

MAYHEM ACADEMY

Mayhem Academy



a role-playing game by Ben Wright

<http://chthonic.150m.com/rpg/>

Additional artwork by Syd

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INDUCTION FORM

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Place Type: _____

Clan: _____

Form Tutor: _____

Blood Type: _____

Emergency Contact 1: _____

Emergency Contact 2: _____

Organ Donor? _____

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The Induction Form is the closest thing the Mayhew Academy gets to a permanent student record. Somewhere in the administration wing, there are filing cabinets filled with these things, stretching back nearly three decades. If you want to play the game, you need to fill in one for your character.

Student Name - Many students attend under pseudonym. If the pupil's real name might cause security issues, create bad blood between students or otherwise compromise security, a pseudonym is recommended. In keeping with the practical bent of a Mayhew education, the false name must be believable, and the student must use it at all times until graduation. Certain members of the teaching staff may know the student's real name, but it will never be used.

Student ID - An ID number. This is used on written exams instead of the name to allow anonymous marking.

Place Type - There are several ways to gain entry to the Academy. The most common is a 'Regular' place. This means the student's family pay the full level of fees- no mean feat considering that Mayhew is the most expensive private school in the world by a considerable margin. Some students are 'Funded', which means that a government or other institution is paying some or all of the regular fees. This happens more often for students from 'repressive' countries, as the idea of young, loyal trained killers particularly appeals to that kind of government. Still more students are given 'Scholarship' places by the Academy itself. They usually have to distinguish themselves in a way that reaches the international news to attract the attention of the admissions staff, but for those lucky few all their expenses are met. Other students are 'Legacy' students- relatives of current or former staff members, distinguished alumni or generous donors. Perhaps the rarest group are 'Transfer' students- pupils moved sideways from the British state school system into Mayhew because even the reform schools can't handle their violent behaviour.

Clan - Mayhew used to have 'Battalions' as their equivalent of houses, but in deference to the decline of regular armies in the modern world they have recently been recast as 'Clans'. Students can earn 'Kills' for their clan through good work, which the Clan that earns the most points in an academic year receiving a handsome silver trophy to keep in their dormitory for a year. The three current Clans are 'Häyhä', 'Galán' and 'Lawrence'.

Form Tutor - The Form Tutor is responsible for the general well-being of a small group of students, and keeps records of their attendance, illness days and so forth throughout their time at the Academy. If a student has a serious problem, they can talk to their form tutor about it. At Mayhew, some Form tutors are more approachable than others. There are only four Form Tutors for each year, and the GM will tell you which four are available to choose from for your character.

Blood Type - This is important, in case the student needs an emergency transfusion after a mishap during a lesson.

Emergency Contacts - Given the robust attitude Mayhew Academy takes to injuries in the line of education, the emergency contacts are generally only used to inform relatives of the recently deceased.

Organ Donor? - Mayhew Academy supports the organ donor register, directly and indirectly. It encourages all of its students to carry donor cards, as even after leaving the school they have a much higher than average chance of dying while in the peak of health.

What's also interesting is what is not on the form. Religion and nationality, for example, are not considered important. Lessons are conducted in English, so the students are expected to be reasonably fluent. Religious holidays and customs are not allowed to interfere with the curriculum. Similarly, although students at the Academy are around 80% boys, no official record is made of sex.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following is taken verbatim from an intelligence report from an unnamed government's briefing pack on Mayhew Academy.

THE MAYHEW ACADEMY

The Mayhew Academy is an educational institution- prestigious only within a certain, very narrow social circles. The great and the good of English aristocracy do not send their children there. It does not boast about how many of its students have gone on to study at Oxbridge.

It is a school for tomorrow's hired killers.

A MAYHEW EDUCATION

The Academy accepts pupils starting at Year 7 level (11 - 12 years old). After five years of training, they are proficient in such diverse fields as sniping, unarmed combat, infiltration and high-speed driving; which is not bad considering they're not old enough to legally drink alcohol at that point.

The total number of students on the roll is around 150, rather on the small side especially considering there are 25 members of staff.

On the other hand, the demand for professional hired killers in the world has never been exactly large. Criminal organisations often rely on foot soldiers distinguishing themselves on the street to fill their need and governments prefer to fall back on loyal members of the military, but there is always a trickle of jobs that need someone a cut above. Of course, murder for hire is not the only career path after leaving Mayhew- there's money to be made in personal security- 'batting for the other team', as Academy slang has it.

It is estimated that around 80% - 90% of the currently active 'hired killers' in the world are Mayhew alumni. Most of the grudges between them stem from altercations they had when they were still at the Academy. This is why the Mayhew Academy never, ever holds reunions.

Interestingly, during Margaret Thatcher's last few weeks as Prime Minister, there were more Mayhew graduates working in Downing Street than civil servants. Only the current head-master knows why.

MAYHEW HALL

The Academy was founded in 1976 by August P. Mayhew, a former MI6 agent who made himself a surprising amount of money through unofficial and treasonous channels. He had a vision of a bright future where all the international skulduggery in the world was undertaken by professionals tithing 10% of their earnings to his institution. His dream never fully came to pass, alas, but the Mayhew Academy lived on past his unexpected death in 2002.

The Hall is a purpose-built cluster of buildings in the Leicestershire countryside. A modest main building houses the classrooms and administration block, and there are ancillary buildings for the dormitories and teaching facilities. The surrounding land is mostly taken up with the artillery range, tank range, driving course and minefield. A short distance from the Hall itself is an abandoned village. It was bought by A. P. Mayhew and is maintained for use as an urban combat training ground. The students refer to it as 'Fakington'.

The entire area is surrounded by a tall electric fence, largely to protect adjacent villages from rampaging students.

THE MAYHEW COMPANY

The staff of the Academy are very dangerous people. It is possible to hire the Academy itself for black-ops. Clients never know exactly who from the Academy will carry out the mission- it might be one or two senior staff members or it might be one teacher and thirty excitable Year II pupils. That's just the way it goes.

The income from these jobs supplements the fees the Academy receives and allow it to continue running.

A DELICATE POSITION

You might be wondering why the British security services allow the Mayhew Academy to continue existing. There are three reasons. Firstly, August Mayhew left MI6 knowing a lot of dirt and held the threatened to reveal what he knew if his project was interfered with. Secondly, there's a standing agreement for preferential rates should any arm of the British government engage the services of the Mayhew Company. Thirdly, they are not stupid enough to enrage hundreds of the most deadly people in the world all at once.

That said, the Academy is expected to keep the carnage firmly within its own grounds. Except, of course, on field trips.

More than one country has tried to tempt the Academy to relocate, or at least set up a satellite institution in their territory, but to date none of them have made an attractive enough offer. After all, there are only so many amoral killing machines the world needs.

THE MAYHEW CURRICULUM

Year 7 includes introductory courses in the use of firearms, self-defence, breaking and entering, explosives and information gathering. All classes are compulsory, and there are few periods reserved for self-directed study. At the end of the year, there are practical examinations.

Examined Modules: Firearms I, Self-Defence I, Infiltration I.

Other Modules: Sabotage I, Interrogation I.

Year 8 expands on the introductory courses, with a greater emphasis on the more difficult disciplines of sabotage and information control. All classes are compulsory. At the end of the year, there is an accelerated Learner Driver course for all students (in Britain, the minimum age to hold a provisional licence is 17, but Mayhew likes to start them early). At the end of the year, students are expected to pick their provisional specialisations.

Examined Modules: Sabotage 2, Interrogation 2, Driving I.

Other Modules: Firearms 2, Self-Defence 2, Infiltration 2.

Year 9 allows the student to specialise in particular subjects. It may take the entire year for the students to find the specialisations that suit them best, so transferring between courses is allowed. The only compulsory course are Firearms, Martial Arts and Driving, although a student will only be allowed to pursue a specialisation if they also follow the related regular module. They are expected to take practical examinations in the core subjects. They can attend lessons in other specialties if they wish, to broaden their knowledge. The specialisations available depend on what courses the staff are qualified to teach, and more importantly what skills they want to pass on. As teachers come and go, the subjects can change.

Examined Modules: Firearms 3, Self-Defence 3, Infiltration 3.

Unexamined Modules: Sabotage 3, Interrogation 3, Driving 2, Artillery I, Sniping I, Jeet Kune Do I, Muay Thai I, Hacking I, Parkour I, Booby-Traps I, Demolitions I, Undercover I, Torture I, Helicopter I, Tank I.

Year 10 is the first year when the specialisations are the most important consideration. Each student must select at least three specialisations, and also pursue the foundation subjects for them. There are many more free periods the pupils can use as they see fit. As before, they can attend lectures for other

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subjects that interest them. If a student wishes to sit an exam in a subject they did not pursue last year, they must catch up by also attending the Year 9 lessons for it. The examinations for this year are more free-form as the number of students per module is generally lower.

Examined Modules: Firearms 4, Self-Defence 4, Infiltration 4, Sabotage 4, Interrogation 4, Driving 3, Artillery 2, Sniping 2, Jeet Kune Do 2, Muay Thai 2, Hacking 2, Parkour 2, Booby-Traps 2, Demolitions 2, Undercover 2, Torture 2, Helicopter 2, Tank 2.

Unexamined Modules: Potentially, any of the above.

Year II is the final year of schooling. Instead of the usual exams, the students are assigned to team with complementary skill sets and each group is given a mission. Some of these missions are fabricated purely for the purpose of the examination, but others are actual 'live' wet-ware tasks the Mayhew Company has been engaged to perform. The students are not told what type of mission they have been sent on, even afterwards in some cases. Year II students are free to attend any Year IO lecture they wish to in addition to their usual studies.

Examined Modules: Final Assessment

Unexamined Modules: Driving 4, Artillery 3, Sniping 3, Jeet Kune Do 3, Muay Thai 3, Hacking 3, Parkour 3, Booby-Traps 3, Demolitions 3, Undercover 3, Torture 3, Helicopter 3, Tank 3.

It is important to bear in mind that some subjects that were previously taught are no longer on the curriculum, but some staff members are knowledgeable about them and alumni may know them.

Discontinued Modules: Poisons, Greco-Roman Wrestling, Karate, Disguise, Tunnelling, Hypnosis, Parachuting.



2. GAME BASICS

This is a role-playing game. If you've not played one before, it's kind of half-way between a board game and an evening of improvised theatre. Although the characters you portray may be in competition with each other, even to the point of doing horrible things to each other, it should bleed over into real life. You are all collaborating on entertaining one another.

Think of it as like getting together for a sing-song.

The man at the piano, if you'll allow me to extend the metaphor, is the Game Master, or GM. The GM is in 'charge' as much as he decides what scene is going to happen next and adjudicates what happens in the game world based on how the other players describe their actions, the rules, and what secrets he knows about what's really happening. Of course, the other players are free to chip in with suggestions, and sometimes the rules specify that another player describes something, but the GM ultimately has the authority to change those suggestions slightly or ask for something different.

The number one priority, above everything else, is making sure that everyone is having as much fun as possible. That's a responsibility that falls on everyone, not just the GM.

THE SCENE

The basic story-telling unit of the game is the 'scene'. It's a bit of a nebulous concept, but in this game a scene is a linked series of events, usually taking place in a single location, where character controlled by the players speak and act. There shouldn't be any scenes where the only character present are those controlled by the GM, as that excludes most of the players. Not all player characters have to be in every scene, but the GM should see to it that the spotlight is shared as fairly as possible.

Scenes should not be allowed to go on for too long- they should start right at the point where something interesting is happening, and the GM should close them down the moment that the most interesting possibilities have been dealt with.

THE EVENT

In a game based around school life, there is a danger that the scenes will degenerate into a series of dull, every-day situations. For example- 'OK, next lesson is Firearms. What do you do for the next hour?'. In order to keep the story moving at a brisk pace, the GM should concentrate on important events.

Think of an 'event' as a sequence of scenes wrapped around a common happening.

Events such as field trips or exams form part of the regular business of the Academy. Unusual situations like a fire, or a pupil taking a sniper rifle up the clock-tower and taking pot-shots at anyone he sees, could also be events in this sense. In particular, some events may not be of any particular significance to the school, but of special significance to one or more player characters. For example, a bully may decide to teach a lesson to someone, or an angry student may want to deliver a richly deserved beating to a rival. Skulduggery like sneaking about the Academy grounds at night is also ripe for becoming an event.

Players may want to tack extra actions onto the end of a scene or event, or want to do something between events. The GM should resist that sternly, perhaps by saying 'You wanted to, but somehow you never got round to it'. It's better if the interesting things happen right in the meat of an event, even if this means complicating the situation. Things that are worth describing are worth letting happen at an exciting moment. Dealing with them in 'down-time' is squandering an opportunity.

CONTESTS

Most of the time, the actions of characters controlled by the players or the GM will be straight forward, and success automatic. Where there is risk or uncertainty, the GM may call for a 'Contest'. There are two kinds of contest, one taking longer than the other, and the GM will ask for the one that he thinks is most appropriate.

MONTAGES

If the GM thinks that the consequences of an event or scene absolutely have to be established before pressing on- which might happen if a pupil has done something likely to get him into trouble or some consequence hasn't played out fully. The GM describes, sparsely, what happens. He may call for a roll from one of the players, or simply describe the outcome as he sees fit. Montages are not the meat of the game, they are a chance to tidy up any loose ends before starting a new event. In particular, other players should refrain from trying to put too much of their input into the scene, so the GM can keep things moving.

IMPROVEMENT

Pupils at the Academy will learn new things and become far more deadly with time. The most significant means of advancement is by increasing the character's abilities following the year-end examinations. There are other ways of acquiring something called a 'character trait', but they are the exception rather than the rule.

WHAT YOU NEED

Some dice, the usual six-sided kind. Six of them is sufficient, but it's always handy to have more than that to hand. You'll need tokens of some kind, three for each player, and you need to be able to tell who the tokens originally belonged to. If you're struggling for that, tear up a sheet of paper and write names on the pieces.

It is handy to use dice or other miscellaneous tokens to track a few things, but not strictly required. You will need some pencils, and either some copies of the character sheet in this book or some blank paper to write the details on. If you're being thorough, you can make some copies of the induction sheet, too.



3. CHARACTER GENERATION

First, fill in the induction form, preferably without reading too much of this section.

No peeking.

FRESH-FACED AND INNOCENTISH

There are six main attributes for your character:

Guns - Shooting things.

Martial Arts - Beating people up with or without implements.

Infiltration - Getting into places.

Sabotage - Wrecking stuff.

Interrogation - Getting information out of people.

Driving - Wheels get the chicks.

These are rated as numbers from I and up. What scores you start with depends in part on how your character came to the school, and decisions you make now on what they are best at.

Although students use the terms 'guns' and 'martial arts', the teachers prefer instead 'firearms' and 'self-defence' as they sound slightly more professional. Everybody can tell what others mean, in any case.

ATTRIBUTES AND TRAITS

Step 1: Get free points.

Each attribute except Driving starts at I. Driving starts at 0.

Step 2: Get Place points.

Get a free point in an attribute if you have the following Place Type:

Funded: Sabotage

Scholarship: Guns

Legacy: Infiltration

Transfer: Martial Arts

Step 3: Spend Choice points.

Spend 4 points on attributes except Driving, but you can't raise an attribute higher than 3.

Step 4: Get Clan points.

Get a free point based on your Clan, which may take the attribute up to 4.

Häyhä: Guns

Galán: Martial Arts

Lawrence: Infiltration

Step 5: Regular Place bonus.

If your Place Type was Regular, roll a die and get a free point:

- 1 - Guns
- 2 - Martial Arts
- 3 - Infiltration
- 4 - Sabotage
- 5 - Interrogation
- 6 - Driving

If you roll an attribute that is already at 4, the extra point is lost. Attributes at 3 can be improved by this roll.

Step 6: Choose Traits.

You can now choose 2 traits from the list given for your Place Type.

Regular: All are available.

Funded: Ally on the Outside, Drop Dead Gorgeous, Nerves of Steel, No Fear, No Women No Kids, Reputation, Prodigy, Swot

Scholarship: Ally on the Staff, Impressive Scar, Innocent Face, Nails, Pain Feels Good, Swot, Tactician, Wheeler-Dealer

Legacy: Ally on the Outside, Ally on the Staff, Drop Dead Gorgeous, Innocent Face, Lovable Rogue, Nerves of Steel, No Women No Kids, Tactician

Transfer: Impressive Scar, Lovable Rogue, Nails, No Fear, Pain Feels Good, Reputation, Prodigy, Wheeler-Dealer

There is more information on what each of them means in the next chapter.

Step 7: Establish Relationships.

Each character always has 3 'developing' relationships at any time. As time goes by, each relationship will mature and become an 'fixed' relationship. A character can have any number of fixed relationships, but starts with none.

Choose three people at the Academy that you want your character to develop a relationship with. You cannot pick other player's characters, but you can pick staff members as well as other students from any year. Feel free to make up students to fit the roles you want- with the GM's permission. It is entirely acceptable for two player characters to have a developing relationship with the same person. The important thing is that the character exist for the player character to interact with and thus develop the relationships. Although you can have an idea now as to what form the relationship takes, you are not bound to it and the reality may turn out to be rather different in play. For other students, you normally have to invent them out of nothing, unless you 'poach' a pupil introduced by another player.

Relationships are recorded on a separate sheet, as you are likely to develop quite a few over the course of your school career.

Example Character

Rodney Gilling is the character name chosen by the player.

Step 1, he gets his free points in everything except Driving.

Step 2, as Rodney is a regular student of Mayhew, he gets nothing here.

Step 3, he spends 2 points on Martial Arts to bring it up to 3, and 1 point on Guns and Intrusion to bring them up to 2. Sabotage and Interrogation stay at 1 point each.

Step 4, as Rodney is in the Lawrence Clan, his Infiltration is increased to 3.

Step 5, a random roll means that Rodney's Guns attribute is increased to 3.

Step 6, Rodney chooses the traits 'Nails' and 'Lovable Rogue'.

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Step 7, Rodney picks his Clanmaster, Mr. Canaris, and two other pupils in his year that he names Constance Tilly and Jacques Brocault. Who they are, and what their stories are, will be established in play.

So, after completing character creation, Rodney looks like this:

Guns 3, Martial Arts 3, Infiltration 3, Sabotage I, Interrogation I, Driving 0.

Nails, Lovable Rogue.

Relationships: Mr. Canaris, Constance Tilly, Jacques Brocault.

OTHER STUFF

There are other things on the character sheet of note.

Momentum: This is used as a handy box for recording any advantage you have in a 'Long Contest'. These things are described later.

Injuries: A character can only weather two injuries and keep on fighting- the third will put the character out of action temporarily. Injury boxes help you keep track of this.

Detentions: During a school year an ill-behaved pupil may be given detentions. Mark how many detentions you've received here.

Favours: Player characters have a system to keep track of favours they owe one another. This uses tokens of some kind, but you can pile the tokens up here. At the start of the game, each player has their own three tokens and none belonging to other players.

Clan Kills: The rewards system of the Academy is based around 'Clan Kills' that teachers award for exceptional effort or achievement.

LATE ARRIVALS

Sometimes a student arrives at the school later on in the programme than Year 7. You may want to do this because a previous character has died or been expelled. Alternatively, you may want to start the game in a later year of school. In both cases, create a character as normal, then adjust it based on the instructions below.

Completed Year 7

Increase all attributes except Driving by 1.

Completed Year 8

Increase Driving by 1. Spend 4 points on attributes (including Driving) but no more than 1 point on each attribute.

Completed Year 9

Gain 5 Advanced Training dice, but no more than 1 per specialisation. You can also spend one of the points on Driving, if you wish.

Completed Year 10

Gain 5 Advanced Training dice, but no more than 1 per specialisation.

How Advanced Training dice work is given in the main rules chapter, 'Getting Stuff Done'. The type of advanced training are available are provided in the 'Examinations' chapter.

4. TRAITS

Traits are aspects of your character that help define them. You can use them as inspiration for how your character behaves, and the kind of trouble they seek out. For all traits, add a little description about the details- who the ally is, for example, for the first two traits in the list.

Descriptions of the standard traits are given below.

ALLY ON THE OUTSIDE

You are associated with someone outside the Academy who is influential in some way. It could be your father, a sponsor, or a government or criminal organisation. They can't directly affect what happens to you at the Academy, but knowing that there is someone looking out for you can be a great boon. You can use this trait to arrange to have something delivered to you in a care package, once per term. Obviously dangerous items will be confiscated by the staff in the post room unless special care is taken to disguise them. Smuggling forbidden items onto school premises inside otherwise innocuous care packages will certainly earn a detention if it's found. On the other hand, there are plenty of things not generally obtainable inside the school that are not forbidden. You may be able to bring in an item for someone else as a favour.

ALLY ON THE STAFF

You are associated with a member of staff. You could be a relative, or a relative of one of the staff member's former protégés. This gives you a certain amount of pull with that member of staff, although you can't push your luck too far. Once per year, you can use this trait to get out of a detention. The exact nature of the association may be kept a secret for a number of reasons, but the favouritism will be obvious. Pick the member of staff from the Staff Directory. You may have a developing relationship with this ally, which operates in parallel with this trait.

DROP DEAD GORGEOUS

You're fit and you know it. There's not much time for love at the Academy, but you can use your looks to help you get what you want. You can gain a Bonus Dice on an Interrogation test against another pupil in your year by flirting outrageously- provided of course that a) they're the opposite sex or b) they've come out as gay, bi or trans. This trait does not work on students in years above or below you, because everybody knows that going out with people a year or more older or younger than you is just Wrong.

IMPRESSIVE SCAR

My god, how did you get that? Whatever the story behind it, it adds to your grim look. You get a Bonus Dice for any Interrogation test where looking intimidating would help, but only against someone in the same year as you are or younger. The older kids are too cool to be impressed by it.

INNOCENT FACE

The looks of an angel with an Uzi in her satchel. You get a Bonus Dice in any Interrogation test where looking innocent or unthreatening would help. However, this only works for people in the same year as you are older. It does not work on any of the staff of Mayhew Academy. Younger kids are too in awe of you for it to work.

LOVABLE ROGUE

Although you are obviously some kind of bounder, you exude a mischievous charm that others find difficult to ignore. You get a Bonus Dice in any Interrogation test with staff members or other adults by playing on that persona. It doesn't allow you to ignore school discipline, but you can try to wriggle out of punishment every now and again, or slide the blame onto someone else.

NAILS

No beating can keep you down for long. You never miss any studies as a result of serious injury.

NERVES OF STEEL

Tension never gets to you. During any exam, test or other extremely high-tension scenario, you get a Bonus Dice if you don't already have one. Note that firefights and other forms of combat are very rarely as stressful as exams, and thus you don't get this bonus very often.

NO FEAR

The prospect of injury or death does not phase you in the slightest. If the difficulty of a test is increased because of additional danger, then you can ignore the first point of that increase. This means that moderately dangerous situations, which only add a single point, are not any more difficult for you than ordinary situations.

NO WOMEN NO KIDS

You have a code. It might have been instilled in you by your parents, or your government sponsors, or be brainwashing by your cartel handlers, but you absolutely will not bend on that aspect. Ordinarily, staff at Mayhew do not make exceptions to the curriculum on these kinds of grounds, but a sufficiently impressive iron will is something Mayhew likes to cultivate, and will make moderate efforts to accommodate it. You may be given a similar, replacement task if the main class' task is against your code. Also, you gain a Bonus Dice in any contest against someone who has just acted against your code right in front of you. Of course, your code does not have to be particularly noble, there are plenty of head-cases in the business with unpleasant codes like 'Leave none alive' or 'Never let a pretty corpse go to waste'.

PAIN FEELS GOOD

For some reason, the pain of injury in a physical feat spurs you on to greater efforts. You can reach past the agony and find a pristine core of determination. If you do not choose 'avoid a consequence' when attacking during a Long Contest and suffer an injury as a result, you gain an extra momentum dice on top of any you would usually gain.

REPUTATION

It takes a lot to impress your classmates at a place like Mayhew Academy. You've already done that somehow. Go you. It's a subtle thing, but you fellow pupils won't hassle you quite as much, and will let minor infractions slide more often. It doesn't give you carte blanche to be a wanker, but it does make your school life just that little bit easier.

PRODIGY

You have an incredible aptitude for a subject. You are, to a certain extent, a natural. This natural skill and instinctive action can save you from disaster at the unlikelyest times. Once per year, you can use this ability to turn a failed short or long contest in that subject into a marginal success. Naturally, you have to choose that subject in advance. You can even save up the ability in case you need to use it in an exam.

SWOT

Yes you, with the glasses. Teacher's pet! How dare you actually put effort in! During the year-end exams, you get four study Bonus Dice to spend instead of two.

TACTICIAN

It's all in the planning. Unlike the rest of your class-mates, who run around firing off guns with no real appreciation for tactical goals, you think ahead. Provided you have ample opportunity to prepare for a Long Contest or a scene containing a number of Short Contests, roll a dice before it starts. On a 4, 5 or 6, your planning pays off and you get a Bonus Dice for the contest or scene. On a 1, you have miscalculated spectacularly, and the difficulty is raised by 1 for you for the entire contest or scene.

WHEELER-DEALER

You know how to make a fast buck trading in favours and contraband. Once per term, you can pay off a favour by using this skill. This avoids you having to yield a contest with the person you owe a favour or help them when you wouldn't want to. You can also do favours for other players and give them someone else's favour token instead of yours.

If you want a trait that isn't sufficiently similar to one of these, speak to the GM. Together, you may create a new and wonderful trait that is balanced and interesting. More likely, you get one glorious session of being grossly overpowered before the trait is nerfed into oblivion.



5. RELATIONSHIPS

FAVOURS

There's an economy of favours between players' characters. Each player has three tokens- it doesn't matter they are as long as it's clear which character they came from- that he gives to another player when that player's character does him a favour. A favour can take many forms- perhaps the most common is when a player character helps another in a Short or Long Contest. Other options are giving something that's valuable or hard to obtain to a character or taking the blame for something they did. The token serves as a reminder that the favour is owed- remember to record any tokens you hold that came from another player at the end of a session so you can set things up properly for the next one.

If you do someone a favour and you hold one of their tokens, you must return it to them rather than giving them one of yours.

If someone holds one of your tokens, you can force them to do you a favour in certain circumstances. Firstly, you can compel them to assist you in a contest, even if they would otherwise not wish to do so. Secondly, you can force them to back down if there is about to be a contest between the two of you. You call in the favour to get them to yield. Thirdly- with the GM's permission you can coerce the character into performing any other action that would count as doing your character a favour in this system. Being prepared to do one another favours is a big help in getting by at the Academy.

If you do someone a favour, but hold none of their tokens and none of your own, nothing in particular happens- they get a freebie. If you have the 'Wheeler-Dealer' trait, you could opt to give someone's else favour token. In any case you should, perhaps, consider calling in some of your existing favours.

Example of Favours

Rodney got help from Hans when he was struggling with some of his Interrogation homework. Hans gave Rodney one of his favour tokens.

Rodney, not wanting the favour hanging over his head, arranges with one of the older pupils to get a video game Hans has been hankering after to pay off the favour.

However, before the game arrives, Hans and Rodney are both being considered by their Firearms teacher for a special assignment. Rodney wants the opportunity really badly, but to his chagrin Hans calls in the favour and gets Rodney to turn it down in favour of him. Rodney returns the favour token.

When the game arrives, Rodney gives it to Hans anyway. Hans has to accept one of Rodney's favour tokens.

They get into one of their frequent arguments over whose turn it is to clean their shared room. Rodney uses the favour token to force Hans to back down and do the chores. Hans has no choice but to do so, albeit with bad grace.

RELATIONSHIPS

The relationships a character holds with GM-controlled characters can also be of great assistance. In any contest, you can make the case that the one of your developing relationships makes your task easier. Whatever way the relationship helps, you get 1 Bonus Dice. You can only call on a single relationship per contest, and you have to provide good justification for how it would help. Note that this doesn't have to imply that the character himself is helping you- it is the fact of your relationship that helps you. So, if a character who has been established as a bully who beats you up challenges you, you can invoke that relationship to give you the courage to fight back harder. Or, if a teacher has been inspirational in your classes so far, you can invoke that relationship when confronted with a task in her subject.

MAYHEM ACADEMY

After a contest where you called on a relationship, you need to fill in one of the five boxes that defines the relationship. If you won the contest, you get to fill it in yourself. If you lost the contest, the player who beat you (which might be the GM) gets to fill it in. What gets written has to reflect what happened in the contest somehow. It does not have to be a positive aspect of the relationship if you fill it in, or a negative one if someone else fills it in. The relationships will be complicated and sometimes self-contradictory, just like real-life relationships. Don't be too put out if another player's contribution takes the relationship in a direction you weren't expecting, or runs contrary to what you were planning. Things don't always work out as your character would like them to. It's important to bear in mind that the mechanical effect of a relationship is not influenced by the nature of a relationship. Destructive-seeming relationships are just as beneficial, as far as the game goes, as constructive ones.

In some other, less bad-ass game about school life, the moral of the story may be that friends help get you through the tough times. In this game the moral is that relationships make your work more difficult, and should be avoided where possible. Life as a paid killer is grim.

Once a relationship has all 5 boxes filled in, it becomes fixed. In terms of narrative, that relationship has been as developed as thoroughly as it can be. The traits that make it up are now set in stone. They describe how your character relates to the other character from that point on. In game terms, you can no longer call on it to help you in a contest. In fact, if the GM can find a way to weave it into the contest it actually makes things harder- perhaps by increasing the difficulty of the contest. Fixed relationships can also drag your character into trouble he would otherwise avoid: if his on-again-off-again girlfriend is in trouble he has no choice but to try to sort things out. This kind of forcing should be done sparingly, but you should bear in mind that a fixed relationship is a real liability. That fact acts as a disincentive to call on your active relationships too often.



Example Relationship

Rodney's relationship with Constance Tilly develops over the course of the game.

The first time he draws her in, he needs help with a difficult problem in Sabotage lessons. Rodney claims that she helps him with a dummy bomb. When he fails the roll anyway, the GM says that she deliberately fooled him into doing something wrong and writes in the description 'Tricks Rodney into mistakes'.

The second time, Rodney's facing down someone from the upper school who's trying to take away a book Rodney's been sent from home. Seeking an edge over the older boy, Rodney picks up Constance's heavy bag and uses it like a club. The other pupil backs away with an embarrassing black eye. Rodney's player says that Constance saw the fight, and was impressed by it. He writes in the description 'Is impressed by how Rodney stands his ground'.

The third invocation is during a field trip. Rodney's paintball gun is jammed, and he's supposed to be hitting the side of a moving vehicle in a mock hijacking. He desperately asks to borrow Constance's paintball gun, and she passes it to him with a smile. He fails the roll. The GM says that when he shoots the van, he realises too late that she'd taken the ammunition out. The GM adds to the description 'Will do anything to get an edge over Rodney at school'.

The fourth occasion Rodney brings her into play is when he gets mixed up in one of his friend's schemes involving sneaking about the school after lights out. When there's a chance that a passing teacher notices them, Rodney says that before he left, Constance lent him her night-vision goggles. This means Rodney can turn off the torch and keep moving stealthily. However, he fails the roll. The GM says that the teacher had actually been told by Constance that Rodney was up to something, and was looking for him specifically. The GM adds the description 'Dobs Rodney in every chance she gets'.

The fifth time Rodney needs her help is when a fire breaks out at the Academy and Rodney ends up trapped in a classroom by a couple of older boys pushing some shelves in front of the door. Rodney says he sees Constance just below the window, and asks her for help. He passes the roll to get out, and he describes how the two of them climb up onto the roof when they see the fire is no threat to that part of the school, and spend the afternoon chatting and kicking their legs while teachers shout up at them. Rodney's player fills in the last description with 'She teases Rodney because she fancies him'.

The relationship is now fixed, so it can't be used to help Rodney in future contests. If Constance is involved, the relationship they have might make future contests more difficult for Rodney, as her flirty attention and pranks will probably hinder him more than help him.

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6. GETTING STUFF DONE

Whenever a player character wants to do something and there is uncertainty about the outcome, the GM may call for a contest. There are three ways a contest can be adjudicated.

GM's Word is Law - If the action is not particularly interesting, between two characters controlled by the GM, or the GM wants to hurry things up a little, the GM simply narrates what happens. No dice are rolled. It's not worth the time it would take to work it out another way.

Short Contest - If the action is interesting, but not terribly significant, the GM gets the player to roll for a short contest. If two players are competing on the action, then the GM picks one to make the roll.

Long Contest - If the action is both interesting and significant and pits a player against a player, the GM calls for a long contest. The players roll dice several times until the contest is resolved. Sometimes the GM can control one of his characters in a Long Contest against a player, but this should be done sparingly.

Example GM's Word is Law

Rodney is breaking into a school cupboard to retrieve a book he left in there. The GM considers making him roll for it, and the possibility of getting caught or breaking the cupboard door altogether, but decides instead to give him a pass.

SHORT CONTESTS

The GM establishes which attribute is most appropriate for the action. The six attributes are also used by characters to protect themselves from someone using those skills. For example, the Guns attribute is used not only to shoot, but also to zig-zag away from someone shooting at you. Interrogation is used to both extract information from someone and to lie convincingly.

The GM then sets a difficulty for the roll. Use as a guideline:

- ✿ 1 Moderately Difficult
- ✿ 2 Hard
- ✿ 3 Very Hard
- ✿ 4 Extremely Foolhardy

The GM can increase the difficulty of the task if the circumstances are particularly dangerous or problematic- but only if the circumstances are truly exceptional. On very rare occasions, the GM may even increase the difficulty by 2 or 3. These increases can take the difficulty above 4.

The player rolls a number of dice equal to the attribute used. A dice showing 6 is an **Excellent** success, a dice showing 5 a **Good** success and a dice showing 3 or 4 a **Marginal** success. 1s and 2s are failures. The player needs to assemble the best group of dice he can, and the group has to have as many dice in it as the difficulty of the task. The overall success of the roll is equal to the lowest dice in this assembled group. If the player does not have enough dice to fill the group, he automatically fails.

With an Excellent success, he can narrate all three of the following outcomes of the action:

- ✿ How he succeeded at the task.
- ✿ How he avoided any consequences in the process, such as injury.
- ✿ How he gained some other small benefit not directly related to the action.

If he had a Good success, he picks two of those things to narrate. With a Marginal success, he narrates one. If the roll was a fail, he gets to narrate nothing. The GM then narrates the opposite of the first two if they haven't already been decided. Not picking the third category doesn't need any additional narration from the GM.

MAYHEM ACADEMY

In this way, it is likely that any roll will make the situation slightly more complicated, even as it resolves one action at issue. The player may have to make a hard choice if he gets something less than an Excellent success. Things get... sticky.

Note that the player is free to choose from that list in ways that the character may not prefer, if he thinks it's more interesting or tells a more compelling story. In fact, the player may choose to have his character fail purely to generate a boon of the third type listed, which may come in handy in future.

Example Short Contest

Rodney has got into a fight on the playground. He has no back-up, and the GM says the boy he's fighting has a Martial Arts score of 3. This means that Rodney faces a difficulty of 2.

Rodney's Martial Arts is 3. He rolls three dice and gets 6, 4 and 6. This is enough for him to get an Excellent success.

His player narrates how he clouts the boy so hard he falls over backwards (success), how he avoids taking a kick to the shin in the process (avoiding consequences) and how the beating convinces the boy not to mess with Rodney in future (other benefit).

Example Short Contest

Rodney is struggling with a firearms assignment. He's stripped the handgun given to him, but in putting it back together bits keep getting left over. His Guns score is 3, and the GM says the difficulty is 1.

He rolls 1, 3 and 4. He can only get a Marginal success. He narrates that he does manage to get the gun back together eventually (success). The GM narrates that he took so long that all the other students were watching him struggle, making him a laughing stock for the rest of the day (consequences).

PLAYER VS. PLAYER

If two players are competing, the GM decides which of them is in the more 'active' role, and has that player roll. The difficulty is half the relevant attribute of the other player (rounding up). The inactive player gets to make the narration the GM would make in a normal roll. If the active player succeeds, he narrates his first choice from the list. The players then alternate choosing from the list and narrating for the active character until they've used up all of their choices. This means that in a contest with another player, the only way to guarantee success without consequences is to score an Excellent success on the roll.

Example Player vs. Player

Rodney has got into an argument with one of his friends, Hans. The GM says that Rodney is active in the argument, and the other character doesn't roll. Rodney has an Interrogation attribute of 1, and the other character has an Interrogation of 2. Rodney's difficulty is 1.

Rodney rolls a 4, a Marginal success.

Rodney's player narrates how in the course of the argument, Hans lets slip that he sneaked a look at the answers to a recent test- something already established in a previous scene (other benefit). The other player then narrates not only how Rodney lost the argument by starting to cry a little (failure) but also how Rodney's school bag was thrown out of the window (consequences).

WHAT VICTORY MEANS

Victory means achieving a single, definite goal. Try not to conflate the means to an end with the end itself. For example, if you want to take a swing at the bully who has been making your life a misery, your goal is not 'Punching him'; your goal is 'Humiliating him in front of his cronies' or 'Teaching him to leave me alone'. Similarly, avoid setting a goal that is purely avoiding something unpleasant happening to you. Instead of 'Dodging the attack', consider goals like as 'Putting myself out of danger' or 'Taking out the attacker'. It should go without saying that trying to cram too many things into your goal is also right out- 'I beat him in the exercise, earning his respect and making his girlfriend dump him for me' is just asking for a slap. Pick the most important aspect- you can always add a second aspect to the success using 'other benefit' if you get a good enough roll.

WHAT CONSEQUENCES CAN BE

Consequences don't have to be injuries. They can mean getting into trouble with the teachers or making enemies among the other students. They also don't have to have immediate- some consequences can be ticking time bombs waiting to cause grief. Often, you will only have a Marginal success and have to choose between success at a price or failure without consequences. Which you pick is up to you.

Consequences should not be things that can be brushed off lightly. They need not have far-reaching ramifications, but at the very least they should inconvenience the character. If it doesn't hurt in some way, it's not really a consequence. Remember that if you fail to avoid a consequence, it either the GM or another player who decides what form the consequence takes, so don't expect it to be gentle.

Injuries are special type of consequence. Your character sheet has 3 boxes for injuries. Cross them off as you take them. Suffering the third injury puts your character 'down'. This is not the same as suffering a serious or life-threatening wound- it just represents being beaten up too much to carry on fighting. You may still make rolls for things other than physical actions, with the GM's say-so. Injuries are generally only healed over the course of days.

Sufficiently dangerous situations may fill in more than one injury box, at the GM's discretion. Generally it will be very clear that the risk is higher than normal- if you stay to defuse the bomb rather than dive behind the concrete wall, you can expect to take 2 or 3 injuries if you fail to avoid the consequence of it blowing up.

Extremely bad mistakes (and there will plenty of opportunity to make them over the course of your school career) might even put you in the infirmary for an extended period, missing plenty of lessons and falling behind your peers.

OTHER BENEFITS

This category is the hardest to pin down. It shouldn't be a way of sneaking a success to a different task in through the back door, but it needs to be an attractive enough proposition that you may want to choose it over one of the others. Apart from that, the field is wide open. Let the GM give you some ideas if you struggle to come up with some- after all, she knows more about what might happen in the future, and might make suggestions that tie into future events nicely.

Some benefits may be bonuses you can take 'going forward'. This means that you gain some advantage in the situation that you can convert into a Bonus Dice on a future roll.

BONUS DICE

There are many ways that Bonus Dice can be added to a roll. Once your character is in the upper school, he will have Bonus Dice for his specialisations in the form of Advanced Training. The GM may decree that favourable circumstances give you a Bonus Dice or two. Finally, receiving help from another player gives you two Bonus Dice. Any further assistance from other players only gives 1 Bonus Dice for each additional helper. Invoking a relationship gives 1 Bonus Dice.

MAYHEM ACADEMY

Bonus dice are not simply added to the dice you roll- in fact they are not rolled at all. A single Bonus Dice is placed as a 3, and can be used together with the dice you roll to make up your success. Two Bonus Dice convert into a single dice showing a 5. Three Bonus Dice, you get a 6. Four Bonus Dice gives you two fixed dice to add to your roll- a 3 and a 6. And so on.

Bonus Dice help reduce the difficulty of the task, but possibly only for a Marginal or Good success. Three Bonus Dice are effectively the same as reducing the difficulty by 1, and you can simplify matters by trading away each three Bonus Dice for a difficulty reduction.

In any contest between two characters that both have Bonus Dice available, the one with the most Bonus Dice loses a number equal to the Bonus Dice of the other, and the other loses all of his. Or, to put it another way, remove an equal amount from both until at most one character has Bonus Dice left.

Example with Bonus Dice

Rodney has persuaded a friend to help him with an Infiltration essay. Rodney has an Infiltration of 3, and the help means that he gets 2 Bonus Dice. They convert into a 5. The GM says the difficulty of the assignment is 2.

Rodney rolls a 1, 3 and 6. The 5 and 6 means he has scored a Good success. The Bonus Dice didn't make it any likelier that he'd get an Excellent Success, but without them he would only have got a Marginal success.

LONG CONTESTS

Long Contests are a big deal. They take up quite a lot of time, and even winning a Long Contest can leave a character with a couple of injuries or in a state of exhaustion. They also take up a lot of in-character time, and can be interrupted without normal conclusion if they go on too long. Also, the potential to pick up a number of injuries over the course of a Long Contest means that one character may be forced to yield because they cannot continue, rather than because their opponent bested them directly. A Long Contest can only ever against another character, so the GM will select a particular character he controls to enter the contest if it's not between two players.

The basic idea behind a Long Contest is that one character makes rolls to accumulate and advantageous position (in terms of dice and in terms of the description of the context) and then tries to convert that advantage into victory. Both characters make a roll as in a Short Contest at each step.

The 'advantageous position' is represented by 'momentum'. Instead of the success choice for Short Contests, in a Long Contest that choice is 'move closer to success'. If both participants have Bonus Dice, then the character with the fewest loses all of them, but the number also gets taken away from the other character.

One character begins as the aggressor (as the GM decides is appropriate). The difficulty for almost all Long Contests is 1- the main problem is to overcome the opponent. Both characters roll. The aggressor's goal is to create attack momentum, the defender's goal is to create defence momentum. Both can be recorded by putting spare dice on the character sheets.

The outcome of each round of the Long Contest is the difference in the level of success of the two rolls. If both characters get the same level of success, then the difference is 0. This will happen about 1 time in 3.

If the aggressor won - he can choose narration rights from the three categories as normal, although bear in mind that the first category is about him gaining a situational advantage, not winning overall. If he gains such a situational advantage, he can add a dice to his pool of attack momentum. Note that if the margin was only 1, which happens often, he will have to choose between gaining momentum and avoiding a consequence. In any case, the defender loses any accumulated defence momentum she has.

If the two characters tied - nothing much happens. Neither gains any momentum and neither suffers any injury. They both keep any momentum they have.

If the defender won - she can choose narration rights from the three categories as before. She may have to suffer a consequence to gain momentum if the margin was only 1. In any case, the aggressor loses any attack momentum he has.

MAYHEM ACADEMY

After the round is resolved, the aggressor can choose whether or not to carry on attacking. If so, another round is rolled, with any momentum dice being rolled alongside the main dice (they are not Bonus Dice!). If he chooses not to attack, then he loses any attack momentum he has. The defender turns her defence momentum into attack momentum and becomes the aggressor for the next round. She can also reduce her defence momentum by 1 to force the aggressor to yield that position- any remaining momentum is converted and the contest continues.

If the aggressor is about to start a round and has some attack momentum, he can choose to go for victory. He converts all of his attack momentum into victory momentum, and makes an attempt to win the entire contest. His difficulty on this roll is 1 higher than the rest of the contest- normally 2. The roll is resolved as normal. If he wins and chooses the success option then he wins the contest overall, even if he suffers his third injury in the process. Succeed or fail, the victory momentum is lost. If the contest continues, he is still the aggressor.

If it's difficult to get a handle on what's going on, think of momentum as the ebb and flow of battle. One character may start to gain an advantage, then lose it as his opponent defends well. Once the defender has a lot of momentum, she can turn the tables on her attacker and beat him back with the advantage she's gained, gaining even more momentum as she goes. Once she has a commanding enough position, she can attempt to end the fight once and for all. If she fails, she's squandered her good position.

- ✿ Only one character can have momentum at a time.
- ✿ Only the character who won the round risks taking a consequence. This seems counter-intuitive, but bear in mind that if the character won he can always choose to avoid the consequence and gain no other benefit.
- ✿ Sometimes it's better to let your enemy keep trying to attack you at first if you have an edge.
- ✿ Bonus Dice can be very, very handy in a Long Contest. In particular, if you have 3 more Bonus Dice than your opponent, you literally can't lose a single round if the difficulty is 1.
- ✿ If the contest isn't one that risks injury, then the consequences (making too much noise, damaging school equipment, attracting the attention of a teacher) are likely to pile up very quickly.

Example Long Contest

Rodney, facing the prospect of a detention, tried to bargain his way out of it by telling the teacher that Hans cheated on the test. Of course, the upshot is that both Rodney and Hans are in detention. Hans is a little upset, naturally, and starts a fight with Rodney as soon as the teacher is out of the room.

Rodney has a Martial Arts attribute of 3, Hans has one of 2. The GM says that this important moment in their friendship merits a Long Contest, with Hans as the aggressor.

Roll 1: Hans 3, 4. Rodney 1, 1, 3. Both score Marginal successes. The GM says they scuffle, knocking over one of the chairs, but nothing serious happens. Yet.

Roll 2: Hans 2, 3. Rodney 1, 2, 6. Hans scores a Marginal success, but Rodney gets an Excellent success. Rodney narrates getting a good knee into Hans' stomach (momentum), and avoiding the flailing fists in the process (avoid consequences).

Roll 3: Hans 3, 6. Rodney 1, 2, 3, 6. Both get Excellent successes. The fight continues.

MAYHEM ACADEMY

Roll 4: Hans 1, 4. Rodney 1, 1, 3, 5. Rodney gets a Good success to Hans' Marginal. Rodney pushes Hans back into the wall (momentum) but gets a bloody nose for his trouble (injury consequence). Rodney spends on point of momentum to become the aggressor.

Roll 5: Rodney 1, 2, 3, 4. Hans 3, 4. All square. The GM points out that it's not going to be long before the teacher returns. Rodney declare he's going for victory, while he still has a chance.

Roll 6: Rodney 2, 4, 5, 5. Hans 1, 3. Rodney has a Good success to Hans' Marginal success. Rodney delivers a vicious uppercut that knocks Hans spark out (victory), but does so just as the teacher returns (consequences).

Rodney has suffered an injury (which may become pertinent in future contests. Both of them are likely to be sent to the infirmary, and will probably have another detention to serve tomorrow.

PREMATURE ENDINGS AND INTERRUPTIONS

There are several ways a Long Contest can end early. If neither character wants to be the aggressor, then the situation de-escalates and the contest ends without conclusion. If one character receives his third injury, he is forced out of the contest and the winner can narrate victory and consequence avoidance for himself immediately (but not any additional benefit). If the contest starts to drag, possibly because of a lot of ties, then the GM introduces an interruption to the contest. The overall time taken up by the sequence of events is directly proportional to how many rounds were fought, so if it goes on for too long the chances of interruption get higher and higher.

Sometimes the circumstances might change during a Long Contest. For example, a player may feel his character is in deep trouble and try to invoke a relationship or enlist the aid of another player to even things up a little. This is perfectly acceptable, as long as the Long Contest doesn't become a trial of who can involve as many other people as possible.

BIG RUMBLES

Sometimes there may be a situation where the players are on one side of a conflict and a number of GM-controlled characters are on the other. Strictly following the help rules would mean that both sides get a ridiculous number of Bonus Dice, which would probably mostly cancel one another out. In that kind of situation, the GM should ask the players which of them has the most invested in the contest, and let that player represent all of his allies in the contest. The GM can describe the others helping by keeping the other side's minions at bay, but the main action is on whoever wants to run the risk of the contest.

SAY WHAT?

No rules set can cover everything players might suggest or try, or every little strange circumstance. If in doubt, go with what the GM thinks is reasonable and keeps the game moving.



7. EXAMINATIONS

Examinations are an important part of the curriculum. The main way that player characters become stronger is through improvement at the end of each academic year- and how much they improve depends on how well they did in their exams.

Not all subjects are examined in each year group- in particular the lower school (years 7-9) are only examined on two or three core subjects in each year. Pupils in years 10 and 11 are examined on whatever specialisations they have settled on. The form of the exams also changes considerably over the course of their Mayhew careers. Year 7 exams are traditionally simple target shooting, a few rounds of sparring with each other and a simple assault course. By year 9, the students are put into small teams of 3 or 4 with complementary abilities and given a dummy mission to perform. The year 11 final exam sometimes is a mission the Academy has been paid to conduct, and even when not is styled as one. The teachers have absolute authority to set whatever examination they want for their subject. Periodically one teacher will become bored with the same old formula and introduce something that comes out of left field just to keep things interesting.

The guiding principle is that the pupils are assessed on their own performance. Even if their team-mates are incompetent, as long as a student handles the ensuing Charlie Foxtrot with professionalism he can still get an excellent mark.

EXAMINATIONS AS MONTAGES

Although it might be tempting to cast every player character's every exam as its own scene, it's probably not a good idea to do so unless you intend to play out the year in great detail, over a number of sessions. Because many of the exams are solo efforts, that would result in long periods of play where only one player is active, which is not usually the best way to do things.

Students prepare for exams. In theory, anyway. Each player can assign two Bonus Dice to his year-end exams, in any combination he likes. This can be used to make a passing mark easier in two out of the three, or make a good mark much more likely in one. Characters with the 'Swot' trait get to assign four instead. Characters with 'Nerves of Steel' can concentrate their study Bonus Dice, and still count as having one in subjects they otherwise ignored.

An exam can be a single Short Contest, with appropriate description to frame it. This may seem to fly in the face of the earlier advice on how to decide what kind of contest to have, but it's entirely in keeping with the all-or-nothing, hope-it-goes-well-on-the-day nature of examinations. Because of the significance of an exam, the results are interpreted in a slightly different way to normal. Rather than picking outcomes from the list, the roll determines how well the student fared in the exam.

- ✱ Fail (U): The student messed up. His next year will include remedial lessons on the subject in the evenings. If a student fails all of his exams in a year, he's expelled. Whoops.
- ✱ Marginal Success (D - C): The student 'meets expectations' for the year. At Mayhew, that's no mean feat. If you want to separate out Cs and Ds, a student gets a C if he can score a Marginal success using only 4s.
- ✱ Good Success (B): The student displays commendable skill and laudable initiative, above average for his year. He's given 5 Clan Kills for his performance.
- ✱ Excellent Success (A): The student surprises the examiner with a innovative approach, incredible confidence or speed of execution. He's given 10 Clan Kills, and is also eligible to improve the attribute related to this exam twice this year.

It's easy to see that a student will earn 0 - 30 Clan Kills for his exam performance.

If a player managed a straight A performance across all of his exams, the GM may gift him the 'Swot' trait for free.

MAYHEM ACADEMY

If the GM wants an exam to be its own scene, then the easiest approach is to let one of the important rolls during the mission be the 'key task', which is used to determine the student's mark in the examination. In a scene with multiple contests, the character may get assistance from relationships or other players in the same test for every contest except the one that determines his grade- for that one his performance alone is assessed.

If the GM uses a Long Contest for the entire exam, then he can grade the entire contest as he sees fit- perhaps based on how convincing the final roll is (assuming the pupil actually succeeded). Even in the event of failure, the GM may award a D if a good attempt was made.

YEAR END IMPROVEMENT

Characters improve at the end of the academic year. This improvement is based, in part, on how well they did in their exams. Each completed year gives the character a number of experience points to spend on attributes and, later, Advanced Training dice.

Always, the character receives one experience points to spend for each term of the year- 3. However, if a student suffered an injury severe enough for him to miss a significant amount time of study, he receives one less point doe each term he missed. Students also receive I experience point for each exam they passed that year.

Experience points may be taken away if a student spent a great deal of time in detention. What constitutes a 'great deal of time' really depends on how many game sessions the GM ran for the year. If a character received a number of detentions equal to half the number of play sessions or more, then the character is penalised a single experience point. More than one point may be lost for a truly heroic number of detentions during the year.

Attributes can be improved by experience points on a one-for-one basis, but you cannot spend more than one experience point on an attribute at once, unless the character got an A in that subject.

Older pupils can buy Advanced Training- Bonus Dice that only apply for certain subdivisions of the attributes. These are also bought on a one-for-one basis, no more than one per specialisation per year unless an A was earned. Different Advanced Training dice stemming from the same attribute can be bought in one year, but you can't improve an attribute and any of its linked specialisations in the same year (again, without an A result).

Improvement Summary

Get 1 point for each examination you pass.
Get 1 point for each term you were able to study in.
Lose points for detentions at the GM's discretion.

Year 7

Examination Difficulty: 2

Examinations: Firearms, Self-Defence, Infiltration.

Experience points can be spent improving attributes, except for Driving. If you have 6 points to spend but cannot spend more than 2 in any subject, the GM will allow you to spend 2 in a subject of his choice.

Year 8

Examination Difficulty: 2

Examinations: Interrogation, Sabotage.

All students are given Driving I automatically, and experience points can be spent on any attributes.

Year 9

Examination Difficulty: 3 for Firearms and Self-Defence, 2 for Driving.

Examinations: Firearms, Self-Defence, Driving.

MAYHEM ACADEMY

Experience points can be spent on improving the Driving attribute, or on Advanced Training for other attributes. You are not constrained to get Advanced Training dice in subjects you have explicitly stated you studied, you can declare you had lesson in other specialisations after the fact when you come to spend points.

Year 10

Examination Difficulty: 3

Examinations: Based on modules taken.

Experience points can be spent on Advanced Training only. As in Year 9, you can take establish new specialisations without having to explicitly stated so during the year.

Year 11

Examination Difficulty: 4

Examinations: Mock Mission.

Experience points can be spent on improving attributes or on adding Advanced Training dice to existing specialisations.

Example Exam Results

Rodney has to sit exams in Firearms, Self-Defence and Infiltration- fortunately those are his best subjects. He decides to put extra study into Firearms and Self-Defence, giving each of them a Bonus Dice.

In his Firearms exam, he rolls 2, 5, 6. That's easily enough for him to get a Good result, and a B, without using the 3 the Bonus Dice got him.

In his Self-Defence exam, he rolls 2, 4, 4. That gets him a Marginal result, and a C, without using the 3 the Bonus Dice got him.

In his Infiltration exam, he rolls 2, 4, 5. That's another Marginal result and another C.

For his exam performance, Rodney gets 5 Clan Kills.

Example Advancement

Rodney studied for all 3 terms and passed all 3 exams, for 6 points to spend. However, he received more than his fair share of detentions, so only has 5 points to spend. He spends one point on everything except Driving, as that is pretty much the only choice he can make.

His attributes are now Guns 4, Martial Arts 4, Infiltration 4, Sabotage 2, Interrogation 2, Driving 0.

ADVANCED TRAINING

After a certain point, each pupil reaches the limits of their basic ability. It's then then specialised training comes to the fore, as the only way to improve. Each subject has three related specialisations, one of which is named the same as the attribute. This attribute encompasses everything related to the subject that doesn't fall under one of the other two specialisations. In some cases, the GM may decide that something is sufficiently specialised that none of the types of Advanced Training fit the bill. When you acquire Advanced Training, there is no minimum value you need in the governing attribute, although it is probably wise to concentrate on subjects you are good at.

Any given task can fall under only one type of Advanced Training. In essence, the attribute splits into three different attributes with the same number of dice rolled at that point.

The types of Advanced Training change as the staff-members of the Academy change. Those currently offered are listed below.

Under Firearms:

Artillery - Although most wet-work is up close and personal, sometimes something heavier, like a rocket launcher, is needed to breach a facility or deal with stiff resistance. The use of such heavy weapons, and actual artillery pieces, is a very different matter to the firearms techniques taught previously. Pupils who expect to end up working with or for military authorities typically take this module.

Sniping - the use of 'patient' weapons. The subject concerns selecting a location, settling in for a long time, assessing wind conditions and target selection. While it is one of the most popular advanced courses, only about a third of the students who start it have the right temperament to finish it, so it has a high drop-out rate.

Advanced Firearms - SMGs, assault rifles and handguns are the stock in trade of the Mayhew graduate, and some students study to lift themselves from 'very dangerous' to 'disturbingly deadly'.

Under Self-Defence:

Jeet Kune Do - Bruce Lee's creation, like most modern, practical martial arts, is a synthesis of different styles. Or rather, as its proponents would style it, a philosophy for creating your own synthesis from any bits and pieces of close combat you find lying around. The pragmatic emphasis, using 'what works', fits into the Mayhew ethos beautifully.

Muay Thai - Developed into a sport from a battlefield technique, Muay Thai has a ferocious reputation amongst layman, but in reality is simply another highly advanced mixed technique. It's close strikes and cinches open a wide range of options when attacking in cramped quarters, which are the kinds of quarters hired killers typically find themselves in.

Advanced Self-Defence - The main band of close-combat concentrates on knives, cudgels and other weapons, not for beating other strong fighters but for despatching guards and poorly-trained foes in short order.

Under Infiltration:

Hacking - The modern infiltrator needs to be able to compromise computer-based security measures. The myth of the 'black-box hacking machine' is debunked in favour of knowing how to find out what OS and software is being used, where to find information on unpatched vulnerabilities and techniques of social engineering to discover secret information. If all else fails, this course teaches how to write your own tool to subvert secure systems.

Parkour - The other extreme end is the art of moving quickly from one place to another. Unlike similar disciplines, parkour emphasises efficiency and speed over grand-standing. On a mission, parkour can be used when stealth is impossible, using speed and surprise instead.

Advanced Infiltration - The existing techniques of climbing, stealthy movement and simple hardware hacking are expanded upon to provide a complete knowledge of available techniques.

Under Sabotage:

Booby-Traps - The art of improvised explosive devices is one that US forces have come to respect. Mayhew teaches not only how to construct them, in order to kill or delay any pursuers, but also how to recognise and avoid them in the field.

Demolitions - Bringing down a large structure is a complex business. Done badly, the explosive force is wasted on non-supporting walls and the collapse is often partial. Substantial knowledge of engineering is required to perform a controlled demolition. The module also includes a section on disabling formal explosive devices.

Advanced Sabotage - The more mundane aspects of sabotage- vehicles, communications lines, and so forth- are not neglected. The advanced module also deals with taking control of systems as well as disabling, and techniques for making the disablement undetectable except after the fact.

Under Interrogation:

Undercover - Whole sections of police forces are dedicated to going undercover. It is a very difficult thing to do. Your own personality needs to be completely suppressed in favour of a cover identity, and it maybe months or years before the agent is activated once in place. The Mayhew philosophy of violence is half-way to the necessary mental conditioning needed, and this module covers the rest.

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Torture - Very few students reach the upper school without being creeped out by Dr. Cortez. Those few typically enrol in the module that is his speciality and his passion- the use of modulated pain to extract information. Most methods of torture are notoriously fallible, as victims will say anything to make the pain stop whether or not it's true. The module concentrates on trying to maximise the chance that the information is correct, reducing the amount of time that has to be spent verifying it.

Advanced Interrogation - The usual methods of information retrieval, gaining someone's trust, tricking them into thinking you already know information and everything else that goes with the territory. And, of course, avoiding making those same mistakes.

Under Driving:

Helicopter - Perhaps the most difficult aircraft to fly, apart from the space shuttle and other highly unusual machines. A helicopter is never-the-less and very useful way of getting in and out of places, and its vertical take-off ability helps black ops teams get clean away.

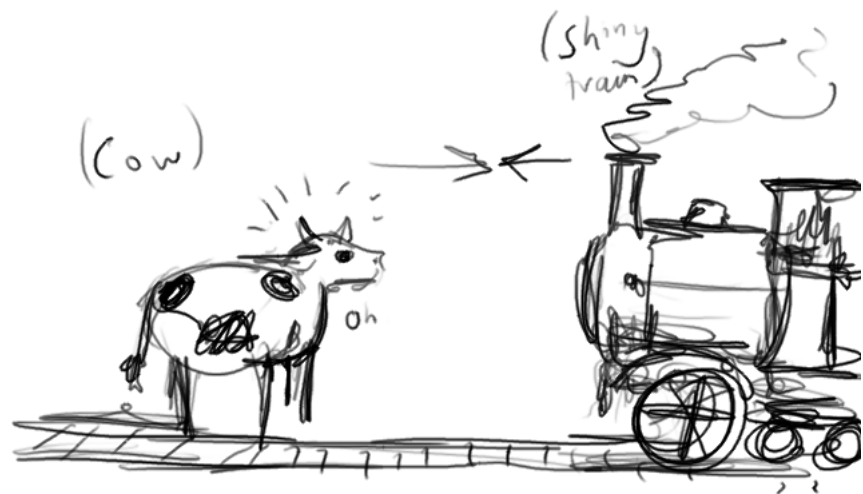
Tank - What better fun can there be than jumping ditches and firing off the big gun?

Advanced Driving - The importance of the wheelman should never be underestimated. A competent driver can find exits where none exist. Jumps might look easy on film, but they're very tricky to pull off in reality, under pressure and without chance of a do-over.

Example Advancement 2

At the end of year 9, Rodney gets a C in Firearms, a B in Self-Defence and a C in Driving. 3 terms and 3 passes, gets him 6 points, but again his behaviour has let him down so he only has 5 to spend.

He improves his Driving by 1 point. He gets the following Advanced Training dice: Advanced Firearms, Advanced Self-Defence, Jeet Kune Do and Parkour.



8. SCHOOL LIFE

THE CLAN SYSTEM

The Houses of Mayhew – the Clans – are a system of encouraging healthy competition and co-operation. The fact that fights frequently break out between them is seen as a small price to pay. On school sports days (and at Mayhew, the sports involved are far from typical) the Clans are teams that compete for the School Trophy. There are events for all ages, so everyone has a chance to shine and help their Clan's cause. Particularly important events, such as the Parkour relay, have their own, smaller trophies.

The academic equivalent is the Academy Cup, which is presented to the Clan that earns the highest overall total of 'Clan Kills' (House Points by another name) over the course of the year. Clan Kills are given by teachers to students that display particular scholarly effort– not necessarily only those students that are naturally gifted or are doing well. Clan Kills are given in ones or twos, except for the large awards given to students for their examination performance. Exams typically net a student 10 CK, and an average student will earn around 10 CK through other means over the year. A simple calculation shows that an 'average' Clan total for a year is around 1,000 CK – the winning Clan usually manages to net at least 1,200.

Each Clan has its own dormitory building, with a kitchen area and a lounge. The entrances are supposed to be kept secure, and it is a common demonstration of courage and contempt to sneak into another Clan's dormitory. Overall, however, the rivalry is friendly. The teachers who are also Clanmasters are supposed to avoid favouring their Clan, with emphasis on the word 'supposed'.

THE CLANS

Häyhä

Colours: Silver and Red (representing blood on snow)

Clanmaster: Mr. Marozsán

Form Tutors: Mr. Anders, Mr. Chan, Mrs. Lovelace, Mr. Gonen, Mr. Garros.

Named for the most prolific sniper of all time, Simo Häyhä. He was a Finnish marksman during WWII who earned over 500 confirmed kills and used iron sights to avoid giving his position away. Although the Clan rarely wins the Academic Cup, it currently holds the School Trophy.

Galán

Colours: Green (representing the countryside)

Clanmistress: Ms. MacGregor

Form Tutors: Mr. Konstantinov, Ms. Pinkaew, Mr. Christie, Mr. Soekarno, Mr. Malik.

Juana Galán, also called La Galana, was a Spanish folk heroine who used guile and guerilla tactics during the Peninsula war to hold the French forces at bay. She is known for taking the fight to the streets of her villa against French cavalry armed only with a truncheon. This Clan has suffered a long drought without winning either of the important trophies.

Lawrence

Colours: Gold and Blue (representing sand and the sky)

Clanmaster: Mr. Canaris

Form Tutors: Mr. Shaddad, Mr. Jones, Mr. Gough, Mr. Katayama, Mr. Panesar.

T. E. Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia, is a towering figure of British military history and the Arab drive for independence. The Clan is considered the traditional holder of the Academic Cup.

DETENTION

Discipline is maintained mostly through a system of detentions. Any member of staff can give any student a detention, but it is generally accepted that students can appeal to their Clanmaster if they feel the detention is unwarranted. Detentions take place after the regular school day, and usually involve performing some menial chore related to the teacher's subject. Some teachers use the occasion as a learning experience, making the detention not exactly unpleasant.

A pupil who receives too many detentions over the course of a year is probably struggling with self-discipline and will not improve have fulfilled his full potential academically.

Never, ever risk getting a detention from Mr. Cortez.

FREE TIME

--- Fists for your quarrels, guns for your quarry. ---

Lethal weapons are tightly controlled by the staff, with very harsh penalties should pupils try to smuggle them out of lessons or steal them from storage. Disputes between students are almost always resolved with fists, feet and heavy blunt objects, because bruises heal.

Even the lower school has mandated time off. In the morning, there is 'break time' when the entire school shakes off the morning sleepiness after the first lesson. As in any school, playground games dominate. However, full-contact games are played more frequently and even old favourites like football have a more physical edge than usual. Actual hand-to-hand combat is too much like a lesson, so tends to be avoided. Lunch is a similar story, although the cafeteria serves hot meals. Meals are served form by form on a strict rota system, so if a student misses his slot he goes hungry, unless he can persuade the teachers on cafeteria duty to take pity on them.

At the end of the school day, the evenings are for the pupils to spend as they wish. Mostly this involves watching DVDs in the House common rooms, homework or reading magazines. There are no school clubs per se, but the teacher encourage hobbies outside the field of infiltration and killing. Friendships with pupils from other houses or years can often be struck up over a common interest. Being on good terms with someone in the upper school can be a huge boon to a younger pupil- not just for extra help with lessons but as someone who might intervene on their behalf against any bullies.

There's always the temptation to try to sneak into locked classrooms or suborn the school's server, but given that the teachers who built the school's security taught the pupils literally everything they know, this rarely works. Most attempts are easily foiled and the culprit tracked down for a detention, but if the attempt was more successful than usual or was particularly ingenious the detention's blow may be softened by a Clan Kill or two.

Weekends are usually free, but they're also a time when teachers can organise field trips in exotic locations without throwing off the usual time-table.

FIELD TRIPS

Fields trips are something special. By their very nature, they straddle a number of the schools' departments. Year 7 pupils usually only get a single field trip, but the higher up the school you go the more frequent they are. Depending on the distance, the field trips involve an unmarked coach or a small private aeroplane.

Lower school field trips involve mock missions in places where the group is unlikely to be disturbed- such as docks full of shipping containers or draughty industrial estates. The students are not given live ammunition or explosives as a rule, but they are expected to act as though they were using them. It's an

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opportunity to put the things they've learned in action all at once without there being much real risk. The trips emphasise one particular subject, almost to the exclusion of the others. An entire class is taken on the mission, and each student given the chance to attempt the task.

Upper school field trips are usually the real deal. Generally, once the field trip is complete the teachers sort things out so no real harm was done (returning the gold to the bank, releasing the kidnapped children safely and so on). Often, it's a live fire exercise and the opposition are trained police or soldiers. Sometimes, the mission is all about doing something without raising the alarm, so the 'opposition' such as it is, are ordinary people. When the mission wasn't one the Academy was paid to carry out, the teachers usually let any victims go and make generous gifts to any civilian who was badly hurt. Stolen property, however, is taken back the Academy when practical. Field trips for the upper school are expected to test more than one subject at once. Small teams of students with complementary abilities are assembled by their teachers, with the intention that their specialisations will be put to use. When it comes to actual killing or acts of terrorism, even upper school field trips are intended to stop short of actual completion. Being in a position to finish the job is all that matters.

The most serious form of field trip are the final exams undertaken by students. Some of these are actual missions the Academy has been engaged to perform, others are created entirely for the purposes of testing. In all of them, however, the mission is the real deal. Students who, even after all of their schooling, balk at the idea of killing someone are given the option of finishing their studies without the exam- but this is considered only slightly less humiliating than dropping out altogether. As with other upper school field trips, the mission is undertaken by small groups of students, but they are also expected to plan the mission based on a briefing as well as carry it out.

BUNKING OFF

After dark, pupils are supposed to stay in the main grounds of the school but it's an open secret that plenty of students gather in Fakington for underage drinking, underage smoking and loud music from time to time. It's about the only time and place that the students are ever really out of sight of the staff. If the party is too obvious, teachers will arrive to close it down, but mostly they turn a blind eye- boys will be boys after all.

Leaving the school grounds entirely requires planning, mostly because the grounds are so large. Getting out of the grounds, doing something, and getting back to the dormitory in a single night is no simple task. More usually, pupils who are struggling with work or are having second thoughts about attending the Academy just try to leave and never come back. Although the public at large are ill-equipped to stop them or even find them, the school's staff takes such a breach of security very seriously. After all, if the students make too much of a nuisance of themselves, the fragile understanding the Academy has with British Intelligence might crumble.



9. STAFF DIRECTORY

Some members of the staff have Advanced Training dice in fields not currently taught by Mayhew Academy. Their meaning should be obvious enough. It should be noted, if the attributes of the teachers seem a little weak, remember that they are taking into account the teachers' natural reluctance to hurt the students- that would cost money in the long term. When the teachers are using kid gloves, it's easier for the students to get one over on them.

SENIOR STAFF

The senior staff seldom teach, except when a regular member of staff is ill or as an extra adult during a field trip.

Mr. Parry - Headmaster

Mr. Parry used to be the deputy head, until the incident that robbed the Academy of its founder and fondest teacher. Mr. Parry no longer teaches, but he is enmeshed in the politics needed to keep the Mayhew Academy on business. The pupils find him personable, if somewhat distant, but his wrath is truly terrible if a student does something to endanger one of its staff or worse, the Academy itself. He's in his fifties, but as sharp as ever. Some say the loss of August Mayhew affected him deeply.

Guns: 5 (Advanced 4)

Martial Arts: 4 (Advanced 4)

Infiltration: 4 (Advanced 4)

Sabotage: 3

Interrogation: 5 (Advanced 4, Getting the Truth out of Pupils 6)

Driving: 3

Mrs. Coulomb - Head of Upper School

Mrs. Coulomb was once a very successful and renowned Chinese-trained assassin. On an active operation, she fell in love with Mr. Coulomb. They retired from their respective positions (destroying their records by fire-bombing key government facilities) and sought a new, quieter life. Eventually they found a home at Mayhew. Mrs. Coulomb has overall responsibility for Years 10 and 11.

Guns: 4 (Sniper 4)

Martial Arts: 3

Infiltration: 5 (Advanced 4, Parkour 2)

Sabotage: 5 (Advanced 3, Booby-Traps 2, Demolitions 4)

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 3

Mr. Coulomb - Head of Lower School

Mr. Coulomb was a rookie CIA agent looking to make a name for himself, when one day he fell for the beautiful and deadly killer he'd been sent to track down in an Iranian terrorist training camp. Together they destroyed any records that could help trace their whereabouts (including DNA profiles and fingerprints) and now live happily together at Mayhew. Mr. Coulomb oversees Years 7 to 9.

Guns: 4 (Sniper 4)

Martial Arts: 3

Infiltration: 5 (Advanced 4, Parkour 2)

Sabotage: 5 (Advanced 3, Booby-Traps 2, Demolitions 4)

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 3

CLANMASTERS

The Clanmasters have responsibility for the Clan they head, but also have regular teaching duties. Although technically not senior staff, they might as well be.

Mr. Marozsán – Häyhä Clanmaster / Sniping Tutor

The tall, spindly Mr. Marozsán doesn't look like much, but in his youth he was astoundingly athletic and something of a hit with the ladies. Unfortunately, that didn't sit well with his position as an army sniper, so after he was drummed out for indiscretions with senior officers' wives, he worked freelance for a while before meeting August Mayhew in Cairo and establishing a firm friendship. It's rumoured that only one man has bested him in a firefight.

Guns: 6 (Advanced 5, Sniper 6)

Martial Arts: 4

Infiltration: 4 (Advanced 3, Hacking 2)

Sabotage: 4

Interrogation: 3 (Advanced 3)

Driving: 5

Mrs. MacGregor – Galán Clanmistress / Demolitions Tutor

Ms. MacGregor makes no secret of her time with the IRA, although she has the good taste not to specify which bombings she was involved with. After progress in establishing a lasting peace with the historic power-sharing agreement, she grew disillusioned with the republican paramilitaries' descent into just another criminal cartel and left. She knows, quite literally, where a number of bodies are buried and so fears no reprisals.

Guns: 4 (Advanced 3)

Martial Arts: 4 (Advanced 2)

Infiltration: 2

Sabotage: 5 (Advanced 3, Booby-Traps 4, Demolitions 5)

Interrogation: 5 (Advanced 3, Undercover 3)

Driving: 3

Mr. Canaris – Lawrence Clanmaster / Undercover Tutor

There is nothing Mr. Canaris likes better than to trick new pupils into waiting in his office for him, even though he's already there. He takes a simple joy in pranks (provided, of course, no harm is done) and is an Academy legend for his skill at misdirection. He generally wears a suit patterned to match the wallpaper of his office.

Guns: 3 (Advanced 2)

Martial Arts: 4 (Jeet Kune Do 3)

Infiltration: 5 (Advanced 4, Hacking 3)

Sabotage: 2

Interrogation: 6 (Advanced 4, Undercover 5, Torture 2)

Driving: 2

TEACHING STAFF

There are 6 departments, each covering one aspect of the curriculum. The Clanmasters are also each part of one of the departments. The departments themselves are not large enough to merit having an official head of department. Those that teach a specialisation of a subject also teach the related lower school subject to spread the workload.

Mr. Anders - Firearms Tutor

His thick Polish accent makes his lessons difficult to follow for some, but it's undeniable that his knowledge of firearms is unsurpassed. He can identify any firearm made in the last sixty years just by the sound of reloading or cocking it. Outside lessons, he's happy for students to put him to the test. His finest hour was correctly determining that a Glock barrel was badly scored and pitted just by the sound of someone blowing dust out of it. Sadly, he suffers from myopia and astigmatism that forced him to retire from active service.

Guns: 4 (Advanced 6)

Martial Arts: 4

Infiltration: 3 (Scuba 4)

Sabotage: 4 (Advanced 2)

Interrogation: 3

Driving: 5 (Advanced 4, Tank 2)

Mr. Konstantinov - Artillery Tutor

An absolute bear of a man, solid classroom rumour says he stood too close to one too many artillery shells. He's certainly hard of hearing, and as a consequence shouts all of the time. He's proud of the scar on his back he got when a tiger attacked him in India, and given half a chance reminisces about time he spent pretending to be a Belarussian wine trader. His rambling stories never seem to reach any kind of conclusion.

Guns: 6 (Advanced 3, Artillery 5)

Martial Arts: 3 (Muay Thai 3)

Infiltration: 1

Sabotage: 4

Interrogation: 5 (Advanced 2, Undercover 4)

Driving: 3 (Helicopter 2)

Mr. Shaddad - Self-Defence Tutor

Mr. Shaddad believes in early mornings, wholesome diet and internal purity. He doesn't touch alcohol or tobacco (literally- he uses tongs to dispose of any he encounters). His dreams of a mixed martial arts championship were squashed after a nasty back injury in a bar-room brawl, so he figured the next best thing was to teach. His idiosyncratic ways meant he had difficulty staying anywhere until he settled at Mayhew, where beating the daylight out of pupils isn't a cardinal sin.

Guns: 4

Martial Arts: 3 (Advanced 7, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu 4, Muay Thai 4)

Infiltration: 4

Sabotage: 3

Interrogation: 5 (Torture 4)

Driving: 3

Mr. Chan – Jeet Kune Do Tutor

Lessons with Mr. Chan are unusual in that he believes actions speak louder than words, and thus never speaks. He's trained several champions of various martial arts disciplines, although he has never competed himself. He believes that internal equilibrium is an essential precursor to learning any martial techniques at all, so his Year 7 lessons involve an awful lot of carrying buckets of water and sand around.

Guns: 2

Martial Arts: 5 (Advanced 2, Jeet Kune Do 5, Judo 4)

Infiltration: 6 (Advanced 2, Parkour 4)

Sabotage: 2

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 4 (Advanced 3)

Ms. Pinkaew – Muay Thai Tutor

Ms. Pinkaew has a reputation for being curiously unconcerned about modesty when practising her skills, even to the point of not bothering to correct wardrobe malfunctions. This makes her lessons particularly popular with most boys and some girls, and more than one Mayhew student's first thoughts of sex came after one of them. She despises inattentiveness, however, and more than one pupil's reverie has ended with an uppercut that cost him several teeth.

Guns: 2

Martial Arts: 6 (Advanced 3, Muay Thai 5, Western Boxing 4)

Infiltration: 2

Sabotage: 4 (Booby-Traps 4)

Interrogation: 4 (Seduction 4)

Driving: 3

Mr. Jones – Infiltration Tutor

No, that's not his real name. Mr. Jones has mastered the art of being forgettable. His long, boring lectures are enough to reduce even the most eager pupil to bleary-eyed torpor. For those that can get past his uninspiring delivery, his knowledge of his subject is encyclopaedic. He follows the philosophy that infiltration is truly about not being noticed rather than not being seen.

Guns: 3 (Advanced 3)

Martial Arts: 4 (Advanced 3)

Infiltration: 5 (Advanced 5, Hacking 2)

Sabotage: 4 (Advanced 3)

Interrogation: 3 (Undercover 4)

Driving: 2

Mrs. Lovelace – Hacking Tutor

If the lovable, elderly Mrs. Lovelace has a flaw, it's in thinking that everybody already knows nearly as much about computers as her. Starting her module is a real baptism of fire, and if you're not comfortable working close to 'the bare metal' and can't convert decimal to octal to hexadecimal in your head, you're going to have a lot of chalk thrown at you.

Guns: 3 (Sniper 3)

Martial Arts: 1

Infiltration: 6 (Advanced 3, Hacking 6)

Sabotage: 4 (Booby-Traps 4)

Interrogation: 3

Driving: 4 (Advanced 4)

Mr. Christie – Parkour Tutor

When the usual street courses grew too tame for him. Mr. Christie took to rooftop running in warzones or in places where the local authorities were more inclined to shoot than arrest. In short, he is a hopeless thrill-seeker. Working at Mayhew pays the bills and funds his trips abroad during the school holidays. Sooner or later his luck will run out, but until then he's happy to make a living spreading his enthusiasm for crazy acrobatic stunts.

Guns: 4 (Advanced 1)

Martial Arts: 3

Infiltration: 5 (Advanced 2, Parkour 5)

Sabotage: 3

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 5 (Advanced 5, Helicopter 2, Tank 2)

Mr. Gough – Sabotage Tutor

Once a well-respected, flat-capped expert in the controlled demolition of old chimneys, Mr. Gough put his talents to a darker purpose when the work dried up. He soon found himself on the wrong side of a number of running gun battles, and toughened up until he could give as good as he got. It was in that line of work that he met August Mayhew, and was specifically invited to teach at the Academy when it first opened.

Guns: 3

Martial Arts: 3 (Fencing 3)

Infiltration: 4 (Advanced 2, Hacking 4)

Sabotage: 6 (Advanced 5, Booby-Traps 2, Demolitions 3)

Interrogation: 3

Driving: 3

Mr. Gonen – Booby-Traps Tutor

Mr. Gonen likes surprises. At least, surprises he springs on other people. He often struggles to keep his classes attentive, but they are always on their toes. A simple request to fetch someone from a cupboard could be one of his object lessons, and woe betide you if you make eye contact with him when he's picking which student to surprise.

Guns: 5 (Advanced 3, Artillery 3)

Martial Arts: 3

Infiltration: 3 (Advanced 3)

Sabotage: 5 (Advanced 4, Booby-Traps 5)

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 3 (Advanced 2)

Mr. Soekarno – Interrogation Tutor

There isn't a trick in the interrogation book that Mr. Soekarno isn't a master of. The subtle encouragement to say too much, the hard questions where hesitating gives the game away, all the tricks that police think are state of the art, he knows them all. It's very rare that a student gets away with anything on his watch, although he prefers to use his technique to teach practical lessons in dissembling rather than find students to punish for minor infractions.

Guns: 3

Martial Arts: 4 (Muay Thai 3)

Infiltration: 3

Sabotage: 2

Interrogation: 6 (Advanced 6, Reverse Psychology 4)

Driving: 4 (Advanced 3, Helicopter 3)

Dr. Cortez – Torture Tutor / School Doctor

Dr. Cortez has a deep and abiding interest in pain, and is writing the definitive work on the subject. He cares little for the Academy and its students, seeing his job only as a means of conducting his research without worrying about funding or interruption from so-called authorities. He is often reprimanded by the senior staff (although never in front of the students) when he uses pupils as subjects for his research or examples for his classes.

Guns: 3

Martial Arts: 2

Infiltration: 4 (Advanced 4)

Sabotage: 4

Interrogation: 4 (Advanced 4, Torture 8)

Driving: 4

Medicine: 5

Mr. Katayama – Driving Tutor

For someone you would expect to be all about speed, Mr. Katayama comes as a surprise. What he holds dear above all else is precision. He teaches time and time again that to drive fast enough to call attention to yourself is often a bad thing, and that every second spent waiting in a get-away car should be used to keep tabs on the traffic so you can peel away at a moment's notice. His courses are very popular, though, simply because he feels that hours behind the wheel count for more than anything else.

Guns: 4 (Advanced 1)

Martial Arts: 2

Infiltration: 3

Sabotage: 5 (Advanced 3)

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 6 (Advanced 5, Helicopter 2, Tank 4, Hovercraft 4)

Mr. Garros – Helicopter Tutor

Mr. Garros is an alumnus of Mayhew, and he returned after his enlisted period in the French military ended. He earned a couple of medals for some of his shadier exploits, but in time the unit he was attached to was wound up because there weren't enough missions coming down to justify keeping such an expensive proposition going. He's philosophical about it.

Guns: 4 (Artillery 4)

Martial Arts: 3

Infiltration: 4

Sabotage: 4 (Advanced 4, Demolitions 2)

Interrogation: 3

Driving: 4 (Advanced 3, Helicopter 6)

Mr. Malik – Tank Tutor

Mr. Malik spends a lot of his lessons reminiscing about his time in the Pakistani Army. Fortunately, at least some of his ramblings contain nuggets of useful information for the students. A regular spectacle is his class, wearing tank turret helmets, 'on manoeuvres' as he rams home some point about the disposition of forces or how to use mobile firing platforms to best effect. His tank course is known for being devilishly challenging.

Guns: 5 (Artillery 5)

Martial Arts: 2

Infiltration: 2

Sabotage: 5 (Advanced 2, Demolitions 4)

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 5 (Advanced 4, Tank 5)

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The admin staff don't get as much respect from the students as the teaching staff, but they are not to be underestimated.

Mr. Panesar – Admissions Tutor

Mr. Panesar trained for special ops with a single aim in mind- destroying Pakistan's resistance to a planned Indian invasion. Sadly, a change of regime in the secret service and thawing relations meant he would never be able to fulfil that goal. He briefly considered attaching himself to a terrorist organisation, but settled instead for a steady job at his alma mater. Apart from sorting out House assignment and scholarships, he also maintains the Academy's computers.

Guns: 5 (Advanced 4)

Martial Arts: 3

Infiltration: 5 (Hacking 5)

Sabotage: 5 (Advanced 4)

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 3

Ms. Meyer – Secretary

Ms. Meyer found her way to Mayhew after an attempt by the U.S. MKULTRA secret organisation to destroy the Academy in 1997. After thoroughly researching the target ahead of a planned strike, Ms. Meyer was intimately familiar with its operation and layout. After MKULTRA was cancelled (for the third time in its history), Ms. Meyer preferred to join the Academy rather than be transferred sideways to MAJESTIC. She says her favourite part of the job is writing letters of condolence.

Guns: 3

Martial Arts: 5 (Jeet Kune Do I)

Infiltration: 4 (Advanced 2)

Sabotage: 3

Interrogation: 5 (Advanced 3, Torture 2, Psy-Ops 3)

Driving: 5

Ms. Luciuk – Guidance Counsellor and Nurse

Apart from her Eastern European origins, Ms. Luciuk keeps her history secret. There are rumours of a few shady disappearances of persons of interest to the FSB, but nothing concrete. Unusually for a staff member at Mayhew Academy, she seems genuinely interested in giving pupils the happiest life they can attain. Her gently smiling face is often the first thing students see after a lesson goes horribly wrong.

Guns: 3

Martial Arts: 4 (Advanced 3)

Infiltration: 6 (Advanced 3, Hacking 2, Poisons 4)

Sabotage: 2

Interrogation: 2

Driving: 3

Medicine: 3

The Caretaker

When the Mayhew Academy was founded, there was only one applicant for the position of caretaker. In 2002, Headmaster August Mayhew decided that a single, poorly-paid man wasn't fitting, and looked for an outside body to contract out maintenance and cleaning to. The day after the caretaker was fired, he arrived at the school gate bristling with weapons. He fought his way past the entire faculty and student body, before killing August Mayhew by shoving his P-45 down the man's throat. After the carnage, he simply returned to unblocking toilets and mopping up blood as he always did. Under the new headmaster, no-one has dared to suggest trying to get rid of him again. The staff *never* mention the incident, and the caretaker himself prefers not to talk about it. Older students have heard about it from people who were there, and rumours abound. Some students have tried to get the caretaker to teach them a little of his craft, but as yet none have persuaded him to do so.

Guns: 6 (Advanced 9)

Martial Arts: 6 (Advanced 9)

Infiltration: 6 (Advanced 6)

Sabotage: 3

Interrogation: 3

Driving: 3

Mr. Davidson - Cook

No-one is quite sure how Mr. Davidson came to the Academy. Some say he worked at the main house before the Academy was even founded, and has simply carried on serving simple, stodgy meals ever since. Usual Academy fare is generally military-style rations, nutritious but not exactly tasty. Mr. Davidson seems to have taken the change in his stride. What's perhaps most peculiar about him is that appears to be completely unaware of the nature of Mayhew Academy and talks to the students as though it was a normal school. It's something of a hobby amongst the pupils to see how clearly they can state the terrible things they're learning to do, to see what innocuous response he provides. It's an open question whether he's suffering from dementia or is just very hard of hearing.

Guns: 1

Martial Arts: 4

Infiltration: 2

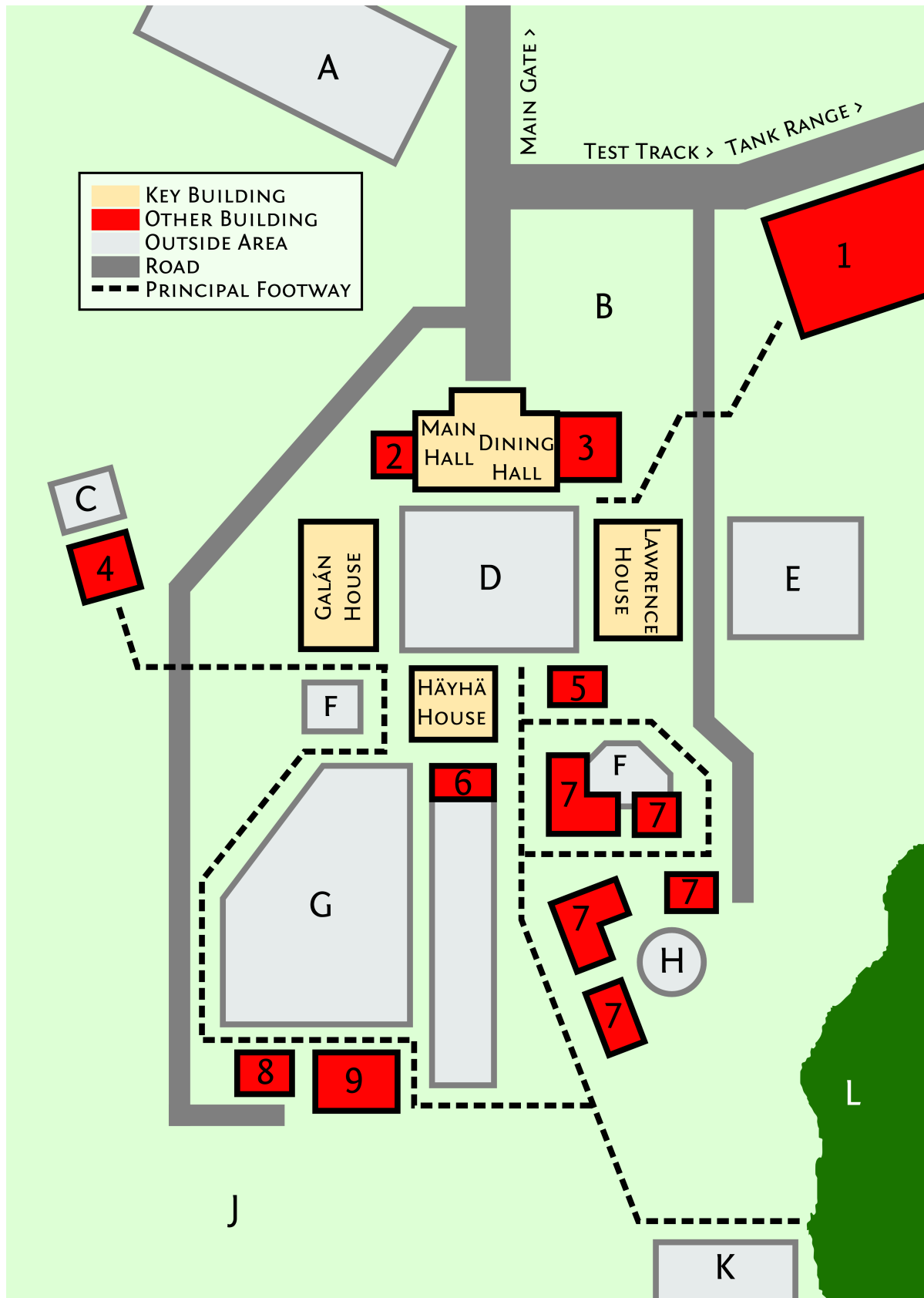
Sabotage: 1

Interrogation: 3

Driving: 1



10. ACADEMY MAP



KEY BUILDINGS

Main Hall – The main meeting hall is used for any gathering of the entire school, such as presentations and special awards ceremonies. This is the oldest part of the complex, a former stately home. Some members of staff have their rooms and amenities in the upper floors of the hall.

Dining Hall – The dining hall and attached kitchens are used for the main meals of the Academy. There are smaller, more limited facilities in the Clan houses but for any sit-down meal is taken in the dining hall. The meals are functional, it not tasty. The Academy buys in bulk, and cheaply.

Clan Houses – Each Clan house has sufficient dormitory space for all the students in the Clan, as well as rooms and office space for the Clanmaster and two other teachers attached to the Clan. There are also large lounge areas for socialising and study. Limited kitchen facilities are provided, mostly consisting of MRE meals. Like the main building, these are on several floors, although the Clan Häyhä clock-tower is the highest point of the campus.

OTHER BUILDINGS

1. **Garage** – The garage contains cars, vans, APCs and tanks that the older students train in. The few members of staff without accommodation on-site also park their cars here.
2. **Headmaster's annexe** – The headmaster has his own collection of rooms, including a subterranean bunker from which he can marshal the resources of the Academy should it come under attack. Students are expected to keep well away from these rooms, in case the automated defences kill them.
3. **Administration Building** – The original hall has been extended with more offices for staff members, including the cigarette smoke-choked staff room.
4. **Dojang** – This is where most of the Self-Defence lessons take place. The dojang is split into four separate areas.
5. **Infirmary** – There are limited resources for patching up any students that take a relaxed attitude to, say, fire.
6. **Shooting Range** – A large range for target shooting, with targets of different colours at different distances. Walking behind any of them is discouraged.
7. **Classrooms** – A collection of generic classroom buildings used for lessons that don't require special facilities, and a number of labs for work with explosives. These frequently have to be rebuilt.
8. **Chemical Store** – Some of the more noxious materials used in bomb-making are stored here, along with anything else that needs to be stored more safely than in a jug in a glass-fronted cabinet.
9. **Arsenal** – All of the firearms and artillery weapons are stored here. Because it attracts trouble-makers like honey attracts fire ants, it's one of the most secure buildings at the Academy. Upper school pupils are occasionally allowed in unsupervised, if they are considered trustworthy.

OPEN AREAS

- A. **Artillery Range** – The heavier weapons are practised with here, facing away from the Academy buildings at all times.
- B. **Rose Garden** – The rose garden is another hold-over from the stately home's part. In good weather, many students take their meals out of the dining hall and eat on benches in the sun.
- C. **Zen Garden** – An attractive backdrop to the dojang. Detentions incurred in Self-Defence classes are often served raking the gravel here.

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- D. Playground – The playground is the area students are expected to confine themselves to if they're out of doors during break of lunchtime.
- E. Helipad – The three school helicopters are kept here when not in use, and the helipad is generous enough to allow even inexperienced pilots to touch down safely. It's close to the infirmary in case anyone needs to be taken to a proper hospital in a hurry.
- F. Climbing Practice Areas – These two areas have climbing walls for practice. The one near the classroom buildings also continues onto the roofs of the two nearest buildings. There is, for the dedicated, a parkour course that runs all the way around the playground and ends at the top of the Häyhä clock-tower.
- G. Assault Course – The assault course is one of those military jobs, with no concessions made to the small stature of the pupils. The harder elements are seldom conquered by most students until year II.
- H. Duck Pond – Quack.
- J. Practice Fields – Plenty of classes involve running around in the countryside, and these fields are primary location for them. Pupils leave Mayhew Academy knowing every inch of turf of this area.
- K. Mine Field – The mine field is well away from anything that could be damaged by explosions. Pupils practice planting mine as well as mine-sweeping here.
- L. The Forest – The forest is another area where practical lessons are held, to provide a different kind of terrain to the open fields.

Fakington is too far away to be shown on the map, but lies part the artillery range towards the main gate.



11. 'TEACHERS' GUIDEBOOK

This section contains useful hints and ideas for the GM, but it is by no means out of bounds for other players. General tips for GMs can (and do) fill entire books, so the advice here is kept specific for Mayhem Academy.

GETTING THE PLAYERS TOGETHER

Given that the players can have their character in different Clans, different lessons and with different interests, sometimes it can be hard to get them to interact. The game thrives on them helping one another, arguing with one another and generally swapping favour tokens right, left and centre.

You can be up-front about your desire to force them together. You can ask them to consider all joining the same Clan at character creation. This would allow you to put all of them in the same form. Failing that, you can arrange for them to be sorted into the same Year 7 classes, or even just have them meet one another on the first day and sort of end up hanging around together. Encourage them to talk in-character about what's going on, and look to other players for help with whatever scheme they have on the go. Relationships are all well and good, but interaction with other players is the most important aspect of the game.

Once the game is properly underway, you should not be ashamed of letting coincidence see to it that groups for field trips, exams and other school activities lump the players together.

ATTENTION CLASS

Do not be afraid to bring some of the techniques of the classroom into how you run the game. Don't treat the players like inferiors, or try to lay down the law, but greet them with a 'good morning class' and adopt a teacher's tone when getting them to settle down. Consider awarding Clan Kills if someone brings the snacks to the table, or someone does a little extra work like write an 'essay' for a subject and so on.

Try to avoid meting out detentions or other punishments in-game for behaviour out of game, as that can get personal and can come across as vindictive. Unless, of course, they just spent the last 5 minutes fiddling with their damn phone- in which case a detention with Mr. Cortez awaits.

THEMES

People tend to look back on their school days with a certain misty-eyed nostalgia. Relatively few remember how utterly horrible it could be for people who got picked on, needlessly so, or the part their younger selves played in making it hard for them.

Action films glamorise the violence and death by finding flimsy justification for the carnage and glossing over the very real human cost of the protagonists' actions. It takes a very particular type of killjoy to point that out while watching them.

Those two statements, taken together, show that it's not so very strange to combine the two.

As the GM you can play to those themes quite magnificently. Let the other players get swept up in the action and the excitement, then drop some details that brings home just what monsters their characters are. For example, after shooting out the tyres of a security van, describe how the airbag didn't stop the passenger from smacking his head on the dashboard. Let the players pull the trigger on ordinary people, and then find a way of restating what they just did to make them feel slightly guilty. Let them play the bully or the prankster to the hilt, then have their victim suffer greatly or strike out with incredible violence. Every now and again do something to bring them up short and re-evaluate what just happened.

Don't be a tool about it. Don't turn the game into a ham-handed morality play. Just keep in mind that the setting is twisted, and use that to deliver a punch to the stomach every now and again.

RUNNING EVENTS

Always concentrate on the interesting things. Don't have ordinary school days- although school days that start out ordinary are fine. Pick an event, and start just after it's started to get interesting. You can never be 100% sure exactly how long an involved an event will be. You can control it, certainly, by introducing new elements or wrapping things up quickly.

If you need to spin an event out for longer, add complications. Other students working at cross-purposes with the players can make what seems like a simply finish incredibly difficult. The presence of people from outside the school- whether trained soldiers or ordinary folk- can leave everyone trying to balance completing their assigned task with avoiding kicking up too much of a fuss. This goes double for field trips, where there might be serious consequences for getting a little too happy with the automatic gunfire.

Bringing an over-running event to a conclusion is a little trickier. You don't want to throw away a chance for a climax to the event, so if time is an issue simply skip to the start of whatever the final scene is going to be as smoothly as possible.



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Here is a big list of event ideas, so you never run out. Field trips could be to anywhere in the world; not just staying in Britain. Although the further away the trip is, the longer the pupils are out of regular school.

- ✿ The induction day for year 7 students includes real baptism of fire for some of them
- ✿ An exam
- ✿ One teacher has a 'special' lesson planned
- ✿ A terrible accident mars an ordinary lesson
- ✿ A lesson is disrupted by a school emergency
- ✿ A teacher is strangely absent for a lesson
- ✿ There is a fire at the Academy
- ✿ Some outsiders try to assault the Academy
- ✿ A pupil loses it, and takes to the top of a building with a sniper rifle
- ✿ An accident in the practice field needs quick thinking to avoid disaster
- ✿ Someone has been stealing Academy equipment
- ✿ Someone smuggled something into the Academy
- ✿ Someone has fled the Academy
- ✿ Someone has gone missing
- ✿ A thief has been taking students possessions
- ✿ Clan rivalry gets out of hand
- ✿ A field trip
- ✿ A field trip where something goes badly wrong
- ✿ A field trip where the students are suddenly left without their teacher
- ✿ Some students get separated from their group on a field trip
- ✿ A field trip turns out to be a sting operation against the Academy
- ✿ Inspectors from OFSTED arrive with armed back-up
- ✿ A student puts his training into practice and makes an IED
- ✿ A student has been a sleeper agent all along, and lets enemies of the Academy strike at an inopportune time
- ✿ Extreme weather makes a lesson or field trip dangerous
- ✿ Someone upsets the caretaker
- ✿ An argument between teachers gets out of control
- ✿ The head teacher organises an 'apocalypse drill'
- ✿ A troublemaker keeps disrupting the Academy's day-to-day business
- ✿ An alumni of the school arrives as a guest for a special exercise
- ✿ It's Sports Day, and the School Cup is up for grabs for the Clan that does the best
- ✿ One day, a teacher is mysteriously absent, and a substitute takes their lessons
- ✿ A student is killed, and the other pupils have to come to terms with the fact
- ✿ There's a party organised at Fakington
- ✿ There's a fight organised at Fakington and you're not chicken
- ✿ A student's relative turns up at the Academy unexpectedly



Here are some ideas for field trips.

- ✱ Holding up an armoured car
- ✱ Assassination in a ballroom
- ✱ Assassination in a mob safe house
- ✱ Assassination at a military barracks
- ✱ Assassination in a city centre
- ✱ Breaking into a bank vault
- ✱ Stealing records from a government facility
- ✱ Kidnapping a prominent politician
- ✱ Stealing valuable items from a moving train
- ✱ Hijacking an aircraft
- ✱ Being dropped into a war zone
- ✱ Tricking a security company into giving away information it shouldn't
- ✱ Sneaking into a nuclear facility without getting caught
- ✱ Infiltrating a protest to instigate violence
- ✱ Infiltrating a protest to overwhelm the police response
- ✱ Breaking someone out of prison
- ✱ Kidnapping someone's child to hold for ransom
- ✱ Getting secrets out of a spy, by any means necessary
- ✱ Sabotaging a bridge
- ✱ Routing a military barracks
- ✱ Infiltrating a subversive group
- ✱ Tapping the phone in an embassy
- ✱ Sneaking faked reports into an intelligence file
- ✱ Planting evidence on a policeman
- ✱ Stealing evidence from a police warehouse
- ✱ Acquiring secret military codes
- ✱ Sinking a boat
- ✱ Wiring a hospital to explode
- ✱ Breaking into an ICBM bunker to force a launch

SERIOUS INJURIES

As alluded to in chapter 6, it is possible for a character to suffer a truly terrible injuries. These are seldom bad enough to force a student to leave the school, but the time spent convalescing can cut into their studies.

If a situation runs the risk of dealing a character such a grievous wound, be sure to let the player know. If he opts to run the risk anyway, then he can't claim that it was unfair. Should the worst happen, the character is effectively out of action for an entire term, and will get one fewer experience point awarded at the end of the year. To avoid leaving the player out in the cold, you can either skip ahead to the next event after his recovery or find a way of including him in the story even if he spends most of the day in his bed in the infirmary.

AWARDING TRAITS

In some circumstances, letting a character gain a trait is a way of rewarding entertaining play or offsetting a bit of bad luck. For example, if a character receives a serious injury it makes sense to give him the 'Impressive Scar' trait if he doesn't have it. If he does, have mercy and give him the 'Nails' trait. This means that even the unluckiest character won't miss more than two terms of his schooling due to injury.

What qualifies as justification for awarding a trait is entirely up to you. If you lay them on with a trowel, they cease to be special. On the other hand, the occasional gift can keep things interesting and encourage the players to make things as entertaining as they can.