

# DRAGONFLY

A ROLE PLAYING GAME BY  
JEFFREY S. SCHECTER

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## What Is Dragonfly?

Think of Dragonfly's setting as a cross between cockfighting seizure monster anime children's series like **Pokemon** and science fiction military bug hunts such as **Starship Troopers**. Players take on the role of Hunters, Riders, Entomologists, and other brave men and women who routinely interact with the gigantic and often psychically potent bugs of the star system Arthra.

Dragonfly is a role-playing game. Role-playing games are often compared to improvisational theater and interactive storytelling: players take on the roles of fictional characters and, through their own decisions of often some random or resource element, guide those characters through various adventures. One player does not create a single character, but instead acts as the Game Master: they outline the scenarios around which game sessions revolve, portray minor characters and antagonists, and describe the setting and situation to the other players.

The Game Master acts as a referee and facilitator of game play, but they are not somehow elevated above the other players: they, like everyone else, are simply at the table to have a bit of fun. While being the Game Master often demands that some extra effort be put into the game, the experience can be quite rewarding.

In order to play Dragonfly, at least one player will need a copy of this booklet. Everyone needs a handful of six sided dice, some paper, and a sharp pencil. Players creating characters will also need a copy of the character sheet found at the end of this booklet, and the Game Master should probably have a legal pad or similar with which to take game notes.

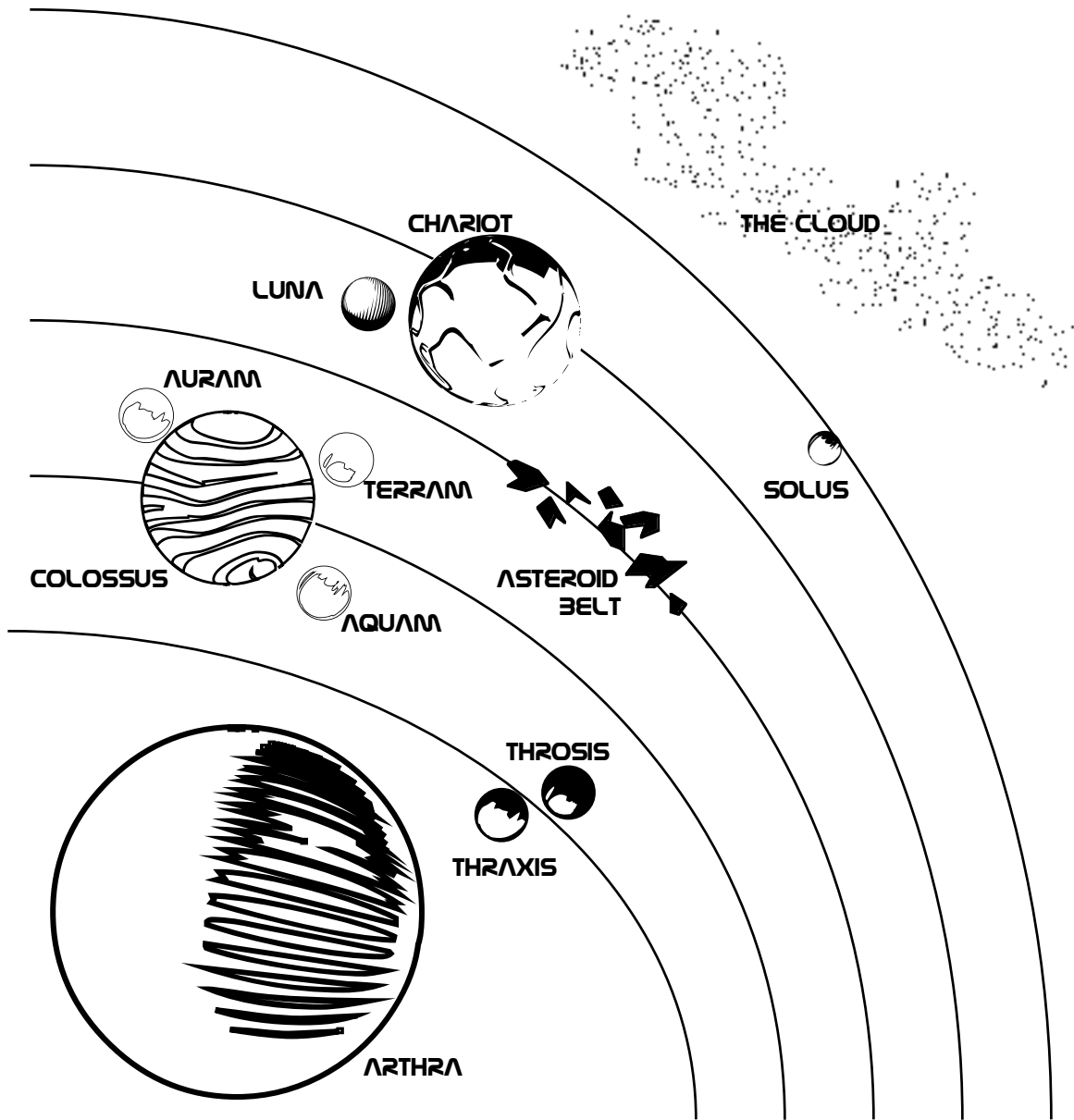
## The System of Arthra

Dragonfly is set in and around the solar system of Arthra. The star by the same name is quite like our own: a main sequence star about four and a half billion years old with a diameter of

slightly more than a million kilometers. There are five planets in the solar system: two Earth-like globes 1 AU from Arthra locked in a binary orbit around each other, a pair of gas giants separated from each other by a large asteroid field, and a small ball of ice on the system's outer reaches. A brief map of the system appears below.

The paired planets Thraxis and Throsis are habitable, enjoying varied climates and strong

tides due to their proximity to one another. Each is moderately populated, with Thraxis carrying around three billion souls and Throsis about half that. Most of the population lives in large cities where the giant bugs of the solar system seldom venture for fear of men, but about a quarter of the population of Thraxis and half of Throsis lives in small rural villages amidst the native beasts. The twin planets are united by a single government, although each planet has its own branch, and separate



departments exist for the numerous provinces. As much as they would like to, the Planetary Alliance holds very little sway throughout the rest of the solar system.

Colossus is a gas giant with a diameter ten times that of the twin planets. The planet itself is in no way fit for life—the gravity is immense and the skies poisonous—but its three moons all boast breathable atmospheres. Aquam is the largest moon, the same size as the twins. Its surface is over ninety percent water, and what land there is is low and resembles a triassic era swamp. These swamps are thought to be the birthplace of the great bugs of Arthra. The next largest moon, Terram, is as dry as Aquam is wet. Most of the moon's surface is ridge upon ridge of cloud kissed mountains and steamy jungle valleys. Auram is the smallest moon, with a core only half the size of Aquam, but made of dense material: it has attracted an unusually thick atmosphere, in which floating islands glide, held aloft by helium producing bacteria. All three moons are lightly populated, none housing more than ten million persons. Most of the populations are scattered in small villages, although there are two cities large enough for space ports on Aquam and one each on Terram and Auram.

The asteroid field of Arthra is not so dense as that in our own solar system. Most of the asteroids are very small, although they are large enough to destroy any ship that attempts to cross using gravity drives.

Chariot is the second gas giant of the system, almost twice as large as Colossus. Despite this, it has attracted only one moon, Luna. The name Chariot derives from an aboriginal religion of Throsis, from which the gas giant acts as the center point of a continually moving constellation. The aboriginals believe that one day the wandering constellation will arrive at

the twin planets, which will be the first sign of the apocalypse.

Solus is the furthest planet of the Arthra system. It is a remote ball of ice, barely a quarter the size of even the moon Auram. Solus is too cold and desolate to support life.

Beyond Solus is The Cloud, a sparse sprinkling of large asteroids. It should be noted that The Cloud does not truly orbit Solus, but is merely (spatially speaking) in the neighborhood. Every so many hundred years one of the asteroids will break away from The Cloud and rush inwards. It is thought that asteroids with multiple impact sights were the vector which spread the gigantic bugs of the swamps of Aquam throughout the other habitable celestial bodies of the solar system.

## Bugs!

The system of Arthra is home to many species of gigantic bugs. The bugs are there wherever there is other life: on all of the inhabited worlds of the system. They range in size from only a foot or two to over ten yards, in the most extreme cases. The bugs are by no means the only life of the system—there are the humans, of course, but also a variety of common mammals like dogs and cats and livestock as well as most other species present on Earth—but no one would question their dominance. Except, perhaps, man.

Humans have had a deep fascination with the bugs as far back as history has been written. The aboriginal tribes of the twin planets live in harmony with them, hunting some for food, using others as beasts of burden and yet more as companions and protectors. Although the aboriginal tribes have by now been mostly

assimilated by the forces of industry and technology, a new generation of bug lovers has risen. Many young men and women have taken to the wilds to study and live with the bugs, and most have been pleasantly surprised: the arthropods are not the simple minded creatures of their lesser kin, but rather often cleverly intelligent, as much so at least as a dog or dolphin. Many, also, have pronounced psychic talents, some going so far as to rely upon those amazing abilities as their main form of protection. There are those humans who consider these particular bugs the harbingers of the future, insisting that if society would simply apply itself, humans, too, could develop psychic capabilities.

That is not to say that all humans love the bugs, or even care for them at all. Neither do all bugs tolerate humans. They are dangerous and powerful, as many rural communities and even some cities have learned the hard way. More affluent communities are able to hire professional hunters to track down and exterminate dangerous bugs, and other poachers hunt them down and sell their shells as luxury goods at a more than fair price. Such behavior is more common in areas less in synch with the natural ways of the worlds, and by extension the twin planets as opposed to the moons of Colossus.

## Technology

The technology of the worlds of Arthra is in general quite similar to that of our own world around the time of the advent of the 21st century. Computers, weapons, communications, and the like should all seem very familiar, should a modern American find their way onto Thraxis. Engineering and aeronautics, however, are two fields easily

recognizable as vastly more advanced than in the contemporary western world.

Humans are only native to one planet in the system, that being Thraxis. They have spread to the other worlds only within the last hundred years or so, soon after the advent of the Gravity Drive. The gravity drive allows a spacefaring vessel to fix itself on a target up to three or four astronomical units away, and subject itself to that target's gravity in a very energy efficient manner. This source of constant acceleration has allowed humans to colonize the three other inhabitable worlds of the system, but is not long ranged enough to allow interstellar travel.

Since the twin planets and Colossus are always between 1 and 3 AUs apart, depending upon their current orbital positions, the gravity drive of a ship orbiting one planet is always within range of the other body. For a few weeks out of every year, however, travel between the two planets becomes impossible, as the sun interposes itself between the two bodies. Also, it should be noted that going from the twin planets to the moons takes a much shorter period of time than traveling in the other direction, as the mass of Colossus is about two and a half times that of either of the twins.

Arthran engineers have accomplished a number of truly epic feats, perhaps the most notable of which is Midway Station, a free floating space colony situated exactly between Thraxis and Throsis. Next in line would be the floating capitol of Aquam, the city of Isle. Isle is a gigantic artificial island with as much living space below the ocean's surface as above it, a fact that attracts more than a million tourists for each year on the twin planets. Explorers both planetary and spacial consider the Solar Positioning Network an immensely helpful tool, using the various artificial satellites

scattered throughout the system to triangulate their position down to only a handful of feet. The colonies of Terram depend on water condensers which snatch moisture out of the atmosphere for their survival, due to the scarcity of freshwater rivers and lakes on the moon.

# Creating Your Character

In order to play Dragonfly, you are going to need to create a character (unless, of course, you are the Game Master; in which case you will create many characters but not by following these rules). Your character will be the persona that you portray throughout the game: one of the protagonists of the story, if you will, but one whose decisions you have complete control over.

Because Dragonfly is all about the bugs of Arthra, characters for Dragonfly must have some connection with the bugs. There are five main roles that characters play in relation to the bugs: Adept, Entomologist, Hunter, Ranger,

and Rider. Your character's Role will determine their basic capabilities, which you may expand upon with a pool of points.

Characters are described in game terms by six Attributes with a varying numerical rating and a number of Abilities that the character either has, or does not. The Attributes are Empathy, Entomology, Fitness, Survival, Technology, and Willpower. Abilities include things like psychic powers and special relations with the bugs. Both Attributes and Abilities are described in more depth in the Character Elements section. A character's Role will dictate the base ratings of a character's Attributes and any Abilities that they start with automatically. After you have chosen your Role, you may spend 10 points to customize your character. Points may be spent to increase Attributes and Abilities. The first +1 increase given to a specific Attribute costs one point, the next two points, the next three, et cetera. Likewise, the first Ability purchased costs one point, the second costs two points, and so on. Any unspent points become Currency.

The Roles are described fully starting on the next page, along with the accompanying base statistics. The below table offers a quick reference to the roles.

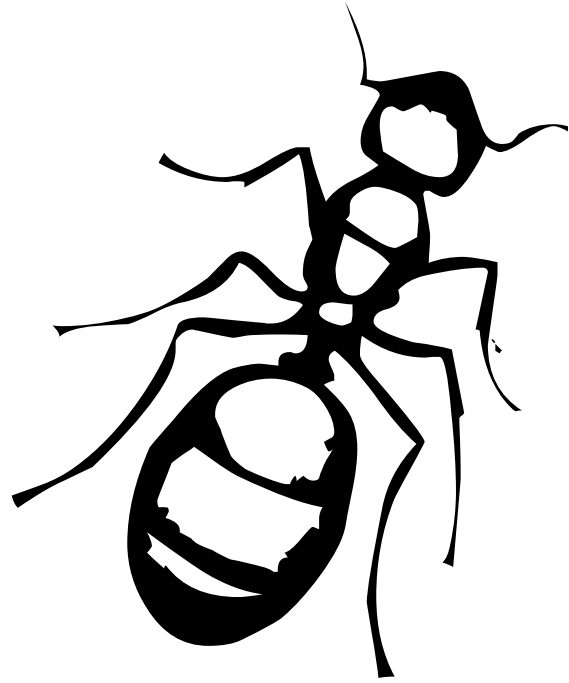
Roles Reference Table							
ROLE	EMP.	ENT.	FIT.	SRV.	TCH.	WIL.	ABILITIES
Adept	10	10	8	8	8	12	ESP, one other psi
Entomologist	8	12	8	10	10	8	Familiarity x2
Hunter	8	8	12	10	10	8	Familiarity, one Deadly
Ranger	8	10	10	12	8	8	Familiarity, Companion
Rider	12	8	10	8	8	10	Companion x2

## ADEPT

Adepts are human beings who hope to learn psychic abilities from the bugs. They often isolate themselves from society and live in the wilderness, attaching themselves to a specific individual or hive. Others congregate in monasteries or urban orders. From their studies, they gain a deeper understanding of Bug culture and sometimes extraordinary psychic powers.

- 10 ENPATH
- 10 ENTOMOLOG
- 8 FITNESS
- 8 SURVIVAL
- 8 TECHNOLOG
- 12 WILLPOWER

**ABILITIES:** ESP, one other psychic ability of the player's choosing

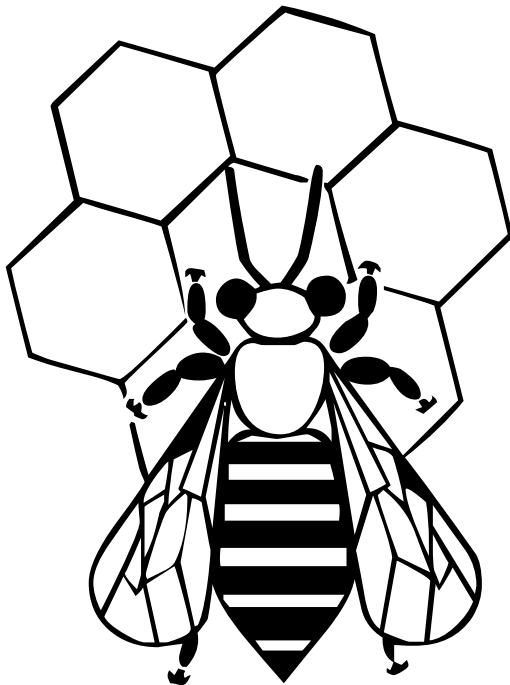


## ENTOMOLOGIST

Entomologists are the scientists that choose to devote their lives to the study of the bugs: their behaviors, their niches, their capabilities, the way they interact with each other and with humans. Entomologists often strive to know more about the bugs so that humans may live closer to them, but not all have noble ends: many communities are severely threatened by the creatures, and, as they say, know your enemy.

- 8 ENPATH
- 12 ENTOMOLOG
- 8 FITNESS
- 10 SURVIVAL
- 10 TECHNOLOG
- 8 WILLPOWER

**ABILITIES:** Familiarity with any two types of bugs of the player's choosing

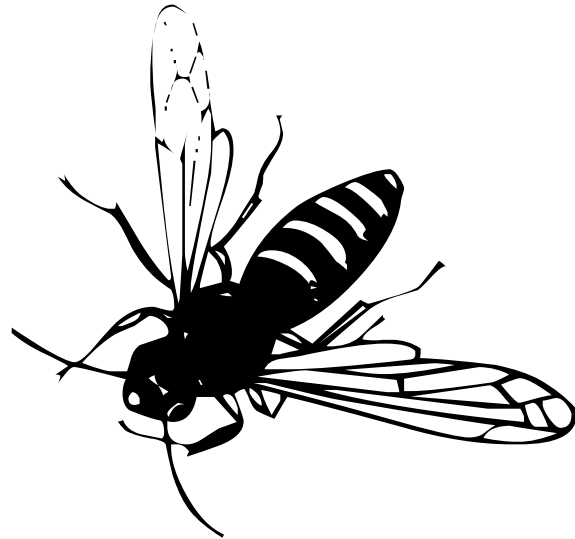


## HUNTER

Bugs aren't always friendly, and when they're not, someone has to put them in their place. That's the job of the Hunter. Some are simply nuisance exterminators (albeit often ten foot long nuisances with mandibles as sharp and powerful as steel), others are active poachers. Whatever their chosen walk of life, fighting bugs is a hunter's bottom line.

- 8 ENPATH
- 8 ENTOMOLOG
- 12 FITNESS
- 10 SURVIVAL
- 10 TECHNOLOG
- 8 WILLPOWER

**ABILITIES:** Familiarity with any one type of bugs of the player's choosing, either Deadly Brawler or Deadly Marksman

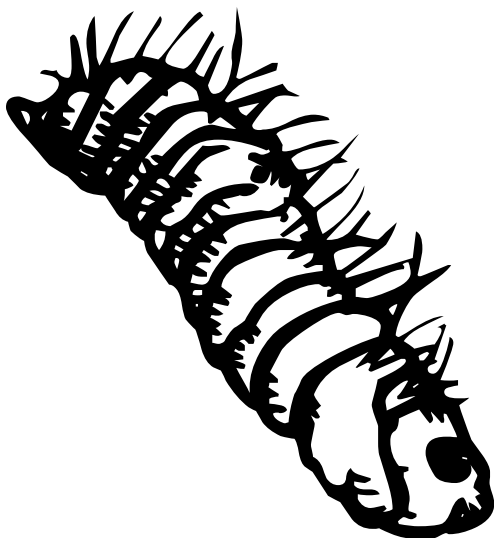


## RANGER

Rangers live in among the bugs. They live off them and with them, hunting them for food and enjoying their companionship. Rangers must keep fit to stay alive, often relying upon their own skills and instincts as much as modern technology to get along in the wilderness. Many find themselves imitating the methods of the bugs: after all, they've taken millions of years to evolve the perfect way of doing things.

- 8 ENPATH
- 10 ENTOMOLOG
- 10 FITNESS
- 12 SURVIVAL
- 8 TECHNOLOG
- 8 WILLPOWER

**ABILITIES:** Familiarity with any one type of bugs of the player's choosing, any one Bug Companion of that same family



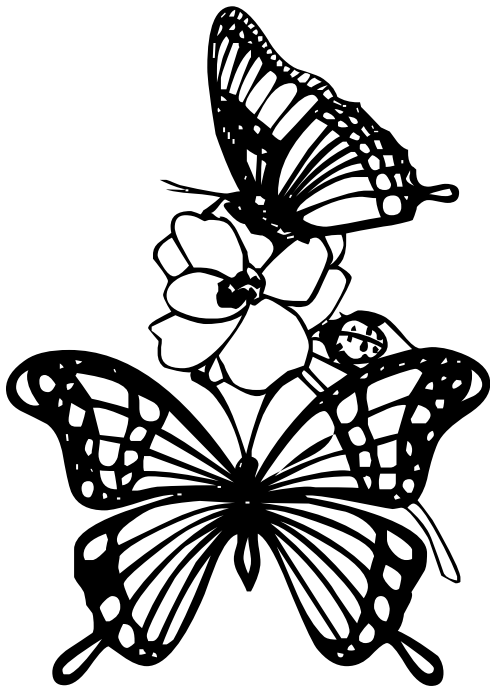
# Character Elements

## RIDER

A bug is the rider's best friend. A bug is also often a rider's primary form of transportation, a defense against enemies, and a helpful companion when roughing it in the wilderness. Riders are from urban centers as often as remote villages, but they all have one thing in common: they take it as their life's mission to befriend as many bugs as possible.

- 12 **ENPATH**□
- 8 **ENTOMOLOG**□
- 10 **FITNESS**
- 8 **SURVIVAL**
- 8 **TECHNOLOG**□
- 10 **WILLPOWER**

**ABILITIES:** Any two Bug Companions of the player's choosing



You may have noticed that each role has three Attributes rated at eight, two rated at ten, and one rated at twelve. A rating of eight is considered average for a person living in the Arthra system. A rating of ten indicates some skill or talent, and a rating of twelve professional competency. Ratings of fourteen or above denote true experts. The Attributes are each described in more depth below.

**ENPATH**□ represents a character's ability to communicate clearly and convincingly. It is also indicative of how friendly others think the character is and the number of people that like them. Empathy may be used to communicate with and train bugs and other animals, make friends, find contacts, convince others that your way is the right way, and lie through your teeth without getting caught.

**ENTOMOLOG**□ rates a character's overall knowledge of bugs, including general patterns and bug biology as well as interesting facts about individual species and the legends of the aboriginal tribes of Thraxis. The Entomology Attribute may be used to identify bugs, diagnose and treat the maladies and injuries of bugs, and recall useful bits of bug trivia.

**FITNESS** describes a character's overall physical condition, including general health, strength, speed, and stamina. Characters with a high fitness tend to be more muscular and physically attractive than those with a lower rating in this Attribute. Fitness may be used to shrug off sicknesses and injuries, lift heavy

objects, climb tricky inclines, run quickly and jump far, and continue to perform strenuous activities for long periods of time without tiring.

**SURVIVAL** represents a character's ability to get along in the wild without the luxury of modern technology. It is also representative of a character's skill at tracking, hunting, and being overall stealthy, as well as their ability to notice when others are doing the sneaking. Survival may be used to catch food in the wilderness, track down a bug, find fresh water in a dry environment, and build a makeshift shelter out of leaves and branches.

**TECHNOLOGY** is a character's competence with every sort of technological device. It covers everything from flying spacecraft to hacking on a computer to operating a Solar Positioning Network receiver. Technology may be used for piloting all sorts of vehicles, programing an finding data on a computer or network, and controlling all sorts of other technological equipment.

**WILLPOWER** quantifies the presence, force of personality, and strength of mind possessed by a character. When a character with high Willpower walks into a room, you can *feel* it, even if you don't see them. Willpower may be used to intimidate others into doing what you want, to resist all sorts of coercion, and to press on even when pain and burden would normally make even basic functioning impossible.

As well as the six Attributes, all characters have two or more Abilities. Unlike Attributes, which may be rated at anywhere from eight to sixteen for the starting character, Abilities have no associated rating: either a character has an Ability, or they do not have it. It's as simple as

that. There are multiple types of Abilities, each of which is described below.

**BUG COMPANION ABILITIES** are just that: bug companions. For each Bug Companion Ability that a character has, they are the friend of one giant bug that follows them loyally. (See the Bug Species section for more information on specific bugs.)

**DEADLY ABILITIES** indicate a character's superior skill at combat. There are two Deadly Abilities: Deadly Brawler (for close combat) and Deadly marksman (for missile combat). When you succeed at an attack in the appropriate mode of combat, the target takes a -2 penalty on their saving roll.

**FAMILIARITY ABILITIES** represent a character's great degree of knowledge about a particular type of giant bugs. When interacting with members of that type, whether to track, to train or communicate with, or to combat, the character gains a +2 bonus on any tests, contests, or conflicts that they may roll with the bug. (See the Resolution section for more information on tests, contests, and conflicts and the Modifiers section for more information on bonuses and penalties.)

**INFLUENCE ABILITIES** represent a those things that give a character some extra pull in society, such as money and friends in high places. During each game session, a player may call on each Influence Ability once. When this is done, the character automatically gains access to some new resource through that ability. Example Influence Abilities include wealth, political power, and contacts.

**PSYCHIC ABILITIES** are supernatural mental powers possessed by a character. These powers are either always active or may be manifested by concentrating and making a

successful resolution roll against Willpower. If that roll fails, not only does the power fail to function, but the character that attempted to use it gains a point of fatigue. The psychic abilities are listed and described below.

**Clairvoyance:** A character may not have Clairvoyance unless they also have ESP. By concentrating and making a test against Willpower (difficulty variable dice), the character may experience events in another location or possibly time as if they were there. Use 3 difficulty dice for a nearby location, 4 for a far away location, and 5 for a location on another planet. Increase the difficulty dice by 1 if the character is only passingly familiar with the target location. Increase the difficulty dice by 1 if they are attempting to see a short distance into the past, or by 2 if they are attempting to see the deep past or the near future. A character may use Clairvoyance for up to their Willpower in minutes or for as long as they maintain concentration, whichever is shorter.

**Cloak:** This ability is always on, as long as the psychic moves slowly and deliberately and makes no sudden movements. Creatures that might see, hear, or smell the psychic must succeed at a test against Willpower (difficulty 3 dice) or not notice the psychic's presence.

**Empathic Healing:** By touching a target and making a test against Willpower (difficulty 3 dice), the psychic may transfer any number of fatigue points currently afflicting the target to themselves. Half the fatigue points, rounding down, are dissipated in the transfer. For example, if a psychic transferred seven fatigue points away from a wounded bug, they would gain four points themselves.

**Extrasensory Perception (ESP):** ESP is always active. A character with ESP is

supernaturally aware of the presence of sentient minds within their Willpower in yards. By making a test against Willpower (difficulty 3 dice), the character may pinpoint the direction and general intelligence of a single mind. A character can recognize a mind that they have pinpointed before if they pinpoint it again or it comes within their Willpower in feet.

**Psychic Expertise:** A character must know at least two other Psychic Abilities in order to select Psychic Expertise. Characters with Psychic Expertise gain a +2 bonus on tests against Willpower to operate psychic powers.

**Pyrokinesis:** This ability gives a psychic control over fires. With a test against Willpower (difficulty 3 dice), they may cause a small fire to spring into existence within their Willpower in yards. A test against 3 dice will also let a psychic put out a small fire that they touch, or extinguish a cubic yard of a larger fire.

**Shield:** The character may deflect attacks with bursts of psychic energy. When a character would be hit by an attack, they may test their Willpower (difficulty 3 dice for close combat and primitive projectile attacks or 4 dice for firearms) to knock the attack aside with their powers.

**Suggestion:** A character may not take this ability unless they have Telepathy. By succeeding at a contest against Willpower with the target (the psychic takes a -2 penalty for a minor suggestion or a -4 penalty for a major one), the psychic may implant a suggestion into the target. This suggestion may not be obviously self-destructive or go against the target's basic instincts or principals. If the suggestion is implanted, the target feels obliged to comply for a number of minutes equal to the psychic's Willpower rating.

**Telekinesis:** The psychic may exert a psychic force up to their Willpower in yards away. This requires a test against Willpower (difficulty 1 die per 2 points of Fitness that the psychic wishes the force to possess). They may control the force for up to their Willpower in minutes, acting with the selected Fitness rating. Whenever this time elapses or the psychic wishes to upgrade the Fitness of their force, a new test must be made.

**Telepathy:** This ability is always functioning. The psychic may speak telepathically into the mind of any creature that they can see. If they do not share a common language, they may still attempt to communicate by sharing images, emotions, and feelings. If a target desires they may reciprocate in kind, so as to carry out a telepathic conversation.

This leaves him with 2 points left over, so he starts off with 2 points of Currency. Jeremy's statistics look like this:

Empathy 11  
Fitness 9  
Entomology 8  
Survival 10  
Technology 8  
Willpower 11  
Four Bug Companions

Now all that's left is to choose what Jeremy's Bug Companions will be. Patrick flips to Bug Species, and decides that he'll go with mainly flying insects from his home world, plus one that he's befriended on Throsis. Patrick picks a Dragon Fly and a pair of twin Monarch Butterflies for his Auran bugs and a Rhinoceros Beetle for his native friend.

## Example Character

Patrick is making a character for Jeff's game. He's been watching a lot of **Card Captors** lately, so wants to go with a Rider with lots and lots of Beast Companions. Jeremy is a young rider from Auram seeing the sights and befriending the bugs of the twin planets. Patrick notes down the rider's basic scores: 12 Empathy, 10 Fitness, 8 Entomology, 8 Survival, 8 Technology, 10 Willpower; and any two Bug Companions.

Patrick buys two more Bug Companions (1+2=3 points), a +2 bonus to Survival (1+2=3 points), a +1 bonus to Empathy (1 point), and a +1 bonus to Fitness (1 point). So far, he's spent a total of 8 (3+3+1+1) points on his character.

## Resolution

When any character (including both the protagonists portrayed by the players and the supporting roles and antagonists controlled by the Game Master) is about to attempt an action that is either opposed by another character or is tricky enough that there is a chance of failure, the Game Master may call for a resolution roll of some sort. There are three types of resolution rolls—tests, contests, and conflicts—but each operates on the same basic principals.

When any resolution roll is about to be made, a simple process must be followed: first, the player of every character involved (possibly including the Game Master) must state in general terms what their character is attempting. The difficulty dice of the action will then be determined and rolled, and

compared to the most appropriate Attribute, as stated by the Game Master. Then, the results of the action are narrated using the roll as a key. Note that any player who wishes may do the narration, although the rights usually go to the player of the victorious character or the Game Master. Also, any out of tone description may be vetoed by the Game Master or majority vote among the rest of the players not involved in narration, with the Game Master breaking ties.

The three kinds of resolution rolls are described below.

**TESTS** are made when a character is testing their skill and talent against a challenge that is not actively resisting. For instance, leaping over a wide chasm might be a test against Fitness, and cajoling a Giant Caterpillar to stop hiding might be a test against Empathy. The Game Master will state a number of difficulty dice based on how challenging the task at hand is. Two dice are used for a simple task, three dice for a slightly tricky one, four for a very tricky task, and five for an incredibly difficult challenge. The player then rolls and totals the difficulty dice, and compares that sum against the stated Attribute. If the sum is equal to or under that Attribute, then the character was successful. If not, then their action was either a failure or a pyrrhic victory, in which the negative consequences outweigh the fruits of victory.

**CONTESTS** are used when two characters are facing off against each other, but a drawn out, blow by blow description of the action is not appropriate or wanted. In a Contest, each character rolls and totals three dice, comparing the sum to an Attribute specified by the Game Master. Both characters do not have to use the same Attribute. If one character rolls equal to or under their relevant

Attribute and the other does not, that character is the victor. If both characters roll under or both roll over, the character that rolled highest is the victor.

**CONFLICTS** are used to quantify suspenseful, engaging competitions between characters. They are in fact a series of rolls, instead of just a single toss of the dice. Each roll is compared against an Attribute appropriate to whatever phase the conflict is in. The Attribute used for comparison does not have to be consistent between contestants or even rolls of the same character. Also, the number of dice used in the roll (“challenge dice”) is not determined by the Game Master, but rather the player making the roll. Each roll must use at least as many challenge dice as the last.

The first roll of a conflict is made by the initiator. If they succeed (ie, roll a sum equal to or under the value of the relevant Attribute), their opponent may then make a roll, using at least as many dice as the original. If they succeed the ball is back in the original character’s court, who, too, must make a roll with at least as many challenge dice as the last roll. As soon as a failure is rolled, the contest is over, with the character that rolled the failure being the loser.

In some instances, a dramatic confrontation will be composed of a number of separate conflicts. In this case, the loser of a conflict may make a saving roll to stay in the fight. To make a saving roll, the player describes how their character attempts to stave off defeat, and then makes a test against an appropriate Attribute using a number of difficulty dice equal to the challenge dice of the last roll made by their opponent (or 2 dice, if they failed on the first roll of the conflict). If that test is successful, the character is able to keep at it,

although there will be consequences (exactly what these consequences are is up to the Game Master). If the saving roll is a failure, then the character has been totally defeated.

If a character wishes, they may back out of a conflict prematurely. This ends the conflict in a draw without any roll, but causes the retreating character to take 1 point of fatigue.

**Combat:** Combat is one of the most common implementations of the conflict resolution roll. When a character loses the conflict, their opponent is able to force a maneuver or attack through their defenses. Succeeding at a saving roll in combat when the winner is making a simple attack meant to injure forces the character to take 2 points of fatigue. Failing the save either puts the loser at the attacker's mercy or deals them 10 points of fatigue, whichever the winner desires.

## Modifiers

A modifier is a temporary adjustment to an Attribute that applies only for a single roll. Modifiers may be used to represent especially favorable or unfavorable conditions or the way in which a character is working, and apply in exactly the same fashion to all forms of resolution rolls. Positive modifiers are called bonuses, and negative ones are called penalties. All modifiers stack with one another. A  $\pm 2$  modifier is considered minor, and  $\pm 4$  major.

**BONUSES** are, as stated, good modifiers. They add to a character's effective Attribute value. A character may gain a bonus for any of the following reasons.

**Assistants:** An assistant with a relevant Attribute of 10 or 11 may grant a character a +1

bonus on a roll, and one with a relevant Attribute of 12 or more may grant a +2 bonus. A character's total bonus for competent assistants may not exceed +4.

**Method:** When a character is performing an action in an especially clever, tactical, or entertaining way, then they gain a +2 bonus on associated resolution rolls.

**Pace:** A character gains a +2 bonus if they take at least half again the normal amount of time required to perform an action and are under no immediate pressure. If they take five times the normal requisite amount of time, this bonus increases to +4.

**Pushing It:** A character may push themselves to their limit, gaining a +2 bonus on any resolution roll. However, this causes them to gain a point of fatigue.

**Tools:** A character using superior tools gains a +2 bonus on any resolution rolls that they make when using those tools for their intended purpose.

**PENALTIES** are the inverse of bonuses: bad modifiers that subtract from a character's effective Attribute value. A character may take penalties for any of the following reasons.

**Disadvantage:** This penalty may only apply to a contest or conflict. When the environment puts a character at a disadvantage relative to their opponent, the disadvantaged character may take a -2 or -4 penalty on their rolls to represent this shift of fortune.

**Fatigue:** When characters overuse psychic powers, back down from conflicts, or push themselves to their limit, they may gain fatigue. A character's current fatigue applies as a penalty to *all* resolution rolls. Fatigue

disappears at a rate of one point per ten minutes of rest or half hour of light activity. A character with at least as much fatigue as half the value of their Fitness or Willpower Attribute (whichever is better) falls unconscious.

**Method:** When a character is acting in an overly predictable or dull fashion, the Game Master may assign a -2 penalty to resolution rolls associated with their actions.

**Pace:** A character may rush, taking half the normal amount of time to perform an action but accepting a -2 penalty on associated resolution rolls. Also, a character may attempt to do two things at once, but, again, take a -2 penalty on associated rolls.

**Tools:** A character working with improvised or especially poor quality tools must take a -2 penalty on rolls to use those tools.

## Currency

Currency is a resource possessed by the player that may give them and their character a bit of extra potency during play. A player will only start with points of Currency if they do not spend the full ten points during character creation. During play, each player (including the Game Master) may hand out 2 points of Currency per session to any player other than their self for whatever they deem appropriate. Currency not spent by the end of one game session carries over to the next one.

If a player wishes, they may also turn in old or absolute Abilities for one point of Currency each. They may also decrease an Attribute by one point in exchange for a point of Currency. A player may only do either of these exchanges

once per game session.

Currency may be spent for any of the following effects.

**ADVANCEMENT** costs a variable number of points of Currency and may only be done once per game session per character. It allows a character to gain a new Ability or increase an Attribute by one point. Advancing an Attribute costs one point of Currency for every five full points of the Attribute's new rating. Gaining a new Ability costs a number of points of Currency equal to the number of Abilities already possessed by the character, minus one.

**MIRACULOUS RECOVER**  costs one point of Currency. It allows a character to instantly eliminate all current Fatigue.

**SAVING GRACE** costs 1 point of Currency, and should be bought after a saving roll has just been made. If the saving roll failed, it has game effects as if it had been successful. If the saving roll was successful, it has no negative consequences.

**SUCCESS** costs 1 point of Currency, and guarantees success on any resolution roll. If both sides spend Currency for Success during a contest or conflict, the expenditures negate each other and the roll is carried out as normal. Note that the currency must be spent before the roll has been made.

## Bug Elements

Bugs are not described in game terms the way normal human characters are. They do share a few similarities, but also have a number of differences. Instead of merely having Attributes

and Abilities, bugs have Attributes, Interactions, Abilities, and Qualities.

**ATTRIBUTES** in bugs function much like they do in human characters, but there are only two of them: Fitness and Willpower. They represent the same things as they do in human characters, and are rated on the same scale. Note that Fitness in bugs also covers sneaking around and remaining alerts.

**INTERACTIONS** are ratings measured in difficulty dice that relate to how bugs interact with humans. The two Interactions are **Feral**, which measures how wild and ferocious a bug is, and **Animal**, which measures how simple minded and unable to communicate or learn a bug is. While Attributes are relatively homogenous (give or take a point or two) throughout one species of bug, the Interactions relate to the personality of an individual. The ratings of the Interactions of bugs species given in the Bug Statistics section are for the average wild bug of that species. When such a bug is encountered, the Game Master should roll a die for each Interaction, and consult the below chart. In addition, any bug that has lived with humans for at least a few months has both

Interactions decreased by one die.

**ABILITIES** in bugs function just like they do in human characters. However, bugs only have access to Deadly and Psychic abilities. Bug Companion, Familiarity, and Influence abilities are appropriate only to normal human characters.

**QUALITIES** are physical characteristics of bugs that alter their capabilities, such as wings that let the bug fly or spinnerets that let them shoot out webs. Any Qualities that a bug possesses will be described in full in that bug's description in the Bug Statistics section.

## Bug Statistics

The following pages include brief descriptions and statistical write-ups for ten of Arthra's most interesting giant bugs. Unless noted otherwise, assume that bugs behave comparably to their Earth equivalents.

Interactions Table	
ROLL	RESULTS
1 or 2	Interaction decreased by 1 die
3 or 4	Interaction not modified
5 or 6	Interaction increased by 1 die

## ANT

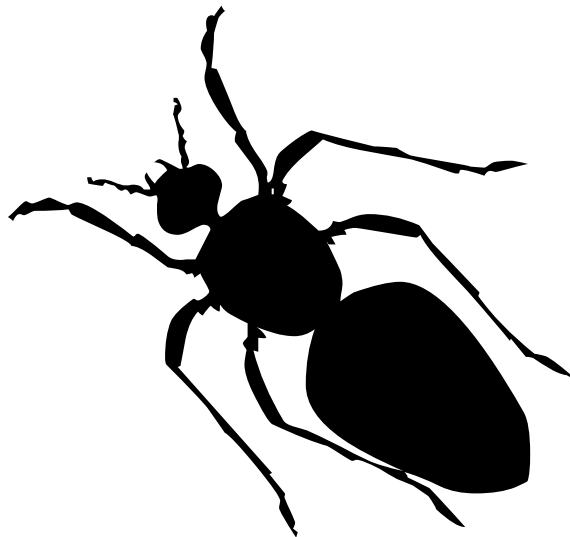
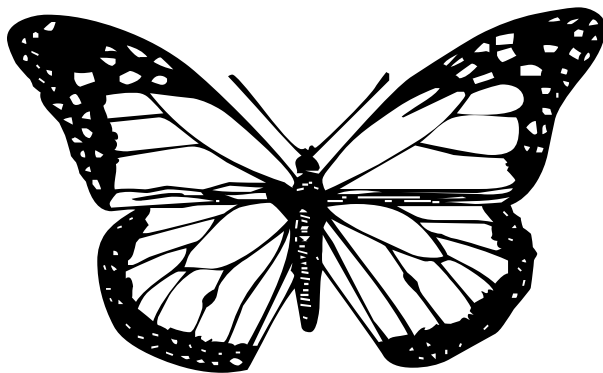
Ants in some form or another are common on every inhabited planet and moon of the Arthra system. They live in large, complex systems of tunnels inhabited by anywhere from tens to tens of thousands of Ants. Not only do the Ants communicate with each other with pheromones and, at times, simple body language, but they are also thought to enjoy a subtle psychic link. Adult Ants typically reach 8 to 10 feet in length, with females tending towards the lower end of the spectrum and males towards the upper end.

15 **FITNESS**  
9 **WILLPOWER**

4 **ANIMAL**  
4 **FERAL**

**ABILITIES:** Empathy (with other Ants only), Deadly Brawler (male Ants only)

**QUALITIES:** Wings (*allow flight*)  
(female Ants only)



## BUTTERFLY

The Butterflies of the rain forests of Thraxis and Throsis, the skies of Auram, and the valley jungles of Terram are some of Arthra's most psychically potent and intelligent non-human inhabitants. The innate empathic abilities of the Butterflies make them the easiest of the bug families to communicate with, and their healing powers have given them almost legendary status among the aboriginals of Thraxis. An adult butterfly is typically 6 to 10 feet long and able to serve as a mount for up to two humans.

12 **FITNESS**  
12 **WILLPOWER**

2 **ANIMAL**  
3 **FERAL**

**ABILITIES:** Telepathy, Empathic Healing

**QUALITIES:** Wings (*allow flight*)

## DRAGON FL

Dragon Flies are one of the most ferocious and powerfully psychic bugs in the system. Adult males typically reach a length of eight to twelve feet, with a wingspan of ten to fourteen feet. Despite their fearsome appearance, however, the Dragon Fly's true power lies in its psychic prowess: the beast is easily capable of creating bursts of psychic fire, and readily deflects attacks hurled at them with bursts of energy.

Dragon Flies are common in the swamps of Aquam and the twin planets, and are often a choice companion of new Riders due to their glamorous appeal.

16 **FITNESS**  
12 **WILLPOWER**

3 **ANIMAL**  
5 **FERAL**

**ABILITIES:** Deadly Marksman, Pyrokenesis, Shield

**QUALITIES:** Wings (*allow flight*), Quick (+2 bonus on Fitness rolls to fly quickly)



## GLADIATOR BEETLE

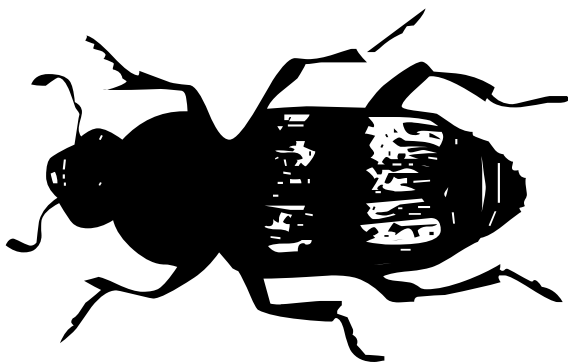
These giant beetles are the most common beast of burden in the system of Arthra. Originally native to only a few regions of Throsis, immense strength coupled with a docile personality has led the beetle to every planet in the system for use as heavy labor. In the wild, the horned Gladiator Beetles will engage in spectacular wrestling matches for the right to mate, ending when one beetle lifts the other into the air. The beetles may grow up to fifteen to twenty feet long and ten feet wide.

18 **FITNESS**  
8 **WILLPOWER**

5 **ANIMAL**  
3 **FERAL**

**ABILITIES:** Deadly Brawler (male Gladiator Beetles only)

**QUALITIES:** Carapace (+2 bonus on tests against Fitness to resist injuries, take 1 fewer fatigue points from each injury)



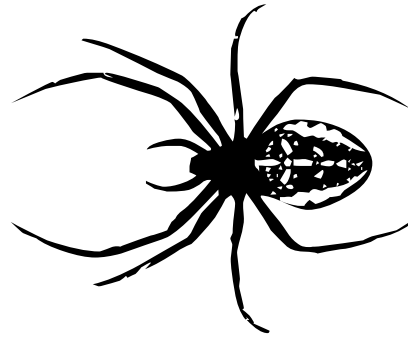
## HUNTING SPIDER

Common to the temperate forests of the twin planets as well as many regions of the moon of Terram, Hunting Spiders stalk and kill their prey with a deadly poisonous bite. Hunting Spiders may have a body up to 15 feet long, which, combined with their great speed and endurance, often makes them an ideal terrestrial mount.

18 **FITNESS**  
10 **WILLPOWER**  
3 **ANIMAL**  
5 **FERAL**

**ABILITIES:** Deadly Brawler

**QUALITIES:** *Poison (characters bitten by the spider must succeed at a test against Fitness, difficulty 4 dice, or be poisoned, suffering 1 point of fatigue per minute until the poison is removed from their system), Quick (+2 bonus on Fitness rolls to run quickly)*



## MANTIS

The giant Mantis is one of Arthra's most interesting bugs. Found in the temperate regions of all five inhabited worlds, this carnivorous bug combines amazing rapid speed with slight psychic powers to take down its prey. The Mantis will typically grow to a length of 14 to 17 feet, but seldom more than a yard wide. Although it has wings, they are too small to support a rider aloft.

Mantises have a reputation for being clever and mean. In the more remote areas of the moons, it is not unknown for a Mantis to stalk a human as prey. Although they may be a powerful ally, they are one of Arthra's most commonly hunted bugs.

18 **FITNESS**  
12 **WILLPOWER**  
2 **ANIMAL**  
6 **FERAL**

**ABILITIES:** Deadly Brawler, Shield

**QUALITIES:** *Quick (+2 bonus on Fitness rolls to run quickly), Wings (allow flight)*



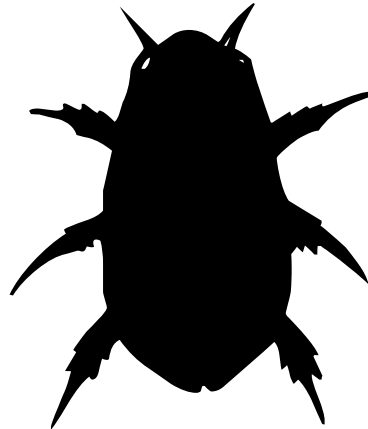
## TICK

While not as overtly fearsome as many of the bugs of Thraxis, the man sized blood draining ticks that inhabit wooded areas of the twin planets and Terram can be just as deadly as any Mantis or Gladiator Beetle. Ticks generally prefer to attack suddenly, draining a large amount of blood in a few seconds and then disappearing into the forest. Ticks are one of the smaller bug species, adults seldom growing above six feet in diameter.

11 **FITNESS**  
8 **WILLPOWER**

5 **ANIMAL**  
3 **FERAL**

**QUALITIES:** *Blood Drain (if a creature fails a saving roll against the attack of a tick, they must test their Fitness, difficulty 3 dice. If they fail this test then the tick has drained so much blood that the creature goes into shock, putting them out of action for a number of hours equal to the summed roll of two dice)*



## WASP

Wasps are common on Thraxis, Throsis, and the moon of Auram, although Auram is by far their preferred habitat. There they make their gigantic papery nests on the underside of the world's floating sky islands. Adult wasps are usually 11 to 13 feet long. While not precisely mean, they are strongly territorial, and are likely to attack any foreign creature that approaches their nest.

17 **FITNESS**  
10 **WILLPOWER**

3 **ANIMAL**  
5 **FERAL**

**QUALITIES:** *Wings (allow flight), Sting (when the wasp hits with a close combat attack, they may take one fatigue point in order to deal two extra fatigue points to their target)*

## **WATER STRIDER**

Another bug common to the swamps of Aquam and, to a lesser extent, Thraxis and Throsis, the Water Strider spreads its weight out on six spindly legs. This combined with subtle psychic thickening allows the bug to dance lightly across the surface of the water. The typical adult Water Strider is one and a half two two feet wide and ten to fifteen feet long. Although Water Striders are not among the strongest or most intelligent of the giant bugs of Arthra, their unique capability can make them a useful pet.

12 **FITNESS**  
8 **WILLPOWER**

5 **ANIMAL**  
4 **FERAL**

**QUALITIES:** *Water Walk (may walk on water as if they were on solid land)*



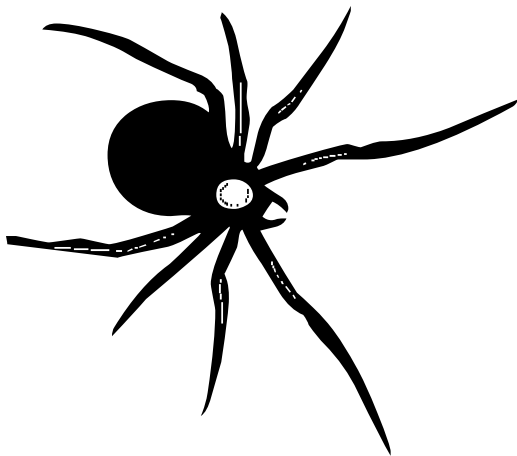
## **WEB SPINNING SPIDER**

Unlike Hunting Spiders, Web Spinning Spiders do not actively track down their prey. Instead, they build large, sticky webs, and devour those unfortunates that get caught in the morass. Arthran Web Spinning Spiders also have the ability to shoot out a fibrous gob of web fibers which entangle their opponents. Web Spinning Spiders are typically 8 to 12 feet long in the body and are often trained and used as guard dogs.

17 **FITNESS**  
11 **WILLPOWER**

3 **ANIMAL**  
4 **FERAL**

**QUALITIES:** *Poison (characters bitten by the spider must succeed at a test against Fitness, difficulty 4 dice, or be poisoned, suffering 1 point of fatigue per minute until the poison is removed from their system), Web (may shoot a web by taking 1 point of fatigue, target must succeed at test against Fitness, difficulty 4 dice, or be immobilized by the sticky web, taking a -4 penalty on most physical actions)*



# Training Bugs

Many adventurous Arthrans see the bugs as not just monsters to fear or interesting subjects to study, but as friends and loyal companions. It can take a bit of work, however, to get a bug to see humans in the same light. Follow the proceeding steps when a character attempts to make friends with a bug. If a character starts off the game with a Bug Companion, you may skip straight to step 4 for that bug.

**1: MAKING PEACE** involves letting the bug know that you are not hostile towards it. To do this, a character must cajole the bug, speak soothingly, and perhaps offer a bit of food. They should make a test against Empathy (difficulty the bug's Feral dice) to see if the bug responds favorably. Increase the difficulty dice by 1 if the bug has had unpleasant interactions with the characters before or has some other cause to feel hostile. If the test succeeds, the bug is willing to come to the character without trying to eat them or drive them off, and perhaps let themselves be petted for a bit.

**2: MAKING FRIENDS** involves spending more time with the bug and getting to know them better. This takes another test against Empathy (difficulty the bug's Animal dice). If this test is successful, the character is able to communicate with the bug, learn a bit about them, express their intentions, and so forth. Over the course of the next day or three, the bug will attempt to remain in contact with the character, if possible.

**3: FRIENDS FOREVER** requires that the character's player pay the Currency for a new Bug Companion Ability. If this is done, then the bug and the character forge deep and

lasting bonds of friendship. The bug will continue to be involved with the character, get to know them and their friends even better, and travel with them wherever they go. After a month or so of contact with humans, the bug's Animal and Feral interactions will both decrease by one die.

**4: TRAINING** is not necessary, but can be useful. Training a bug includes teaching it basic commands, such as "attack" or "go there," which allow the bug and character to communicate more easily. While a character is training a bug, they will take an hour or two every day to practice. At the end of each week of training, the character may make a test against their Entomology (difficulty the bug's Animal dice). If that test succeeds, the bug has mastered one command of the character's choice.

Bugs may be easily scared by dangerous situations. When things start heating up, bullets begin to fly, and wild bugs attack, they may turn dangerous and uncooperative. In order to prevent this, the bug's owner may make a test against Willpower (difficulty the bug's Feral dice). If the bug does lose control they will not attempt to communicate with their master or obey their commands, but they will retain a sense of who is their friend and who is their foe. In most cases, the bug will simply flee until the danger has passed, but more violent bugs might attempt to fight the enemy off.

Unless a bug has some sort of empathic ability like the Butterfly, communication between man and bug isn't exactly rapid or clear. When a bug is attempting to tell something to a human, that human must make a test against Entomology (difficulty the bug's Animal dice) or either misunderstand the bug or simply fail to notice that the bug is attempting to tell

them something. When a human attempts to get their ideas across to a bug, they must make a test against Empathy (difficulty the bug's Animal dice) or suffer a likewise miscommunication.

# Being the Game Master

The Game Master is responsible for many things, not all of which are learned easily. The following advice should at least give you a good idea of how to go about running a game of **Dragonfly**. However, the numeral uno thing to remember about being a Game Master is that skill can only come with practice, practice, practice.

**SCENARIO CREATION:** Before each game session begins, the Game Master should have at least some vague idea of events that may transpire during play. They should have a number of related conflicts, characters, and other items of interest in mind that may be combined during play to create an engaging and exciting scenario. Not all Game Masters plan to even a similar extent: while one may simply be thinking about what could happen during the game, another may have five or ten pages of written notes when they come to the table. Neither way is intrinsically "better" than

the other: it is important that you, personally, as a Game Master, find what is most comfortable and fun and stick with it.

**ARBITRATION:** The Game Master is responsible for setting difficulty dice and modifiers for tasks that characters attempt in the game. There are really only two things to remember here: be fair, and protagonize. Be fair means don't assign a task difficulty dice disproportionate to how difficult the task actually is. The below table is given to refresh your memory. Protagonize means keep in mind that the other players' characters are the axis of the story, and should be treated as such. Don't do things for no other purpose than to foil or embarrass the characters and players, like require a roll to walk down some stairs without tripping. That's not fun for anybody.

After a resolution roll has been made, the outcome needs to be described. In many games this is the sole responsibility of the Game Master, but in **Dragonfly** the Game Master often only acts as a check and balance to whoever is narrating at the moment. On a test, the Game Master narrates failure and the player of the character making the test narrates success. On a contest, the player of the winning character has narration rights. After each roll of a conflict, regardless of success or failure, the player that made the roll may narrate. When a player other than the Game Master is narrating and adds in a detail that the Game Master deems inappropriate to the

mood of the game, they may put that detail to a vote. All but the narrating player and the Game Master may

Difficulty Dice Table	
TASK	DICE
Simple (jumping a 6' crevasse)	2
Tricky (following someone of average height through a crowded street)	3
Very Tricky (hacking into a well protected database)	4
Incredibly Difficult (tracking a bug through a desert sandstorm)	5

vote, and the Game Master breaks ties. If the detail is voted out, it is simply erased, and the player that narrated it may come up with a suitable replacement if they wish.

### **PORTRAI OF NON PLAIER CHARACTERS:**

None Player Characters, or NPCs to the lazy, include every character that appears in the game who is not controlled by a player other than the Game Master. NPCs include villains, rivals, friends, and contacts of the player's characters, bit players, bugs, and others. For more major NPCs the Game Master should attempt to give them a spark of individuality and personality. An interesting quirk or played up personality trait is often the easy route to a memorable NPC. However, don't go overboard: again, remember to protagonize. The player's characters, not the NPCs, are the stars of the show. If the players start to complain that they are being overshadowed by the NPCs, don't make excuses or argue. Instead, find out what you are doing that makes them feel this way, and for heaven's sake, stop bloody doing it!

One easy way to cut down on search and handling time when playing Dragonfly (or any game, for that matter) is to not bother rolling dice for the actions of NPCs. Just make up results that you think are logical. There are two exceptions to this: when the NPC is interacting with the players' characters, or when the players want you to roll.

**NO MTH:** No Myth is an abbreviation of No Myth of Creation, which in turn is jargon among game designers with way to much time on their hands for a technique whereby the setting is mostly blank, and in fact does not exist until someone brings it up. **Dragonfly** is meant to be run using this technique. How many continents does Thraxis have? You tell

me. Are the moons of Colossus united under a single government? Up to you. What's the name of the person in charge of Midway Station? Your call. Are there any other space stations? Good question.

Keeping track of your Arthra can get a bit confusing. It can be helpful to have a couple note cards with you. Label one "People," another "Places," and a third "Fluff." Whenever a setting element is invented by the Game Master or one of the other players, the Game Master should jot it down briefly on the appropriate card, along with a few words of description. A couple sessions in you should start having multiple cards in each category and even spin-off categories, such as "Technology" and "Valley Jungles of Terram."

**PACING:** Here's a piece of advice that dates back to the beginning of role-playing as a hobby: when things get slow, two guys with machine guns burst through the door. Come up with why later--the important thing is that the action should keep moving, stuff should continue happening, and no one should ever get bored.

Sometimes it is necessary that the players' characters split into multiple groups, thus forming a number of parallel scenes. When this happens, the Game Master should attempt to keep switching from one scene to another. They should look for the best opportunities to switch scenes--spots where the tension is high and a cliffhanger will be created--and just do it. If one group goes for too long, the other group is bound to get bored. However, the Game Master should attempt to stay with each group long enough for something interesting to happen: if there's nothing going on, what was the point of interrupting the other group's scene, right?

