



*The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
Seemed fervourless as I.*

--Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush"

Perfect is an RPG about committing crimes in an oppressive and unfeeling world. It is a game that delves into the criminal mind, as well as exploring the essence of humanity.

Designed and Written by:

*Joe McDonald*

Editing and Layout by:

*David Artman*

Artwork by:

*Johann de Venecia  
Bradley Bleeker  
Joe Slucher*



*an Inciteful Entertainment game.*

# Chapter One:

## Cadence

This chapter provides an outline of the world in which Perfect is played.

Cadence is a fictional country, but draws its inspirations from two major sources: The Victorian Era, and Dystopic Literature.

The country of Cadence holds many parallels to Victorian England, and was largely inspired by it. Coal factories and urbanization are fresh upon the world. Society is strictly regimented by social status, monetary influence, fashions and etiquette.

Now, take that whole setting and trap it inside a controlling and oppressive dystopia. The game is largely inspired by George Orwell's amazing book, *1984*. The setting pushes a cult of personality, as does Cadence. The conditionings from sources like *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange* provided a large basis of the criminal justice system in this world: simply arrest and reprogram criminals.

Other dystopic literature that this game draws upon includes *Fahrenheit 451*, *Brave New World* and *Handmaiden's Tale*. Although not dystopic literature, Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* has also played a significant role in inspiring this world. And finally, although itself not literature in the most common sense, the RPG *Paranoia* was a large influence on setting.

There are other large influences for the game, which had an impact on characters, game mechanics, narration and social contract. These inspirations will be discussed in other chapters.

## **Queen Abigail**

When Queen Abigail ascended to the throne, the country of Cadence rejoiced. Her father had been a slovenly and disgraceful ruler, and his gluttony and excess had sent the entire country on a downward slide. They put an immense amount of pressure on the young Queen Abigail, hoping that she would pull them out of this slump.

Queen Abigail was seen as virtuous, graceful and eloquent. She was too shy to provide any input into parliament, but the nation was content in letting parliament run itself for the time being. They were just glad to have a ruler who wasn't screwing things up royally.

Queen Abigail had been beaten as a child, and was afraid that getting close to others would always result in pain. She shied away from suitors, and locked herself away from the other members of the royal house.

As Queen Abigail grew into full maturity, she became even more reserved and timid. For a few years she spoke only in hushed whispers, but by the age of twenty-one she'd stopped speaking altogether. Parliament stopped expecting her presence, as she slowly stopped showing up.

She was praised for putting faith in Parliament, and in letting the nation run itself. The idea that wisdom lay in silence became very popular. People started emulating this behaviour, speaking to others less and less, and becoming more passive in their everyday lives.

The more Queen Abigail was praised, the more insecure she became. She was constantly searching for the approval of her subjects, and was scared that they might fall into criticism of her. A blemish on her praise would have been a catastrophic blow to Abigail.

Afraid that she might break whatever she laid her hands on, she refused to touch anything in public. She tied her hands up in bound gloves, and only took them off when alone in her own house.

Her residence was often visited by members of the church or parliament, who would talk at great length to Abigail about their personal achievements. They were always trying to earn recognition from her, some form of approval. There were two men who visited her more than others: Thomas Tellington, of the parliament; and, William Olsen, of the church.



At the young age of thirty-one, she came down with an unknown ailment. Doctors were puzzled by her condition, and because Abigail refused to verbalize her symptoms or allow them to examine her, they couldn't pinpoint it. She retreated to what would become her deathbed.

After a month, she broke her oath of silence only once, speaking to Thomas Tellington and William Olsen: "Make everyone just like me, and don't allow this to ever change."



*Queen Abigail.*

## **The Gailists**

Parliament buzzed with tension. Tellington had returned to parliament with amazing news: The Queen had spoken for the first time in ten years. She had given them their first order since she had ascended to the throne.

Groups appeared before her, trying to delve deeper into her command. She refused to speak another word. Months went by, and people weren't sure how best to interpret her words.

A group developed within parliament. This group was single-minded, harsh, and commanding. They believed that Queen Abigail's requests should be ingrained in law. They set out an agenda of laws that would basically confine people into a lifestyle that they believed Abigail would approve of.

The Gailists, as they were known, immediately gained the support of most of parliament, if for no reason but that they were decisive and exacting. Parliament was soon run by the Gailists.

They proposed a self-governed system, which was legally unable to adapt or evolve. It would be a stagnant system, and it would preserve Abigail's vision forever. They encoded status into law, and declared that citizens would not be able to climb to certain statuses without voluntarily adopting certain codes of behaviour.

The leader of the Gailists brought the bill declaring the completely revolutionary new government system before Abigail. She refused to take her hands out of their bound gloves, and break her oath not to touch anything. All she would do was nod. She died shortly after the Gailist left to report her satisfaction with the bill.

Doctors say Abigail died with a smile on her face.

The bill was invoked the following day.

## **The Church of Abigail**

In the eyes of most of Cadence, Abigail was nothing short of pure and perfect. She had delivered an entire nation, and showed them the strength of silence.

When William Olsen returned from his visit to Abigail, on the day of her command, he knew exactly what had to be done. This whole business of God and righteous action had to die, immediately. There would be a new deity; the church would kneel before a new face. That face would be Abigail's.

The Church of Abigail was founded, praising her glory. Olsen worked with Tellington very closely to ensure that membership with the new church would be mandatory of all citizens. Failure to attend mass would be considered a criminal act.

With everything in place for the Church of Abigail, all that remained was her final passing away. The day after she died, the Gailist bill was enacted. The Church of Abigail became Cadence's official religion within the week.

The pastor will often focus his sermons around Abigail's glory, how her reign changed Cadence for ever, or the sins of past generations and of her father.

Other sermons might be more directly to the immediate congregation, inspiring them to be more passive and accepting, or to speak less and listen more.

Mass is scheduled at different times for different Status groups, in an attempt to preserve the purity of the upper classes.

The Church has a few commandments and guidelines they put extreme faith in:

- Silence is stronger than speech.
- Sadness preserves us.
- Superiors must be trusted.

## Daily Life Under Gailism

By limiting the rights of citizens, Gailism has protected their purity and sanctity. Everything the Gailist system does is benevolent and beautiful.

At least, that's what you have been told. The truth is, Gailism is a system of oppression and control. The Gailists have made conformity the only possible venue for climbing higher.

Laws are constrictive and stifling – bordering on ridiculous in some cases. They make it near impossible to feel anything substantial without committing some crime or another.

Displays of affection, love and physical intimacy are all illegal outside of wedlock. It is expected that the first time a couple will hold hands is at the altar.

As well as laws, citizens are confronted by freedoms: contractual impositions that people actually take upon themselves. Although they are presented in a positive and enabling light, the average freedom has a crippling impact on a person.

The fashions, the laws, and the societal structure are intentionally designed to be constrictive and oppressive: exactly as Tellington believed Abigail would have wanted.



*A decent gentleman of the Gailist period.*



## **The Inspectors**

The Inspectors are the Gailist equivalent of a police officer. Unlike members of certain Statuses, they have access into every single building, every single assembly, and every single scheduled mass.

Their job is to watch for infractions, and watch for citizens who are acting in an improper and criminal fashion. If a citizen looks suspicious, they are allowed to take that citizen in for questioning and interrogation. If a citizen is caught in the act of breaking a law, they are allowed to take that citizen in for mental re-conditioning and re-programming.

Inspectors are the only people legally allowed to wear the colour black in all of Cadence, and thus have a very iconic image. The black suit, cane and bowler hat are unmistakeable, and can be immediately picked out in a crowd.

All citizens, even the law abiding ones, live in constant fear of the Inspectors. They are cold, unfeeling, and merciless. Citizens will turn each other in at a moment's notice, because withholding information is a crime unto itself.

No one is positive about how a citizen becomes an Inspector. Some assume that you are born into a line of Inspectors. Others believe that Inspectors are recruited from prospective civilians. Still others believe that Inspectors are simply criminals who were caught and re-conditioned so many times that their entire personality has been written over.

An Inspector will usually refrain from physical contact and violence at all expenses. Their power lies in command and suggestion, not in force or aggression.

## Between Men and Women

The Gailists made their opinions on the matter very clear from the beginning: love is a vile, corrupt thing. It is to be avoided at all costs.

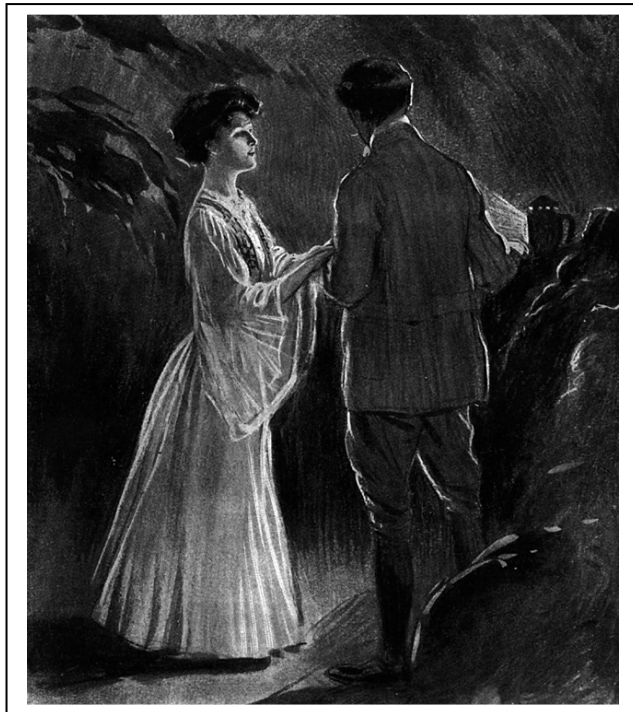
It is illegal to hold a romantic or intimate relationship outside of a legally accepted marriage. Physical intimacy outside of a legally accepted marriage is reason for arrest.

Married couples should never display love or honesty in front of others. The Gailists advise that marriage partners should ignore each other while in the presence of others.

Some still speak of the forbidden realm of love, in hushed whispers. Roses are considered a taboo object, because of the association with romance. Placing a rose on someone's doorstep is enough to warrant you arrest, on the grounds of romantic relationship.

Some would even break the law to taste forbidden love, stealing away in the night in a fit of passion.

These people are vile and sinful, and must be reported and arrested.



*Two citizens, who have fallen into the repulsive state of “affection” and “love”.*

## Fashions

Fashion is heavily controlled by the Gailist government, and many rules are ingrained in law.

It is against the law for citizens to wear any colour other than white, grey, and brown. Clothing in any other colour or shade leaves a citizen subject to arrest.

The only except to the colour rule is the government-issued vests and bodices, colour-coded to reflect a citizen's status.



You are required to wear your vest or bodice at all times. Failure to comply leaves a citizen subject to arrest.

Men are required to wear a full suit while in public. Women are required to wear a dress that covers their arms and doesn't leave any skin bare from their collarbone to their ankles.

Fashions are constrictive, but also extravagant. Women's dresses are often frilly and intricately designed. Men's suits are immaculate and sharply stitched.

## **Marginals**

Cadence is an island – albeit a large one. Centuries ago, large stone walls were built just in from the coastline, protecting citizens from sea raiders. When the Gailists came into power, they set these stone walls as the Regulated Boundaries of their country.

Anything that lay outside these boundaries lay outside their rule. This includes the sailors that were constantly sailing between Cadence and other lands, bringing in essential imports.

Sailors, and people in similar positions, were granted status in Cadence as “Marginal Citizens”. They legally controlled the land outside of Cadence’s Regulated Boundaries, and in exchange were contracted to provide essential goods and imports to Cadence.

These Marginals sometimes act like proper citizens would, emulating the behaviors that occur inside the boundaries. Others act like vagabond drifters, drinking and carousing like fiends whenever they land.

Some Marginals will organize and hold large country fairs when they dock, gambling and drinking and entertaining themselves in a raucous fashion.

Others will sometimes attempt to breach the walls of the Regulated Boundary, and then reach out to the real citizens of Cadence, for one reason or another.

Only citizens with the proper certifications are allowed to consort with Marginals – for all other citizens, it is illegal to do so.



## **Laws**

Below are some of the laws of the Gailist world. These are but a jumping off point for creating laws in your own game, though – feel free to collaboratively invent new laws as you play.

### **Respect**

Behavior unbecoming of a Gailist will not be tolerated.

Gailists will not refuse an inspector's orders.

Gailists will not speak poorly of our glorious Queen Abigail, the Final Monarch.

### **Relational Laws**

Love may not be expressed except within the confines of a legally sanctioned marriage.

Married couples may not come into physical contact in public.

Colored flowers may not be possessed by anyone but a Citizen First Class.

Kissing is illegal.

Romantic relations may not occur outside of one's home.

### **Fashion**

Government-issued status markers must be visible at all times.

Colored clothing will not be tolerated.

All Freedom markers must be worn at all times.

Black may not be worn by anyone but an Inspector.

Colored makeup will not be tolerated.

Clothing that is inappropriately fashioned will not be tolerated.

Clothing that contains rips or patches may not be worn.

Higher status citizens may not wear clothing that is dirty or unkempt.

### **Aggression**

Physical contact will not be tolerated.

Murder will not be tolerated.

Citizens may not raise their voice towards someone of higher status.

### **Time**

Tardiness to work or citizen duties will not be tolerated.

Citizens may not be out past the curfew applicable to their status.

Citizens will spend at least one hour of every day in prayer.

### **Organizations**

You may not enter an organization building or assembly without certification.

Membership in a blacklisted organization will not be tolerated.

An Inspector must be present during all organization functions.

Organizations may not promote anti-Gailist beliefs.

Only church organizations may assemble on Sundays.

All organization memberships will be declared to the government.

### **Church**

All citizens will follow the Church of Abigail.

Blasphemous beliefs will not be tolerated.

All citizens must attend mass during the scheduled times for their status.

Speaking during a pastor's sermon will not be tolerated.

**Outsiders**

Citizens may not leave Regulated Boundaries.  
Citizens may not associate with foreigners.  
Citizens may not associate with Marginals without certification.  
Citizens may not associate with exiles.

**Substances**

Citizens may not possess or use alcohol unless they are Crude Citizen.  
Citizens may not possess or use opium unless they are Citizen First Class.  
Citizens may not eat meat on even days.  
Citizens may not eat on Sundays.

**Etiquette**

Male citizens chewing food in the presence of a lady will not be tolerated.  
No part of the body from the collarbone to the ankle should be displayed in public.  
Lewd gesturing will not be tolerated.  
Singing in public will not be tolerated.  
Dancing in public will not be tolerated.  
Gambling is illegal.

**Art**

Blacklisted art and devices will not be tolerated.  
Creating art without license is illegal.  
Art which depicts anti-Gailist images will not be tolerated.  
Expressing an opinion about art is illegal.

**Property**

Theft will not be tolerated.  
Theft against the government will be harshly dealt with.  
Trespassing will not be tolerated.  
Destruction of public or private property will not be tolerated.  
Houses cannot be painted colours that are disallowed for your status.

# Chapter Two:

## Character Overview

The characters in *Perfect* are criminals.

This will mean something entirely different for every character. The first thing is to realize is that a lot of things we take for granted in *our world* are considered crimes under the Gailist government in Cadence.

Relationships, and love, are illegal outside of wedlock. Imagine taking any piece of Victorian literature, and pulling out elements of romance. Now imagine how much this would simply suck. Imagine being willing to break the law to get that romance back.

Think about how information and art is blacklisted in *Fahrenheit 451*, or in the movie *Equilibrium*. Would you be willing to break the law in order to preserve the past? Is art worth dying for?

In a world where the soul is stifled, sometimes people feel empty. They use violence as a way to connect with their emotions, and to affirm their actual values. Think about Alex in the movie *Clockwork Orange*, or pretty much any character in Chuck Palahniuk's book *Fight Club*.

Sometimes people become criminals in an attempt to do the right thing. Characters like *The Punisher* come to mind, but so do people like Nelson Mandela.

## **Character Overview**

In Perfect, you play a character who cannot bring himself or herself to accept the Gailist system of law. You play someone who begins breaking the law, for one reason or another.

This might start out subtly, with a broken curfew or a skipped duty. But it escalates. It becomes a recurring thing, maybe even an addiction.

You play someone that the Inspectors want to catch, and want to put in a dark interrogation room. Inspectors exist because vile creatures like you exist.

In Perfect, players take turns setting scenes. These scenes are narrated between player and GM. Each and every scene will involve a crime, and end in what is mechanically known as a Crime Cycle.

The crime you commit is always pulled off successfully – you won't have to test to see if you can break into a building, steal something, etc. What you will have to test are the after-effects and repercussions.

Every test you make will be to determine one of two things: Whether you get caught committing a crime, and what effect your punishment has on you.

This section outlines all the elements of a character, and how they work. This is followed by a section on the mechanics of the game and how tests are made.

Once character and mechanics are established, there is a section on building and developing characters.



## Status

Status is legally documented and recorded. The government issues colour coded vests and bodices, to mark what your standing and status are.

Your status determines how many Freedoms you are obligated to take up. Freedoms are the Gailist way of “coming closer to Abigail”. The higher your status, the more Freedoms you are forced to take on. Your status also denotes what organizations you may be involved in, and when your mass is held.

### Example – Status

#### **Lesser Citizen**

Colour code: Red

Freedoms: 2

## Archetypes

Each character picks one to three archetypes. Archetypes are categorizations that help to describe your character’s actions, at a glance. Keep in mind that these are only broad brushstrokes. They don’t define your character; they just act as guidelines.

## Intolerance

Each character has certain things that they just simply *cannot* deal with rationally. If they are brought into contact with that thing, they will lash out at it. Intolerances represent just that.

Intolerances are statements that begin with “I cannot tolerate...”

Players cannot narrate their character’s Intolerances into the scene, in any way. The GM is the only person at the table who can narrate an Intolerance in. They may do this once a session to each player.

When an Intolerance is narrated into a scene, the player is forced to commit a crime against that Intolerance, in some way. The stakes are ramped up in that Crime Cycle, and the test becomes a lot harder too – but the Payout is bigger.

### Example – Archetype and Intolerance

#### **Archivist / Idealist**

*I cannot tolerate seeing artwork destroyed.*

## Freedoms

Freedoms are contractual laws you sign to, in order to gain more standing in society.

Freedoms were instated by the Gailists as a way to make citizens become more like Abigail. Each freedom represents another element of Abigail's personality and customs.

Freedoms have both a gain and an imposition.

Breaking a freedom means you pay a certain price. This is represented by the freedom's Repercussion.

### Example – Freedom

#### **Freedom of Passage**

Representation: bound gloves

Imposition: you cannot touch anything in public.

Gain: Inspectors cannot ask to see your papers.

Repercussion: GM gains 1 point for each object you touch.

## Aspects

Every character has certain strengths they can draw upon in times of need. Some are memories and images that give them courage and strength. Some are tactics and tricks they can employ when down to the wire.

Aspects are things that your character can lean on during tests. They can be really direct like “run away” or “act normal”, or they can be a bit more abstract like “image of my childhood” or “was abused as a child”.

Invoking an Aspect during a test gives you a Gain toward that test. Succeeding at that test means you also suffer the Aspect's Fallout. Aspects are, in ways, double edged swords.

### Examples – Aspects

#### **An image of father playing chess.**

Gain: *You may re-roll your die*

Fallout: *On a die result of 1 or 2, lose your Payout.*

#### **Pretend like nothing's wrong.**

Gain: *Remove Fear points bid so far.*

Fallout: *GM banks 3 points for future scenes.*

## Trusts

Trusts function the same way as Aspects do in game, but represent connections your character makes with the other characters in the game.

The way that Trusts differ from Aspects is how they are created. Aspects are created by a single player for himself or herself.

Trusts are created by two players, and then put on each other's character sheets. They are created as a result of the two characters interacting, committing crimes together.

Trusts are always created as an exchange.

### Example – Trusts

#### **Saved his life once**

Person: Constance.

You may re-roll your die if its lower than the GM's.

On a die result of 1 you lose your Payout.

#### **A lover who would die for you**

Person: Amelia.

You may roll two dice and pick the highest one.

You can't add numerical bonuses to your next die roll.

## Conditionings

Characters don't start the game with any Conditionings. These are added to the character when a character is taken in for re-programming.

Conditioning is a rigorous process of mental control, carried out by Inspectors when a person is caught committing a crime.

Players can't narrate any actions that contradict a Conditioning they have. There is no way to circumvent a Conditioning without removing it from the character sheet altogether.

Conditionings are impositions on the character, which are tied to crimes they have committed.

### Example – Conditioning

#### **I will not touch flowers.**

Scope: Two.

# Chapter Three:

## Committing Crimes

The mechanics of Perfect were designed with some very specific goals and concepts in mind.

First of all, the dangers of committing a crime are great – both in colour and in mechanics. Committing a crime meant that you would face significant danger, as far as societal response and the inspectors went.

Any actions you commit in Perfect will automatically succeed. What you test for is to determine whether those societal responses and dangers catch up to you afterwards. The game's test mechanics determine whether you are found to be suspicious and/or caught in the act of crime; and, if you are caught or turned in, what the repercussions are.



*A citizen's criminal acts have caught up with him, and an Inspector pays him a visit.*



## **The Mechanics of Committing Crimes**

In Perfect, you only test for an action if you are committing a criminal activity.

There are four different tests, and together they create what is mechanically referred to as a Crime Cycle.

The four tests are:

- **Calm Test** – a test to see whether you keep your cool, act normal, and don't let others in on the fact that you are up to something. Failing this test means you are reported for acting suspiciously and taken in for interrogation by the Inspectors.
- **Discovery Test** – a test to see if you are caught red handed by the Inspectors, as you commit the crime. Failing this test means you are taken into Conditioning by the Inspectors.
- **Interrogation** – This test is only taken if you fail your Calm test and are subsequently taken into interrogation. This is a test to see if the Inspectors can uncover certain images and memories you have hidden deep down, and break your spirits.
- **Conditioning** – This test is only taken if you fail your Discovery test and are subsequently taken into Conditioning. This is a test to see if the Inspectors can program into your head certain commandments and conditionings.

## **How a Test Works**

All four tests follow the same basic structure, but lead to different effects.

The GM has two different Point pools: Inspector Points, and Fear Points. Depending on what test is occurring, the GM will pit one of the two Point pools against the player.

The GM opens by bidding any amount of points from the appropriate Pool.

Then the player may invoke an Aspect or Trust.

It goes back and forth between the GM bidding points and the player invoking one Aspect or Trust.

If either side passes on their turn, they are considered finished for the rest of the bidding/invoking process.

Once both sides have passed and are thus finished, each side rolls a six-sided die. The GM adds to his or her die the amount of points bid. The player adds to his or her die any numerical bonuses granted from Aspects and Trusts.

The winner of the test is the person with the highest end score. Tie goes to the GM. If the player wins the test, then he or she suffers the Fallouts for each Aspect and Trust invoked.

## How a Crime Cycle Works: Setting Up the Crime

Cycle Cycle refers to a complete cycle in the resolution system.

During narration of a scene, a character decides to carry out a crime. The player outlines the intent, and the crime.

If inspiration or clarification on laws is needed, there is a list of Gailist laws on Page XX which can be referred to.

Both parties decide how much is at stake for this crime: how much is at stake for the character, for the game world, and for the storyline.

Both player and GM pick a number from 1-10. Add the two numbers together to get a number between 2 and 20. This number is the Tension Level.

Again, the list of laws on Page XX can be referred to for a little guidance on setting Tension Levels, if needed.

The GM gets a number of Points equal to the Tension Level. He or she gets to divide these points between the two point pools: Inspector Points, and Fear Points.

The player gets to set a Payout for committing the crime, with a level equal to the Tension Level. A Payout is a mechanical gain for the test. The Payout is chosen from a chart, which is on Page XX.

The Payout effect is chosen when Tension Level is set, but its effect doesn't apply until after the Crime Cycle is completed.

### Example – Setting Tension for a Crime

#### **Crime in question: Breaking into the Mayor's House.**

The player decides to break into the Mayor's house, and steal an antique vase he sees.

The player sets Tension Level at 5, the GM sets it at 6.

The GM thus gets 11 points to divide between Fear and Inspector.

The player selects a Payout of level 11 (10+). This Payout is selected now, but comes into play after the Crime Cycle.

## How a Crime Cycle Works: Running the Tests

The GM has a limited amount of Inspector and Fear points, to spend throughout the entire test cycle. These points do not refresh – spending points on a Discovery test means that the GM doesn't have them for subsequent tests or cycles.

The player can, however, invoke tools once per test. Invoking a Trust on a test still allows you to invoke it in subsequent tests.

Two tests are automatically taken in each Crime Cycle: Calm tests and Discovery tests.

Depending on the results for those two, the player may have to take Interrogation and Conditioning tests.

The four tests are detailed on the following pages, as well as the effects of winning and losing those tests.

If the GM has any Inspector or Fear points left over after the entire test cycle, these points are banked as “generic points”. (ie, both Fear and Inspector points are simply pooled together, and then re-assigned during the next Crime Cycle).



### **Calm Test (automatically taken)**

The Gailist system doesn't simply rely on Inspectors to police communities and people. It also relies on suspicions between neighbours, and a willingness to rat out even your family and friends.

A Calm test determines whether you give off weird signals or people notice any suspicious behaviour on your part. If they do, they will report you – even if they have no proof – and Inspectors will take you in for Interrogation.

Aspects that are the most logical to invoke during this test are ones that inspire courage, and help the character to act calm and collected.

The character is up against his or her own fear – the GM Fear Points used in this test represent an abstract worry that causes the character to give off nervous signals to others.

GM can use the following point pool: Fear

Player wins test: Player suffers Fallout for all Aspects and Trusts used.

Player loses test: Player must enter an Interrogation test.

Whoever wins this test gets to narrate how the character either acted smooth, or made little blunders or slip ups around neighbours and Inspectors.

### **Discovery Test (automatically taken)**

Inspectors loom everywhere: In your place of work, at street corners, standing outside your house. They watch you and wait for you to slip up.

A Discovery test determines whether an Inspector witnesses you committing the crime, and whether he catches you and takes you in for Conditioning, a rigorous process of brainwashing and re-programming.

The GM uses Inspector Points in this test.

GM can use the following point pool:  
Inspector.

Player wins test: Player suffers Fallout for all Aspects and Trusts used.

Player loses test: Player must enter a Conditioning test.

Whoever wins this test gets to narrate either the escape or capture.

If the player was successful, the player can narrate a daring chase with Inspectors in tow, or a quiet crime committed without incident. In the end, the player just has to escape.

If the GM was successful, the GM can narrate the Inspectors watching the whole crime take place, or stumbling across it. In the end, the player just has to be caught and apprehended.



## **Interrogation Test (triggered)**

When someone acts suspicious, it is common belief that they are guilty of at least something. Even if the Inspectors can't expose a specific crime during interrogation, they can weaken a person's rebellious nature and belief in themselves.

An Interrogation test determines whether the Inspectors can uncover some of a character's triggers – what makes him or her tick. If they can do that, then they can break those things down systematically.

The character must dodge questions, lie, accuse others of their own crimes, and basically give the illusion of innocence. The Aspects they invoke would logically involve this behaviour, or rationalize it.

More than the inspectors, what the character is really up against is his or her own fear. The terror of being grilled in a dim, dank room can cause people to crack quite easily. The GM uses Fear Points in this test.

GM can use the following point pool: Fear.

Player wins test: Player suffers Fallout for all Aspects and Trusts used.

Player loses test -

The GM selects one or more Aspect Fallouts, which have a combined level equal to half the Tension Level (rounded down).

The GM attaches these Fallouts to the character's Aspects.

In this way, multiple Fallouts can be attached to a single Aspect.

Whoever wins this test gets to narrate the interrogation, how the Aspects and Trusts were put into action, and how the character held up during the questioning.

They can narrate exposing or concealing certain secrets the character holds, or in exposing certain elements of the society.



## **Conditioning Test (triggered)**

Inspectors prefer not to take a crime to court when someone is caught. A trial suggests the possibility of innocence. They prefer to deal with the matter directly, and discreetly. Conditionings are held in the backrooms of the feared Inspection Yard buildings, which are littered all across the cities and towns. They are dark, cold, and eerily sterile.

A Conditioning test determines whether you can resist their hypnosis, mental control, brainwashing, and fear tactics.

It makes sense to invoke Aspects that might instil bravery in the character, or help them block out the pressures of the programming.

The character is up against the Inspectors – harsh, unfeeling, imposing. They tower over you, and they talk in circles that leave you confused and questioning yourself. The GM draws from the Inspector Point pool.

GM can use the following point pool: Inspector

Player wins test: Player suffers Fallout for all Aspects and Trusts used.

Player loses test: A Conditioning is set, with Scope equal to the Tension Level for this crime cycle.

Details on how to create a Conditioning are found in the Character Creation chapter.

Whoever wins the test may narrate the process of the conditioning.

If the GM wins this test, he or she will often end the narration for this test by saying, “And after it is all over, you wake up in your own bed, with no recollection of this conditioning ever happening.”

### Example – A Complete Crime Cycle

One player, Thomas, is narrating a turn for his character, Jacob Renault. He narrates that Jacob Renault has fallen in love with a woman, and decides to steal a red rose and leave it at her doorstep. The GM inquires as to where he will find this rose, and Jacob says that he will steal it from the Baron's family garden.

The Tension for the crime cycle is set. The GM sets it at 6 because it is of little significance to most of the world, but Thomas sets it at 10 for Jacob – this is a matter of the heart!

The GM divides his 16 blank points into: 10 Inspector, 6 Fear. Thomas chooses a Payout (from the 14+ category): Player may add to a Tool a Gain of Level 1, 2 or 3. This payout will be awarded after the entire crime cycle is finished.

The GM and Thomas decide it makes the most sense to test Discovery first: he will test for Discovery while picking the flower, and Calm the next day, when he sees the girl again at work.

The GM starts the Discovery test by bidding forward three Inspector Points.

Thomas invokes the Aspect "Stealthy"  
*Gain: On an even die result, gain +3.*  
*Fallout: GM banks 3 points for future scenes.*

The GM bids another point.

Thomas invokes the Aspect "Headstrong"  
*Gain: +2*  
*Fallout: On a die result of 1 you lose your Payout.*

Both sides roll, the GM gets 4 and Thomas gets 2.  
Because Thomas had an even roll, he gets a total of +5, totalling 7.  
Because the GM spent four points in total, he gets +4, totalling 8.

The GM wins, and thus Thomas will have to make a Conditioning test. The GM narrates an Inspector seeing Thomas with the red rose, and arresting him on his walk home.

Since Thomas lost the test, he doesn't suffer any Fallouts.

### Example – A Complete Crime Cycle, part two

The GM and Thomas discuss which test would logically come next. They decide that the Inspector would take him in for Conditioning that night, with the Calm test still being taken the next morning.

The GM starts by bidding 1 of his remaining 6 Inspector Points.

Thomas invokes “Headstrong” again.

*Gain: +2*

*Fallout: On a die result of 1 you lose your Payout.*

The GM bids another 1 point.

Thomas invokes “Remembers His Father’s Last Words”

*Gain: +3*

*Fallout: You don’t get a die roll during your next test.*

The GM banks 1 point.

Thomas invokes “Love is more important than laws”

*Gain: Remove Inspector Points bid so far.*

*Fallout: GM banks 4 points for future scenes.*

The GM’s previous 3 points are now washed away.

The GM bids his remaining 3 Inspector Points.

Both sides roll, the GM gets 6 and Thomas gets 3.

Thomas gets a total of +5, totalling 8.

Because the GM spent three points in total, he gets +3, totalling 9.

Since the GM won the Conditioning test, Thomas’ character now has a conditioning added to it, with a Scope in the 14+ category (because the Tension Level was 16).

The table decides that “I will not touch red things” is an appropriate Conditioning. Since the GM won, he narrates the Inspector relentlessly yelling at Jacob Renault.

To bridge to the next test, Thomas narrates Jacob waking up the next morning, not remembering a thing. He narrates Jacob going to work, and walking past the woman he dropped the rose to the night before.

The GM says, “Let’s test Calm to see if you start acting nervous.”

Example – A Complete Crime Cycle, part two

The GM bids 2 of his Fear Points.

Thomas invokes the Aspect “Stealthy”

*Gain: On an even die result, gain +3.*

*Fallout: GM banks 3 points for future scenes.*

The GM bids his final 4 Fear Points.

Thomas invokes “Remembers His Father’s Last Words”

*Gain: +3*

*Fallout: You don’t get a die roll during your next test this cycle.*

The GM says that he is completely out of points.

Thomas invokes “Headstrong”

*Gain: +2*

*Fallout: On a die result of 1 you lose your Payout.*

Both sides roll, the GM gets 4 and Thomas gets 5.

Thomas gets a total of +8, totalling 13.

Because the GM spent six points in total, he gets +6, totalling 10.

Because Thomas won, he narrates, detailing how Jacob walks past the woman he loved. He narrates how the conditioning removed any memory of the rose.

Because Thomas won, he suffers the Fallouts for his Aspects invoked:

*Fallout: GM banks 3 points for future scenes.*

*Fallout: You don’t get a die roll during your next test this cycle.*

*Fallout: On a die result of 1 you lose your Payout.*

Because he didn’t roll a 1, and there are no more tests this cycle, the only applicable Fallout is that the GM banks 3 points.

Thomas gets his Payout now, and adds it to his sheet.

## Breaking a Freedom

### Example – a Freedom

#### **Freedom of Thought**

*The government wants to protect your thoughts, and doesn't want to meddle in matters of your mind. However, they need an assurance that your thoughts will not poison the rest of the populace in order to grant you this right.*

Representation: Scarf tied across neck.

Gain: Cannot be Interrogated.

Imposition: Cannot speak.

Repercussions: GM sets both tension levels.

Take a look at the above Freedom.

The Gain is “cannot be Interrogated”, meaning that even if you fail a Calm test, there cannot be an Interrogation test.

Unlike the Gains on Aspects, a Freedom's Gain is constantly running.

The Imposition is the downside: what you need to live with in return for the Gain. A character with this Freedom cannot speak. Speaking is considered a criminal act for this character, and thus will trigger a crime cycle.

If the Imposition is “broken”, then two things happen. First of all, the Gain is considered null and void until the end of the scene/crime cycle.

Second, the Repercussion comes into effect. In this case, if the character speaks, then he or she enters a Crime Cycle where the GM sets both tension levels.

## **Partners in Crime**

Although it is scary trusting others in such a menacing and ominous world, you won't get far on your own.

Players play characters that will hopefully, throughout the game, become interconnected and supporting of each other. One way of doing this is through Collaborative Crimes.

The second is through Trusts, which can only be built immediately after a Collaborative Crime has taken place.

## **Collaborative Crimes**

Two characters may decide to commit the same crime.

The GM and the first player declare Tension Levels. The player sets their Payout, and the GM gets points equal to the Tension Level.

The GM and the second player then declare a separate Tension Level. The player sets their Payout, and the GM gets points equal to the second Tension Level.

The two players test Calm together – both of them invoking Aspects on the same Calm test. They also test Discovery together – again, invoking Aspects on the same test.

However, should they fail either of those tests, their Interrogations and Conditionings are tested separately.

### **Example – Collaborative Crime**

Thomas and Mike decide that their characters will join forces and both break into the Archives to liberate some blacklisted art.

Thomas sets Tension at 5, the GM sets it at 6. Thomas picks a Payout of level 11 (10+), and the GM banks 11 Points.

Mike sets Tension at 8, and GM sets it at 6. Mike picks a Payout of level 14 (14+), and the GM banks another 14 points.

They test Calm together, and pass.

They test Discovery together, and fail.

Thus, they each take a separate Conditioning test, with different Tension Levels should they fail the test.

## **Invoking an Intolerance**

Each character has an Intolerance on their sheet.

This Intolerance is something that the player cannot narrate into any scenes.

The GM, however, can narrate an Intolerance into a scene. This happens through a special Intolerance Scene.

When it would be the player's turn to narrate a scene, the GM can ask to create an Intolerance Scene. The player has the right to accept or refuse, but they will most likely accept – Intolerances are designed to create cool scenes out of!

Instead of the player setting the scene, the GM does. In any other scene the GM plays a backseat, reflexive role. In an Intolerance scene, he or she can frame and narrate as aggressively as they like.

The scene narrates in the Intolerance. After that, the player must choose how to commit a crime against it. The crime could be an immediate lashing out, or the player could say "I go home that day shaking, and that night I make plans to strike against it." The only rule is that the crime must attack the Intolerance this scene.

Each side automatically sets their Tension Level at 10.

On top of Payout, the player gets an additional bonus: The GM creates an Aspect for the player, and puts it on the player's character sheet. This Aspect is entirely free.

Then the GM and player enter the Crime Cycle as normal, except for one condition:

The player doesn't get to roll a die during this Crime Cycle. All four tests are taken without a die – only gaining a bonus through the Aspects and Trusts invoked.

Yeah, this is probably going to hurt. But look at the prize – a free Aspect!

# *Chapter Four:*

## *Character Creation*

### *and Evolution*

This chapter provides you with all the tools to create a character. There are a lot of ways one could attempt to optimize their character mechanically, but in the end the most important thing is to create a solid personality and flavour.

Your character will be your vehicle for creating a story, and that fact shouldn't leave your mind through any part of character creation.

It is important that the group collaboratively set a tone and locale for the game, and that your character match these guidelines to a degree. More information on collaboratively establishing tone can be found in upcoming chapters.



*Two citizens of Cadence.*



## **Character Creation**

We've gone over elements of a character, and how they interact during test cycles. Now we will see how characters are created, and how these individual character elements are constructed.

The first stage is to develop a character concept. Is this person a bitter old elder, or a young romantic? Does this person work with their hands, or with their mind?

Each player chooses his or her character's Status. It is easier for group cohesion if characters have the same Status, or are close in Status levels, but this isn't mandatory. Record the status on your character sheet.

Next select one to three archetypes. These are rough indications of what kind of character you are playing, and what potential your story might hold. If at any time you feel your archetypes aren't reflecting your character well, feel free to change them.

The Status that a character has determines how many Freedoms the character has. Select the appropriate amount of Freedoms, and record them on your character sheet.

Each player gets 5 Build Points, with which to create a character. Creating an Aspect costs 1 Build Point.

It is recommended that players save one or two of their Build Points, because they are also used in-game to develop Trusts. Trusts cannot be made during character creation – they can only be made after a Collaborative Crime has taken place.

Next, the player picks 2 certifications for his or her character. These can help flesh out the character's job or hobbies, or can reflect any other facet of the character you find suitable.

Finally, set an Intolerance.

Congratulations – after these steps you will have a finished character.

If you have some time – before other players finish their characters, between sessions, or during another player's scene – flesh out the character more. Sketch a profile, write a short synopsis of the character, or detail the character's wardrobe and outfit (always important in Perfect).

## **Status**

Citizens have their status and class legally documented.

The “Colour Code” is the colour of the vest or bodice you wear.

Freedoms states how many Freedoms you must select if you are a character of that particular class.

Crude Citizen

Colour Code: Brown

Freedoms: 0

Low Citizen

Colour Code: Purple

Freedoms: 1

Lesser Citizen

Colour Code: Red

Freedoms: 2

Common Citizen

Colour Code: Orange

Freedoms: 3

High Citizen

Colour Code: Yellow

Freedoms: 4

Citizen First Class

Colour Code: Gold

Freedoms: 5

## **Archetypes**

Choose one to three Archetypes, which reflect your character best.

Archetypes serve the purpose of letting others in on your character goals.

### **Anarchist**

*You commit crimes in an attempt to break down the system, and strip the law of its authority.*

### **Archivist**

*You commit theft and other crimes in an attempt to collect up remnants of the past, either hoarding them to yourself or redistributing them to their rightful owners.*

### **Hedonist**

*You commit crimes because you need to feel something more. You need the pain, the thrill, and the adrenalin of breaking the law.*

### **Idealist**

*You believe that conditions can change, and you commit crimes in an attempt to make the world a better place.*

### **Inquisitor**

*You commit crimes in an attempt to uncover the truth. The world is full of masks and convoluted lies, and you feel it is important to uncover them.*

### **Judge**

*Others have committed sins, and you carry out crimes as a way of distributing vigilante justice upon these people.*

### **Leader**

*You commit crimes as a way of taking control of the situation, and gaining the confidence of others around you.*

### **Romantic**

*You commit the most noble crime of all: love. You believe that love is something worth fighting for, and something worth dying for.*

### **Sadist**

*You watch others, learn their weaknesses, and you commit crimes against these people just to see them in pain and suffering.*

### **Vandal**

*You lash out at the world, destroying things simply because you don't like them. Your crimes are simple, violent, and destructive.*

## Freedoms

Freedoms are contractual obligations that citizens take on in order to climb to a higher Status. The Gailist government says that Freedoms are “an imposition on your life which is intended to bring you closer to the image of Abigail’s perfection.”

Freedoms have a Gain (a constantly running effect), an Imposition (a rule which you are expected to follow), and a Repercussion (the effect that happens if you break your Imposition). For a detailed look at how Freedoms work in the game, turn to Breaking a Freedom (Page X).

### Freedom of Thought

*The government wants to protect your thoughts, and doesn’t want to meddle in matters of your mind. However, they need an assurance that your thoughts will not poison the rest of the populace in order to grant you this right.*

Representation: Scarf tied across neck.

Gain: Cannot be Interrogated.

Imposition: Cannot speak.

Repercussions: both Tension levels set by GM.

### Freedom of Investigation

*The government welcomes help in policing efforts, and will award the Right to Question Citizens to those who volunteer themselves. However, the government realizes that friends and allies can affect the better judgement of a questioner, and cause them to leave out important information.*

*Inspectors closely monitor the relationships a questioner has, in order to ensure impartiality.*

Representation: Bowler.

Gain: You may request to see a citizen’s certifications, as if you had Inspector status.

Imposition: You cannot use Trusts.

Repercussions: GM gains 2 points for each Trust invoked.

#### Freedom of Practice

*The government wants to allow citizens as much inclusion in the church as possible. They are willing to allow you to attend mass even if your Status would bar you, provided you give a certain level of commitment to the church.*

Representation: Abigail profile brooch.

Gain: You may attend masses held outside Status, even if it requires cancelling duties.

Imposition: You must attend at least two masses daily.

Repercussions: Conditioning Scope set one level higher if related to church or mass.

#### Freedom of Privacy

*The government wants to respect your privacy, but recognizes that leaving people alone can lead to the sharing of hateful ideas and dangerous substances. By isolating a citizen from others, it becomes safe to allow that person privacy.*

Representation: Umbrella.

Gain: You have the right to ask an Inspector to leave any room you own.

Imposition: You may not invite people into a room you own.

Repercussions: Automatically fail Calm test.

#### Freedom of Assembly

*The government wants to open doors and allow you to participate in as many organizations as possible. However, certain organizations can become plagued with new and poisonous ideas, and if those ideas were to spread too far they could become dangerous. The government is willing to allow a citizen access to numerous organizations, provided that there are a few safeguards to protect the upper classes.*

Representation: A metallic certification card worn on a necklace.

Gain: A certification allowing access into any organization assembly.

Imposition: Cannot attend assemblies with citizens of a higher status.

Repercussions: Automatically fail Discovery test.

### Freedom of Creation

*The government wants artwork and culture to flourish through its reign, but artwork can sometimes instigate unwanted and unnecessary emotions. The process of blacklisting art is an extensive one, and a steady flow of new artwork would mean extensive work.*

*The solution was an obvious one: If a citizen guaranteed not to create any original works, in any medium, then that person could be licensed as an artist.*

Representation: steel bracelet

Imposition: Cannot create any physical object/document which is original.

Gain: Allowed to create artwork.

Repercussions: GM gains +3 to Conditioning test this scene.

### Freedom of Passage

*The government wants you to be able to roam freely, and witness the inner workings of the system for yourself. However, if the wrong citizen got their greasy fingers on certain equipment, they could wreak havoc upon it. With an assurance that you won't touch anything, you are free to travel anywhere.*

Representation: Bound gloves.

Gain: Inspectors cannot ask for your certifications.

Imposition: You cannot touch anything outside of your home.

Repercussions: GM gains 1 Point for each thing touched.

## Aspects

To create an Aspect, spend 1 Build Point.

Select any Gain from the Gain chart (located on the next page).

Note the Gain's level, and select a Fallout of an equal level.

Record a description of the Aspect, along with the Gain and Fallout.

Note that the only time that you can spend Build Points to create Aspects is during character generation. The only way you can create Trusts is by spending Build Points after a Collaborative Crime has been committed.

### Can You Give Me Some Examples of Descriptions?

Choosing a description can sometimes be the hardest part of designing an Aspect. Because Aspects are a large part of your character, you should have the descriptions reflect them in a meaningful way.

Creating images and memories that the character holds is often the most impacting and provocative way of doing this. Consider how much impact the following memories have:

- ♣ Father's dying breath.
- ♣ Mother being arrested.
- ♣ Queen Abigail's death.
- ♣ Being molested as a child.

Some personality traits also make very good Aspects. Try to avoid using very generic things like "strong", and instead make them more unique, like:

- ♣ Willing to die for love.
- ♣ Inhuman strength when fighting for his beliefs.
- ♣ Too stubborn to change.
- ♣ Hair-trigger temper.

Occasionally, when used properly, NPCs or other people (aside from other player characters) can work as Aspects. Think about how you could use:

- ♣ The librarian who lives on Weston St.

Occasionally, when used properly, physical objects can work as Aspects. Consider the following Aspects, and some sample uses they might have:

- ♣ A dark cloak
  - "I don my cloak, and make for a quick escape."
  - "I make a point of twirling my cloak, distracting the inspector."

## Gains for Aspects

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
Re-roll your die if it is a 2 or lower.	Gain +2.	You may re-roll GM die.	Gain +3.
Gain +1.	Instead of rolling a die, you may gain +4.	You may re-roll your die.	On an even die result, gain +4.
	Immediately end all bidding and invoking.	Instead of rolling a die, you may gain +6.	Remove the Inspector points bid so far.
	Re-roll your die if it is lower than the GM's		Remove the Fear points bid so far.
	On an even die result, gain +3.		You may re-roll either die.

## Fallouts for Aspects

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
No Fallout	GM gets +2 to all remaining tests this cycle.	GM banks 3 points for future scenes.	Lose one Aspect or Trust.
	You can't invoke this Tool again this test cycle.	If your die result is 5 or 6 you lose your Payout.	You can't add any numerical bonuses to your next die roll this cycle.
	If your die roll is a 5 or 6, the GM banks 3 points for future scenes.	If you roll a 5 or 6, permanently add a Level Two Fallout to a Tool.	GM banks 4 points for future scenes.
	If your die result is a 6, you lose one Aspect or Trust.	GM gets +3 to all remaining tests this cycle.	You don't get a die roll during your next test this cycle.
	If your die result is a 6 you lose your Payout.		Permanently add a Level Two Fallout to a Tool.



## **Certifications**

Certifications are basically membership cards that allow you entry into certain organizations, functions, buildings, and parts of the city.

There are nineteen certifications, and as a part of character creation you select two.

### **Teacher's Hegemony**

*No adult may enter a school unless they are a member of the Teacher's Hegemony or an Inspector. Hegemony meetings are a way for Inspectors to keep an eye on the individuals teaching the nation's youth.*

*It is rumoured that some join the hegemony in an attempt to influence the new generations with anti-Gailist messages of rebellion.*

Type: Organization membership

Access: May enter a school, may teach

### **Queen's Crucibles**

*These citizens have organized to help the Inspectors by monitoring their fellow citizens, and by helping distribute literature issued by the Inspection Yards.*

Type: Organization membership

Access: May enter Inspection Yard

### **Banker's Union**

*Only a Banker and an Inspector may enter a Bank Vault. Inspectors will regularly review Banker's records to confirm that the Banker's patrons are paying their full taxes. Bankers attend meetings to share investment tips and new banking services.*

*It is rumoured that some members of the banker's union will secretly plot heists and other ways to upset the monetary system.*

Type: Organization membership

Access: Bank Vaults

### **The Sentinels**

*In order to publish news in a newspaper in Cadence, a Journalist must be a member of The Sentinels. Inspectors attend Sentinels meetings to look for signs of dissent. Sentinels usually specialize in different sections of the paper: Fashion, Social Events, Marriages, Discourses on Etiquette, and Obituaries.*

Type: Organization membership

Access: Newspaper offices

**Hermetic Society**

*Doctors have a large body of knowledge and are very compassionate. These qualities are honoured and revered by Abigail and her followers. However, sometimes Doctors will stray from the flock by giving treatment to a citizen of too low a status. Inspectors use their meetings to discover those individuals.*

Type: Organization membership

Access: May act as a doctor

**Corpus Factum**

*In Cadence, fashion reigns supreme. The creators of new fashions have organized into a guild of Fashion designers called Corpus Factum. It is rumoured that Inspectors have encouraged the Corpus Factum to constantly be creating new designs in order to keep the citizens distracted. There are 5 design halls with factories in Cadence.*

Type: Organization membership

Access: Fashion factories, design halls and warehouses

**Queen's Honour Guard**

*A large society which is dedicated to the historical appreciation of Queen Abigail, the Final Monarch. The society reviews literature, blacklisting as necessary, as well as composing reports on the beauty of Abigail.*

*It is rumoured that some of the members are secretly looking for some sign that Abigail really didn't want the nightmare government that she left the world with.*

Type: organization membership

Access: exclusive Abigail shrines, original records of the Gailist movement and the Gailist Bill.

**Alliance of Purity**

*Dedicated to protesting the sins of love and romance, the Alliance of Purity (All-Pure) is often regarded with mixed feelings from citizens.*

*It is rumoured that some of the most romantic souls in all of Cadence are secretly members of the AL A, and use their membership as a way of sabotaging the organization.*

Type: organization membership

Access: Alliance of Purity media buildings.

Requirements: Cannot be married.

### **Archivist's Certification**

*Certified Archivists are allowed entrance into the Gailist Archives of Blacklisted Objects. These buildings are large, sprawling storehouses of confiscated and blacklisted items. It is rumoured that some certified Archivists will steal blacklisted items, re-releasing them into the public.*

Type: building access

Access: The Gailist Archives of Blacklisted Objects

### **Mercantile Exchange Certification**

*This ticket allows the bearer to sell goods. Storeowners and service providers must possess a Mercantile Exchange Certification in order to do business.*

Type: job certification / special rights.

Access: Allows the citizen to hold storefront, and sell goods.

### **Craftmason's Guild**

*Apart from the Mercantile Exchange Certification, these are the only characters that can enter mercantile warehouses. The Inspectors use the Guild to set prices across the nation. It is demanded that any artisan who employs more than two people must be a member of the Guild.*

Type: Organization membership

Access: Enter warehouses, control employees



*An Inspector checks to make sure this lady's Mercantile Exchange Certification is still valid.*

**Art Traders' Guild**

*Although inaccessible by the ignorant and unappreciative lower folk, the Art Traders' Guild is a great gift to the upper classes. It is a community of art enthusiasts, who share and trade artwork amongst each other.*

*Although never proven, some believe that the Art Traders' Guild is actually used by some of its members as a way of bartering illegal and blacklisted objects and artworks.*

*Inspectors heavily monitor the Guild for such occurrences.*

Type: organization membership

Access: art trading halls, organization assemblies

Requires: Common Citizen status or higher.

**Drinking Hall Membership**

*Although alcohol is banned for most citizens, it is still available for certain Crude Citizen applicants, who prove the value and difficulty of their work. This certification is awarded to the most deserving and needy candidates.*

Type: Building access / special rights

Access: Drinking halls, the right to drink alcohol

Requires: Crude Citizen status.

**Union of Crude Labourers**

*Any Crude Citizen with gainful employment will likely have this certification. This certifies that you are employed in a factory. You work in dank, claustrophobic conditions, usually creating textiles or building materials.*

Type: job certification.

Access: Factories.

Requires: Lesser Citizen status or lower.

**Abigail's Envoys**

*This ticket allows the bearer to consort with Foreigners who enter inside the regulated boundaries.*

*It is rumoured that some Foreign Ambassadors have actually attempted to flee Cadence, and run off with the foreigners to other lands.*

Type: special rights.

Access: Allows interaction with Foreigners.

**Governor's Ticket**

*This ticket qualifies a citizen to act as Governor for a district. The position of Governor holds nothing more substantial than symbolic power and status.*

Type: job certification.

Access: Allows the citizen to act as Governor.

Requires: High Citizen or Citizen First Class status.

**Merchant Marine's Ticket**

*This ticket allows the bearer to consort with Marginals – the members of society not held under regular citizen laws. The citizen is able to act as a distributor of imported goods to merchants.*

*It is rumoured that some traders actually get the notion that it would be wise to run off with these gypsy traders.*

Type: special rights.

Access: Allows interaction with Marginals.

**Concordance of Abigail**

*This ticket allows a citizen to assume the role of Pastor with the Church of Abigail. It allows the bearer to run sermons, as well as lead prayers in the name of the Final Monarch.*

Type: job certification.

Access: Allows the citizen to lead sermons in the Church.

Requires: Freedom of Practice.

**Order of the Cross of Abigail**

*Allows higher status citizens entry into the prestigious Social Halls. These halls are grandiose, elegant and outfitted in pompous splendour.*

Type: building access / organization membership

Access: Allows access into Social Halls

Requires: Common Citizen status or higher.

## Creating an Intolerance

You've seen how Intolerances are used, in special Intolerance Scenes.

Creating an Intolerance is as simple as simple could be.  
Create a sentence that starts with "I cannot tolerate".

Make it something that drives your character mad with rage (or envy, or loneliness, etc).

Remember that your Intolerance is something that you can, in no circumstances, narrate into a scene. Thus creating something like "I cannot tolerate men" is probably a bad idea, because you won't be able to narrate a scene involving even a single man in the picture.

## Some suggestions for Intolerances

I cannot tolerate cruelty to animals.  
I cannot tolerate disrespecting elders.  
I cannot tolerate sermons about how love is vile.  
I cannot tolerate the bakery on 5<sup>th</sup> and Penston St.  
I cannot tolerate the inspector who posts at Yale St.  
I cannot tolerate vulgar men.  
I cannot tolerate neighbours who hide secrets from me.



*A gentleman refuses to sit, because he simply cannot tolerate being patronized.*

## **Evolving your character during play**

There are ways that character sheets will change during play: through Payouts, through the repercussions of crime (Conditionings and new Fallouts), and through the creation of Trusts.

Payouts are the perceived benefits of committing a crime. A Payout represents what's in it for the character – what emotional or mental benefit there is.

During an Interrogation, inspectors attempt to uncover certain “unfavourable” elements of a citizen's personality. Every Aspect you have is an unfavourable element, in the eyes of inspectors.

Failing an Interrogation test means the Inspectors have uncovered an Aspect, and tried to beat it out of you. While never truly successful in beating it out of you, they manage to create some stigma around it – and this is represented by new Fallouts being attached.

During a Conditioning, the Inspectors will try to brainwash commands into your head. This is no exact science, and the art is far from perfected. As a result, the scope of their control is very limited, and it varies depending on the emotional attachment a citizen carries with his or her crime. Conditionings represent the effects of such a brainwashing.

## **Trusts**

Finally, Trusts are created between characters as the result of committing Collaborative Crimes together.

Once two characters have committed a Collaborative Crime together, they can opt to create a Trust. If they do, both players spend 1 Build Point. They each create a Trust, using the Trust Gains and Trust Fallouts in the same way they would creating an Aspect.

Once both players have completed creating their Trust, they exchange them. This means that player one creates a Trust which gets put on player two's character sheet, and vice versa.

## Payouts

To choose a Payout, simply select an effect from the far left column, and compare it to the crime's Tension Level to see how great the effect will be.

Possible Payouts, by Tension Level:

<b>Tension Level</b>	4 or higher	7 or higher	10 or higher	14 or higher	17 or higher
Player may remove a Conditioning with Scope...	1	1 or 2	1, 2 or 3	1, 2, 3 or 4.	No limit
Player may add to an Aspect a Gain of Level ...		1	1-2	1-3	1-4
Player may remove from an Aspect a Fallout of Level...			2	2-3	2-4
Create a new Aspect set at Level 2 or lower.			1	1	2
Player may gain this many new Build Points...				1	1

### Example – Selecting a Payout

Emily is committing a crime with a Tension Level of 12.

She selects the “Player may add to an Aspect a Gain of Level...”  
She looks under the “Tension Level 10 or Higher” row.

By selecting the appropriate row and column, she has selected the Payout “Player may add to an Aspect a Gain of Level 1-2.”



## Setting Conditionings

When a character fails a Conditioning test, that character is forced to adopt what is known as a Conditioning. A Conditioning is a commandment that the Inspectors have managed to lodge deep within a character's subconscious.

A character never realizes that they were conditioned, and there is no way to circumvent a Conditioning without removing it altogether.

The Conditioning is determined by collaborative agreement. Its Scope is limited by the crime's Tension Level.

Scope 4+	The conditioning affects a remote part of the character's life, or is associated with a fairly rare object.
Scope 7+	The conditioning sometimes affects the character, but never to any large effect.
Scope 10+	The conditioning affects the character on a semi-regular basis, but never to any great effect.
Scope 14+	The conditioning affects the character on a semi-regular basis, sometimes to great effect.
Scope 17+	The conditioning affects the character on a regular basis, sometimes to great effect.

### Examples – Different Conditioning Levels

**I will not steal red flowers.**

Scope: 4+

**I will not touch flowers.**

Scope: 7+

**I will not touch anything that is red.**

Scope: 10+

**I will not be in the same room as flowers.**

Scope 14+

**Red objects make me faint.**

Scope: 17+

Note that the above example is assuming the character doesn't have a red vest. The impact might change greatly if he or she did.

## Gains for Trusts

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
Re-roll your die if it is a 2 or lower.	You gain +2.	On an even die result, you gain +4.	You gain +3.
You gain +1.	You may re-roll your die if it is lower than the GM's	You may re-roll GM die.	You may re-roll a die.
On an even die result, you gain +2.	On an even die result, remove a Conditioning with Level lower than or equal to this crime's Tension Level.	If you and this Trust's Person are collaboratively committing a crime, you each get +3.	Forfeit your die on this test. The next test you make, add an extra die.
		You may invoke an Aspect from this Trust's Person's list.	You may roll two dice and pick the highest one.

## Fallouts for Trusts

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
No Fallout	You can't invoke this Tool again this test cycle.	GM banks 2 points for future scenes.	This Trust is removed.
	GM gets +1 to all remaining tests this cycle.	You cannot use Trusts again this test cycle.	You can't add any numerical bonuses to your next die roll.
	If the die roll is a 6, the GM banks 3 points for future scenes.	On a die result of 1 or 2 you lose your Payout.	GM banks 3 points for future scenes.
	On a die result of 1 you lose your Payout.	GM gets +2 to all remaining tests this cycle.	You don't get a die roll on your next test.
	If the original die roll is a 1, you lose one Build Point.		Permanently add a Level Two Fallout to a Tool.

# *Chapter Five:*

## *Setting Up and Running Perfect*

A really important facet of roleplaying games exists outside the game's setting, rules and colour; it exists around the game table, amongst players.

Perfect was created with a vision of how these elements of gaming would be addressed: through discussion and collaborative decision making. The set-up portion of *My Life With Master* was a source of inspiration, in this regard.

This chapter talks about how to encourage productive development and consensus decision making. The contents of the chapter draw strongly from manuals and workshop handouts that deal with facilitation, consensus-model decision making, conflict resolution, and active listening.

This chapter was written to help make sure as much fun as possible happens around the table – which means making sure everyone has equal footing and a way of providing real input.

## **Game Expectations and Tone**

Perfect can be played in a lot of different ways.

The game can have a very consistent storyline which players weave between their crimes and narration. Alternately, it can be played as a disconnected string of atrocities, which together provide an insight into the character.

The characters can be rebels and revolutionaries, who plot to expose the government in some way. Alternately, the characters can be out for nothing but their own self-interests.

The game can be set in the capital of Cadence, bustling with activity and people and smog. Alternately, it can take place in some small rural hamlet. It only has to take place somewhere where neighbours and inspectors do exist.

The characters can be of great note and rank, able to impact the social atmosphere of their town with a mere command. Alternately, they can be insignificant cogs in the Gailist system.

## **Using consensus to establish tone and expectations**

The best way to ensure a fun game is to make sure everyone gets real, legitimate input on what they want out of the game. There are a few models of decision making which don't really achieve that goal. Top-down decision making, in which the GM hands down a verdict, is one of them. Voting, where two players get to put down a third's idea, is another.

Consensus decision making is about reaching a *collective best*. Consensus utilizes agreement, discussion, compromise and creative alternatives to arrive at a final destination that everyone is excited about.

Consensus doesn't always mean reaching unanimity, but it does mean reaching a decision which everyone is in agreement with.

Granted, making this type of decision will take longer than one person simply *deciding* for the others. It will slow down the game's set-up time, and require more energy. In the end, though, the payback for such a decision-making process is well worth it.

## **How the GM can facilitate consensus**

The GM's role in Perfect is, above all else, a facilitator. He or she has the duty of bringing the players together to form a cohesive whole.

There are a few ways the GM can help make consensus decision making a more smooth and rewarding process for all involved.

- Make sure there is an appropriate amount of time to discuss issues like tone and setting. If you feel the session is pressed for time, consider planning out tone as a group beforehand – maybe meeting before the session or through a chat service online.
- Make sure everyone is in a productive, creative mood. If some people are in a crummy mood, consider playing a warm-up game or some other exercise that will get them into a more creative atmosphere.
- Encourage quieter members to voice their opinion. Ask “what do you think about that idea” if someone hasn’t said much yet.
- Be aware of feelings that arise and conflicts. If necessary, intervene in a polite and respectful manner. Either suggest a break to cool heads, or note the tension in the air. Don’t be afraid to say “I feel like you guys are being really hostile to each other.”
- If addressing players about concerns that arise, use as many “I statements” as possible. Your feelings cannot be wrong, whereas your assertions and assumptions can.
- Realize that conflict shouldn’t always be avoided. People are often the most stubborn about the issues that matter most to them. Don’t attempt to block off certain conversations simply because people are getting riled up – that will only cause the same topic to resurface later. Instead, attempt to mediate and keep emotions in check while the conversation is going on.
- Sometimes consensus will simply fail. The players and yourself will not be able to reach a collaborative solution. If this is the case, it does fall to the GM to lay down the law. Say “since we can’t decide together, we’re going to do it this way. Are there any serious objections, or can we move on?”

## Duties of the GM

It is important to be very clear on the GM's role in Perfect, as it is a very specialized and focused one. The GM doesn't control the story, as is the case in some games; the GM doesn't control any elements of the game, really. The GM's duties in Perfect are:

- Ask questions, and interact with the player, to create a more interesting and provocative narrative.

Try asking questions like, "Why would he do that?" or, "How does he pull that off?" Don't contest what the players are saying, but instead help them explain it in a more complete way. Use questions that get to the heart of the matter, finding out motives and mindset.

### Example – Asking questions

**Tom:** He picks up a blacklisted book about Queen Abigail's father, and heads towards the exit.  
**GM:** Why *that* book? Why does he care about her father?  
**Tom:** Well, for some time he's struggled with whether or not Abigail ever meant to instil such a government upon her people.  
**GM:** Cool! So how does the father tie into that?  
**Tom:** Well, if my character can get some insight into her upbringing, he might be able to understand more about her. You get it?  
**GM:** Yeah. Is he looking for any specific details about the king?  
**Tom:** Not really. He just has this feeling in his gut about the book.

- Help the player move narration forward, and provide resources to create a cool scene.

When a player is having trouble moving the scene forward, the GM is someone who can help by introducing new elements into the scene, extrapolating on what exists in the world, and providing hooks and prompts.

This must be done reflexively, as a way to help put players back in the driver's seat – it shouldn't take away from players, interrupt or derail them, or put characters in situations that they wouldn't themselves enter.

NPCs can be introduced into a scene by the GM, as a way of stimulating dialogue and creating new possibilities for the scene.

- Root the player's ideas in the context of the setting and game tone.

By narrating NPCs (especially inspectors and those suspicious, tattling neighbours) the GM can help provide flavour and colour, keeping the scene rooted firmly in the genre and setting.

The GM should never say, "that's out of genre," or, "that totally doesn't fit the tone of the game we established." Instead, the GM should ask *how* the narration/crime *do* fit the setting, genre, tone and character.

- Facilitate group interaction and decision making.

The GM plays the role of facilitator at the gaming table: it is his or her duty to make sure people are heard, that their ideas are properly understood and taken in, and that discussion moves forward and doesn't get derailed.

One facet of this is determining turn order, and who gets to narrate the next scene. Sometimes this will be a simple and straightforward task, but sometimes there will be several factors to consider: attention levels, desire to get involved and certain people being left out. Make sure that the person who yells the loudest isn't always the person who gets the next scene.

Another important element of group interaction in Perfect is allowing players to have input into each other's scenes – they should be able to ask questions and provide suggestions, but not take control. The GM should help to keep this process going, inviting people to give input, but letting them know if they are going about it in the wrong way.

Finally, the players can interact through Collaborative Crimes. Collaborative Crimes get more people in on the immediate action, and can be a great tool for keeping the group involved. The GM can suggest Collaborative Crime Cycles by simply asking, "are there any other characters you want to bring into this scene?" Phrasing the question like that puts the idea on the table, without forcing it upon anyone.

- Playing opposing forces during Crime Cycle tests.

The GM gets points from Tension Level in order to oppose players, and make sure they never get to a place where they can simply overcome the law.

Use your points strategically – if one player becomes overpowered, use points saved over a few scenes in order to rectify this problem. Your points are the players' opposition, and they are also a balancing force if used properly.

## Watching Vibes

Sometimes players can get annoyed, restless or disconnected during a play session. They may start distracting play or being unresponsive when it becomes their turn to narrate a scene. This is simply something that will occur in any game, and in any setting.

Someone at the table needs to be watching the group vibes, and gauging interest levels. If the GM isn't someone who is very attuned to this sort of thing, consider appointing a player as the *Vibes Watcher*.

The Vibes  
Watcher's job is  
to make sure  
everyone is still

The most important thing in communication is to  
hear what isn't being said.

**Peter Drucker (1909 - 2005)**

having fun, and is still engaged. If people aren't, then it is the Vibes Watcher's responsibility to draw awareness to this fact. There are many ways to deal with vibes of boredom or stress that you might pick up on.

Calling a small break in play is often one of the best ones. Taking five minutes to stand up, stretch and grab a little food can sometimes do wonders for a gaming session.

Engaging all players in the scene can be another way of re-connecting the whole table. Even something as simple as asking for input like, "What would you set the Tension Level at?" can bring players back into the game.

Mixing up the turn order to make sure players stay interested can sometimes help. Some players will naturally have a shorter attention span than others, and sometimes bumping their turn up can help to keep their heads in the game. Be careful of doing this too often though, because it could leave players feeling neglected or forgotten.

Inviting more Collaborative Crimes is a way of getting more players in the action at any one given time.

If you have a note taker in your game, consider rotating the note-taking duties amongst players who are currently sitting out. Let them know that note-taking doesn't need to be a burden: simply jot down a few broad strokes about the scene, and note what you thought was cool about it.

Sometimes, though, the only thing that needs to be done to shift a mood is taking note of it. Just a simple "I'm sensing that energy is pretty low right now. Do we want to do something about it?" It's amazing what a little acknowledgement can do for a mood.



## Synergy amongst characters

It is perfectly okay for all characters to be completely different from each other. However, sometimes it is cool to create synergy amongst them, having different characters sharing different traits and common ground.

This turns the game into a more cohesive one, and makes scenes with multiple characters cool to narrate. This is by no means a suggestion to create uniform, template characters; it is a suggestion that there be some connections and similarities which can be extrapolated on during gameplay.

If two characters share a certification, they can more easily meet and associate. Maybe, because of having shared experiences, they also have developed shared disgusts with the system. Two people within the *Corpus Factum*, for example, might have both grown to hate the amount of control the government puts on designers.

If two characters share an archetype, they likely use similar means to reach their goals. Maybe, because of their shared approach, they find it mutually beneficial to work together. Two *Inquisitors*, for example, could work together on a detective-type case.

There are many other ways that players can connect their characters – equal status, or same traits and memories as Aspects. They can be connected in ways that aren't represented on their character sheets, like being neighbours or sitting side by side during mass.

Trusts will also be developed during play, to establish more synergy and connection between characters. Consider what character elements you can use as precursors to those Trusts being built.

## **Taking turns creating scenes**

Perfect is narrated one player at a time, alternating between scenes.

A group can simply agree to go around in a circle, each person narrating one scene. However, this does get messy: there are Collaborative Crimes to take into account, not to mention players that will exclaim, “That bridges into my next scene so well!”

The group needs to be flexible enough to work out who gets the next scene without stepping on any toes or denying players a chance to jump in with a “cool next crime.”

If someone really wants to narrate the next scene, but has had a significant amount of spotlight over the evening, try asking the group, “Is it okay if he narrates the next scene?”

If there is a player who missed a turn or has gone a long time without a scene, try saying to the players, “I know you’re excited about this next scene, but he/she has gone a long time without a scene and it’d be unfair not to give him/her the next one.”

## **Ordering the Tests**

When narrating tests, it is important to remember a few key pointers:

- ✦ Tests can go in any order - just so long as every required test is taken before the end of the Crime Cycle.
- ✦ There can be a large span of in-game time between tests, if it makes more sense.
- ✦ Narration for a test can add in as much detail as you like, so long as the end result (capture/escape, conditioned/resisted, etc) remains the same.

You have the freedom to mix things up a little, as far as narration between tests goes. Although the character might test for Discovery at the crime scene, the Calm test might not come into effect until an event the next week triggers nervous behaviour, for example.

# *Resources*

There are a variety of resources that can help you make the most out of Perfect.

## Websites

### **The Forge**

A forum for game designers, which helps collaboratively shape the face of indie game design. Much of Perfect was designed over this forum, and with these people.

There are playtest reports as well as design threads about Perfect.

[www.indie-rpgs.com](http://www.indie-rpgs.com)

### **Inciteful Entertainment**

Information and updates right from the source.

The Inciteful Entertainment site will offer some additional background materials, as well as other cool and innovative games.

[www.incitefulentertainment.com](http://www.incitefulentertainment.com)

## Sources of Inspiration – Books to check out

**1984**, by George Orwell

**Fight Club**, by Chuck Palahniuk

**Fahrenheit 451**, by Ray Bradbury

**The Handmaid's Tale**, by Margaret Atwood

**Foundation**, by Isaac Asimov

**Brave New World**, by Aldous Huxley

## Sources of Inspiration – Movies

**A Clockwork Orange**

**Equilibrium**

**Pride and Prejudice**

## Other Sources of Inspiration

**Paranoia RPG** (for colour)

**My Life with Master** (for setup and tone of game text)

**Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopaedia** (for literally everything)

# *Thanks*

Layout and Design

**David Artman**

Website Development

**Trevis Martin**

Artists

**Joe Slucher** (Page XX)

**Bradley Bleeker** (Pages XX, XX, Back Cover)

**Johann de Venecia** (Cover, Pages XX, XX)

Playtesters

**Dave M**

**Darcy Burgess**

**Mat Collens**

**Casey Spooner**

**Jen Hascarl**

**Steve-O Schiavon**

Major Input and Feedback

**Nate Peterson**

**Dave M**

**Darcy Burgess**

**Patrick Charles-Lundaahl**

**Neil Butt**

**Chad Barber**

**TroylovesRPG**

POD Printer

**Lance Williams, Avalon Innovations**