won't even occur to him to run, despite being terrified, since he assumes that food thieves are always executed. The fact that Bomari seems ready to carry out that sentence with his shovel isn't helping matters. Peko has a small glass knife with him and enough panic adrenaline flowing that he might use it. Between the two of them, the characters will have to work hard to prevent the situation from escalating.

Calming Bomari is an **opposed** and **advanced test**, using a character's **Communication (Persuasion)** against Bomari's **Willpower (+2)**. Each successful test adds its Drama Die's result to a running total. If the investigators' running total meets or exceeds the success threshold of 10 within a minute (about five rolls), Bomari is placated. Players should use Social Stunts during this test. If the investigators fail to calm the farmer, he attacks Peko with the shovel. If this becomes an action encounter, both Bomari and Peko use the **Other Resident** stat block in the **Comm Residents** section.

Once the situation's deescalated, the characters can escort the hungry youth to the Headwoman's office without further problems.

## SCENE 4

# NEW PROBLEMS

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

After the players and their characters have gotten their feet wet, the stakes rise drastically.

## BACK IN THE OFFICE

Once the characters arrive at the Headwoman's office, they might notice that Chago is present. They instantly notice that Tan'esh is frantic. Not only is she not at her desk, but she's already gathered her shawl and walking stick. Whatever just happened is serious enough for her to head out in person. She tells Peko to sit down in her office and wait. Also, do not steal anything. She sends the players and Chago to the Glass Smithy with instructions to get to the bottom of things and to keep things calm until she can get there.

*As soon as you knock on the headwoman's door, someone yanks it open from the inside, grabbing whoever's closest and dragging them in. Tan'esh waves the rest of you in hurriedly, her eyes barely glancing over Peko, a far cry from the concern she had over his identity earlier today. As you start to speak, she cuts you off.*

*"Peko, go sit over there and hush. As for you, my independent investigators, I need you to keep this comm. from tearing itself apart again. I need you to run to the glass smithy, and I do mean run. Chago, tell them what you told me."*

*You finally see Chago, a young Resistant boy whom you've seen working near the glass smithy. He's covered in sweat and nearly out of breath, making it hard for him to deliver the following:*

## PEKO — HUNGRY STRONGBACK YOUTH ATTITUDE: +1

**GOAL:** Avoid all threats, real & imagined

**THOUGHT:** "What have I done? What's going to happen?"

Peko is a tall and well-built 14-year-old boy who finds it hard to pay attention in school, let alone help his parents build and maintain buildings. Although he's still attending creche, his growth spurts have made him so tall and strong that his parents have filled his free time with construction work, despite the awkwardness his growth spurts have also brought. Though not yet an adult, he's one of the tallest people in Nuveen, standing close to six-and-a-half-feet-tall. His brown Midlatter skin provides gentle contrast to his dark tan clothing, which he's nearly outgrown. Although he knows better than to steal food, his growling stomach has been merciless, especially with the heavy labor his parents have had him doing after school.

Peko doesn't know Bomari, but he feels great remorse for stealing and would love to make it up to the farmer somehow. At the same time, he's deeply afraid that something bad will happen to him, as this is essentially the first time he's ever gotten into serious trouble. He's convinced that he'll be executed for this if not slain on the spot. Although it takes no effort to get Peko to confess to stealing the crops, calming him down is another matter.

If anyone is badly wounded in this scene, he becomes Frightened of anyone who's been aggressive towards him, attacking only in response to being attacked. If he believes anyone present has been killed, he drops his knife and has a panic attack, becoming Helpless.

*"I think Danit's dead. I heard him yelling. He's always yelling, but I heard a glass explosion and him screaming like he was mad about that. Then, someone screamed that she wanted him to go away forever. She picked up something heavy and CRACK! CRACK! Right in his face! There was a loud, wet sound like someone smashing a mela open. Everyone but him started screaming after that. He's a jerk, but I didn't think anyone would actually kill him."*

## CHAGO — WITNESS

ATTITUDE: +2

**GOAL:** Tell what he knows, follow the team, and spread the word

**THOUGHT:** "This is such a scandal. Everyone should know!"

Chago is a pale and lanky young man. His height and long fingers prove useful for getting hazardous substances out of tricky locations. Thankfully, he's a Resistant, so such hazards are less likely to affect him. Not only has he proven himself to be one of the more efficient Resistants at dealing with industrial byproducts, he's the one who reinforced the seal on the glass smithy's quenching pool, which prevents the occasionally toxic water from seeping out into the groundwater. Chago is an excitable person and regularly exaggerates details.

Unfortunately for everyone involved, he's completely right that someone killed Danit. He doesn't know who was yelling with him, although the voice sounded feminine, which probably rules out Fuhar, the smithy foreman. Chago leaps to the assumption that Mino was the one yelling and concludes that she must be the killer; this is perfectly reasonable and even something that you should steer the characters toward, as it is the first red herring in the murder mystery.

Careful characters will notice that Chago could not have seen the murder, despite his excited and detailed account of the killing. He will not freely admit that he is not actually an eyewitness, nor will he even think to mention it; he heard it, which is good enough for him. Anyone with at least a 1 in Communication or Perception can roll a **TN 12 Communication (Investigation)** or **TN 12 Perception (Intuition)** test to spot the hole in his story. Players who notice Chago's error may decide their character does, too. He could not have seen anyone pick up or swing a heavy object.





Chago has spoken to everyone in the smithy within the past day or so and is on good terms with each of them. He informs the team that Mino and Danit had an ongoing grudge, so a murder wasn't completely out of the blue. He also suggests that Fuhar might have been in on it, since Mino is his daughter. This part isn't true; Chago is confusing Mino with Ohoj, who is Fuhar's daughter, something that anyone can roll a **TN 12 Communication (Investigation)** test to remember.

## SCENE 5

# THE SMITHY

## EXPLORATION/SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The characters arrive at the smithy where they're met by Mino, one of the smiths, who answers the door. She initially tells the team to go away, though she's too stunned by recent events to effectively hold the door shut. If the investigators tell Mino that they're there on behalf of the Headwoman, she wordlessly moves out of the way.

*The glass-smith Mino reluctantly moves back to let you pass. Inside the brick walls of the smithy, the air is oppressively hot and humid. Beads of liquid form on you in seconds. In the center of the circular building lies the quenching pool, a well at least twenty feet across and half as deep. The water inside looks unclean.*

*Chago might not be the most reliable person, but sadly, he was right about this; Danit is clearly dead, his face is covered in blood, with a small pool of it under his head. Mino closes the door behind your group and keeps looking at the body of Danit as if she expects it to get up. Besides her, Fuhar, Sadi, and Ohoj are the only other smiths present. The three are huddled together, with Ohoj sobbing while her father and Sadi try to console her.*

It's plain to see that everyone in the smithy is in shock. The smiths are all genuinely in emotional pain, which any Perception roll will verify. It takes no roll to tell that Ohoj is the most distraught, as she's the only one completely wracked by sobs at the moment. The investigators can and should talk to each of the witnesses and inspect Danit's body to piece

together what happened. As explained in the **Social Investigation** sidebar in **Scene 2**, you should feel free to award clues if it seems organic to the conversations the investigators have with the smiths.

**Danit's Body** is an obvious place for the group to begin searching for clues, although talking to **Mino — Senior Apprentice** is also a good starting point, especially since the investigators have already spoken with her, albeit briefly. She's also the only smith currently standing, as Sadi and Fuhar are sitting on the floor, consoling Ohoj. Particularly suspicious investigators might try talking to **Fuhar — Smithy Foreman** or **Sadi — Smithy Mentor** anyway, who will grudgingly oblige. In fact, there's only one avenue of investigation that's closed at the beginning on this scene: interrogating the traumatized Ohoj. See **Ohoj — Junior Apprentice** for details on why.

## INVESTIGATION PROGRESS

There are a few crucial facts that the group needs to uncover during this investigation:

- Mino was facing away from Danit when he died.
- There were two impact sounds, not an impact and an echo.
- Ohoj was the only one looking at Danit when he died.
- Ohoj has a sling with her.

After the investigators discover the first of those clues, they may notice that a crowd is beginning to form around the smithy with a successful **TN 12 Perception (Hearing)** test. This is especially true if they didn't take Chago with them into the smithy, as this growing mob is largely here because of Chago's incessant gossiping about the killing. Even if he was kept inside the smithy and asked not to tell onlookers what's going on, he's still managed to blab enough to attract attention.

Once the Headwoman's team uncovers the second clue, they notice the crowd swelling to dozens of people. (If the investigators didn't already know the crowd was there, this is an even bigger shock.) There is no need for players to roll to try to disperse the crowd. It's not possible. The gathered people are comm members who've just learned that one of their

neighbors is dead, possibly murdered; there are few forces on the Stillness that can make them go home and wait it out.

After the investigators find the third clue and seem as though they could use an extra challenge, you can announce that they spot Danit's wife Weimi and his half brother Kalit and transition to **Scene 6: Rogga Riot**. Otherwise, you can wait until they have all four clues before moving to the next scene. If your players seem really engaged in the investigation, you can even continue this scene for a few more clues. Beyond the characters needing the above facts, there's no official time to transition to the next scene, but a good guideline is to do so once the investigation starts running out of steam.

## PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Although **Danit's Body** is the most obvious piece of evidence, there are other leads to run down.

### LEAD: DANIT'S BODY

*As you get close to Danit's body, you're briefly stunned by the surreality of it all. You just saw Danit the other day. And now you'll never see him again. His face is crisscrossed by shallow cuts, as if someone flailed at him with a knife. A pair of bloody work tongs lie half on his body and half on the blood-covered floor. You're not sure you've ever seen so much blood in one place before. It's pooled around his body, mostly his head.*

As soon as the investigators get close to Danit's body, two leads become obvious: the **Cuts** and the **Bloody Tongs** nearby. The group can start with either of those leads or perform a more thorough search of the deceased.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Intelligence (Medicine)

There's a small rock embedded in the back of Danit's head. With him lying down and the pool of blood surrounding him, it was hard to notice, but now becomes obvious. The rock is clearly the cause of death, although it's unclear if it got there through **Accident or Violence**.

Investigators wishing to examine the stone more thoroughly find that the information isn't terribly helpful; it is a type of marble found throughout the comm, including the unswept areas of the smithy.

### LEAD: CUTS

Danit has several small cuts across the left side of his face and a large one that runs from his cheek to his scalp.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Intelligence (Medicine or Tinkering) or talking with the staff about the **Explosion**

The cuts are from a large piece of glass exploding near his face. The cuts are not the cause of death. Nor are they the source of the pool of blood; that's coming from a small stone in the back of his head.

### LEAD: BLOODY TONGS

There are a pair of heavy tongs next to Danit's body. They're about three feet long and made of about five pounds of iron, with a mineral coating to prevent warping under heat. The tongs have blood on them.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 11 Perception (Seeing) or speaking with the staff

The blood appears to all be on the handle, from lying in the pool of it underneath the body. Danit does not have any wounds matching the tongs, allowing the investigators to rule them out as the cause of death. If the investigators haven't already found the small stone, they automatically find it if they search **Danit's Body**.

## STRESS FRACTURES

## TIMELINE OF THE MURDER

To help keep the facts straight in case you need to improvise a lead and/or clue, this is the order of events:

- Danit improperly annealed a glass basin
- Mino pointed the error out
- The glass basin exploded in Danit's face
- Danit began yelling at Mino
- Mino told him she wanted him to leave her alone forever and turned away from him
- Danit raised his tongs as if to hit Mino in the back
- Ohoj hit Danit in the back of the head with her sling
- Danit died instantly and collapsed to the floor

### LEAD: ACCIDENT OR VIOLENCE

Although improbable, it's possible that Danit slipped and fell directly onto the rock, as Sadi suggests.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Perception (Seeing). Anyone with a focus in **Accuracy (Slings)** gains a +1 bonus to this roll.

While it may have been possible for Danit to slip after the argument with Mino, aside from the glass and body, the floor is well swept and free of stones. Unless Danit has the worst luck in the Stillness, he didn't accidentally fall on the only rock on the entire floor. This was murder.

It's far more likely the stone was flung with great force, like by a sling or by an orgene.

### LEAD: ECHO

Mino and Sadi claim to have heard an impact and its echo, where Fuhar suggests that the first impact was from the **Tongs** and the second sound was Danit's head hitting the ground. None of them are correct, and reconciling out this audio question will provide a major piece of the puzzle.

#### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Perception (Hearing) or Intelligence (Geomestry)

Although the smithy is never quiet, there are few flat surfaces inside the building. Regardless of how loud a sound the investigators make near Danit's body, they cannot cause an audible echo, certainly not one that would be audible over the sounds of the smithy while everyone's working.

The investigators come to the inescapable conclusion that the second sound was Danit's head hitting the ground, which means the stone hitting him in the skull was the first sound. But who did it? And how?

## MINO — SENIOR APPRENTICE ATTITUDE: +1

**GOAL:** Explain her side, no matter the cost

**THOUGHT:** "The truth will set me free."

*You know Mino as the older of the glass smithy's two apprentices. She usually seems somehow simultaneously thrilled and deeply calm about her craft. Her energy and devotion to glasswork mean that most of your past conversations have at least briefly touched on her work.*

*At 23, she still has much to learn about working glass and stone but has been trusted to make small bottles on her own before, something that she's very proud of. Her tanned skin marks her as having more than a little Midlatter in her, although her hair is closely cropped, long enough to keep sweat out of her eyes and no more. Under ordinary circumstances, Mino is calm and meticulous, a woman who wants to make her every project perfect. Unfortunately, today is far from ordinary.*

## LEAD: YELLING

Mino's not eager to get into trouble and hesitates when an investigator asks her about the yelling that Chago mentioned. She weakly suggests that sometimes there's yelling in the smithy, especially when there's something dangerous, like Danit's glass basin.

### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 10 Communication (Persuasion)

*"Fine. It was me. I tried to save that idiot. I told him his basin might shatter if he handled it. And I was right. And then things got worse."*

Mino explains that she noticed Danit skipped a step in annealing the glass basin he'd been working on, a critical error that caused it to explode in his face. It also immediately led to an **Argument** between the two.

## LEAD: ARGUMENT

Mino's less than thrilled about the prospect of admitting she got into a heated argument with Danit seconds before he died, but she trusts Headwoman Tan'esh, and by extension the team.

### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Communication (Persuasion)

*"I'm not proud of it, but we fought—not physically. He held his tongs like he wanted to hit me, and I yelled at him. I said," she falters for a moment. "I said that it would be better if he just went away forever. I didn't mean it. Not like that. But I walked away from him. I was going back to my station when I heard the crack. I can still hear the sickening echo."*

Mino claims she was facing away from Danit when she heard the crack of Danit hitting his head on the floor and its **Echo**, opening that lead in the **Physical Evidence**. If pressed about the **Echo**, Mino suggests she was mistaken and only heard one impact, even though this isn't actually true.

## EXPLOSION

Mino explains that annealing is the process of slowly cooling glass and is critical to all glasswork but especially pieces with complex, hollow shapes, like the water basin Danit had been working. She told him that it would require a slower process than normal, but he didn't listen, and the basin exploded, slashing his face badly.

## MINO & FUHAR

Mino sees Fuhar as an endless font of wisdom that mostly goes over her head. She absorbs as much as she can from him, which has led her to have an above average understanding of the chemistry and physics behind glass. She sometimes wonders if they'd be friends if the smithy didn't exist.

## MINO & SADI

Sadi is like a second mother to Mino; she's responsible for most of Mino's education in glass smithing, as well as most of the hugs and parental advice that she's received in the shop.

## MINO & OHOJ

Mino would like to get along well with Ohoj but thinks that the younger apprentice doesn't like her much. Despite Mino's attempts to get along, Ohoj often look away and pretends not to notice her, especially when Mino tries to make eye contact. Ohoj spends a lot of time on the other side of the shop, which Mino's come to accept.

## MINO & DANIT

Danit had been hard on her ever since she joined the shop, berating her for every mistake she made, regardless of how small. If asked, she'll say that she didn't hate him, nor did she want him dead. Nevertheless, she did shout, "I want you to leave me alone forever!" right before he died, which doesn't do much for her case.

## SADI — SMITHY MENTOR

ATTITUDE: +1

**GOAL:** Console Ohoj and protect Mino

**THOUGHT:** "It was self-defense! Mino should be spared!"

*You've seen Sadi around and even talked to her a few times. She's one of the most muscled women in the comm; her deep bronze arms are almost too big to fit in her leather work gauntlets. She's pulled her ashblow hair back and tied it every few inches, presumably to keep her thick hair from trapping too much heat in the already sweltering smithy. Despite only being 30, she's seemed downright matronly in your past interactions. Unsurprisingly, she's doing her best to console the distraught Ohoj.*

*It suddenly occurs to you that Sadi is now the senior-most Strongback in the smithy.*

## LEAD: YELLING

Sadi's somewhat evasive when asked about the yelling that Chago heard. She knows the shouting was between Danit and Mino, although she's not sure what caused it. Nevertheless, she's reluctant to point the finger at Mino and won't reveal more without pressure.

### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Communication (Persuasion)

*"It was Danit and Mino. It's not the first time they've butted heads, but it wasn't her. You have to believe me. She's not rusting capable of doing something like that!"*

As soon as she realizes that she's let slip that Danit and Mino had history together, she blanches, prompting the investigators to ask her about their **Argument**.

## LEAD: ARGUMENT

When asked about the fight, Sadi explains that Danit had been furious about an **Explosion** that Mino may or may not have caused. She says that Danit was holding heavy tongs as if he was going to hit Mino but must not have succeeded. She says that she looked away for just a moment and speculates that Mino ducked the attack or that Danit slipped and fell, cracking his skull on the floor. If the investigators don't already have the **Physical Evidence** lead **Accident or Violence**, her speculation provides it now.

She tries to leave it at the suggestion of an accident.

### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 13 Communication (Investigation)

or knowing that Danit neither slipped nor used the tongs

*"If he didn't hit himself or slip, then I guess Mino defended some other way—knocking him to the ground so hard I heard an echo from his head hitting the ground."*

Sadi's belief that there was an **Echo** opens that lead in the **Physical Evidence**.

## EXPLOSION

Sadi explains that Danit made a mistake in a glass basin's annealing process, although she concedes that it's possible that Mino distracted him somehow. She's certain Mino said something to him before the basin shattered.



## SADI & FUHAR

Sadi views Fuhar as a grandfatherly figure. He's a font of knowledge and part of her family, even if they're not related by blood.

## SADI & MINO

Sadi took Mino under her wing years ago and has been doing her best to train the apprentice. As such, she holds Mino in high esteem and wants to keep her safe, which will include stalling the investigation, as she believes that Mino killed Danit in self-defense, but is not sure how to explain it.

## YSADI & OHOJ

She's also Ohoj's mentor, although the youngest apprentice has had less time on the smithy floor, so Sadi doesn't have the same kind of bond with Ohoj as she has with Mino. Nevertheless, she deeply wants to keep Ohoj safe, as she sees the apprentice as a joy to work with and thinks Ohoj might one day be the comm's greatest smith.

## SADI & DANIT

Sadi never had the same kind of problems that the other women in the shop had with Danit, but she wasn't blind to the friction and insults that he'd spout. She got along with him but can't pretend that he was a kind man.

## FUHAR — SMITHY FOREMAN ATTITUDE: +2

**GOAL:** Prevent staff from being taken away

**THOUGHT:** "I could take the blame and end this now."

*Fuhar is the foreman of the glass smithy and one of the larger members of the comm, with round cheeks that would be cheery on any other day. Although his position is often held by a Strongback with experience working on the shop floor of the smithy, he barely holds a journeyer rating at glass smithing. Nevertheless, very few in the comm have any reason to complain about his performance. Instead of accumulating knowledge over years of working under a master glass smith, Fuhar's approached smithing with a rigorous system of experimentation and careful logging of results.*

*Because of this, the Innovator has the best understanding of what glass does under heat and pressure out of anyone in Nuween. He's even worked to make his findings available to the other workers in the smithy, as well as to create thermometers to allow them to better control the heat of their furnaces and annealers. He's old and grey enough to be a grandfather, although he and his husband's only child, Ohoj, is only 19 years old. Really, though, he thinks of all the members of the smithy as his children.*

## LEAD: YELLING

Fuhar immediately downplays the shouting, saying that it was just a simple misunderstanding.

**UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Communication (Investigation)**  
or **Perception (Empathy)**

*"All right. All right. Danit was getting into it with Mino again. But these things have always blown over in the past without any real problems. Is— is it wrong to say that I was proud of her for standing up for herself? I mean—before Danit..." Fuhar's voice cracks, and he pauses before whispering, "Before he died."*

Fuhar saw the argument blow up much like it always does. It wasn't the first argument that he's seen between the two, although Mino did stand up for herself harder than she had in the past. He was briefly proud of her for that and even prouder when she turned her back on Danit. At that

point, he thought the scuffle was over, so he turned away, and began going over plans for a new jar with Sadi.

Once the investigators know that Fuhar was downplaying a serious **Argument**, they realize he's likely covering for one of his staff. This suggests two important things: Fuhar's probably innocent, and someone else in this room probably isn't.

## LEAD: ARGUMENT

If the team learned there was more to the **Yelling** than Chago thought, Fuhar explains that Danit was holding a pair of tongs and looked like he might be mad enough to hit Mino with them. When Mino turned away, Fuhar assumed the fight was over and turned back to the piece he was working on. It doesn't take much to realize that's only half of the story.

**UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 13 Communication (Persuasion)**  
or **Perception (Empathy)**

*"I heard a crack and thought Danit had hit her. But by the time I turned around, he was falling to the floor, and his head made another soul-shattering crack. I don't know how Mino did it, but she must have defended herself somehow. Please, don't punish her."*

Fuhar is careful to clarify that he did not see Danit swing at Mino, nor did he see whatever she did to protect herself.

## EXPLOSION

Fuhar explains that Danit seemingly botched annealing the glass basin that he'd been working on. He's not sure why the experienced smith made such a mistake, although it sounded like Danit blamed Mino.

## FUHAR & MINO

Fuhar loves Mino like another daughter. She's taken quickly to his instruction and has even managed to teach him a few things in the years that she's been working at the smithy. She doesn't understand everything that he says, but she tries far harder than anyone else. He desperately doesn't want to see Mino taken away, executed, or exiled. That would be like losing two children in one day for him. Even though it's gauche to have a favorite child and Mino isn't related to him, she's his favorite; she has both the manual skill of an artisan and the mind of a scientist.

## FUHAR & SADI

He loves Sadi for her seemingly innate understanding of what glass thinks. She's worked hard to hone her understanding of the art, and he deeply respects that commitment as well as her compassion for the staff. He thinks of Sadi as a second co-parent.

## FUHAR & OHOJ

He loves his daughter, Ohoj. Although he has repeatedly told her that it's all business on the shop floor, he always makes sure that he checks her work first and offers her feedback that's far more detailed than he does for anyone else. She is also the only one in the smithy that he'll volunteer to help with a piece. When Ohoj collapses into tears, he's there in a flash, holding his baby girl again.

## FUHAR & DANIT

Even though Danit is brusque and rude, Fuhar sees him as a promising journeyer who has all the experience he needs to be a master. Fuhar is deeply saddened that Danit is dead.

## OHOJ — JUNIOR APPRENTICE ATTITUDE: +1

**GOAL:** Avoid talking or looking anyone in the eyes

**THOUGHT:** “Oh no. Oh no. Oh no...”

*You’ve heard generally good things about Ohoj. At 19, she’s the youngest of the smithy’s apprentices, though what she lacks in experience she more than makes up in passion. Her thick black hair is pulled back behind her head and tied off with a green ribbon. Her young face has delicate features and narrow eyes that suggest Western Coastal ancestry. As the most junior apprentice of the smithy, her job is to keep the shop clean and to make sure that everyone has what they need. If she’s received any favoritism by being the daughter of the foreman Fuhar, it doesn’t show.*

*At the moment, her father’s cradling her as she sobs inconsolably.*

At the beginning of this scene, anyone trying to interview Ohoj will be aggressively confronted by the rest of the smiths, who close ranks to protect her. Even if the group somehow separates her from the rest of the smiths, she’s initially physically and emotionally incapable of speaking.

Ohoj gradually calms down over the course of the encounter. Once they have inspected the body and interviewed the other three smiths, she’ll be ready to talk. Medically inclined characters may be able to get her cogent even faster with a successful **TN 15 Intelligence (Medicine)** or **Communication (Expression)** test.

### LEAD: YELLING

By the time the investigators speak with Ohoj, they should be aware of Danit and Mino’s argument. If not, Ohoj mutters, “Mino didn’t mean what she said,” which immediately ties the yelling to Mino.

### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 10 Communication (Investigation)

Once the group knows that Mino was the one yelling with Danit, they know to ask Ohoj about the **Argument**.

### LEAD: ARGUMENT

She says that Mino was walking away from Danit when he started to swing his tongs at her. She omits that Mino shouted at him, which the investigators should realize. She also omits that she killed him. Thorough investigators may notice these omissions and pressure Ohoj to admit the truth.

### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 14 Communication (Investigation)

*“It was me. I...I killed him. I’m so sorry.”*

Ohoj resumes sobbing after admitting that she killed Danit. Her tears are genuine, and her reason was just, although the investigators may not know that at this point. If anyone tries searching her for a sling, the rest of the smiths balk, but she makes no move to prevent it.

This admission shocks the rest of the staff and ends the interview scene. While this doesn’t necessarily end the scene, it’s very likely to.

### EXPLOSION

Ohoj heard Mino tell Danit that his annealing was wrong. She turned in time to see his basin explode.

### OHOJ & FUHAR

Ohoj desperately wants to prove herself worthy as a smith to her father. She has nothing but love and respect for him. She doesn’t think that she’s received any special treatment and was starting to wonder if Fuhar loved the rest of the smiths more than her, which she immediately realized wasn’t the case when he comforted her earlier.

### OHOJ & SADI

Ohoj adores Sadi and holds her in high regard, thinking of her as a mother. Ohoj wants to be more like Sadi.

### LEAD: OHOJ & MINO

Ohoj claims to not pay much attention to Mino and immediately realizes that her words have given something away. Ohoj has a history of ignoring Mino, regularly pretending to not hear her requests and giving Mino’s workspace the least amount of cleaning attention.

### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 13 Perception (Empathy)

*“I...I like her, OK? She’s pretty and strong and smart and...” Ohoj blushes and looks away from everyone.*

Ohoj admits that she has a crush on Mino, something that’s news to everyone else in the shop.

### LEAD: OHOJ & DANIT

Ohoj claims to have gotten along with the man but seems slightly evasive. but also admits she didn’t like him. and claims to have no specific reason for feeling that way.

### UNLOCKING METHOD: TN 12 Communication (Persuasion)

*“He was a jerk. He didn’t deserve that, but he was mean to me and Mino. Mostly Mino.”*

Ohoj briefly claims she didn’t have a reason for disliking Danit, but soon admits that she didn’t like how he treated Mino. She’s been holding this grudge for some time at least a few months. If the team doesn’t already know that Ohoj is infatuated with Mino, they gain the lead (or an additional attempt to unlock it)

## SCENE 6

# ROGGA RIOT

## SOCIAL/ACTION ENCOUNTER

Things will move quickly in this scene, especially if the investigators are still trying to figure out who really killed Danit. The basic beats of the scene are:

- The crowd forms outside the smithy, and Weimi and Kalit, Danit’s wife and half brother, begin banging on the door to the smithy, demanding answers.
- Weimi interprets any evidence provided in the most uncharitable fashion and concludes that in order to hit Danit from behind, Mino must be a roggia (a slur for an orogene).
- The mob tries to grab Mino and pull her away from the characters.
- Chaos ensues as Weimi, Kalit, and a furious crowd attempt to tear the comm apart.
- The investigators deal with each of the three problems simultaneously.

## THE CROWD

The crowd outside has gotten impossibly large and animated. The majority of the comm is outside, demanding justice for Danit. Weimi and Kalit are at the head of the crowd and demand entry to the smithy. Although it’s possible for them to force their way into the smithy, they won’t do so until they know who to grab. The characters should feel as though the crowd could burst in at any time and that negotiation is their best option.



It's important for the characters to remember that they are not police; their only authority comes from the headwoman, which essentially makes them her errand girls. They will have to rely on their own persuasion skills and quick thinking to keep things calm. It's also vital for them to remember that any further death is a terrible outcome; everyone present is not only an essential part of the comm's survival plan, but a friend, relative, or neighbor.

After a tense introduction to Weimi and Kalit, someone—possibly the investigators—mention in passing that Mino couldn't have killed Danit because she was facing away from him when he died. Weimi leaps to the conclusion that Mino could have, *if she were an orogene*. At soon as she makes that accusation, the crowd bursts into furious action, tearing the smithy door off its hinges and smashing out windows to get to Mino. Dozens of hands grab Mino and try to drag her off.

The characters can try to physically prevent the mob from dragging Mino away as an **advanced test** (p. 7). They have 3 rounds to meet or exceed the success threshold of **15**, with successful **TN 14 Strength (Intimidation or Might)** tests. Multiple characters can help, but only the highest Drama Die from a successful roll adds to the players' total. This test is deliberately designed to be difficult enough that most groups will fail.

If the investigators lose their hold on Mino, the scene enters its **Riot** phase with Mino in danger, as if the investigators had suffered a **minor consequence** (see **A Comm Divided** in the **Riot** section). This does not count against the investigators' 2 minor consequences.

If they succeed at keeping the mob from dragging Mino off, the scene enters its **Riot** phase without anyone in immediate danger.

## RIOT

There are effectively three challenges within this encounter that the characters must overcome:

- **THE FIREBRAND:** Kalit stirs up the crowd, making them further incensed and riotous, leading another group of investigators to try to beat him in a high-stakes debate.

## STRESS FRACTURES

- **THE WARRIOR:** Weimi demands justice and prepares to kill Mino (or Ohoj), forcing some of the investigators to defend Mino with words or weapons.
- **A COMM DIVIDED:** The crowd goes out of control, meaning that any characters not currently dealing with Weimi or Kalit must pacify their neighbors before a full-fledged riot breaks out.

The first two are **opposed advanced tests**, each of which has an effect on the other. The last is a **challenge test**, where the characters must keep the peace or risk more blood spilling in Nuveen. All three of these tests begin simultaneously and occur in action time, meaning that the investigators must choose who will deal with which test. Multiple characters can participate in the same test, and each successful roll generates SP that can be spent on stunts. However, only the highest Drama Die on a successful roll for a test counts toward that test's success threshold. To help players understand everything that's happening, you can mark each test's running total in a separate area.

To save time or reduce difficulty, you can omit **The Warrior**, saving Weimi's rage as a possible consequence of the investigators failing **The Firebrand**.

## THE FIREBRAND

While Kalit's demands are reasonable, he wants someone to punish and potentially exile *tonight*. So long as the well-liked stonelore teacher is shouting, things will continue to get worse. The investigators have several obvious methods of getting him to stop. Changing his Attitude towards the characters will eventually get through to him and make him realize what he's doing to the comm with his rhetoric. This can be combined with persuasion or other social acts. He can also be physically removed or prevented from speaking. Doing so may rile the crowd up more, but at least Kalit will cease stirring them up.

Until Kalit stops stirring the crowd up, he inflicts a -1 penalty to all of the investigator's Communication rolls.



Stopping Kalit is an **opposed advanced** test. The success threshold is **20**. The first side to meet or exceed the threshold successfully silences the other. If the investigators win, Kalit admits that he was being too hasty (or simply shuts up), ending his penalty. If Kalit wins, the characters who rolled against him cannot make Communication tests for the next round.

### KALIT — TEACHER

ATTITUDE: +1

**GOAL:** Capture his half brother's murderer

**THOUGHT:** "Weimi's instincts are usually right."

Kalit is a beautiful, bronze Sanzed man. He works as a stonelore teacher at Nuvenc's school and regularly has to mediate disputes between children. Despite this, he has just lost his half brother and wants to see someone pay. Though he's typically a calm, collected, and compassionate individual, he's at his breaking point. In addition to the children he teaches, he also has three of his own.

He doesn't live with his half brother, so he hasn't heard nearly as many negative stories about Mino. On the contrary, he was one of Mino's teachers many years ago, so he has a few positive memories of her (as well as Ohoj). In fact, there's no one present that he doesn't have generally positive feelings for. Of course, just because he likes someone doesn't mean that he's not going to try to capture whoever killed his half brother. He doesn't have the same bloodlust his hunter sister-in-law has, but he's willing to fight to ensure justice.

## THE WARRIOR

Weimi is furious and on the brink of violence. She can be talked down or fought. Talking Weimi out of fighting is an **opposed advanced test** with a success threshold of **20**. If the group wins, she puts her weapon down and rests a hand on her brother-in-law, calming him slightly. Mechanically, this adds 5 points to the investigators' total in the Firebrand advanced test and ends the penalty he imposes to Communication rolls. If these additional points push the characters' total past their threshold, they immediately win that test, as well.

If Weimi wins, she surges forward to attack whoever she thinks is to blame for her husband's death and fights until taken out. Her stats are listed on p. **30**.

If the investigators fight her, all rolls to calm the crowd receive a -1 penalty. If they successfully incapacitate her through violence, that penalty immediately ends.

If the team pacifies Weimi—through violence or emotional pleas—**A Comm Divided** becomes much easier; the maximum consequence for a failed roll is reduced to **moderate**. This does not remove any existing Dying conditions.

### WEIMI — HUNTER/GATHERER

ATTITUDE: +0

**GOAL:** See the murderer punished

**THOUGHT:** "That bitch Mino did it!"

Weimi is a tall, deep-brown Midlatter woman, with strong arms that currently hold a hunting spear. She's been married to Danit for nearly two decades and has a pair of young children at home. She is typically short with people, not out of anger or disdain, but simply because conversations in the forests where she works have to be brief to prevent spooking game. This personality trait makes it hard for her to have a conversation with the characters, especially when she wants to just take decisive action.

Through her husband's complaints about work at home, Weimi has heard every mistake (real or perceived) that Mino has made since the apprentice joined the smithy. As such, she believes that Mino is a dangerous individual, malicious and incompetent. As soon as someone mentions the possibility that Mino is a rogga, she seizes on the idea, thinking that it explains *everything*. At that point, she's willing to kill Mino on the spot. She knows basically nothing about Ohoj and is shocked to

find out that the younger apprentice is her husband's killer. She respects Fuhar and Sadi and will listen to what they say, although she will still demand justice. Weimi has no special feelings on the characters, except that they're in her way.

## A COMM DIVIDED

With dozens of people enraged by the death of Danit, the smithy staff rushing to defend their own, and the entire comm shouting for something to be done, the scene has become complete chaos. People are shoving and shouting at each other, causing the lines between the sides to blur completely. As people argue, the crowd rushes back and forth erratically, sweeping bystanders and rioters alike into the turmoil. Anyone who falls is in clear danger of being trampled, or worse.

The group must try to calm the situation with a **TN 12 challenge test** (p. **7**) with a success threshold of **20**. Virtually any ability and focus roll can help (see **Keeping the Peace**). There is no time limit or fail state for this challenge test, although the longer it goes on the more people will be hurt or killed.

While succeeding here is easier than the test to save Mino, the consequences for failure are more severe. Each round the investigators don't succeed at calming the crowd causes a **consequence**. The first two are **minor**, the next two are **moderate**, and all subsequent failed rounds cause **major** consequences.

- **MINOR:** One of the residents is in visible danger. They may have fallen and are now at risk of being trampled, or in the case of Mino or Ohoj someone may directly threaten them. This is more compelling if it's one of the characters the investigators have already met.
- **MODERATE:** Someone gets struck—accidentally or not—suffering damage in the form of an Injured condition, removing 1d6 damage points. In most cases, this is one of the residents previously imperiled by a minor consequence. If all of them have been taken to safety, feel free to pick a new resident or even a player's character.
- **MAJOR:** Something or someone strikes a resident in a vital place, imposing the Dying condition on them. Most residents have a starting Constitution of 1, meaning that they'll die in four rounds without medical attention—Mino and Weimi can survive five.

Once the team pacifies the mob and the recently bereaved, there's still a matter of actual justice. The investigators present their findings to Headwoman Tan'esh in **Sentencing**.

## KEEPING THE PEACE

Like the other tests in this scene, each character can try their own way of helping, earning SP to use on stunts on successful rolls, but only the highest result on a Drama Die each round is added to the running total. Virtually anything the players can think of will help with this challenge test. Here are several of the possible ways the investigators can try to calm things:

- Catching thrown objects: **Dexterity (Initiative)**
- Adding barriers between people or physically separating them: **Strength (Might)**
- Guiding bystanders out of harm's way: **Communication (Leadership)**
- Convincing rioters to stop: **Communication (Persuasion)** or **Strength (Intimidation)**
- Stepping in between belligerents and acting as a human buffer zone: **Constitution (Stamina)**
- Noticing people in precarious positions and helping them before they get hurt: **Perception (Intuition or Seeing)**

- Reminding people of important Stonelore and other guiding principles: **Intelligence (Lore)**
- Dousing people with water: **Accuracy (Thrown)**

## SCENE 7

# SENTENCING

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Now that the investigators have uncovered the murder and the Headwoman has arrived, the intrigue is over, although the danger has not passed for some. After all, finding a murderer is never the end, especially when the comm is already short one person. Ohoj's fate now lies in the team's hands. How they communicate the events to Tan'esh will determine whether Ohoj lives to see the dawn.

What sentence can possibly fit the crime without further condemning the resource-strapped comm? Surely, Ohoj should not receive a harsh sentence for protecting the woman she loves from getting hit by a blunt instrument. Or does sparing a killer set a bad precedent?

Similarly, Peko is still at the Headwoman's office. Although it's true that traditional punishments for stealing food from the comm include execution and exile, would it be fair to sentence Peko more harshly than Ohoj? Both crimes were understandable given the danger to Mino and Peko's heavy workload and growth spurts. "Necessity is the only law" according to stonelore.

## EPILOGUE

However you and your players decide to sentence the two will influence how the rest of Nuveen thinks of the characters. But at least there will still be a Nuveen tomorrow, thanks to the investigators.

## REWARDS & CONSEQUENCES

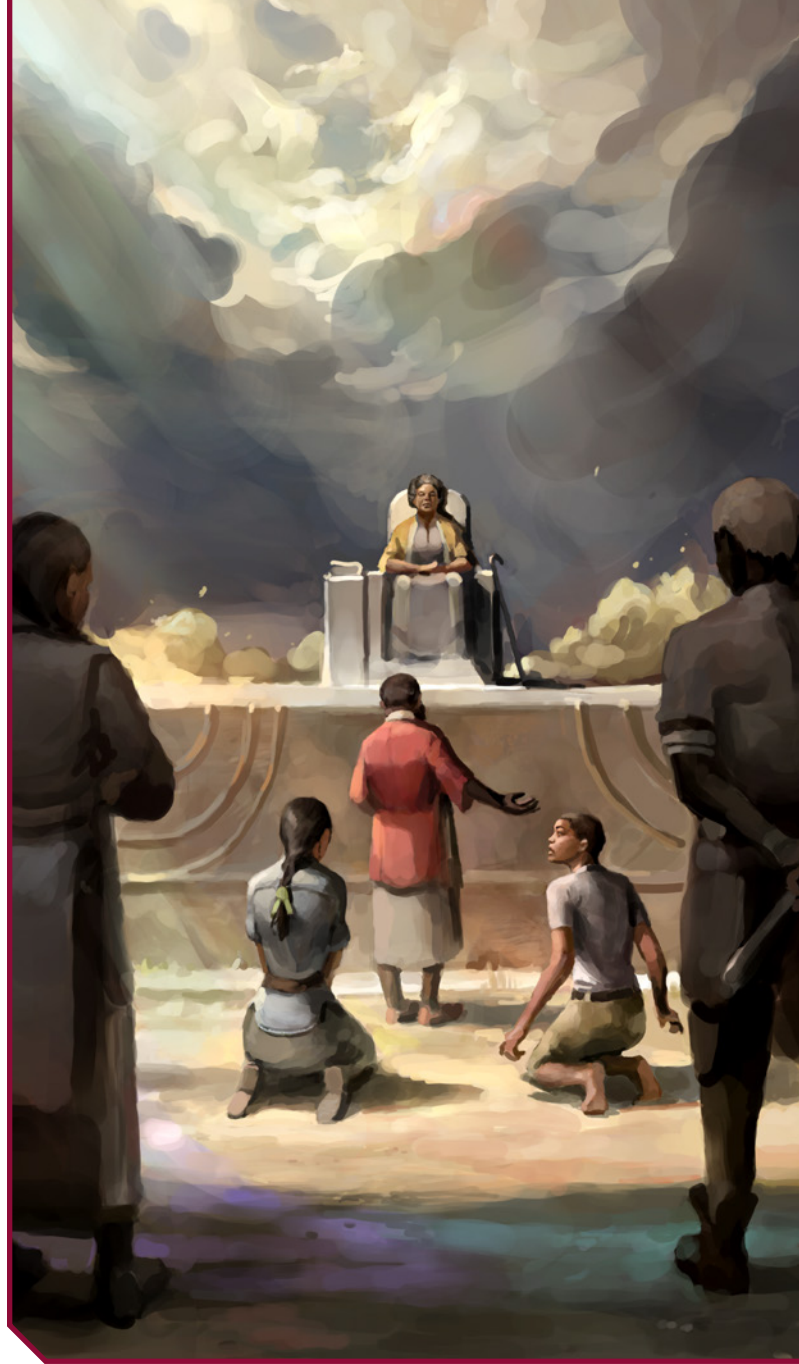
If this adventure is part of an ongoing campaign, it is reasonable to award your players a milestone towards advancement (see the *Fifth Season Roleplaying* core rulebook for character advancement rules). They have also earned a degree of respect from those in authority or who uphold the comm's structures. Assume the player characters have a standing +2 bonus to Communication checks in dealing with such folk over the course of the next two seasons.

If some of their neighbors died in the riot, most of the comm still respects them, but some people won't remember the night or the characters fondly (see **Attitude Shifts**).

## DEVELOPMENT

Now that the Comm has dealt with two significant crimes, hopefully things will calm down a bit. The people will likely still bristle for quite some time, especially when it comes to discussions of Peko and Ohoj, but they have newfound respect for the characters. It seems a near-certainty that they'll be called on again the next time there's a problem.

The next time Headwoman Tan'esh calls the investigators, it may be something as mundane as settling a dispute between Nuveen merchants and those from Savyn. The people from there tend to be larger, raising the stakes if a fight breaks out. Or it might be as serious as Jorgen Innovator going missing while foraging outside the walls for useful stones. Anything could have befallen him, such as being eaten by dangerous animals, forced to flee a hostile scouting party, or even just leaving Nuveen to live with a woman in Savyn.



## ATTITUDE SHIFTS

EVENT	RESIDENT	CHANGE
Fought Weimi	Danit's family	-2 to current
Sentenced Mino to exile or death	All smiths	Attitude becomes -3
Prevented Mino's abduction	All smiths	+1 to current
Sentenced Mino or Peko to death	Everyone except Danit's family	-1 to current
Sentenced Mino to death	Danit's family	+1 to current
Spared Peko	Bohari	-1 to current
Spared Mino	Weimi	-1 to current
Prevented death during Rogga Riot	Everyone	+1 to current
Failed to prevent riot deaths	Everyone	-1 to current
Sentenced Ohoj to death/exile	All smiths	-3/-2 to current
Sentenced Ohoj to restitution or exile	Danit's family	+2 to current

# COMM RESIDENTS

This section contains the descriptions and stats for the characters encountered in *Stress Fractures*.

## FUHAR INNOVATOR

### ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

**Accuracy 1, Communication 2** (Leadership), **Constitution 1, Dexterity 1, Fighting 1, Intelligence 3** (Tinkering), **Perception 2** (Seeing), **Strength 1, Willpower 2**

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS
11	11	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Brawling	+4	1d3+2

### QUALITIES

**FAVORED STUNTS:** Cards on the Table, Dodge, Impress

THREAT: MINOR

## KALIT BREEDER

### ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

**Accuracy 0, Communication 3** (Etiquette, Persuasion), **Constitution 1, Dexterity 1, Fighting 1, Intelligence 2** (Lore), **Perception 3** (Hearing), **Strength 1, Willpower 2**

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS
11	11	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Brawling	+0	1d3

### QUALITIES

**FAVORED STUNTS:** Crowd Appeal, Impress, Read the Situation

THREAT: MINOR

## WEIMI STRONGBACK

### ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

**Accuracy 2** (Brawling, Thrown), **Communication 1, Constitution 2, Dexterity 2** (Stealth), **Fighting 2** (Spears), **Intelligence 0, Perception 1, Strength 2, Willpower 1**

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS
12	12	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Brawling	+4	1d3+2
Spear	+4	1d6+2

### QUALITIES

**FAVORED STUNTS:** Dodge, Injure, Knock Prone, Threatening Point (2 SP)

**STUNT - THREATENING POINT:** Weimi uses her spear to limit the target's options. The target can't move closer to her without suffering damage (1d6+2). This lasts until Weimi's next major action.

THREAT: MINOR

## MINO STRONGBACK

### ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

**Accuracy 1, Communication 1, Constitution 2, Dexterity 2** (Crafting), **Fighting 2, Intelligence 1, Perception 1, Strength 3** (Might), **Willpower 1**

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS
12	12	2

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Brawling	+1	1d3+1

### QUALITIES

**FAVORED STUNTS:** Boost, Double-Team, Grab

THREAT: MINOR

## OHOJ STRONGBACK

### ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

**Accuracy 2** (Slings, Thrown), **Communication 2, Constitution 1, Dexterity 2** (Crafting), **Fighting 0, Intelligence 1** (Tinkering), **Perception 2** (Searching), **Strength 1** (Machining), **Willpower 1**

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS
12	12	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Thrown debris	+4	1d3+2
Sling	+4	1d6+2

### QUALITIES

**FAVORED STUNTS:** Dodge, Skirmish

THREAT: MINOR

## OTHER RESIDENTS

### ABILITIES (FOCUSES)

**Accuracy 1, Communication 0, Constitution 1, Dexterity 1, Fighting 2, Intelligence 0, Perception 1, Strength 1, Willpower 0**

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS
11	11	1

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Brawling	+1	1d3+1
Club	+2	1d6+1

### QUALITIES

**FAVORED STUNTS:** Grab

THREAT: MINOR



# PLAYER REFERENCE: EXPLORATION & SOCIAL STUNTS

BASIC TEST FORMULA: 3D6 + ABILITY SCORE + FOCUS BONUS (+2) VS. TARGET NUMBER (TN)

## EXPLORATION STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	<b>ASSIST:</b> Your action assists an ally. That character gains a +1 bonus to their next test per SP spent.
1-3	<b>BOOST:</b> You gain a +1 bonus per SP spent on your first test in your next turn.
1-3	<b>WARINESS:</b> You gain a +1 bonus per SP spent to the next test to avoid any negative consequences of your action. For example, using this stunt while searching for tracks would apply a bonus to hiding from dangerous animals.
2	<b>EFFICIENCY:</b> Your action takes half as much time or resources (your choice) as normal. In action time, you gain +2 to your initiative score for the remainder of the encounter.
2	<b>INSIGHT:</b> When performing an action that logically follows this one, you gain a +1 bonus on the test and, if specialized knowledge is required, you can act as if you possess that knowledge, with GM permission.
2	<b>TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM:</b> When you successfully avoid a trap or hazard, but an ally does not, you can choose to take the damage for that ally, leaving them unaffected.
3	<b>COMPENSATE:</b> While performing the task, you learn how to work with your surroundings. You ignore environmental penalties to further tests in your location for the rest of the encounter, so long as conditions don't change.
3	<b>EXTRA INFORMATION:</b> You gain an additional piece of information related to your action. If you are examining a clue, you get an extra lead from it.
4	<b>READY FOR ACTION:</b> If an action encounter breaks out in the location where you acted, you gain an extra minor action you can use before anyone else acts, regardless of initiative. You still have your usual actions when your first turn comes around.

## SOCIAL STUNTS

SP COST	STUNT
1-3	<b>IMPRESS:</b> Gain a +1 bonus per SP spent to your next social test involving the same target during this encounter.
1	<b>CARDS ON THE TABLE:</b> If you were completely honest when making this test, your target must be completely honest in the next social test they make against you during this encounter. Both of you can still omit information or offer misleading truths.
1	<b>READ THE SITUATION:</b> Unless others are trying to hide their Attitudes, you can tell what they are. Each SP spent tells you the Attitude of one person in the vicinity.
2	<b>AND ANOTHER THING (EXPLORATION OR SOCIAL):</b> You make a second roll related to a successful test. In action time, this occurs as a free action, but cannot be an attack roll. In an advanced test, you may make the bonus test during the time increment in which you made the initial test.
2+	<b>CROWD APPEAL:</b> Your social action affects one additional person per 2 SP spent, as long as their Willpower score is equal to or less than your Communication. This does not allow social stunts to affect more than their listed targets.
2	<b>HIDDEN MESSAGE:</b> Your social action conveys a simple, secret message to one other person, which might be your target or a bystander. Others can detect this subterfuge with a Communication (Empathy) test with a TN equal to your test result.
2	<b>TAUNT:</b> You insult or distract one target of your choice within 10 meters who can hear you. Make an opposed test of your Communication (Deception) vs. the target's Willpower (Self-Discipline). If you win, the target suffers a -1 penalty to all opposed tests until the end of the current social encounter, or until they successfully taunt or undermine you. If used in combat, the target suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls on their next turn.
3	<b>SPOT TELL:</b> The TN for your target's next test to lie or otherwise trick you is the standard TN or opposed roll, or the successful social roll, whichever is higher. This benefit lasts until the target fails in an attempt to lie or the encounter ends, whichever comes first.
3	<b>PAY ATTENTION:</b> Your interaction reveals information about your target above and beyond even what you might have been looking for. If you're pursuing an investigation, you gain an additional lead.
4	<b>DOMINATE:</b> Select a target who can perceive you and has a Willpower no greater than your Communication. You impose your choice of the Confused, Defenseless, or Frightened conditions on the target, which lasts until the end of your next turn.
4	<b>SWAY:</b> Your social gesture is especially potent. You shift your target's Attitude an additional step in the direction of your choice.
4	<b>INSPIRE:</b> Your social action inspires allies who witness it. Each of them gets +1 to all of their tests until the beginning of your next turn.

# PLAYER REFERENCE: SETTING & ACTIONS

The Stillness—the world of *Fifth Season*—is a harsh place, where survival is far from guaranteed. Despite the dangers inherent to the world, there are often more reasons to solve conflicts peacefully than there are to choose violence. After all, there's rarely any guarantee of living through a battle; the act of warfare is always carefully considered, as it often lowers a comm's chances of survival. When people in the same comm butt heads—as they do throughout the adventure *Stress Fractures*—there's even less reason to fight. Injury, death, and exile all reduce the number of people working towards the shared goal of eking out a living in the dangers of the Broken Earth.

This isn't to say that the people of the Stillness are afraid to spill blood to protect themselves from threats; few would shy away from fighting to protect their homes, loved ones, or neighbors. But *Fifth Season* is not a setting where adventurers fight in heroic and consequence-free battles. It is a world where most are simply trying to survive, and player characters who aren't helping their comm make it through the next season are no heroes at all.

## NUVEEN

This quick-start's adventure *Stress Fractures* takes place in Nuveen, a small comm in the Midlats, only about a kilometer from Lake Sana, a moderate-sized body of fresh water. Nuveen lies between an escarpment to the north and west and the lake lowlands to the east. An Imperial Highway cuts between the comm and the lake before snaking its way north and east around the escarpment, and much of the terrain around the area, particularly towards the south, is wooded. The next closest comm is Savyn, which trades with Nuveen and is about twenty kilometers away, or half a day's walk.

## ACTION

You can take a major action and a minor action, or two minor actions on your turn. A list of action stunts is available in the **Action Encounters** section.

### MAJOR ACTIONS

**DEFEND:** You gain a +2 bonus to your Defense until the start of your next turn.

**MELEE ATTACK:** You attack an adjacent opponent with a weapon such as a fist, knife, or sword.

**RANGED ATTACK:** You attack an enemy by firing a bow or throwing a weapon.

**RUN:** You move up to double your Speed in meters. You must already be in a standing position to do this. If you are running after someone who is also using this action, or they are running after you, you have a **Chase** on your hands (see **Chases** in **Action Encounters**).

### MINOR ACTIONS

**ACTIVATE:** You start using an ability, device, or something else that requires a moment of concentration, or continue to maintain such an ability.

**AIM:** If your next action is a melee attack or ranged attack (even on your next turn), you gain a +1 bonus on that attack roll.

**MOVE:** You move up to your Speed in meters. If you limit your travel to half your Speed, you can also drop prone, stand up, or mount or dismount a mount or vehicle as part of your Move.

**PREPARE:** When you take this action, you postpone your major action. You declare one major action and your choice to Prepare it. After you do so, the next person in initiative order acts, and so on, but at any time until the beginning of your next turn, you can interrupt another character and take your prepared action immediately. If you don't use the prepared action by the start of your next turn, you lose it.

**READY:** You draw a weapon, pull out a tool, or otherwise get ready to use some stowed item on your person. As part of this action, you can also put away something you already had in hand.

# FOH-BAK

INNOVATOR



CASTE:  
INNOVATOR

SPECIALIZATION:  
GEOMEST

## BACKGROUND

Originally hailing from the Western Coastals, this geomagestrix traveled across the Mers Desert to study the Stillness' various forms of rocks. This trek lasted seventeen years, teaching them a little bit of everything and a lot of bow-hunting. More importantly, it increased their rock collection by over 200 different samples. Though they rarely show off their rock collection, they're always looking for new minerals. Unfortunately, they're nowhere as spry as they used to be, meaning that they'll probably never get their hands on rocks from distant lands without help.

Thankfully, Foh-Bak's sand and gravel-based water filtration project is exciting enough that they rarely have time to miss field research. While Lake Sana is close enough that the headwoman Tan'esh originally told them not to bother making a water recycler, she now appreciates the ability to make water last longer. Though it can't purify something as toxic as the smithy's quenching pool or as infectious as human waste, it does a good job of cleaning wash water.

Though their work occupies most of their time, they make time for their best friend Pashum, who has exciting insights into the nature of stones.

## DESCRIPTION

Though you often joke that it's your increasing age that draws people's attention, you know that it's really your unusual Westcoastal accent along with your glass visor. In fact, catching people off-balance is one of your joys in life; it might annoy some, but others probably enjoy your wry sense of humor, right? At the very least, Pashum appreciates your terrible puns and occasional outbursts of whatever's captured your interest. In fact, you tend to get along well with most of the comm's stranger characters.



# FIFTH SEASON

ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL  
1

MOVE  
12  
IN METERS

RUN  
24  
IN METERS

NAME Foh-Bak

AGE 49 HEIGHT & WEIGHT 1.72m, 59kg

COMM Nuveen

CASTE Innovator

SPECIALIZATION Geomest

ACCURACY  1  
Bows

COMMUNICATION  1

CONSTITUTION  1

DEXTERITY  2

FIGHTING  1

INTELLIGENCE  3  
Geomestry, Navigation

PERCEPTION  2  
Intuition

STRENGTH  1

WILLPOWER  1

EQUIPMENT  
compass  
crossbow  
magnifying lenses  
mineral sampling & testing kit  
notebook & pencil  
obsidian scalpel  
pocket almanac  
rock collection

SUPPLIES

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	FORTUNE
12	12	1	0	0	
ARMOR TYPE					20

TALENTS & SPECIALIZATIONS

**Archery Style (Novice):** When shooting a bow or crossbow at a target within 6 meters of you, you inflict +2 damage.

**Geomestry (Expert):** You gain the Intelligence (Geomestry) focus and a +1 bonus to Intelligence (Geomestry) tests, in addition to focus bonuses (if any). If you fail an Intelligence (Geomestry) test, you can re-roll it, but must keep the results of the second roll. When you perform an exploration stunt with an Intelligence (Geomestry) test, you gain +1 SP to the amount you spend.

**Improvisation (Novice):** You can make an ability test with a required focus even if you do not have the focus. You do not generate SP when doing so.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Bows	+3	2d6+2 (crossbow)
Brawling	+1	1d3+1
Light Blades	+1	1d6+2
Slings	+1	1d6+3

RELATIONSHIPS

**Comm of Nuveen (Intensity 1)**

**Pashum (Intensity 1)**

DRIVE & PERSONAL CHALLENGES

**Rebel:** Your quality is **innovation**, the ability to look at things from angles no one else has considered, and to do things your own way. Your downfall is **defiance**, a dislike of conformity, conventionality, and doing what you're told.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

# JAHNI

LEADER



CASTE:  
LEADER

SPECIALIZATION:  
ORGANIZER

## BACKGROUND

Born and raised in Nuveen, Jahni is an up-and-coming Leader, able to juggle dozens of concerns and problems. She's a coordination expert, working with a variety of projects within the comm to ensure that the various groups have what they need to succeed. Though this has proven increasingly difficult over the past year, she's been instrumental in keeping projects afloat.

Jahni's foresight and ability to make connections between what people have and what others need has made her one of Foh-Bak's greatest allies. While she resisted the Innovator's water filter idea at first, she's since become its greatest ally, initiating a comm-wide program to save wash water to be processed by the Innovator's filter. She's also been working with the farmers to ensure they're never without enough hands to tend their crops.

Jahni's presence on the comm's investigation team is one of the biggest reasons why the rest of the comm trusts the group to get to the bottom of matters impartially. The comm's trust in her is an honor that she doesn't take lightly.

## DESCRIPTION

You're unusually short for a Sanzed woman—a mere six feet tall—not much taller than everyone else in the comm. Since you rarely have free time, your ashblow hair hangs in thick braids that fall to your waist. Though you often fret about the use of comm resources, deep down you know that you're doing a good job and that Nuveen is better off for your hard work. You resist being curt with people, but you're always thinking of the next problem, making it easy to mentally dismiss someone you've already helped.

# FIFTH SEASON

ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL 1

MOVE  
11  
IN METERS

RUN  
22  
IN METERS

NAME Jahni

AGE 43 HEIGHT & WEIGHT 1.75m, 145kg

COMM Nuveen

CASTE Leader

SPECIALIZATION Organizer

ACCURACY  2

COMMUNICATION  3  
Etiquette, Leadership

CONSTITUTION  0

DEXTERITY  1

FIGHTING  1

INTELLIGENCE  2

PERCEPTION  2

STRENGTH  0

WILLPOWER  2  
Courage

EQUIPMENT  
canteen  
flask  
glassknife  
first aid kit  
project journal  
sling  
snacks  
tea set

SUPPLIES

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	FORTUNE
11	11	0	0	0	
ARMOR TYPE					20

TALENTS & SPECIALIZATIONS

**Inspire (Novice):** As long as you are conscious, any allies within sight of you gain a +1 bonus on all Willpower tests. An ally defending you from harm while you are unconscious receives the same bonus.

**Observation (Novice):** If you fail a Perception (Empathy) test, you can re-roll it, but must keep the result of the second roll.

**Organizer (Expert):** If you fail a Communication test using the Etiquette or Leadership focuses, you can re-roll it, but you must keep the result of the second roll. You can contribute to advanced and challenge tests using Communication to represent your efforts to coordinate others, so long as at least one other person is involved in the test with you. This is the case even if Communication is not normally an ability used for that test.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Brawling	+2	1d3
Light Blades	+2	1d6+1
Slings	+2	1d6+3
Staves	+2	1d6+1

RELATIONSHIPS

**Comm of Nuveen (Intensity 1)**  
**Player's Choice (Intensity 2):**  
**Player's Choice (Intensity 1):**

DRIVE & PERSONAL CHALLENGES

**Networker:** You're here to make friends, because it is all about who you know. Your quality is **gregariousness**. You're good with people and at home in social situations, and tend to seek them out. Your downfall is that you're **overwrought**. You tend to get caught up in social conflicts.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND



# KOKOI

RESISTANT



CASTE:  
RESISTANT

SPECIALIZATION:  
CULTIVATOR

## BACKGROUND

Kokoi thinks he's one of the most important people in the comm, and he's probably right, though few would admit it. His main responsibility is handling the dirtiest jobs in the fields—fertilizing soil with animal dung, destroying sick crops, and fighting insects (by eating them). Though the odor of earth and sweat follows him, few can deny just how handy it is having him around. He owes his job at the farm to Jahni who saw his talents and put them to good use.

Kokoi's heritage is more mixed than most other natives of Nuveen, with features from all over the Stillness. Though his parents died years ago, many older residents still comment on how much he resembles them. These instances have been happening more frequently now that he's a member of the investigation team, a fact that he's not sure how he feels about. On the other hand, Kokoi is thrilled that he gets to do new things and that people seem to respect him more after he helps them navigate their problems. While Kokoi isn't driven by the need for recognition, he's not used to it, and it tastes sweet.

## DESCRIPTION

You're a thick, brown-skinned man, carrying a little more muscle than most, thanks to including bugs and other pests in your diet. You're not sure why people seem so resistant to exotic proteins outside of Seasons, but you're not complaining about the extra servings. People tend to pretend you don't exist until they need something from you, a fact that you've made peace with a long time ago. Of course, you still have a few non-Resistants among your friends, which you don't understand but deeply appreciate.

# FIFTH SEASON

ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL 1

MOVE  
11  
IN METERS

RUN  
22  
IN METERS

NAME Kokoi

AGE 27 HEIGHT & WEIGHT 1.75m, 95kg

COMM Nuveen

CASTE Resistant

SPECIALIZATION Cultivator

ACCURACY  2

COMMUNICATION  1  
Animal Handling

CONSTITUTION  3  
Stamina

DEXTERITY  1

FIGHTING  0

INTELLIGENCE  1  
Medicine, Natural Lore

PERCEPTION  2

STRENGTH  2

WILLPOWER  1

EQUIPMENT  
animal treats  
foraging kit  
glassknife  
medical kit  
recurve bow  
unusual food

SUPPLIES

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	FORTUNE
11	11	3	0	0	
ARMOR TYPE					20

TALENTS & SPECIALIZATIONS

**Cultivator (Novice):** You have a +1 bonus with Intelligence (Natural Lore) tests. With a few hours of work and a simple TN 9 Intelligence (Natural Lore) test, you can gather sufficient edible plants to keep a number of people equal to the result of the Drama Die supplied for the day. If you have the opportunity to prepare a meal, you can use an Intelligence (Natural Lore) test as a Stunt action to impress the people you feed.

**Medic (Novice):** Taking a major action to provide treatment allows a patient to add your Intelligence score (and Medicine focus, if any) as a bonus to a test to avoid or overcome a medical hazard, or grants a new test to overcome that hazard, if there is one. This includes saving a patient from dying or reviving an unconscious character.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Bows	+2	1d6+5 (recurve bow)
Brawling	+2	1d3+2
Light Blades	+2	1d6+3
Staves	+2	1d6+3

RELATIONSHIPS

**Comm of Nuveen (Intensity 1)**  
**Player's Choice (Intensity 1):**

DRIVE & PERSONAL CHALLENGES

**Helper:** You're here to help as many people as you can, however you can. You have a difficult time turning away anyone in need. Your quality is **compassion**, naturally feeling and responding to others' needs. Your downfall is **self-sacrifice**, a tendency to place the needs of others above your own.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

# MOASI

STRONGBACK



CASTE:  
STRONGBACK

SPECIALIZATION:  
GUARD

## BACKGROUND

Born in Nuveen, Moasi is an expert forager and hunter. A near-disaster has left her reluctant to go on solo hunting trips out of fear of not being there to protect her wife Itanja or other Strongbacks on the foraging team. On a foraging trip before Moasi had the confidence to confess her love to her now-wife, Moasi left the smaller woman alone to hunt a deer. In the meantime, a venomous snake slowly slithered toward Itanja, seeking prey. When Moasi returned, her footfalls surprised the snake, causing it to turn and strike at her instead.

Only her amazing reflexes kept the women alive, although she had to block the attack with the deer, poisoning the meat. Recognizing that a few seconds or inches of difference would have spelled a very different path, the women surprised each other by confessing their mutual love as they killed the snake. Both of them credit the moment with changing their lives, not just because it led to their marriage, but because it made both of them fiercely protective of each other.

To this day, Moasi feels guilt for leaving her foraging partner behind to do something else. She's spent the time since then building herself back up with the help of her wife, but fear of failing her loved ones still slithers alongside her.

## DESCRIPTION

You're a tall, well-muscled olive-skinned woman, completely fearless when it comes to your personal safety. You're not exactly sure why you're on the investigation, although the moments when you're able to directly contribute to the team fill you with a new sort of pride. You're quick to encourage young love when you notice it—especially among other femme couples—as you know that happy endings are rare in the Stillness. You love your wife Itanja and feel guilty when your duties take you away from her, even though you know she's more than capable of taking care of herself.



# FIFTH SEASON

ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL 1

MOVE  
12  
IN METERS

RUN  
24  
IN METERS

NAME Moasi

AGE 33 HEIGHT & WEIGHT 1.93m, 109kg

COMM Nuveen

CASTE Strongback

SPECIALIZATION Guard

ACCURACY  1

COMMUNICATION  0

CONSTITUTION  3

DEXTERITY  2

FIGHTING  2  
Bludgeons

INTELLIGENCE  0

PERCEPTION  0

STRENGTH  4  
Might

WILLPOWER  2  
Self-Discipline

EQUIPMENT  
camouflaged hunting blind  
crossbow  
cudgel  
foraging kit  
glass-edged hatchet  
handwraps  
first aid kit  
snare

SUPPLIES

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	FORTUNE
12	12	3	0	0	
ARMOR TYPE					20

TALENTS & SPECIALIZATIONS

**Guard (Novice):** If you fail a test to avoid being surprised, you can re-roll the test, but must keep the result of the second roll. Even in situations where there is normally *no* test to avoid being surprised, you get one, but you do not get to re-roll this test if you fail.

**Quick Reflexes (Novice):** You are always ready for action. Once per round, you can use Ready as a free action on your turn.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Bows	+1	2d6 (crossbow)
Bludgeons	+4	2d6+4
Brawling	+1	1d3+4
Heavy Blades	+2	2d6+4
Light Blades	+1	1d6+5
Staves	+1	1d6+5

RELATIONSHIPS

**Comm of Nuveen (Intensity 1)**  
**Itanja (Intensity 3)**

DRIVE & PERSONAL CHALLENGES

**Penitent:** You screwed up, but you're trying to make it right by doing better. Your quality is **humility**. You have fallen low and learned from it, so you're not quick to judge or to accept accolades. Your downfall is **guilt**, as you're sometimes haunted by your past mistakes and feel any new missteps heavily.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

# PASHUM

OROGENE



CASTE:  
RESISTANT

SPECIALIZATION:  
STALWART

## BACKGROUND

Seeking inner peace and understanding is hard under the best of circumstances, but for an Orogene working as a Resistant? Nearly impossible. Each day, Pashum is forced to hide her true self for fear of being forced from her home ... or worse. Of course, every day she practices pretending to be just another comm member brings her one step closer to it being true. While she might be from elsewhere in the Midlats, she feels more accepted and trusted than she ever has, especially thanks to her friendship with Foh-Bak and her appointment to Nuveen's investigation team.

So far, Foh-Bak Innovator is the only one who shares her secret. Fortunately for the two, Foh-Bak's water reclamation project is the perfect cover for Pashum, as it falls to the Resistants to move water dirtied by washing clothes, dishes, and bodies into Foh-Bak's sand filter. Thanks to this fortunate coincidence, she can safely contribute to the comm, and if anything goes wrong they can cover for her. Moreover, Foh-Bak regularly takes her outside the comm to test and refine her orogeny away from prying eyes.

Although being on the investigation team brings Pashum more attention than she'd like, she enjoys her role. She might not be able to explain why she's so good at finding hidden clues, but few question her value to the team.

## DESCRIPTION

You're a thin woman with sand-colored skin, with your dark hair braided close to your scalp in protective cornrows. Many overlook you as few pay close attention to Resistants, which suits you just fine; it lets you put in hard work in secret and receive recognition from those who really matter.

Though some assume you and Foh-Bak are dating, you've never felt desire for more than friendship from anyone. The Innovator is practically family to you, and you'd do anything for them at this point; their kindness feels like home.

# FIFTH SEASON

ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL  
1

MOVE  
12  
IN METERS

RUN  
24  
IN METERS

NAME Pashum

AGE 35 HEIGHT & WEIGHT 1.68m, 52kg

COMM Nuveen

CASTE Resistant

SPECIALIZATION Stalwart

ACCURACY  1

COMMUNICATION  2

CONSTITUTION  2  
Stamina

DEXTERITY  2

FIGHTING  1

INTELLIGENCE  1  
Geomestry

PERCEPTION  2  
Sessing

STRENGTH  1

WILLPOWER  2  
Self-Discipline

EQUIPMENT  
canteen  
crossbow  
glassknife  
portable seismometer  
scented worry stone

SUPPLIES

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	FORTUNE
12	12	3	0	0	
ARMOR TYPE					20

TALENTS & SPECIALIZATIONS

**Orogeny (Novice):** You can make Perception tests to sss geological activity in your surroundings: impending tremors or movements of the Earth, potential boils or hotspots, and so forth. You can perform orogeny stunts (see below) but doing so imposes a Fatigued condition on you for every 2 SP you spend on them.

**Stalwart (Novice):** You have +1 Toughness (included). You can re-roll a failed Constitution (Tolerance) test but must keep the result of the second roll.

**Orogeny Stunt - Stilling (1+):** You stop or still a shake or similar geological hazard with a level equal to twice the number of SP spent.

**Orogeny Stunt - Icing (1+):** You rapidly draw away all of the heat in the surrounding area, causing 1d6 penetrating damage per SP spent in a roughly 10-meter radius. Any creature killed by icing is frozen solid, and a layer of ice or frost covers all surfaces in the area.

**Orogeny Stunt - Hazard (1+):** You *cause* a geological hazard with a number of dice equal to twice the number of SP spent (up to 5 SP). This can range from a minor shake that does 2d6 damage to a massive one that does 10d6 damage. The Game Moderator decides the exact nature of the shake, blow, or boil, depending on the SP, the area, and the total damage.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Bows	+1	2d6+2 (crossbow)
Brawling	+1	1d3+1
Light Blades	+1	1d6+2
Slings	+1	1d6+3
Staves	+1	1d6+2

RELATIONSHIPS

**Comm of Nuveen (Intensity 1)**  
**Foh-Bak (Intensity 1)**  
**Player's Choice (Intensity 1):**

DRIVE & PERSONAL CHALLENGES

**Survivor:** Life is hard, but you are going to make it, no matter what. Your quality is **preparedness**. You survive by being ready for anything and knowing what to do in any situation. Your downfall is **cynicism**.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND



# ZUHANCHI

BREEDER



CASTE:  
BREEDER

SPECIALIZATION:  
COMPANION

## BACKGROUND

Known as “Father Zuzu” by his twelve children, Zuhanchi is a loving father and caretaker at the comm’s crèche. Responsible for building and repairing furniture, his basket weaving skill created almost half of the chairs and cribs in the crèche. Despite his impressive ability to care for numerous family members at once, he’s often caught off-guard by surprises and is easily flummoxed.

Like many men of the Breeder caste, Zuhanchi has no idea whether any of his twelve children are his by blood, nor is that a question he’d ever like answered; he helped raise them along with the rest of the crèche’s members, and that’s all that matters to him. Family is family.

The past year has not been kind to the Breeders of the crèche, with one of his children dying of fever six months ago. Discovering that the comm has a food thief shocks and infuriates him, as he immediately fears for his children.

Zuhanchi dislikes being part of the investigation team since it takes him away from his family. He knows that his co-parents can handle things without him, but he misses his co-parents and children even though he’s never truly far from them.

## DESCRIPTION

You’re a tall and heavysset Midlatter with a perpetual smile on your face. While many think this means you’re always excited and eager, you’re usually just tired and confused. With your numerous children, co-parents, and spouses, you have little time to rest. Even when you don’t actively have something to do, your thoughts often return to your family, distracting you from really being in the moment. And you wouldn’t have it any other way. You’re happy to play the fool if it means those you care about are taken care of.

# FIFTH SEASON

ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

LEVEL 1

MOVE  
12  
IN METERS

RUN  
24  
IN METERS

NAME Zuhanchi

AGE 43 HEIGHT & WEIGHT 1.75m, 145kg

COMM Nuveen

CASTE Breeder

SPECIALIZATION Companion

ACCURACY  1

COMMUNICATION  2

CONSTITUTION  1  
Stamina

DEXTERITY  2  
Crafting

FIGHTING  1

INTELLIGENCE  2

PERCEPTION  2  
Empathy

STRENGTH  0

WILLPOWER  2

EQUIPMENT  
basket weaving tools  
flask  
glassknife  
sling  
snacks  
tea set  
whittled toys  
wood-carving tools

SUPPLIES

SPEED	DEFENSE	TOUGHNESS	ARMOR	PENALTY	FORTUNE
12	12	1	0	0	
ARMOR TYPE					20

TALENTS & SPECIALIZATIONS

**Artistry (Novice):** You can create works of art. The GM determines the time, target number, and threshold of a simple or advanced test, depending on your intentions, and the Drama Die determines the overall quality of the work, if your test is successful.

**Carousing (Novice):** You can outlast most other people when having fun. When making a Constitution (Stamina) or (Tolerance) test as part of an advanced test, you gain a +1 bonus to the result of each Drama Die.

**Companion (Novice):** When you generate Stunt Points, you can give them to allies nearby able to hear and interact with you. They use them on their next turn as if they generated the SP themselves. You can divide up the SP among different allies and do not need to give out all of them.

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
Brawling	+1	1d3
Light Blades	+1	1d6+1
Slings	+1	1d6+3
Staves	+1	1d6+1

RELATIONSHIPS

**Comm of Nuveen (Intensity 1)**

**Player's Choice (Intensity 2):**

DRIVE & PERSONAL CHALLENGES

**Builder:** You want to create something lasting. Your quality is **organization**, being able to figure out how to structure things so they work. Your downfall is **stubbornness**, becoming so caught up in structure that you lose flexibility.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

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# FIFTH SEASON

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## ROLEPLAYING IN THE STILLNESS

## CAMPAIGN ENDS FEBRUARY 23!