

Game System



All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

Shakespeare, Hamlet act 2, scene 7, lines 138-42

Character generation



I dream, therefore I exist.
August Strindberg

Character generation is standard Storyteller, with a few differences.

1. Come up with an interesting **concept**, or play [Genesis](#) to find out.
2. Fill out **Name**, **Title** (if any) and **Nationality**.
3. **Attributes**: Each attribute starts at 1 (unless some flaw removes it). Distribute 6/4/3 points between the different categories.

Appearance is replaced by Social, a measure of social standing (beauty and ugliness can be bought as merits/flaws). This is not just current status but also breeding, style of speech and contacts. This can be used for everything from intimidation to making a business deal seem more promising.

Social

- * Nobody
- ** Normal
- *** Respectable
- **** Gentleman. A person of breeding or distinction.
- ***** Nobility or royalty.

4. **Abilities**: distribute 23 points between your abilities.
5. **Backgrounds**: distribute 7 points between your backgrounds. Some suitable backgrounds:

- **Allies** - Close friends, people you can turn to.

- **Artefacts** – Magical items, relics, dream objects, all forms of unique things.
- **Secret identity** (Each dot represents one fake identity, or several dots for a very carefully made identity that will stand up to closer scrutiny)
- **Backing** (Backing represents a combination of formal ranking and standing within a group. Note that the level of oversight increases proportional to the backing level.)
- **Secrecy** – the ability to keep out of sight from authorities and others.
- **Contacts** – Important people you know.
- **Enemies** – People out to harm you (adversarial, gives freebies)
- **Equipment**
- **Favours** – Somebody important owes you one or more favours.
- **Fame/Infame** – You are known, for good or ill (infame is adversarial, gives freebies)
- **Followers**
- **Influence**
- **Mentor**
- **Network** - Being part of an informal group or network
- **Resources** – Having an income or good savings.
- **Sanctum** - Your safe/useful hiding place(s)
- **Spies** - People providing information, especially information you are not supposed to have.
- **Staff** - Performs jobs
- **Soldiers** - Bodyguards or mercenaries

Note that high levels of many backgrounds require time for maintenance – dinners with allies, endless meetings with backing organisations, resolving disputes among your staff, polishing your weapons etc.

6. Freebies, merits & flaws: You have 21 freebie points to spend on attributes, abilities, backgrounds, Passion, Reason, Breed, Shaping or other traits. These can be increased/decreased by taking merits and flaws (as well as adversarial backgrounds like Enemies). The costs are:

	Cost
Attribute	5
Breed	5
Ability	2
Background	2
Passion/Reason	2
Shaping	2
Extra initiative	1
Extra speciality	1

Breed: If your character has dream-blood, this denotes the amount. The higher the Breed, the more dreamlike the character is. On one hand this makes Shaping much easier (Breed is added to Shaping rolls), on the other hand it also makes the character less and less able to function in awake life.

Shaping: If your character can shape dreams, this is where you note the shaping abilities they have.

Reason and Passion: During awake time, these act as Willpower in standard Storyteller. One can temporarily spend one point (mark the box) to gain an automatic success on a roll. During dreaming they help shaping or resisting shaping.

8. **Decide on a Passion and a Reason nature.** These determine your personality and how you regain Passion and Reason. The Passion nature is what drives the character; this is what gets them fired up. The Reason nature is what grounds the character, the things they rely on or trust.

They can be identical, but have subtly different effects. For example, a Passion Caregiver gives help because they feel compassion or enjoy doing their Christian duty. A Reason Caregiver does so out of duty or faith – rewards have nothing to do with it, it is *right*. A Passion Gallant does impulsive, dramatic and stylish things “because it is cool” while a Reason Gallant aims at elegance, wit and a grand reputation.

9. **Finishing touches:**

- Move: Crawl 2m (uses all available cover), Walk 7 m (can use partial cover), Run dex+12, (no cover) Sprint dex*3+20 m
- Initiative: DEX+WIT
- Throwing range: STR x 12 m
- Handedness: select or roll 1d100 (1-85 righthanded, 86-99 lefthanded, 100: naturally ambidextrous). (ambidextrous is a +1 merit that can be bought; this corresponds to having trained for it)
- Describe: Height, Weight, Hair, Eyes and general Description
- Consider your religion.
- Describe details of your Backgrounds.

List allegiances

A character may have up to three allegiances, listed in order from most important to least important. These allegiances are indications of what the character values in life, and may encompass people, organizations, or ideals. A character may have no allegiances (being either a free spirit or a lone wolf) or may change allegiances as he or she goes through life. Also, just because the character fits into a certain category of people doesn't mean the character has to have that category as an allegiance.

If the character acts in a way that is detrimental to his or her allegiance, the GM may choose to strip the character of that allegiance (and all its benefits) and assign an allegiance more suitable to those actions.

An allegiance can create an empathic bond with others of the same allegiance. With the GM's permission, the character gains a +1 or 2 bonus on Charisma or Social-based skill checks when dealing with someone of the same allegiance— as long as the character has had some interaction with the other character to discover the connections and bring the bonus into play. Allegiance can also be used as a temporary Reason or Passion point *once* each gaming session to do something (or avoid something) that is important for the allegiance.

Abilities



Here is a somewhat longer list of possible abilities, some very specialized or unusual. Many overlap with each other; a person with Academics has broad academic knowledge about many things, while a person with Science knows state of the art in the natural sciences while a person with Physics has focused on physical phenomena. The Academic will know of science, but is unlikely to be good at physical calculations. A priest will have learned enough Homilectics from their theological education, but an expert might want to go further.

Academics	Accounting	Acrobatics	Acting	Alchemy
Alertness	Animal Ken	Animal Lore	Animal Training	Archery
Architecture	Area Knowledge	Art History	Artillery	Artistic Expression
Astrology	Astronomy	Athletics	Awareness	Barter
Biology	Blacksmith	Blind Fighting	Blowgun	Boating
Brawl	Brewing/Distilling	Bribery	Bureaucracy	Camouflage
Carousing	Carpentry	Chemistry	Chivalry	Church History
Church Lore	City Secrets	Classics	Climbing	Commerce
Conspiracy Theory	Construction	Cooking/Baking	Court Lore	Craft Lore
Crafts	Cryptography	Culture	Dancing	Dead Languages
Debate	Demolition	Demonology	Diplomacy	Disguise
Diversion	Divination	Diving	Dodge	Dream Lore
Drinking	Drive	Empathy	Endurance	Engineering
Enigmas	Escapology	Etiquette	Expression	Falconry
Fast-Talk	Fencing	Finance	Fire Eating	Firearms
First Aid	Fishing	Flight	Foraging	Forgery
Fortune-Telling	Gambling	Garrote	Gematria	Geography
Geology	Gossip	Gunsmithing	Haggling	Healing
Hearth Wisdom	Helmsman	Heraldry	Herbalism	Heresy
Hiding	History	Homilectics	Hunting	Indoctrination
Inquisition Lore	Instruction	Interrogation	Intimidation	Intrigue
Intuition	Investigation	Jeweler	Journalism	Larceny
Law	Law (Shari'a)	Leadership	Leatherworking	Legerdemain
Linguistics	Lip Reading	Literature	Lockpicking	Logic
Lore	Lucid Dreaming	Martial Arts	Martial Arts	Mathematics
			Weapons	
Mechanic	Mediation	Medicine	Meditation	Melee
Metallurgy	Metaphysics	Might	Military Tactics	Mining

Misdirection	Moneylending	Music	Mythology	Nation Lore
Naturalist	Naval Artillery	Navigation	Negotiation	Occult
Organization	Orienteering	Paleography	Panhandling	Performance
Knowledge				
Persuasion	Pharmacopoeia	Physics	Pickpocket	Poetic Expression
Poison	Politics	Portents	Pottery	Power-Brokering
Professional Skill	Propaganda	Public Speaking	Publishing	Repair
Research	Ride	Sacred Scriptures	Scan	Science
Scribing	Scripture	Scrounge	Seamanship	Search
Secret Code	Security	Seduction	Seneschal	Sense Deception
Language				
Shield Parry	Shipwright	Sign Language	Singing	Skiing
Slang	Sleight of Hand	Speed Reading	Stealth	Steward
Storytelling	Strategy	Streetwise	Style	Subculture
Subterfuge	Survival	Swimming	Symbolism	Tactics
Talith, The	Taxidermy	Theology	Throwing	Tightrope Walking
Tolerance	Torture	Tracking	Traps	Trick
Underworld Lore	Urbanism	Ventriloquism	Vice	Weather-Eye
Wood Craft	Wood Lore	Wrestling	Writing	

Merits and Flaws



Flawed Skill

You learned a skill in the dreamworld – or you are just incompetent. In any case, you think you know how to do something but reality disagrees.

Beautiful/Handsome (+3)

The character is very good-looking. People enjoy the sight of him or her, Amor smiles.

Epic Beauty (+5)

The character is wonderfully beautiful, the kind of beauty that inspires poets, makes people travel to see the character and is almost certain to enmesh him or her in artistic or romantic intrigue.

Ugly (-1)

A large nose is the mark of a witty, courteous, affable, generous and liberal man.
Cyrano de Bergerac

The character is not just plain but actively repulsive. Esthetes avoid him or her, Amor turns his face elsewhere.

Disfigured (-3)

The character is horribly disfigured, whether from the pox, burns, wounds or his or her mother having seen something awful during pregnancy. No sane person can stand their sight, many believe their souls to be as twisted as their bodies – or that they are some kind of devilspawn.

Grown up in a dream

The character grew up in the dreamworld and only recently moved to reality. This means their “common sense” is ill suited to the real world. They have a distinctly skewed grasp of normal life, how to deal with other people or the political situation. Or life or death.

People from Antillia always have this flaw.

Unable to wake up

The character suffers a sleeping sickness making them unable to wake up. They still live in the dreamworld. If their body is not fed and cared for they will die.

Unable to sleep

The character simply cannot sleep. He certainly needs rest, but there is no way of actually fall unconscious.

Insomnia

The character needs sleep – but it evades him.

Bringing things from the dreamworld into reality

Deep sleeper (-1)

I never knew a man come to greatness or eminence who lay abed late in the morning.

Jonathan Swift

The character has a hard time to wake up, either when affected by outside disturbances or when using Lucidity to escape a dream. The roll has +1 difficulty.

Vulnerable to Topos

The character is particularly vulnerable to a Topos, and will not be able to block it with Reason.

Memory Palace

The dreamer has built up a safe refuge in the Praedormitorium.

Recurring Nightmare

Almost every night the dreamer will have the same nightmare. Trying to escape it with Lucidity is at -3 difficulty, and people who know of the nightmare may also lie in wait inside it. Dream creatures from the nightmare have been given persistence by the anguish of the dreamer, and are good at getting more from him – they will seek him out to torment him according to their nature.

Recurring Dream

The character has a recurring dream that is hard to avoid. Maybe it is based on a strong experience, maybe it is a sign from God, but it always reappears. Trying to escape it with Lucidity is at -3 difficulty, and people who know of the dream may also lie in wait inside it.

Dream retainers (varies)

The dreamer has allies in their dream, who will assist them. The retainers are just like waking retainers, but could be any kind of fantastic beings. Some nobles (and a few imaginative commoners) have entire dream courts.

Imaginary friends



There 's no such thing in Nature; and you 'll draw
A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.
Duke of Buckinghamshire Sheffield, Essay on Poetry

Alternate dream self

The dreamer is not himself in their dreams, but somebody else. This dream self may be an idealized version of themselves, a different gender or even a strange creature. He might have a different personality or even somewhat different skills.

Evil Eidolon

While most people's Eidolon is not themselves and may have bad sides, the character's Eidolon is actively out to get him.

French Pox (-3/-7)

The character is infected with syphilis (alias greatpox, the lues venereae or grandgore). At -3 the character has latent syphilis, at -7 the character suffers from tertiary syphilis. A character with latent syphilis might occasionally get sores and is somewhat infectious to others.

A character with tertiary syphilis suffers from visible cankers, tumours or have internal lesions. Over time the character will decline horribly, unless painful treatments are undertaken.

Betrothed (-1/+1)

As a flaw, the intended spouse is undesirable for one reason or another – a bad temper, bad reputation, lack of money, the wrong religion or even lack of love. As merit, it promises great prospects – but first whatever holds the marriage back must be overcome

Impregnable Mind (+3)

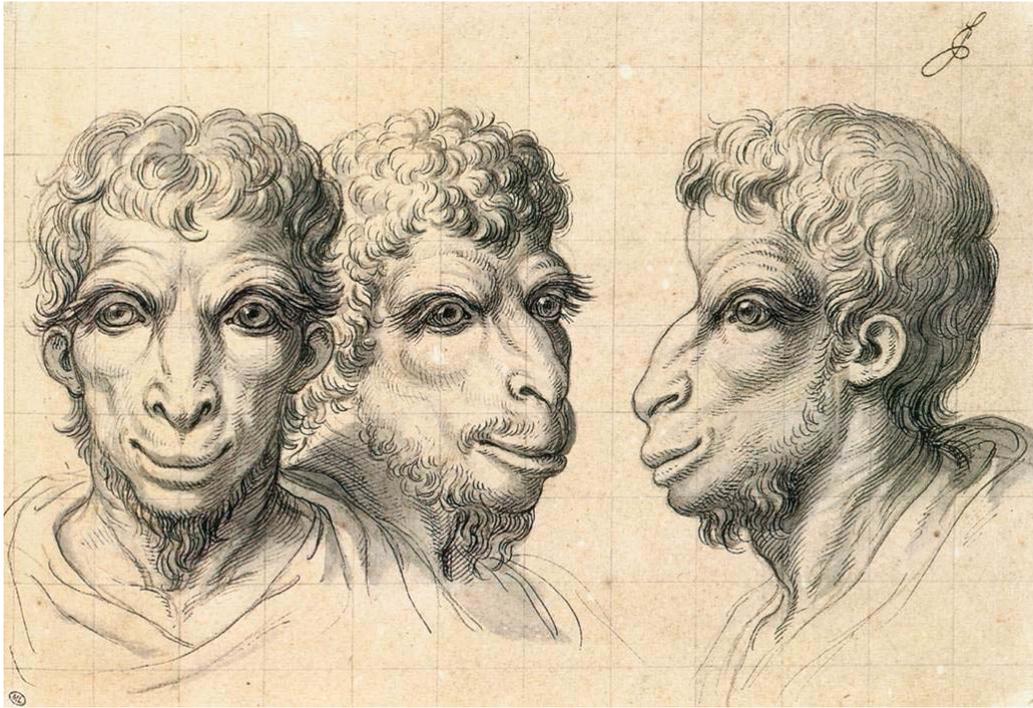
True courage is a result of reasoning. A brave mind is always impregnable.
Jeremy Collier

Your inner self is hard to affect. While you might be affected by Topos and other events in dreams, they have a hard time changing your mind. Your Reason points count double whenever you use them to resist any form of influence that seek to manipulate or sway you.

Fortune: you have a number of points

Flaw: religious minority

Cambion signs



People with dream blood sometimes have strange or unreal aspects of their appearance, since they are not entirely real. Anybody with a dot in Breed can have these signs, but some of the more extreme signs only occur in relatively pure dreams. Most signs are relatively minor and easy to hide, but if discovered most people will be disconcerted or superstitious. After all, they are suspiciously similar to the signs known to indicate witches.

Half Weight (-1)

The Cambion weighs half as much as he would normally weigh (Requires Breed 3 or more).

Quarter Weight (-2)

The Cambion weighs a quarter as much as he would normally weigh (Requires Breed 4 or more).

Weightless (-3)

The Cambion lacks weight and simply floats in the air. He can fly at walking pace. (Requires Breed 5 or more).

No shadow (-1)

The Cambion lacks shadow.

No reflection (-1)

The Cambion casts no reflection in mirrors.

No colour (-2)

The Cambion is colourless. This is not the same as being black and white; rather, the being (and his clothing) has no colour anybody can recognize or recall.

Transparent (-3)

The Cambion is slightly transparent, giving a ghostly appearance. (Requires Breed 4)

Diffuse (-3)

The Cambion has ill-defined edges, as if he was slightly misty or out of focus. (Requires Breed 4)

Uncertain appearance (-2)

The Cambion's appearance is not entirely fixed, and will depend on who views him. People tend to have some disagreements on details in face, clothing or voice, although the Cambion can still be identified.

Unusual appearance (-1)

The Cambion has some unusual appearance: extremely long limbs, a disconcerting eye or hair colour, a strangely shaped nose, a voice that sounds different from every body else.

Inhuman appearance (-2)

The Cambion has some very strange elements that definitely does not belong to a human: foxlike ears, a tail, horns, cat eyes, scales or something even more monstrous (requires Breed 4 or more).

Monstrous appearance (-3)

The Cambion does not look like any human, but instead a monster out of legend. This makes it easy to intimidate people, but most people also tend to think the Cambion is actually a devil. (requires Breed 5).

Inhuman beauty (-1)

The Cambion looks more perfect than a human should; while everyone agrees about the beauty there is something artificial and unreal about it.

Odourless (-1)

The Cambion gives off no smell.

Hard to perceive (-3)

The character is almost fictional and not readily perceived: he cannot be seen in the corner of one's eye. People who have drunk too much coffee or people with no imagination have a hard time actually seeing him. This is extremely disconcerting, but gives +1 or more dice to Stealth. (requires Breed 5)

Experience



He who stops being better stops being good.
Oliver Cromwell

The cost of improving abilities are:

Trait	Cost
New ability	3
New Topos	3
Reason/Passion	New rating
Ability	New rating x 2
Topos	New rating x 2

Attribute	New rating x 4
Background	New rating x 3

Learning Topoi is usually done through trial and error: characters that have affected dreams can improve their abilities. Mentors and formal teaching may be possible in some far realms, but usually they are learned by doing.

Changes in Reason and Passion are usually due to experience and personality development. Note that it is possible to *reduce* Passion or Reason if it is suitable; this will give some extra experience points.

Passion and Reason



"I reviewed the great theorem due to frere Pascal that for any hexagon inscribed in any conic the three points where pairs of opposite sides (if extended enough) meet lie on a straight line. It was as true in my dream as it was in real life. Deductive truths are true and reliable no matter how deceptive the surroundings are. Thus armoured, I turned towards the enemy."

All great diversions are dangerous for a christian life, but among all those the world has invented none is to be so feared as that given by theater: it creates a representation so natural and so subtle of human passions that it excites and engenders them in our heart.

Pascal, Pensées, 1655-62

The heart has its reasons, of which reason knows nothing.

Pascal, Pensées, 1655-62

Passion is the emotional strength of the character. It is not poetic ability (although poets often have passions in abundance) or overflowing emotion, rather it is the emotional vitality of a person. Passionate people are driven and strong in feeling. A passionate character will not have a tepid affair or mild irritation: he will suffer the anguish and ecstasy of Amor's domain acutely, and when allowing himself to be vexed he will be vexed indeed.

Passion can be used to empower dream creations, giving them more permanence independent of the perceptions of a dreamer. Without passion they will remain only as long as the dreamer concentrates or believes in them. With passion they will take on a bit of

independent activity. Most dreamers inadvertently empower a few objects or beings in their dream every night, helping populate the dreamworlds.

Reason is the connection to the real world. It is not logical ability or education, but more like common sense, having a sceptical mindset or faith in an ordered world. The puritan eschewing learned discussion in favor of faith in Providence, the Cartesian scholar finding strength in doubt or the cynical courtier who has seen it all, each have Reason in abundance.

Reason points can be spent as automatic successes against any dreamshaping affecting the character (or if the character has the same Topos as used, within perception). Reasonable people can dispel attacks or pass through enchantments. However, they are still vulnerable to real attacks – being shot by a real musket in a dream will kill as surely as in reality. Shapers can temporarily nullify a shaping attack with Reason: if the character successfully resists the attack, uses Spirit successfully as their next action and spends a Reason point that particular kind of attack will not have any effect on them for the rest of the scene.

All of our reasoning ends in surrender to feeling.
Pascal, Pensées, 1655-62

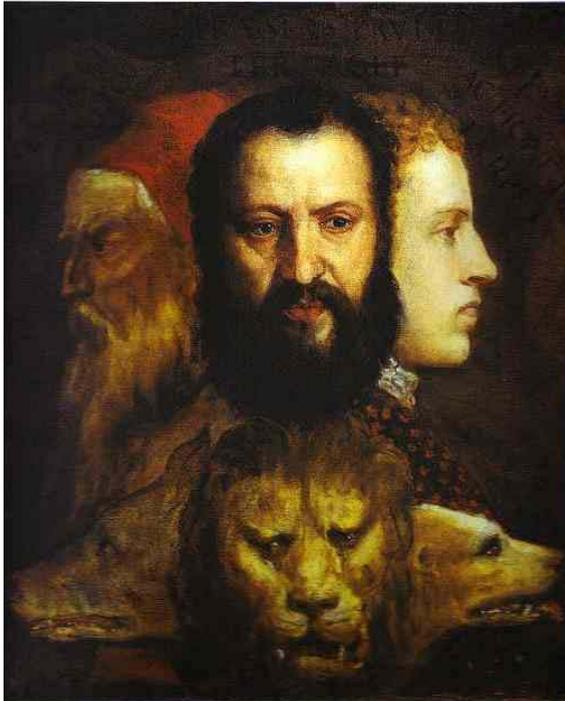
Passion and reason cannot easily coexist: whenever each is used, subtract half of the other (round down) from the level. A person with Reason 5 and Passion 5 will have an effective Reason and Passion of 3. A person with Reason 4 and Passion 1 will be better at resisting the effects of dreams than such a contradictory genius.

When a person is drained of all Passion, they are emotionally drained and become listless and discouraged. When drained of all Reason they begin to act irrationally or in confusion.

Poetry is a mere drug, Sir.
George Farquhar

Reason and Passion can be replenished through certain means. Hearing a rousing poem, listening to music or being subjected to skilled oratory can restore a Passion point, if the poet has more successes than the current Passion rating (and the theme is agreeable to the Passion Nature). Similarly a good sermon or discourse can help restore Reason.

Breed



What a Chimera is man! What a novelty, a monster, a chaos, a contradiction, a prodigy! Judge of all things, an imbecile worm; depository of truth, and sewer of error and doubt; the glory and refuse of the universe. Who shall unravel this confusion?

Blaise Pascal

Characters with 3 or more in Breed will have some Cambion signs, slight aberrations showing that they are not quite of this world.

-	Fully human, no bonuses for shaping.
*	Some Cambion blood.
**	Cambion blood. Able to use Shaping in the awake world on dream objects and beings.
***	Full cambion. Can physically enter dreams and reality, does not sleep. Can be hurt by dream weapons in reality. One Cambion sign or more.
****	Dreamblooded. More at home in dreams than reality, requires an expenditure of Passion to enter and remain in the real world. Two Cambion signs.
*****	Near dream. Requires blood for gaining and maintaining physical existence. Cannot regain Passion and Reason on their own, requires it from other people or dreams. Can be hurt by dream weapons in dreams. Three Cambion signs.