

# SILENT ARCHAEA

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Memory, Drugs, Palace

*In a war-torn future, an elite unit of soldiers roams the depths of space exploring Palaces, huge warships frozen in space and time. They use their training and sense-enhancing drugs developed by the military to defeat unknown enemies and to learn straight from the Palace's Memory Flow. But beware, for without teamwork they could easily fall into the mouth of madness.*

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# Introduction

## What is Silent Archaea?

Silent Archaea is a role-playing game. The characters will be elite troopers exploring huge abandoned spaceships in a distant future. They will use weapons, teamwork and sense-enhancing drugs to complete their mission. Some may go mad. Some will never return.

## Game Chef Contest

This game is part of the 2007 Game Chef Contest. It's a friendly online competition where you get to design a complete RPG in two weeks. The number of designers signed up is huge and the feedback you get from your peers is the most important part of the contest. In fact, no part of this game was designed without at least a minimum amount of feedback.

## What you need to play

In Silent Archaea you will use an array of different dice and some tokens. The dice are familiar to roleplayers and can be bought in any specialized store. You will need a D6, D8, D10 and a D12. One of each is enough, but the more the merrier.

Tokens can be anything from small paper balls to coins. You will use several of these. Even the GM will have his own tokens.

Apart from this you'll need pen, paper and an eraser. A copy of the character sheet is given in the back of the book for you to use.

## The basic Silent Archaea mechanic

As detailed later in the book, you will see that the basic mechanic is very easy. Just grab the die related to the attribute you are using, and roll as high as you can. If you rolled the die's highest number (an eight on a D8, for example) you can roll it again and add the results.

The GM will handle modifiers, target numbers, and everything else.

# The world of Silent Archaea

## Isolated

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Esteban is sweating. He lost his buddies a few minutes ago getting through some kind of glowing circle in the floor. He looks around. The darkness is intense, but somehow he can see around him. The marble walls to his side are cold and slippery. He looks up. No ceiling at sight. “This didn't look as big from the outside” he thinks.

He remembers the mission's warning paragraph. Unknown activity monitored by roaming scout vessels. What kind of activity, they did not know.

He points the flashlight on his rifle to the front. The passageway widens. Far away he sees (or thinks he sees) dancing lights. He runs towards it, his finger on the trigger.

Before he can act the floor starts to change its level, now he's almost falling. He hears some interference in his radio, shouts and screams. Maybe he finally connected with his team. The feedback is not reassuring however. While thinking this he realizes he's falling. The floor is now a wall. Esteban desperately hangs onto the first projecting element he sees. It's supposed to be a stairway going up. Now it's just a mere relief.

He knows there's more to this place than this barren passage.

Unconsciously he takes a dose of the drug given to him by Command. Training makes him act, not free will. He manages to keep the dose down.

Now he can see clearly. The pitch black walls actually hold lots of small steps coming from it. Almost like the climbing walls where they used to train. He also sees more lights below, at what seems to be the bottom of the pit.

Before he can start his climb down, like a silent fist from darkness it strikes him. The Memory Flow fills his head, only for a second.

He's standing in a room. Fixing something. A door. It sure looks like a door. He can feel the tools in his hands and a light breeze coming from under the door he's repairing. He notices he can work fast. He has four arms working in unison. His skin is gray, almost rocky.

The floor is cold, just like the walls he was clinging from. There's a scripture in the door, he thinks he understands it, but no. There's yelling, and shooting. He turns around quickly and something passes through his

chest. The pain is so strong he comes out of this fantasy, and into himself again. What was that? Where is that door?  
He cleans his sweat from his forehead, and gets ready for a long descent. What awaits him there?

## **The Time of Men**

Men conquered the stars. Masters of space travel, colonization was it's only concern for hundreds of years. Peace was granted as mankind got busier. Planets got central Command groups who ruled and traded with the rest of the Expanse. Faster and more comfortable ships made traveling through the stars an affordable necessity. Several branches of the Expanse were dedicated to specific purposes. Exploration, search for intelligent beings, resources recollection, everything was blooming.

Military defense was not overlooked.

Planets began to fill dedicated roles for the Expanse's needs. Whole systems would work in only one aspect of production or study, getting their needs fulfilled by trade. For the Expanse was a safe place.

This was called the Alliance era. A new way of counting years started.

Life had been meaningless before the Alliance. There was no need to remember what happened in the years Before the Alliance.

The future was now.

## **The Time of War**

The future brought many discoveries. And Man always knew what to make of them. Far away planets suffered supply problems. They could not keep with the Expanse's needs when theirs was not satisfied.

This discoveries where used for espionage, power struggle, assassination and even genocide. No one wanted to accept that war caught up with us. New ways of killing, communicating and traveling were being used with military purposes.

An so the Expanse died. The Future died.

War struck. Planets allied, betrayed each other and waged war on space and land. Factions were created and dismembered. Whole planets were used as machines of war. Creation of machines, troops, and leaders was fundamental.

Most fought without knowing why. Enemies changed from month to month. And the regular soldier didn't always live to see another month in service.

The Expanse grew in such a way that Man was everywhere. Fighting,

escaping, dying.

Now Command groups rule whole systems. Military development reached its peak. Almost everything a man knows from birth to death is war. It's his way of life and death. He doesn't complain. There's no one to complain to.

## **The Alien Suspicion**

All this exploration and travel was not in vain. Thousands of files of information are filled with evidence of alien intelligence. But as far as the general public knows, there's no real proof. It is said that some species have allied with Factions one time or another. It's also said that the military has a way of controlling the flow of knowledge whenever a campaign discovers too much. Whatever the truth, there is something out there.

In fact, most of the Palaces drifting around are thought to be non-human creations. This cannot be proved though. War has raged for too long to even remember Man's own creations of war.

## Characters

Characters in Silent Archaea are members of an elite military unit. Their job is to explore Palaces, huge ancient warships frozen in space and time. Massive pieces of war machinery forgotten, abandoned, destroyed. The unit's specific assignment may be varied and it can include rescue, search and destroy, exploration, extermination, etc.

The characters are highly trained troops and they survive more than the regular trooper. It's still not a very long time. If you are in the unit, you are a veteran after surviving your first mission.

The only thing worse than charging into a firing battery is going against the unknown. And that's exactly what they do.

## Attributes

The characters are defined by four attributes.

These attributes are measured by a die type. The more faces the die has, the highest the attribute's level is.

Some attributes also have points (Sanity and Health) This points are determined by the attribute's die (level) and vary from character to character. Some will be stronger mentally, some physically.

Here's an example of how the attributes would look in a character's sheet:

Martial [D8]

Specialist (Medic) [D12]

Sanity [D10] ○○○○○○

Health [D6] ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

Martial training is basic military training. Almost everything they'll need to do in a mission is tied to some part of the martial training they received. It can be used for self defense as much as using simple machinery or understanding military plans.

Specialist training is the character's actual job within the unit. The player should choose and detail a specialization area in parenthesis. This can be Medic, Leader, Heavy Weapons, Communications, Pilot, Scout, Technician, etc. Whenever the character does something related to his specialization, you should use this attribute. Use common sense and the guidelines given below.

Sanity is the actual state of mind of the character. In this game characters are given mind altering drugs by the military. This will greatly improve their effectiveness in any given situation, but will slowly take away their mental health. Every time they use drugs you will have to roll for his Sanity. Missing will get the character near to madness.

Health is an indicator of your physical state and ability to absorb damage. It represents mostly your build, but also your reflexes for getting out of they way. If Health points drop to zero, the character is dead.

### **Attribute's die**

Every attribute has a type of die attached to it determining it's value. The dice can be D6, D8, D10 or D12. The lower the die, the lower the attribute's level.

You should decide on a die for each attribute with the limitation that the total faces of the dice should not rise above 36.

For example, you could have your attributes die this way:

Martial [D8]  
Specialist (Medic) [D12]  
Sanity [D10] ○○○○○○  
Health [D6] ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

Or maybe this way:

Martial [D8]  
Specialist (Medic) [D10]  
Sanity [D8] ○○○○  
Health [D10] ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

Or even this way:

Martial [D10]  
Specialist (Medic) [D10]  
Sanity [D10] ○○○○○○  
Health [D6] ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○



You see that if you add the dice's sides together you end up with 36. This is a way of balancing all starting characters. You can have less than 36 "points" if it suits your character, of course.

If you are wondering what are the possible combinations of dice, here they are:

D6-D8-D10-D12

D10-D10-D10-D6

D8-D8-D10-D10

D12-D12-D6-D6

You can give the levels to the attributes as you see fit.

## Sanity and Health points

Designer's note: These attributes are very important. You will see that the higher the die you assign to them, the more points you get. And of course, your chances of passing a roll are increased. But you should not think this are the most important attributes due to their double effectiveness. Remember that Martial and Specialist are the attributes that group your skills and let you do the actual work.

The levels you give the Sanity and Health attributes will determine your Sanity/Health points. For Sanity, you can do this simply by dividing the die's faces by two. For Health, just multiply it by two, thus:

Sanity/Health level	Sanity points	Health points
D6	3	12
D8	4	16
D10	5	20
D12	6	24

Whenever you roll Sanity and you do not succeed the character will lose a Sanity point. When he loses his last point he will go insane.

Whenever you roll Health and you do not succeed the character will lose Health points (depending on what hit him) When he loses his last point he will die.

## Equipment and drugs

The characters will usually have an array of military equipment for every mission. This includes weapons, communication devices, specific tools related to the character's specialization, etc.

But the most important tools they will have are five doses of a military provided senses-enhancing drug. Every character starts with only five doses.

## Specialization

The specialization attribute you choose will most likely define your character. You can talk to the other players and decide who will play which role. Sometimes the GM will tell you there's an important role to be filled, for example, Networks specialist. This attribute will be used often and describes who your character is to the rest of the members. They probably don't know how tough he is, but they know what his skills are.

Here are some example Specializations and some things your character will be able to do. When your character does this things he will roll on his Specialization rather than his Martial attribute:

*Medic:* Gives first aid, long term medical treatment, understands medical information, can understand alien anatomy (less than an Aliens Races specialist) and biotechnology.

*Heavy Weapons:* Carries the meanest machines of destruction, can use different weapons, use artillery and explosives, set up defensive positions and make lots of noise.

*Pilot:* A talented (and needed) soldier in charge of transporting his unit. He can pilot several different machines in the most extreme circumstances.

*Scout:* A soldier who tracks, hunts and advances without fear. He can set perimeters, explore difficult areas and keep everyone in safety.

*Technician:* A wizard in his field. He can usually repair anything and everything with the appropriate tools. He should specialize in an area, like weapons, computers, spaceships, etc.

*Networks:* Commonly referred as a hacker, he will get into the strangest systems to get the information he needs. He will usually learn quickly from older (even ancient) system networks still functioning.

*Demolitions:* The guy you need when the road is blocked. He uses explosives in closed environments to open, collapse or kill things.

*Archaeologist:* This soldier is an explorer by nature. He can identify

ancient scriptures, items and architecture. He knows about a myriad of cultures, some possibly alien.

*Alien Races*: Knows most of the limited information about alien encounters. Most of it classified. Can identify, possibly communicate with several alien races. Will try to engage any new life form in peaceful ways and learn as much as possible. Can read in many strange languages.

*History & Science*: Professor would be his nickname. His knowledge on human history is unsurpassed. He can do investigation and research. His understanding of motivations can be very useful in confusing situations.

## **Tokens pools**

You will have two tokens pools. One will be just momentary and used for a few minutes while you make use of drugs. This is called the *Enhancement pool*. After Enhancement is done, your Enhancement pool will be empty, always.

The other is where you keep your unused tokens for use on your teammates. This is the *Team pool*.

When you start you will have your pools empty. As game progresses you will make use of your Enhancement pool and your will (hopefully) fill up your Team pool. More detail on the Drugs section.

## **Other details**

You should complete the character sheet with an appropriate name, a military rank, a recurring phrase and a brief physical description. A back story is also useful, specially a shared back story of the unit's members.

## **Example of character creation**

Robert is creating a character. He decides Mika is going to be a female technician with innate talent for spaceships. She can fix them and pilot a bit.

He thinks she should be very good at what she does, so gives her a D12 on Spaceship technician, her Specialist attribute.

She's a grounded person, so gives her a D8 on Sanity.

Her Martial training is important to her and as a dedicated unit member she gets a D10.

However, her build isn't that great, and she's used to work with tools that do all the heavy lifting. She gets a D6 on her Health.

Mika gets four Sanity points and twelve Health points.

Now Robert talks to the rest of the players and they decide on a common background. He will also write some history about Mika before entering

the military, meaning her childhood on Nozhe Alpha with her mom and uncle.

She now gears up. She'll get the regulation uniform connected to her team members and Command, breathing aid and visor with infrared, thermal and night vision. She gets her tools suitcase and a pistol with ammo. She also gets some medical kits and a survival kit.

The five doses are already inside her body. They were put somehow during her last night in the barracks.

Now she's ready to go into the small ship that will get her unit (code name Unicron) into the Palace. She will actually pilot the spaceship.

Check her character sheet on the next page.

# SILENT ARCHAEA

**CHARACTER** Mika Hargrove

**PLAYER** Robert

**DESCRIPTION** Tall brunette woman. Wears strange goggles.

**RANK** Private First Class

**BACKSTORY** Born in Nozhe Alpha, she was raised in a farming community. She had an aptitude for repairing machines. She was spotted by the local force and made her way into the unit.

**EQUIPMENT** Tools case. 2x Medikits. Survival Kit. Pistol (6/4)

**MARTIAL**

D10

**SPECIALIST**

D12

Spaceship Technician

**SANITY**

D8

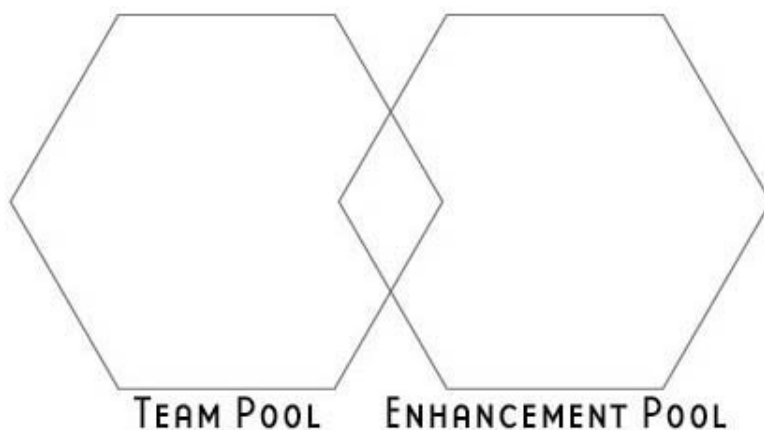
⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ○ ○

**HEALTH**

D6

⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗  
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

**DOSES** ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗



# Action Resolution and Combat

## Doing things

Whenever you do something the GM will decide if the action is automatic, possible or impossible. Automatic actions are made without any kind of roll. Impossible actions are just that, impossible. A possible action however has a chance of success. This means you will need to roll a die.

The GM will also decide which Attribute you will use. Most actions will be made using your Martial training. This determines which die you will roll.

The last thing the GM will decide is the difficulty of the action. This can be a number between 4 (easy) and 12 (extremely difficult)

Now you roll the die. If you roll below the target number, the action fails. If you roll equal or higher, you succeed, you "pass the roll."

## Re-rolling

It's not impossible to make something difficult with a low Attribute though. Sometimes luck is on your side.

Whenever you roll the biggest number on a die (8 on a D8, for example) you can roll it again. You then add the results together and compare it to the target number. If you get the biggest number again you can re-roll for a second time, and so on.

## Automatic failure

When you roll a 1 on any dice the action is an automatic failure. Even if you used bonus tokens (as in a Sanity roll) and you somehow pass the target number, it will still count as a failure.

The only exception is when rolling a 1 on a re-roll. Then you just add 1 to your previous roll.

## Unopposed actions / Opposed actions

When you are trying to do something without any opposition, like lifting a heavy object, you roll against the target number decided by the GM. This is an unopposed action.

But when you try to do something and someone (or something) else is opposing you, like fighting hand to hand, you will try to roll higher than

your opponent. This is an opposed action.

To do this both characters roll their respective attribute, re-rolling when possible, and just see who rolled the biggest number. This will indicate who won the contest.

## Combat

Combat should be an important event and described accordingly. This should not turn into "dungeon crawl in space." Describing the battle actions with enough detail help the GM decide on modifiers and target numbers.

Die rolls can represent several actions or one blow, depending on each fight scene.

For combat purposes, treat hand to hand combat as an opposed action and ranged combat as an unopposed action.

Always remember to describe your actions in a cinematic way. This will improve your chances of damaging the enemy by giving the GM a clear idea of what you are doing.

*Hand to hand combat:* When fighting hand to hand you will roll your respective Attribute against the opponent's roll. You will usually receive an amount of modifiers depending on the weapons being used, positioning of the fighters and as many other factors as the GM deems important.

The winner will hurt the opponent and the damaged character will have to make a Health roll. The combat continues until a character falls unconscious or runs away.

*Ranged combat:* When firing a weapon of some kind, the firing character will make an attack roll. Again, roll the appropriate Attribute die but this time against a target number set by the GM. She will take into account distance, visibility, target movement, etc. If he passes the roll the target is hit and will make a Health roll.

Weapons will be shot more than once usually but some weapons have a greater rate of fire. This is represented by another die roll, giving the attacker another chance to wound the opponent (while he only rolls once)

Hand to hand and ranged combat can be simultaneous and the GM can decide that Health rolls will be made after the shots from both characters are landed/fired.

## Health rolls and dying

Whenever a character gets hit in combat he will roll his Health die. This is an unopposed action and the target number is defined by the weapon that hit the character. The GM can add modifiers to this roll as necessary.

Passing a Health roll means the character somehow absorbed the pain or the wound is superficial. Nevertheless he will lose one Health point. This represents exhaustion and scratches.

Failing a Health roll means the character got hurt badly, so he will lose as many Health points as detailed on the weapon's Damage factor.

When a character's Health points reach zero, he is dead.

So you see, a character can die from few heavy wounds, but also from lots of seemingly insignificant fights.

## Knocked out

You can use this rule if the GM thinks it's necessary.

Characters who lose half their original Health points from one blow or in the same action (for example, several opponents shooting at him) will be knocked down from the shock. He can recover after receiving some first aid from a team member.

## Healing

Characters with Medic or related specializations can help injured characters to recover. With the appropriate time and tools characters can recover some Health points.

Medic characters can give first aid in a tense situation by making an attribute roll and using a Medicine pack. The GM will set a difficulty according to the situation. This way a character can be healed by one point per roll, per Medicine pack. This usually takes about 5 minutes and represents cleaning a cut, stopping a bleeding injury or calming a concussion.

With rest, care and a dedicated character taking care of the wounded however, a character who stays put recovers up to 3 Health points a day. Medicine should be readily available and any difficult medical maneuvers should be rolled for.



## Equipment

Every weapon has two characteristics. The Difficulty is the target number for Health rolls when a character gets hit by it. The Damage is simply the amount of Health points the character losses when failing the Health roll.

This are some example weapons. You can create your own without too much trouble.

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Details
Unarmed	4	1	
Knife or similar blade	4	2	
Pistol	6	4	
Sub-machine gun	8	6	Roll twice.
Rifle	7	6	
Anti-armor weapon	8	8	Explosive shells. Destroys structures.
Blaster pistol	7	4	
Blaster rifle	9	6	
Repeating blaster	9	6	Roll twice.
Heavy blaster rifle	9	8	
Flamer	10	12	Sets things on fire.
Grenade	10	12	

Armor can reduce the damage taken. Not everyone wishes to wear armor, for even the lightest protection can get in the way if doing delicate or long term work.

The Protection factor of armor deducts that same amount of Damage taken from a weapon. Armor and shield factors can be added together. Blaster weapons don't use shells. They use another kind of energy and represent the infinite variation in alien weapon designs. Armor shot by blaster weapons have their Protection factor divided by 2.

Armor	Protection
Light armor	4
Heavy armor	6
Microfiber shield	2

Other equipment includes the following items:

*Medicine pack:* A small pack with basic medical implements. Once used it is discarded. Used mainly in emergencies.

*Communication devices:* This include any kind of external devices not included in the soldier's gear. This can be used for different types of data.

*Ammunition:* Every character has ammo for their respective weapon. Some other kinds of ammunition can include stun shells, armor piercing for the heaviest of weapons, explosive shells and smoke and gas bombs.

*Survival kit:* This kit has food and water for five days. It includes elements like a flashlight, painkillers, a knife and batteries.

*Infrared scanner, thermal and night vision:* This is part of the normal gear. Any character can set his visor to infrared scanner, thermal or night vision. If the character is not wearing the original suit for some reason cannot use this features.

*Surveillance cameras:* This cameras can be positioned by hand or shot from some types of weapons. They stick to any surface and have a limited arc of sight. They connect directly to the soldier's visor.

## Military drugs

Your character has a limited amount of drugs supplied by the Command at his disposal. These drugs are specially designed with two purposes. The first is a senses enhancing sensation. Your character's reflexes are maximized, his mind reacts quicker and he notices things he didn't before. This is called Enhancing.

The second function for the drug is not formally expressed on any military document or official data. However, any veteran character will know of its usefulness even though he doesn't understand it completely. This takes the form of feedback straight to the character's head. Sometimes it takes the form of visual representations, smells, sounds, and even other beings' memories. This will usually be connected somehow to the Palace where the mission is taking place. This is known as *Tapping into the Memory Flow*.

Don't worry if things get confusing while reading this section. There's a detailed example at the end.

## Using drugs

Whenever the player chooses to, his character can use one of its five doses. He can use only one dose at a time. As the drugs are already into the soldier's body, he can mentally engage them and feel the effect immediately.

When the character uses a dose the player receives five tokens. These five tokens are put on the Enhancement pool.

He will now decide how strong the dose will be. Using one token will get him a Level 1 Enhancement. Three tokens, a Level 3 Enhancement.

There are only five Enhancement Levels. See below at what an Enhancement Level actually is.

When the player makes use of his enhanced senses, he will spend tokens equal to the Enhancement Level. Those tokens are discarded. The remaining tokens will stay in the Enhancement pool for now, unless you used all five of them on a Level 5 Enhancement, of course.

After the character played through the Enhancement scene he will have to make a Sanity roll. This is explained below.

## Enhancing

The main effect of using the drugs is the higher awareness the character gains. This is represented in game by allowing the player to change elements of the scene. This will actually change the scene from what the GM dictated. You, as a player, will have moderate freedom to change things in the game world, as far as your character's reach. It represents a higher understanding of your surroundings, a clear view of things, a better control of the variables around you. No wonder this things are dangerously addictive.

Use your Enhancement pool tokens and decide on an Enhancement Level. They will let you do different things. Enhancement Levels are explained below. The highest levels include the previous ones.

*Level 1:* You can change a small object on the scene. Whether by adding, subtracting or modifying it. This cannot be a powerful weapon or an important item (like a key or an access code)

*Level 2:* You can change a minor important item like a small weapon or an escape key.

*Level 3:* You can create a minor scenery change like changing the location of some furniture or creating a small hatch or window.

*Level 4:* You can create a minor NPC reaction. This could distract an enemy or make him change his mind about something not really important (you cannot dissuade him of shooting you)

*Level 5:* You can change a major aspect of the scene like an important part of the scenery (creating a door where apparently there was none before), a NPC reaction considerably (aggressive to helpful) or an important item.

It will usually be easier if you say what you plan on doing and let the GM decide how many points that will cost. It's impossible to foresee all available options and common sense is the best tool.

## **Making a Sanity roll**

When your character takes a dose and uses an Enhancement Level, the next step is to make a Sanity roll. This is your inner fight against the dangerous side effects of the drug.

You roll your Sanity die, and add your unused Enhancement pool tokens to the roll.

When you roll your Sanity die you can be successful or fail. To be successful you need to equal or beat a target number of 8. If you do not pass the roll, you fail and lose a Sanity point.

The tokens used as modifiers to the Sanity roll are discarded, whether the roll was successful or not.

## **Success - Tapping into the Memory Flow**

It is not clear yet what the Memory Flow actually is. It is known though that a side effect of the drug allows soldiers to get information, short and for a second, that seems to "be around" somehow. This can take many forms, and knowing how to use it will be an important tool for any troop.

When you pass your Sanity roll your character will automatically tap into the Palace's Memory Flow. He will receive information straight into his head. This will take the form of a note written by the GM with the information you discovered. You can share it with your teammates or keep it to yourself. Depending on the strength of the Memory Flow, it will sometimes be harmful. This will actually wound your character physically.

## **Failure**

If you fail your Sanity roll you will automatically lose a Sanity point. Losing Sanity points brings your character closer to madness. The drugs are affecting his reason in a bad way. If he loses his last Sanity point he will go insane. Going insane means your character will take one of three reactions at random (*Panic*, *Immobilize*, *Frenzy*) and it also means you will lose some control over him, represented by the GM pool.

## Going Insane

When the character has lost his mind the GM will roll (or simply decide) on a set reaction. He can do this by using a D6 assigning two numbers to each reaction. This reactions need to be role-played by the player. They are:

*Panic:* Your character will enter a state of fear and will want to escape. Escape from his enemies, from his own friends, from the Palace, or whatever the GM can come up with.

*Immobilize:* Your character will freeze in fear. If he stays that way for a while he will search for a hiding place and stay put.

*Frenzy:* Your character will gain an uncontrollable rage, a killing frenzy, or any other suitably angry state. He will direct it towards his enemies, his team, or anything the GM decides.

Besides this reaction your character will be partly in the "hands of madness." You will be able to do things according to the reactions described above but the GM will have an amount of tokens in the GM pool to use them on your character. She will consciously try to complicate things for your character.

## Saving tokens - The Team pool

When you use and Enhancement Level, you use tokens. After that, when you make your Sanity roll, you will use more tokens. But if you still have some tokens left, you can move them to your Team pool and leave them there. They are not discarded, they are saved.

Every character has a Team pool on it's character sheet.

This tokens can be used only to help another teammate. If your character takes another dose later in the game, he will not be able to use the Team pool's tokens on himself. This are only used on a teammate.

Whenever another member of the unit uses drugs near your character (or in contact somehow), he will spend his own tokens as normal. But if you have some tokens in the Team pool you can help him resist the drug's power. You will give the teammate an amount of tokens and he will use them as modifiers to the Sanity roll. He cannot use them for Enhancement.

This represents the team's control over each of it's members. Your team members are the most important asset on your mission. Take care of them.

The Team pool's tokens can also be used to help a teammate *Snap out of it* as described below.

### **Snapping out of it**

You can regain control over your insane character, but only through teamwork.

Any team member can say he's actively helping you snap out of it. Thus, your character will make a Sanity roll adding tokens from the helping character's Team pool as modifiers. Several characters can add their Team pool's tokens together for one roll.

A team member without tokens on his Team pool cannot help another character.

### **Regaining Sanity points**

When making a Sanity roll, if you pass the roll with 12 or more, you can regain a lost sanity point. You can use tokens from a teammate's Team pool if he permits it. You can never have more Sanity points than you originally had.

### **Drug use example**

Mika is a player character. She's trapped in a huge ventilation shaft. The path where she came from collapsed and the only way out is through a giant metallic fan that moves the air through the shaft. It's not very fast, but heavy enough to rip her arm off.

She takes a dose and is automatically hit by an empowering feeling.

Mika's player, Robert, takes five tokens and puts them on his Enhancement pool. Now he talks to the GM. They decide Mika finds an old wrench-like tool forgotten by some technician near the fan. This tool was not described by the GM before, but Mika's enhanced senses find it. The GM decides this is a Level 2 Enhancement. Even though it's a small and seemingly unimportant item (should be Level 1), the GM decides the ventilation shaft to be a pretty barren location and so finding this is pretty unlikely, though not impossible.

So, Mika finds the wrench, blocks the fan and passes between its blades. Robert discards two tokens. Now before Mika continues her search she will make a Sanity roll.

Robert throws the Sanity die (a D8 in this case) and adds two of the three tokens remaining in his Enhancement pool. He rolls a 6, adds the two tokens, so the roll is an 8. He barely passes the roll. Now he discards the

two used tokens.

Succeeding in a Sanity roll gives Mika an additional benefit. She connected to the Palace's Memory Flow. The GM gives Robert a piece of paper with something written on it. Mika has a weird flashback involving a detention cell of some kind with writings on the walls. She recognizes the passageway that leads to it.

Now, Robert has one more token left in his Enhancement pool. This token is moved to his Team pool and left there for future use. He will help his teammates with this token. It represents his own experience with the drug's effects, and the way he can help other members overcome its dangers.

If Robert failed the roll, Mika would have lost a Sanity point. She wouldn't connect with the Memory Flow. The used tokens would have been discarded but the unused token would still go to the Team pool.



## Game-mastering Silent Archaea

As a Silent Archaea Game Master you have the advantage of making the game system as simple or as detailed as you like. This section has lots of advice and guidelines. Discard anything you feel is not needed.

### Assigning target numbers

For every action that a character wants to do that is neither automatic nor impossible you will have to set a target number.

The next list are just guidelines. You can use any number you wish.

Difficulty	Target number
Easy	4
Regular	6
Hard	8
Harder	10
Extremely difficult	12

### Modifiers

If you are used to games where adding or subtracting modifiers is a normal mechanic, you can use it here as well. Just decide on the normal difficulty for the action and give the player a +2 or -2 to modify the die roll. That's a normal modifier. A +/-4 is a big modifier.

If you don't like this just change the target number as you see fit. This means the same action in different circumstances can have a different difficulty.

### Combat roll modifiers

This can be as simple or as detailed as you like. Remember to describe the important fight scenes in an exciting way and demand that from the player characters. You can assign modifiers for good role-playing too. When assigning modifiers in hand to hand combat you should take into account the relative positions, the size of the characters (if there's a big difference), a charge movement and anything you deem tactically important.

In ranged combat you should think about distance, visibility, the firer and target's previous movement, etc. Just remember to be fair when assigning modifiers.

## **Health roll modifiers**

When a character is hurt he will roll his Health attribute. This roll will have a target number assigned by the weapon that hurt him. Sometimes you can set modifiers to this roll. You can take into account any kind of armor or protection, for example. You can also decide that certain weapons are not effective against certain protection. You can also give modifiers to add damage! It's not the same being cut by a pointy stick than running straight to it.

## **Creating the Memory Flow**

The Palace's Memory Flow is a very important part of any Silent Archaea game. You should have this set from the start. Just write down some information on pieces of paper that you will give the characters every time they connect with the Palace. They can be as specific or as vague as you wish, but they should always be related to the current storyline. This should be a help to the characters.

They can be phrases, technical information, memories as seen by someone else, even a piece of a map. Anything you can come up with can be part of the Memory Flow.

If one of the characters has a specialization such as Archeology, Ancient Technologies or Alien Races, for example, you could make him roll the attribute's die if the piece of information is too vague. Maybe rolling high will get him some more information.

You can also give the Memory Flow data at random. Put your papers upside down and don't read them before giving them to the players. This way you will not know exactly what kind of information they have. Unless they read it out loud, that is.

## **Damaging the characters with the Memory Flow**

In special situations, when the storyline requires it, you can give such an important or dangerous piece of information that it will actually damage the character's body. The character will suffer from getting this data. Something horrible, painful or just completely overwhelming has entered his mind.

You can make the character roll either Health or Sanity, as you see fit. The difficulty can be anything from 2 to 12, depending on the game

impact of the information. You should not try to kill the character though, because the Memory Flow is there to help them. Also, more than one damaging memory will scare the characters and avoid the use of drugs, making the mission very difficult (and missing important plot information)

## **Judging Enhancement Levels**

Whenever a character takes a dose he will decide on the level of enhancement he will receive. You should control this but not limit it. Decide on what kind of actions can be taken using the Enhancing Levels as guidelines. If a player tries to take advantage of the system (something not very difficult) punish him mechanically. Try to guide the players on what you expect out of drug usage and learn to set levels whenever a player simply expresses his intentions. It's not an easy task, but the system is worth it, in my opinion.

## **The GM pool - Complicating insane characters**

As GM you will start play with ten tokens on the GM pool. This will be used when a character goes insane. You will use the Enhancement Levels just like the players do, but you should try to complicate his actions in creative ways, acting as his unreasonable side. Try not to mortally engage the character, but make his life very difficult. Every time the insane character does not role-play his reaction (Panic, Immobilize, Frenzy) you get two more tokens to keep making his insane side more and more obnoxious. You get ten tokens for the whole game, not per insane character. Be careful how you use them.

## **Character advancement**

Characters surviving a mission gain invaluable knowledge which is usually erased from their minds for security purposes. They will forget everything related to the previous mission except that there was a mission. They will however improve in their skills by sheer practice. Unless there's a really good reason, characters should only improve their Martial and Specialist attributes. Health points will be replenished and no more than two Sanity points can be recovered between missions. To improve attributes, the character changes his die type for the next one with more sides. A D8 would be a D10. This growth should not be too often. A character should increase only one attribute for every two or more missions. If he survives long enough.

## About the missions

Silent Archaea is somewhat limited in scope. The character advancement system is not very detailed and the idea is that a character with two or three missions under his belt is a real veteran. These are the most dangerous missions assigned in the military and possibly the most important regarding the discovery of technology and ancient artifacts. Missions should be deadly. But they shouldn't be impossible. Most of the times, only half the team will return. But the discoveries will be substantial, and specially trained (though raw) troops will be assigned to fill the ranks.

## Plot creation

If you need help creating plots, you should see some of the movies I used as inspiration for the game. These are Event Horizon, Solaris, Aliens, and any other which combines space and terror or suspense. There are several books too but I would be dumb to list them since I have read them in Spanish (and the titles change without much sense)

In any case, use this next table. It has lots of items so you get an idea of the possibilities. Add elements or create your own table! Just choose the elements you wish to use or roll for them to get your random plot

### Random Plot Generator

Die roll	Mission assigned/dated	State of the Palace (structure)	State of the Palace (systems)	State of the crew	Origin of the Palace/Crew	Objective	Enemies
1	By the command group	As good as new	All systems operational	Alive	Human, same faction	Retrieve crew	Unknown sentient being
2	By a distress call	Regular use wear	Only life support	Dead	Human, allied faction	Retrieve weapon	Aliens
3	By chance discovery	Took fire	Only communications	Disappeared	Human, enemy faction	Retrieve special technology	Enemy troops
4	By espionage	Took heavy fire, sections inaccessible	Only weapons	Abducted	Alien	Retrieve ship	Insane crew
5	Assistance to another military unit's job	In ruins	Only some of the above	Wounded	Human, unknown faction	Blow up ship	Sentient machinery
6	Unit abducted into the Palace	A wreck, almost destroyed	No systems operational	In pieces	Completely unknown	Kill crew	Traitor same faction troops

## Out of the Palace

After a few missions, a dedicated GM might want to delve deeper into the setting with his own creations. Maybe the player's are getting tired of getting in and out of Palaces all the time.

Palace-less missions are possible. You can play a short mission regarding any other element of military actions, just like other sci-fi games. You can still use the drug mechanics. The Memory Flow can be avoided or replaced with something else.

You should use books, films and other games as inspiration. Do not be limited by the text on this game. If you like the mechanics, the characters and the setting take the next step. Have fun.

# SILENT ARCHAEA

CHARACTER  
DESCRIPTION  
RANK  
BACKSTORY  
EQUIPMENT

PLAYER

MARTIAL  
SPECIALIST  
SANITY  
HEALTH  
DOSES

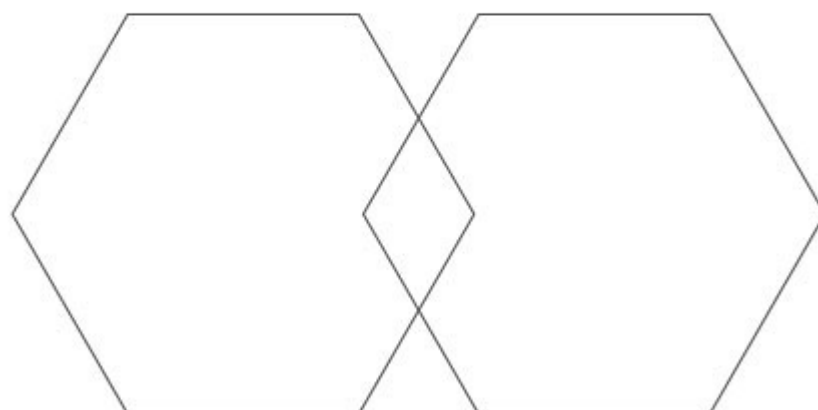


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TEAM POOL

ENHANCEMENT POOL