FINAL FANTASY: SPIRITS WITHIN (F 1.0)

In 2065, Earth lies in ruins, largely abandoned in the aftermath of a one sided conflict between humans and the mysterious entities called the "Phantoms". 34 years ago, the Leonid Meteor struck the planet, and from the smouldering crater, alien creatures known as the Phantoms spread out across the planet. First contact with the alien species proved fatal to humans, and no attempt at establishing a means of communication had any effect, the Phantoms ignored the humans and continued to spread from the impact site. Unable to contain the Phantoms, humans across the world were forced to retreat. 14 years after the impact, technology finally caught up, and strongholds were built, protected by mighty walls sustained by a new energy source known as "bio-etheric energy". The aptly named barrier cities became the last bastions of human civilization as the global government body known as the UNSC worked on a formal strategy with the intention of reclaiming the planet from the alien invaders.

You'll be living here for the next decade, so it's probably in your best interests to ensure that the human efforts at driving the Phantoms away succeed. But you're not completely bereft of help in this regard, other than the local initiatives to combat the Phantoms, there is also this to help you make any necessary preparations.

+1000 points

[Initiation Parameters]

Assuming that you have a human appearance, blending it with the locals won't be much of a problem. But if it is necessary, you can change the specific details regarding your appearance, such as your age, gender, and distinctive physical features. People here generally care more about what you can do rather than what you look like, so you may want to consider one of the following backgrounds as part of your acclimation process.

Background	Description
Survivor	Being able to survive out in the wilderness is no small feat, and your skills will be enough to establish a strong reputation for you. While most people prefer to stay away from the wilderness, expeditions into the wilderness are often necessitated for research or military purposes, so your skills will likely be in high demand. If they can find you anyways.
Soldier	One of the most important occupations in this Phantom devastated world, soldiers are the first and last line of defence against an enemy that has not shown any signs of relenting. While all soldiers are given the means and responsibility of fighting the Phantoms, there are specific branches within the USMF that deal with other issues, such as domestic disputes and city security.

Scientist	Research has kept humans in the game, both in terms of weapons for use against the Phantoms and the barriers that keeps humanity alive to fight another day. With humanity's fate hanging by a thread, every scientist is valued so long as there's a chance that their work might prove to be the key that reverses the situation around.
Councillor	In the aftermath of the Meteor Impact, the governments across the Earth came to realization that unless they worked together, it would be impossible to sustain the human civilization. The United Nations Security Council was founded to organize the survivors, and arranged for resource allocation towards the construction of barrier cities. As a member of the Council, you have a responsibility to the people, and in return they'll afford you a degree of freedom and flexibility in terms of utilizing city resources, from equipment to personnel.

For your own safety, you'll be dropped off at one of the barrier cities, number 42 on top of what used to be "New York". Now it happens to be the headquarters for the United Nations Security Council's military branch, the USMF (United States Military Force). With a large stationed army and serving as a major communications hub, this is probably the safest place to be.

The wilderness outside the barrier cities is – in one word, hostile. While you can opt to start there instead of inside a barrier city, you must be wary that Phantom attacks can occur at any time from any direction – Phantoms are capable of moving through solid objects, thus they can easily spring up from right underneath you and instant kill you. Furthermore, there's a distinct lack of life out in the wilderness – so surviving in the traditional fashion may prove to be difficult. Based on what is known, it appears that Phantoms are drawn to living beings – there are debates over whether they are drawn because they desire the lifeforce of the living, or if it is merely curiosity which compels them.

[PERKS/PERSONAL MODIFICATIONS]

Modifications are discounted within the appropriate background. The first tier is free for the given background, but the cost increases by 100 each time a first tier perk is taken (Discounts still apply after the cost is increased – Effectively it costs 100/200/300/400 or free/100/150/200 discounted).

THE SURVIVOR

Survival Instincts 100(n)

The following set of skills will help build the foundation for how you scrape together a living out in the wilderness.

Foundation	General Description
Banding Together	While there are those who believe very strongly in operating alone, in the wasteland having someone to watch your back is critical if you're to stay alive. This helps you to find allies, even if they're only temporary like small animals or random scientists looking for life forms to add to her collection. If necessary, you can call upon a creature "native" to the area to accompany you for a little while, though what kind of creature you'll get is entirely dependent on where you are, the silver lining is that you don't need to worried about them being hostile towards you.
Forager	Unless you've somehow evolved past needing sustenance, you'll probably want to consider this as a foundation if you're going to be living in the wasteland. Supplies and creatures are hard to come by from the moment you step out of the barrier cities, and this serves to help you find necessary resources where others might overlook them. Generally, the longer you stay in an area, the longer it takes to continue finding supplies, but given enough time, you could stay around in one place and get by.
Ruins Navigation	Much of the old cities have been reduced to ruins through a combination of disrepair and Phantom/Human conflict. Because of this, the old infrastructure has been utterly trashed and is quite unreliable. Thankfully, you have a solid foundation in navigating through mazes, ruins, caves and the like without any technological aid. You'll have an instinctive sense of where you are, what is in the areas surrounding you, potentially usable supplies, and of course, any areas which may potentially be hiding enemies. Given that the Phantoms can quite literally surface through the ground, it's nice to know of their arrival beforehand.
Seeking Safe Shelter	You specialize in finding a place to hide and stay the night. While ideally you wouldn't want to stay in any given place for very long, from time to time when you need a rest, this will ensure that your chosen hideaway will be Phantom free and predator free for the duration of your stay. If you stay in one place and refuse to move, be wary that thiswill eventually

	fade, and if Phantoms or enemies can track you down, they will.
Wastelands Thriller	Well, in the worst case scenario, if you find yourself cornered by the Phantoms, this will come in handy to help you get away. The only problem is that utilizing it effectively can be somewhat awkward, and requires that you have no hesitation towards doing something completely insane in the face of death. Namely, you need to dance. You'll find that if you dance, creatures hostile to you like the Phantom will follow suit. Generally, smarter enemies will ignore this, but the Phantom aren't all that smart and seem to be acting more on instinct, so that shouldn't pose a problem. This also improves your dancing ability. Just in case you're actually looking to impress someone with your dancing.

Wasteland Rose 200

With a wide range of modern amenities available to them, hygiene and appearances are generally the last thing that anyone living within a barrier city worries about. But those who have to survive outside the barrier don't have the luxury to worry about such things to begin with – Phantoms aren't going to avoid a person just because they're dirty or look repulsive. Thankfully, you don't need to worry about either cleaniness or attractiveness. You're naturally attractive enough that others will mistake you for a model (even if the modelling industry is somewhat dead given the circumstances), and even if Phantoms force you to run through a swamp, the filth doesn't stick to you or your apparel for very long.

Of course, it'll still be nice to take care of hygenic matters should the opportunity present itself, but you won't feel any discomfort or suffer from any negative effects if you have to go for weeks without a shower or brushing your teeth.

Alien Presence 400

When you can survive in a Phantom infested wasteland for months on end, it's probably reasonable to consider you fundamentally different from the other humans living on Earth. Certainly, the Phantoms don't seem to react to you as they react to other lifeforms, and you'll find if you ever get the chance to venture into a barrier city that people seem to generally overlook your presence when it would be otherwise an issue. Guards don't seem too concerned with you walking about an otherwise restricted area, civilians don't seem too concerned if you're out in the open with a weapon. Of course, if you actually provoke a hostile reaction through your own actions, you'll have to deal with the consequences.

Oddly enough, this effect also has an influence on how people will try to track you down, not just by deterring investigation attempts, but also influencing the effectiveness of the investigation method itself, be it via digital means or some sort of supernatural avenue. Those who manage to ignore the deterrance will find that if they were to go by public records, you simply don't exist.

Anti-Body 600

There are far too many hazards out in the wilderness that asking someone to prepare for each and every possibility is probably more difficult than asking them to build an ark to transport humanity out into space. But given that the Phantoms are not only the most copious threat but also the most lethal threat, with a means to mitigate that hazard, you can make the wastelands much less hostile than it currently is. This serves as a countermeasure against the Phantom's bizarre ability to rip the living spirit out of a person – that's one interpretation the USMC Science Branch has for the odd method of killing the Phantoms have anyways. Normally when a Phantom makes full contact with an individual, their spectral body will pass through the victim and this interaction appears to drag something out of the victim, which can be observed if one has a bio-etheric monitor.

Your body naturally prevents this from happening, which results in Phantoms passing through you harmlessly. Their particles don't linger within your body, a Meta-Phantom can pass through you and you'll just feel an odd sensation at worst, and similarly, other foreign bodies also can't establish a proper foothold within you. You're still better at rejecting spiritual/supernatural invasion, but conventional attacks like the common cold and nasty transmitted diseases are severely hampered by your resistance as well.

Should you run into a case where your spirit is intentionally attacked, this may help you flip the tables on the attacker. Rather than allowing them to possess you or manipulate your spirit, them engaging with you in this fashion locks them in a proverbial tug-of-war. Whoever is stronger will pull the other over to their side. Naturally, you still need to train to become mentally strong.

THE SOLDIER

Combat Doctrine 100(n)

Being the sole official military foundation conducting operations, the USMF is massive and while every soldier is given basic training, those who stick around to become career soldiers eventually opt into a specialization. With attrition rates being moderately high, and finding soldiers compatible for long term service increasingly difficult, the USMF is more than happy to train specialists to address the growing concerns heaped onto them by the UNSC.

Specialization	General Description
Combat Engineer	The engineering team for the USMF is responsible not only for the general maintenance of equipment, but also for the operation and deployment of field units such as bio-etheric buoys, sensors, and barrier maintenance. Accordingly, you're pretty handy at fixing, hot wiring, and jury rigging equipment, even if it isn't something that you have the blueprint memorized for.
DEEP Eyes	One of the few units comprised of veterans specializing in the destruction on Phantoms,

	you'll find that having the extensive combat experience involving Phantoms has honed your sixth sense – a third eye as it were. Even when the enemy is invisible, you'll be able to discern their presence based on hostile intent, and once you've "locked on" to them proverbially, you can follow their movements even if they disappear behind cover or retreat into the earth. That said, since Phantoms do tend to move in large numbers, you'll probably want to keep an eye on your surroundings too.
Heavy Weapons Specialist	As the specialization implies, you're an expert when it comes to using heavy weapons, seemingly capable of squeezing out a couple more rounds using the same clip, and using ammo more effectively regardless of the foe. Most notable is your proficiency with explosives, as you'll develop an instinct for where and when to apply explosives in order to maximize damage, and explosives you utilize seem to be far more effective than normal.
Homeland Security	An internal department used for determining if USMF security has the potential to be compromised. The General is a rather pragmatic man and prefers to keep an eye on every card in his deck. Within this specialization, you'll find that keeping tabs on the important people within the local area is an effortless endeavour. Even if they happen to be stuck in an elevator on an impromptu rendezvous, you'll know about it pretty much as soon as it happens. Of course, there are probably moments that you wouldn't care to know, so thankfully it isn't hard to filter out the information either.
Vehicles Specialist	It's reasonable to just call you a pilot, but the USMF does have some ground vehicles and this will train you in handling both the planes, ships, as well as ATVs and multi-purpose vehicles. By the end of the training period you'll have developed the knack for operating with perfect spatial and spectral awareness – whether you're in the air or on the ground, you'll have perfect awareness of inanimate, animate, and spectral entities in your surroundings. It's helpful if you don't want to fly headfirst into a Meta and die.

Timely Arrival 200

With humanity as severely outnumbered by the Phantoms as they are and each failed operation only increasing the difference in manpower, the USMF has no choice but to pick and choose the battles they fight. The geography itself works against the USMF, as they can only afford to station small platoons in the barrier cities scattered across the Earth. For a soldier like you, it means that you're going to be sent all over the place on various missions, maybe even sent into missions where you aren't expected to succeed.

You won't have much to rely on besides your team when it comes to ensuring mission success, but you can be assured that when you're assigned to a task, you'll always have the times to get there in time. No worries about delays, no worries involving sudden equipment failure, as long as you know where you need to go and the destination isn't impossible to reach, you'll be able to get on site and make a difference.

Disproportionately Dangerous Pathing 400

The arrival of the Phantoms redefined standard combat doctrine for the USMF. Though the first few attempts at driving the Phantoms back had the USMF treat the aliens as being much like humans, these operations were utter disasters, because unlike humans, the Phantoms were capable of effortlessly moving through solid matter. Bio-etheric energy gave the humans what they needed to harm the entities, but it didn't lessen the Phantom's terrain advantage.

Unfortunately for you, this means that should you be sent out into Phantom infested territory, you're more than likely going to walk into a Phantom ambush every so often, or find yourself pushed into a corner by Phantoms that conveniently pop up from the ground or through the walls. There is still a silver lining though – you have enough experience being thrown between a rock and a Phantom that escaping and regrouping is now second nature to you. If you're in a squad, as long as your squad follows along with you, they're more than likely to survive as well. Naturally, the members of your team that trust you are more likely to survive than those who don't – this difference could come in handy if certain people needed to...disappear.

And while the USMF prefers if their soldiers don't play up the heroics, you'll find that whenever you're in a pinch, things work out for the better if you're willing to take the over the top approach rather than the conservative approach. It makes little sense, but that's probably why it works in the first place, because not even a Phantom would expect you to leap off a bridge to make an escape, much less survive the fall. But you will, so you might as well make that leap as elaborate as possible. This effect extends to your companions by a lesser degree.

Thunder of Zeus 600

Given that fighting off the Phantoms is part of your job, it's important that you show up with the right tools. While the bio-etheric weapons are rather reliable, bio-etheric energy also happens to be what attracts Phantoms and when they come, they come in droves, capable of overrunning an entire barrier city in a matter of minutes. Even with a barrier city's worth of soldiers, they can only hold the line for so long – and that's if a meta-Phantom doesn't show up. Metas are generally too big for conventional bio-etheric weapons to be effective without heavily sustained fire from dozens of soldiers.

Now, you're no superhero, but you do have something that sets you apart from other soldiers – in that for some reason, you seem to have no problems harming Phantoms even with conventional weapons. Truth be told it probably isn't just Phantoms, but there aren't really many other entities that conventional weapons don't work against for you to test with. What you will notice though, is that your weapons have a tendency to cause critical chain reactions. You and another soldier could take a shot at the same oil drum, but your shot will cause the drum to explode into flames and set off every other drum in the vicinity. Sure, you'd want to keep it in check if you have to fire while civilians are around, but if you're up against a Meta...well, that kind of firepower would allow you to do what a whole squad can't.

There is a bit of a catch that you should be aware of – almost as if you're in a movie, the effectiveness of your weapons is somewhat dependent on your mood. When you're confident and motivated, your weapons are even more effective than usual. But when you're down or your heart isn't in the fight, your weapons – well, they'll work, but they won't be anywhere near as effective. Though when you're up against Phantoms, keeping your mind focused on the task isn't much of an issue, there's no real moral dilemma in shooting killer ghosts from space.

THE SCIENTIST

Scientific Foundation 100(n)

While most scientists in the United Nations' employ nowadays are solely focused on the study of Phantoms and developing countermeasures, these men and women came from a wide spectrum of academic backgrounds. When humanity finally managed to regroup and formed the UNSC, they quickly realized that the scientific community had been whittled down to a pale shadow of its former state, but without the scientists, there was no hope of understanding the threat. So, with scientists suddenly becoming a chief asset, the UNSC employed any scientist it could secure, even those who originally belonged to more esoteric fields of study. They were desperate for a solution, and the scientists were the only ones likely to provide them with one. Thankfully, this solution came in the form of bio-etheric energy.

As a scientist, you were originally studying something – though with most records being lost, no one but you will know what it was. Each time this is taken you can claim to be a researcher in a specific field, this can be anything from classical sciences to something more obscure like spiritual energy, ghost phenomenon, and xenobiology. This'll give you the prerequisite knowledge necessary for you to be recognized as a researcher, though you'll probably want to actually do some work with it in order to demonstrate there's some merit to your field.

Technobabble 200

As your knowledge in a field develops, it is only normal that the language you use will become more sophisticated. You'll encounter terms that are never seen in common conversation, and discussions between you and your colleagues may come off as cryptic to the uninitiated. Though you may not be out to intentionally confuse others, sometimes the time it takes to bring a layman up to speed isn't time that you can afford.

For moments like that, you might as well hit them with a wall of jargon, you'll find that works better when you need people to accept your stance on a matter and move on to more important things. Sometimes, if you use enough jargon, they'll even accept a premise that no ordinary person would consider if they had more than a few moments to think on it.

With all the practice you'll have, both in conversation and in your field of work, you'll find that deciphering the technical language used in other fields comes naturally to you as well. This can come in handy if you're in a conversation where the topic is clearly outside your intellectual comfort zone.

Pneumatology 400

While bio-etheric energy still isn't very well understood, the scientific community seems to agree that it is, to some degree, an energy source that stems from the spirit of living beings – a life energy as it were. The science branch of the USMF still doesn't quite understand it, but the military isn't concerned with understanding it, and neither is the majority of the population so long as it keeps the barrier cities up and running.

However, as a scientist you have some measure of responsibility to figure out if in fact, bio-etheric energy is some sort of life force converted into a different form. Only time will tell whether you succeed in this venture, but in the process you will learn a great deal more about life, spirits, and the bio-etheric energy that resides within living beings. So long as you're studying a living being, you'll find that they should possess a small parcel of bio-etheric energy.

If you could extract it in a safe manner, you could use this to re-create the technology in use by the USMF, or with a large enough supply, you could probably manufacture new technology of your own. Though one has to wonder, if the Phantoms were ever driven away from Earth, how would the planet change with this new energy source at hand?

Spirits Without 600

There's a theory called the "Gaia Theory" – most scientists consider it too farfetched to have any scientific basis and many councillors among the UNSC consider it too fanciful and too nonsensical to be given the time of day. Going by the theory, life as we know it stems from Earth itself – and while biology explains our physical bodies, the energy that resides within us belongs to the planet and returns to it after death. It's not hard to see why some people are vehemently against this idea.

But seeing as you're a scientist, regardless of whether you believe this theory holds any weight, you might as well test it out for yourself. If the theory holds true, then the planet should be capable of "recieving" spiritual energy. Well, the hypothesis is sound, but for a planet as large as Earth you may not necessarily have enough energy to make much of a difference. Instead, you can take a portion of your own vitality and invest it into another living being, this will convert into a pool of spiritual energy not unlike bio-etheric energy. But the part of this experiment tying back to the Gaia Theory occurs when they die, as only a part of the energy you invested will return to you. The remainder appears to merge with the subject's surroundings, enriching it. If you trace this energy for long enough, you'll find it will eventually migrate to another host.

Does this prove the Gaia Theory? Perhaps it does, but convincing other people of its validity may be a challenge. On the other hand, while investing your energy into another living being may seem like an extreme price to pay even if your energy replenishes, there's another part to the theory that may interest you. The Gaia Theory suggests that a living being will slowly cultivate the energy within them as they age and mature as individuals. The initial injection already appears to make them stronger and more resilient (mentally speaking), but if you're

willing to wait for long enough, you'll observe that the infused being can potentially multiply the "pool" of energy which was initially invested.

In cases where the subject comes into contact with an entity like a Phantom, the invested energy seems to capable of flaring up and driving the spectral intruder away. There's no scientific explanation for why this works, though one scientist's theory suggests that this is due to a specific wavelength countering the spectral phenomenon. Being as it is, it'll probably affect other entities similar to the Phantom as well. Alien ghosts and human ghosts are still ghosts after all.

THE COUNCILLOR

Department Assignment 100(n)

For easier organization and greater effectiveness, people within the new government are assigned to specific branches. While you could certainly opt not to affiliate yourself with any branch – associating with a branch does have its benefits in terms of the knowledge which will be imparted upon you, as well as an area of jurisdiction which others will recognize you by. This recognition persists even if you venture elsewhere, so long as there is something akin to a working government.

Branch	General Description
Defence	The department of defence has a very straightforward mandate – keep the Phantoms away and keep humanity's hopes alive. Generally overseeing the USMF, you have extensive pull when it comes to arranging for the deployment of troops, and if necessary, you can reroute assets towards objectives without needing to put it past a vote. Of course, it'd be best if you don't squander resources – but in the absence of an USMF, you'll still be able to conjure a small unit of soldiers appropriate to your locale for tasking.
Education	Though the adults may not have much hope, the children still need to have a future, and they can't do it without guidance from their more knowledgeable peers. While you're generally responsible for the education system as a whole rather than individual pupils, you won't encounter any problems when attempting to raise the overall intelligence of the population, and generally speaking all students within the system will find it easier to adopt specific professions and expertise. It won't be the same profession for every child for certain, but the odds of a child with absolutely no applicable talents is practically nonexistent.
Human Services	Dealing with manpower is more important than ever before, thanks to how few people managed to survive the disaster. Without people, there's no future, so every man, woman and child is important, and you're particularly talented when it comes to managing and cultivating a population. Under your watch, you can expect life expectancy, general quality of life, and the productivity of the populace to increase. Developments related to people also tend to occur quicker than normal.

State	Though the barrier cities are collectively managed under the UNSC, this department represents the individual barrier cities when issues regarding the cities' individual operations require special attention or immediate aid. Though you're not necessarily a minister of foreign affairs, your affinity towards diplomacy and ability to converse in other languages improves substantially – something which will come in handy if you have to deal with representatives from barrier cities elsewhere.
Treasury	It might be an alien induced apocalypse, but there's no denying the importance of regulating money and facilitating trade. People need goods to survive, and for that, they need trade to provide suppliers with the incentive to keep the chain moving. Your talents lie in this field, being able to stimulate the exchange of goods and the growth of the market. The general quality of goods produced will increase dramatically, markets will develop at a steady pace regardless of the economic climate, and you can also expect a small windfall of "side profits" to grace your account periodically. Money isn't of much use if you have nowhere to spend it, so you might as well ensure that the market is healthy.

VIP 200

Being a Councillor automatically makes you fairly important in the eyes of the people, even if you choose not to act the part. People may not be familiar with your responsibilities or your track record, but just by the way you carry yourself, they'll be convinced that you're the leader or acting representative...of something. And that means you're held above the rest.

This elevated level of importance does come in handy when disaster strikes, as people will instinctively try to shepherd you to safety with every means at their disposal. But because the people around you can become rather obsessive over this, it falls to you to make sure they keep a level head, and not make any rash and unnecessary sacrifices.

Emergency Protocol 400

Regardless of what department you opt to serve, it's important that you learn the necessary procedures for handling people in an emergency – because with the Phantoms being what they are, and bio-etheric technology still far from being perfected, an emergency is a matter of time rather than a faint possibility. Thankfully, you're a natural counter against the human tendency to spread panic when disaster strikes, and as long as you're willing to lead, people will tend towards orderly behaviour instead of losing their heads. As long as you don't succumb to panic, you'll become their proverbial anchor against the tide, and you'll find that whatever orders you give out will be followed to the letter, at least they'll give it their all.

Of course, you can test people out a little – give them a disaster response drill as it were. When it suits you, you can convince the people around you that there's a disaster going on. The more vague you are about what the disaster is, the more likely they are to believe you, and the less severe the repercussion is should they find out you were just yanking their chain. But so long as they do believe that there's an emergency, they'll be more than happy to follow your lead.

Suppression Speechcraft 600

The strength of a politician is illustrated by the number of avenues they have to tackle a problem, and politicians who are restricted to one solution will invariably fall victim to tunnel vision, even if they find a way to reframe every problem into something that their solution can address. Unfortunately the military officials of this world, having been backed into a corner time and time again, regularly operate in this fashion, and it makes for very difficult discussions when considering how to address the Phantom problem. It falls to you then, with your prodigious speechcraft, to smooth things over – or at least keep the military from driving the proverbial human vessel off the side of a sheer crevasse.

With words alone you can overwhelm a person, and while they may try to resist this if their position comes from a deeply rooted bias or a strong conviction, if you're allowed to talk for long enough, you'll eventually succeed at bringing them to a middle ground. Words being your weapons, as long as you're allowed to keep talking, your presence will steadily grow, making it impossible for your counterparts to ignore you – though your presence may get so overbearing that they can't actually put together what you're saying.

Of course, speechcraft isn't something that can only be used in a singular fashion. Just as you can use your words to diminish someone's misgivings or obstinacy, you can also use this to reinforce someone's stance or encourage them to action. Just choose your words wisely, as your words can condemn someone to an ignorance induced disaster just as easily as they can save them from it.

OTHER OPTIONS

Crossing the Valley 100

Back when the world was more peaceful and people had the time to stop and appreciate the world around them, the arts flourished and people made substantial headway into creating entire worlds with near-lifelike portrayals of landscapes, people, and societies. That time may be long gone, but your skills are a legacy of their endeavours. Your creations, be it through drawings, animation, sculpting or otherwise, are so lifelike that they can fool even Phantoms in believing that they're real. It would only be accurate to say that your creations have completely crossed the uncanny valley, to the point where people are instinctively drawn towards your creations. But what you make doesn't necessarily have to be beautiful – which can lead to rather odd reactions and conflicting emotions in your audience.

In any case, unless you put in the effort to remove your name from your craft, it is very likely that your reputation will increase dramatically with each piece that you make public. Sure, it may be hard to find an audience when the world is falling apart, but when you can make art this compelling, word of mouth becomes a rather dependable means of accruing fame.

Phantom Infection 200/400/600

Put simply, most people don't survive a Phantom Infection. The introduction of Phantom "particles" into a human body leads to body's systematic destruction as the Phantom moves through the patient. But in theory, it is possible to contain a Phantom within the human body without killing either the Phantom or the patient, and well, technically it has been applied in practice, but it has confirmed that some odd effects occur when a Phantom and a human remain in this close proximity for an extended period of time. Most importantly, depending on the state of the Phantom at the time of containment, the effects shift in severity. Higher infection levels retain the effects found at lower infection levels.

Infection Level	Effect
5%	At the lowest infection level there isn't a very pronounced effect, and you'll even escape notice from scanners and whatnot. However, you will find that the Phantom will attempt to communicate with you via your dreams. Here in this world, the dreams will reflect the past of the Phantoms, but you'll find that in other worlds, the dreams somehow reflect the past of those worlds – often involving pivotal moments that shaped the world's history.
50%	This level of infection would normally incapacitate a man and leave them near the brink of death, but in your case, it only seems to have strengthened your mental and spiritual fortitude. Those capable of detecting bio-etheric energy will notice that your body gives off a faint blue glow. If necessary, you can repulse Phantoms and other similar entities by emitting tendrils of your own, similar to the ones used by the Phantoms. Judging from their dreams, it would seem that the Phantoms used to use these as weapons, and they'll be very effective at fighting off all sorts of magical entities. The tendrils have a limited reach, though much like the Phantoms' tendrils, they can pierce through solid objects with ease.
99%	Despite the infection threshold, you're not actually a Phantom, rather, the Phantom that's residing within you has reached a state where it can actively manifest on its own. It can move independently, but it generally doesn't stray far away from you and will return if you happen to be threatened. While not immediately hostile except towards those you deem an enemy, be wary when you direct the Phantom to attack. This blue Phantom differs from its brethren in that while it still inflicts tremendous damage to foes, it doesn't yank out the souls of its victims like its brethren. Instead, every time it makes contact with a foe, it'll wound them while mentally assailing them with a memory. This is normally the same memory that you would have seen in the dream when the infection first began, but your symbiotic relationship with the Phantom allows you to manipulate the memory to one of your choosing.

Spirit of Rest 300

A long time ago, on a planet far away from Earth, a war broke out which resulted in the planet's destruction. The people of that planet condemned themselves, not only to the destruction of

their world, but also to a fate where they would be forced to “relive” their dying moments. As the fragments of their planet drifted through space, they relived the memory of the end, and this would repeat endlessly. Even when the shard that carried them crashed upon a distant world, the spirits that had been dragged along were not freed from their fate.

But if it's you, there's a chance that you can free them from this eternal prison. The spirits may be intangible, but you're capable of emitting a wavelength that can release them from the loop. This ability of yours isn't restricted to Phantoms either, entities of a similar nature to Phantoms, things that people would call “ghosts” or “lingering spirits” can also be freed with this. Though you can banish them outright, you don't have to, and removing them from their state of purgatory will have a distinct effect on their behaviour and how they influence others. With Phantoms for instance, once they've been neutralized, they are no longer immediately fatal to living beings upon contact – and they also turn blue instead of their normal orange hue.

Just keep in mind that some spirits may strongly abhor any kind of change, and may become even more aggressive when any sort of change begins to influence them. Being trapped in a loop is a quick method to warp one's mind, and spirits aren't known for being able to distinguish friend from foe, much less the Phantoms.

[COMPANION MODIFICATIONS]

Companions cannot take companions of their own.

The Irregulars 50/300

Import a companion for 50 points; companions go through the same entry procedure, but are granted 600 points to spend as they see fit, outside of purchasing companions.
You may import in a batch of 8 for 300 points, with the same benefits.

The Survivors 50/100

There are numerous survivors living in the scattered barrier cities across the world, but decades after the initial meteor impact, many of them have grown complacent, confident that the barriers will keep the Phantoms at bay indefinitely. Many people have resigned themselves to their fates, and the new generation has never known any other lifestyle except being huddled up within the barrier cities.

Finding someone that you can count on among the locals may prove difficult – but if you so wish, you can pay to arrange for meeting with the locals and make them a companion. If you prefer, you can opt to find them on your own and convince them to join you, at the lower cost. This option can be used to recruit anyone living in the world (regardless of whether they're in the main cast or not).

The Actress 100 (Free if Irregular Fantasy is active)

A young woman by the name of Aki Ross, who was told that this would only be a "short job", and it would be good for her acting portfolio. Because she had only trained to be an actor and has never actually taken part in a film, she was keen on accepting the offer and ended up...well, in this mess of a world.

Aki's core focus revolves around acting – she's rather obsessed over it, and as such her modifications revolve around improving her ability to act. Some of it may help her survive in this twisted world as well, but she's not too concerned about that. Rather than using standard resources to improve herself, Aki can pick **5** skills out of the following training list. Where reasonable, the training can be taken more than once.

Training	General Description
Acting Lessons	The most fundamental modification and the most basic, Aki may already be an actor, but without experience, she's not necessarily a good actor. This improves her ability to act, with the consequence of making her more proficient at handling a wide range of situations outside of her normal expertise. Taking this also enhances the effects of all other modifications.

Lone Actor	In today's world, finding people willing to consider acting is a substantial challenge. Most people would likely scoff at the idea as a waste of time, which means that Aki will probably have a tough time finding anyone willing to act with her. By the end of this training practice that shouldn't be much of an issue, as she'll be proficient enough to portray multiple roles, simultaneously if the need arises. Your audience won't question how she's doing this and successfully bending her personality to fit the role, so you probably shouldn't question it either.
Meisner Acting	This school of acting revolves around improvisation and being able to respond to circumstances without extensive deliberation or preparation. In theory, an actor proficient in this would develop a "natural instinct" that allows them to react as a situation unfolds, and this reaction would come off as natural and genuine. In practice, this greatly sharpens Aki's ability to assess her surroundings and take events into stride, also preventing her from being taken by surprise (unless the script demands it, of course).
Method Actor	Stemming from one of the original methods for teaching new actors, the theory behind Method Acting seeks to align the actor with the emotional state of the characters, with the intention of delivering a performance which could sincerely resonate with the audience. Following the doctrines of this method improves Aki's ability to recall situations and drastically improves upon her memory – to the point where she can re-enact circumstances that happened long before, even events which she only witnessed in passing. Her acting will become effective enough that those who watch her will feel as though they're drawn into the scene, like experiencing a memory.
Motion Capture	An odd technique which was originally used to prerecord movement sequences for simulation and projection purposes, Aki has somehow adapted this with her own body. By memorizing a set of actions in advance, she can perfectly recreate them when the situation demands it on set. The memorized actions became second nature to her, regardless of the difficulty or risk, so long as she can perform it properly in isolation.
Selfie Skills	An actress shouldn't be expected to have to film herself, but finding a film crew in this day and age can be a real challenge, so there could be merit to teaching Aki how to film herself. Oddly enough, this makes her capable enough to act and film at the same time, though exactly how this works is left completely unexplained – it's not clear if she knows how it works herself. It also helps her strike fancy poses more effectively, but that might not be due to the training...
Siren's Pull	Hailing back to an even older age when theatre was a bit more demanding for the actor, this training module is intended to teach Aki how to use her voice to greatest effectiveness. With her voice alone, she'll be able to captivate entire audiences, even if they don't understand what she's saying. As she gains confidence in this field, her charisma will surge as well, and people become drawn to her just by being around her.
Stunt Double	A practice for executing stunts where an actor is replaced with somebody who resembles them, but has the physical capacity to perform the stunt safely, in Aki's case this has developed in a rather odd fashion – another "Aki" will appear when Aki needs help, and this doppelganger's ability to perform stunts (and general physical activity) scales in proportion to Aki's ability to act.

Typecasting	Normally it would take multiple roles before an actor is typecasted, as it would take time for directors to notice what works with a given actor, and without the experience, the actor themselves would not have a good idea what type of role they're well suited for. This gives Aki the experience that would make her suitable to be typecasted (though some actors would abhor this, Aki doesn't seem to mind), and depending on the genre that she chooses to specialize in, Aki's overall skillset and expertise changes. Opting for horror genres makes her more competent in surviving against monsters, disaster flicks helps her respond to emergency situations better, science fiction gives her a fair measure of "scientific" knowledge.

Spirit Conversion 100 -> 50

If you have too many points and nowhere to spend it, this allows you to convert your points for your companions can use. Conversion occurs at the indicated rate, and applies to all of your companions. Only you can take this option.

[ITEMS]

Items taken by companions are bound to them. While items can generally be purchased multiple times, specific items marked with (+) have differences depending on how many times they have been purchased.

Hostile Environment Survival Suit 50

Specifically designed for use out in the wilderness, this suit has been tested in a wide variety of environments and guaranteed to protect and regulate the user's body environment regardless of their environment. Be it the harsh desert wasteland or a plasma incinerated crater site, the suit will ensure that the wearer remains protected and comfortable – provided that they don't jump head first into pool of lava or a Phantom. Since avoiding the Phantoms is standard procedure for anyone looking to venture outside the barrier cities, the survival suit is designed to minimize one's presence as much as possible.

Maxim Magazine 50

Left over from before the Leonid Meteor impact, one would expect this magazine to be an outdated relic, perhaps not even worthy of becoming a museum piece. But there's something odd with this magazine, likely something which has to do with why it is still in pristine condition. Someone born in this generation wouldn't know what "Maxim" even is, but this magazine focuses on depicting the most beautiful individuals across the world. And that's where the peculiarity with this magazine lies – it'll update to reflect the people that reside within the world you're in. When it comes to rating "beauty", the magazine doesn't exclude people who aren't flesh and blood. Alongside the pictures is a short description of who these people are and a little blurb about their history.

The magazine can come in either female or male exclusive editions, or an edition that includes both males and females.

Monoscopic Ear Mounted Goggle 50

These come in two models, one that consists of a single reticle is worn on the ear, and another that is closer to a traditional flip down goggle. Both of them serve the same function, allowing a normal human to see dense concentrations of energy, as well as spectral entities such as Phantoms. If you plan on living out in the wilderness, or even just going out for a trek every now and then, you're going to want one of these. Thankfully these work in all conditions, so if necessary, you can use them for night vision or to detect specific wavelengths.

Phase Armament 50

You can utilize this option to modify an existing piece of equipment, or you can opt to grab something out of the local armory instead. The weapons in use by military organizations such

as the USMC aren't too different from the weapons used before the arrival of the Phantoms – except they fire bursts of bio-etheric energy instead of hard bullets. The conversion process to integrate bio-etheric energy allows the weapon to affect spectral entities such as Phantoms, and instead of using conventional ammunition, the converted equipment runs off of rechargeable battery packs. Normally you'd need to recharge these off of a major bio-etheric energy source, but in the absence of that, you can simply wait for the batteries to recharge after a short period of time. For weapons and basic equipment, this doesn't take very long.

Portable Phantom Barrier 50/100/200

The defensive application of bio-etheric energy forms the backbone of the barrier cities, and scientists assume based on the Phantoms' reactions that at high enough concentrations under a specific wavelength, the same bio-etheric energy which normally attracts Phantoms can instead drive them away. Though its inner workings has led some scientists to develop "unorthodox" theories towards solving the Phantom problem, the barrier itself is a tried and true deterrance measure against the Phantom

The base foundation for the barrier technology nets you a man sized shield, a downscaled field emitter which will drive Phantoms and similar spectral creatures away as long as the emitter is active. You could technically use it to physically smash Phantoms, which will cause them to disperse if they're small enough. The **100** tier purchase is adapted to vehicles and small scale structures, something which could come in handy if you happen to be in the wilderness most of the time. The **200** tier purchase has a generator which is sufficient for protecting a barrier city on its own – even if the existing barrier happens to collapse.

Standard Configuration Ship 50+

A standard issue airship, used for transport of people and goods across different barrier cities as the land routes have all been compromised by the Phantoms. This ship has a pair of generators that can work independently, to ensure that outside of flying headfirst into a Phantom, the ship can remain operational indefinitely. It isn't exactly comfortable, but if necessary, you can have the ship maintain a holding pattern while you take a nap. Stay high enough, and even the flying Phantoms won't bother with you.

Modifications can be made to this ship – each modification costs **100 points**.

[800 Series Modification]

A prototype model that never manufactured en masse, the 800 series was adopted for research use, replacing the then redundant 500 series. With sophisticated scanning equipment and facilities on board to allow for research, surgery, and experiments, the 800 series suits a crew of scientists more than soldiers or civilians. It is particularly notable for having a built in launch vehicle and reentry assembly, allowing it to fly into space if necessary. However, it doesn't have many options as far as defence is concerned.

[Copperhead Tactical Modification]

The standard aircraft used by the USMC for offensive and reconnaissance purposes. Fast, maneuverable, and with hardpoints for a flexible loadout against Meta-Phantoms, the Copperhead is a strong first response unit for a wide range of situations. Because communications outside the barrier cities tends to falter, the Copperhead is often also used as a mobile headquarters with tactical assessment equipment. In operations where avoidance is valued over offensive strength, the Copperhead is capable of firing signal buoys, used to lure Phantoms away from a location by firing off weak pulses of bio-etheric energy.

[Pendulum II/600 Series Module]

A civilian use craft, taking inspiration from the original 600 series intended to shuttle civilians to a space habitat. However, construction of the space habitat never completed, and the Pendulum was adapted instead for emergency evacuation purposes. With a large passenger capacity and a sophisticated flight AI, this model is well suited for transporting people out of danger. Additional sensors built in help it track incoming entities, regardless of whether they are physical or spectral, and the flight AI can handle emergency evasion, even when following a pre-set flight pattern.

Dream Recorder 100

This device generally sees use in psychiatric practices, though it isn't uncommon for people to buy them for use at home. It functions in a fairly straightforward manner, once hooked up to a computer, you wear the reciever device and drift off to sleep. As long as you remain asleep, the device will capture every single dream you have, in a film reel fashion. The program automatically terminates should you wake up, and your dream is saved – either on a hard drive or in the recorder's internal memory banks for later review.

Gel Launcher 100

Commonly used by military units for AO insertion purposes, this launcher fires a slab of thick “gas” that resembles green ectoplasm. The slab kills the momentum of objects that enter it, so objects or people falling from a great height will be slowed to a stop without any physical consequence. After it absorbs the kinetic energy, the slab dissolves, allowing for the person inside to move unhindered. While described as a gas, in practice it appears to work more like a bed of goo, sans the slime.

OVO-Converter 100

A downscaled bio-etheric generator, which takes ambient energy from its surroundings and converts it into bio-etheric energy. You'll know that it works, because it glows a nice green color when “fully charged”, despite bio-etheric energy behind orange in application. No one knows why this is the case, but it doesn't seem to have any consequence on operation. The

converter can be hooked up to any piece of equipment which normally uses electricity, but it can also be used to recharge batteries or simply create a stockpile of bio-etheric batteries.

Phantom Canister 100

Used by science teams to create an isolated environment, this canister acts as both a containment unit for phantoms and a general life preservation unit when used to collect flora and fauna speciments. It is large enough to contain a medium sized Phantom, though it takes a bit of time to deploy. When used to isolate a Phantom however, it is best that you keep it hooked up to some sort of energy supply – bio-etheric energy works best for this. Otherwise the Phantom might just slip right out of containment, being a spectral entity and all.

Wrist Halo Lifeform Tracker & Tags 100

Typically used by research teams to do preliminary area surveys before they venture into the wilderness, this piece of equipment comes in two varieties, one that is a weapon attachment, and a standalone variant, but both work in a similar fashion. This launches a densely packed cloud of bio-etheric energy into the air, which disperses as it descends. The bio-etheric particles will mark any lifeforms that it makes contact with, be it physical or spectral entities, and the tracker itself reads the data to determine where the lifeforms are.

Via the user interface, lifeforms can be "tagged", which makes the bio-etheric particle latch onto the target and remain active as long as the target is active. While the device will lose track of them beyond a certain range, while they're within range you'll have constant information on their whereabouts.

Meteor Shard 200

It's a nice looking chunk of space rock. It also happens to be a very haunted chunk of space rock. Coming in a stable bio-etheric containment field, it makes for a nice lamp, illuminating a large area with a bright orange glow. Granted, the bright orange glow comes from the Phantom tendrils that occasionally prod at the containment boundary, but it is harmless and the rock isn't trying to break containment. There's likely a Phantom bound to the rock, and if the containment field were to drop, more Phantoms would likely emerge, so unless you're completely certain that you have the situation under control you should keep the field up.

The space rock has a rather peculiar effect. When people die in its vicinity, the rock seems to pull their spirits into it, and this creates a Phantom to add to the rock's "collection". These Phantoms act more or less as they would have if they were alive, though it is pretty clear that they're spirits at this point, and can only "communicate" as a Phantom normally would.

R-Analyzer Assembly 200

Following the appearance of the Phantoms and the manifestation of bio-etheric energy, research times across the world quickly developed new equipment to study both the new

energy source as well as the nature of the Phantoms. Many teams prioritized the latter, hoping to find a countermeasure to the alien threat.

And stemming from this focus, this analysis assembly was created as a medical testbed, intended to treat early stage Phantom infection. The venture was successful, resulting in an assembly which could not just isolate the Phantom "cells" within a patient, but track its movement and eliminate them with an otherwise unobtrusive bio-etheric laser. Though success wasn't guaranteed and some patients died regardless in some cases, the machine made it clear that infection was no longer a guaranteed death sentence.

This machine isn't restricted to Phantoms alone. It can analyze a patient and identify anything that would be foreign to the patient's body. A bio-etheric net can then be constructed, encasing the offending object, and the laser can be utilized to disintegrate the object while leaving the patient otherwise unscathed.

Atmosphere Cannon Assembly "Proto-Zeus" 300

In the recent years, an alternative plan to tackle the Phantom menace was set into motion, and a joint effort between several barrier cities led to the creation of a "prototype" countermeasure. Using the same theory between small scale bio-etheric weapons, a large scale weapon was created with the intention of obliterating the Phantoms at their source – the Leonid Meteor impact site. The logic was that a sustained beam of bio-etheric energy would be capable of reducing the meteor and the phantoms in the vicinity into ashes. But along the way, design complications arose, and it became apparent that sustaining the beam for an extended period of time was impossible without overloading the entire array.

This station and cannon assembly is a small scale variant of the existing Zeus Cannon – a proof of concept as it were, originally intended for demonstration purposes. With fewer bio-etheric batteries and a smaller barrel, the intensity of the beam is lower, but it is still sufficient for atmosphere to surface strikes in short bursts. Enough to cause major and indiscriminate damage to a small town or sections of a city. The station itself is automated, though the facilities in here can sustain a small crew indefinitely if the need arises. Like the actual Zeus Cannon, it would not be wise to fire this repeatedly, as the bio-etheric batteries need time to recharge between shots.

[SITUATIONAL MODIFIERS]

While there is no limit as to how many points you can accumulate via modifiers, be wary that certain modifiers combined together may lead to unpredictable situations. In addition to this, two specific modifiers have additional circumstances you should take into consideration when it comes to combinations.

Spirit of Misfortune +100

To call you unlucky would be an understatement, around you, things seem to go wrong on a regular basis, and in a world where everything is one phantom attack away from collapsing, that isn't a good trait to have. Rumours of you being a bad luck charm will spread quickly, and while you could avoid the repercussions by minimizing your interaction with others as much as possible, that may make survival a difficult task. If you don't do anything to dissuade others from growing your reputation, don't be too surprised if it gets blown out of proportion. You might find that people assume you to be unluckier than you actually are.

Sadness of Spirit +100

Since the initial meteor impact, things have only been steadily getting worse. The humans that managed to make it to safety lost their family, their belongings, their homes, all but their lives. But that wasn't to be the end of it. As time passed, it became apparent that Earth was not going to be reclaimed, and worse still, the barrier cities were not fullproof. As barrier cities started to fall, the remaining survivors realized that their last bastions weren't as safe as they had thought. Some people hardened in anticipation for the worst. Others...simply gave up on hope, and on life.

This world is a bleak place, and regardless of whether the Phantom threat can be driven back, there are many people who have lost the will to live. While trying to raise people's spirits isn't a futile endeavour, it will require concentrated effort, and the slightest setback will put your efforts to waste. But if you don't try, there might not be enough of a population to rebuild, even if the Phantoms are dealt with.

Twisted Spirit +100

Desperate times create desperate men, and not everyone has the right mindset to face the end of human civilization. Some people are driven into a very particular mindset; be it cold anger, or resigned sorrow. You aren't any exception to this. In light of the circumstances, your emotional state that become somewhat polarized – one particular emotion influences you to a much greater degree than others. While the emotion overwhelming you may not necessarily be negative, the intensity of the emotion will lead you to make choices which don't make much sense given your circumstances. While there certainly are other people similarly afflicted by intense emotions like you – don't expect them to be understanding of your plight.

Malignant Spirits +200

Based on what the researchers have been able to determine, the Phantoms are attracted to dense energy concentrations, in particular clusters of bio-etheric energy. But while they're driven to seek out bio-etheric energy, most Phantoms don't appear to be aggressive unless they're attacked. Scientists have theorized that the Phantoms are acting on their curiosity rather than in aggression, though given that the consequence of "curiosity" happens to be death, perhaps the difference is merely academic.

Well, you're about to face what happens when the Phantoms are intentionally aggressive. Similar to what happens when they're "feeding" on bio-etheric energy, the Phantoms will attack anything in sight, which for larger variants means they'll just run straight through living beings and kill them. The barrier cities may keep the Phantoms at bay...but if there's a slight power outage or one of the barrier layers fails...the city and its denizens are as good as dead.

Spirit Hunt +200

The ongoing theory developed by Doctor Sid of the USMF Science Branch involves a set of eight "spirits", necessary for the creation of a wave pattern capable of nullifying the Phantoms' energy signature and potentially destroying them. The problem is that Doctor Sid's research isn't held in high regard among the other branches of the USMF, and so efforts into finding these Spirits have been lackluster at best.

The problem is that the Phantoms seem to understand the threat that the Spirits possess, because they're now aggressively moving towards the Spirits. Should the Phantoms manage to secure the Spirits...well, Doctor Sid's theories will likely remain forever untested. And humanity will lose one of the few cards they have left to play.

Second Impact +200

The Leonid Meteor which struck Earth decades ago was enough to devastate human society, and initially it was assumed that its arrival was a freak event – a one time occurrence that only happened by cosmic chance. But the scientists were wrong on this. The Leonid Meteor was a fragment of something bigger, something which shattered into hundreds of fragments, and following in the "shadow" of the Leonid Meteor is a second fragment.

It's hard to say whether Earth, be it the planet or the spirit of Gaia, will be able to endure another meteor. If the Leonid Meteor brought Phantoms along with it, then undoubtedly this meteor will as well. It isn't as though Earth has no defences – but its greatest asset in stopping a second meteor is currently pointed in the wrong direction, and convincing the people in charge that they need to worry about a second meteor may take quite a bit of effort.

Irregular Fantasy +300 [*You've been issued a new objective*]

[*This modification has a special consequence on the companion known as (**The Actress**)*]

If humanity is to have a future, then someone needs to do something in order to ensure that they can survive in the present. The barrier cities may keep people alive, but they're not truly living – they're just waiting for the day when they die in their glowing coffin. There's someone who is out to change that and for some reason, she's dead set on making you her producer.

That person is Aki Ross, an actress. Not to be mistaken with Aki Ross, a scientist in the employ of the USMC Science Branch. Her dream is to make a movie that won't just be *one of the best sci-fi films ever made*, she wants to make a movie that will motivate people to live their lives to the fullest even in the face of an extraterrestrial invasion.

Needless to say, it's a pretty big ask when most people are more concerned with whether they'll live to see tomorrow rather than where to watch a movie.

But it's your problem – because your objective is to ensure that Aki's dream is fulfilled. That is – to make a movie starring Aki which will successfully instill a renewed sense of hope into human society. The movie also needs to be commercially successful for the decade while you're here, but that's a separate problem. If you don't have any idea of what to make, Aki's proposal is a movie called "Spirits Within" - a science fiction romance drama. But she's not much of a screenwriter, or much of a writer in general – so her idea has more than few holes in it.

She'll defer to you (because you're her esteemed director) when it comes to executive decisions such as the movie's focus, genre and theme, as well as the logistics involved with making and distributing the movie. But your first major issue is still going to be the presence of the Phantoms – if the Phantom problem isn't solved, very few people will be in the mood to watch a movie. It doesn't seem like Aki is too concerned though, she just wants to get started.

If you lack the equipment necessary, it may be possible to procure aid from the various research teams scattered across the barrier cities, though convincing them that it's a worthwhile allocation of resources may be a challenge. Similarly, finding other actors could be an issue, especially if you happen to be at the 42nd Barrier City...where the "other" Aki Ross happens to live. Somebody will inevitably mistake one for the other.

Assuming you find everything you need, release the movie, and it is a sincere success that resonates with the people in the way Aki was hoping, well, your objective is met. Aki, if she happens to be a companion, will gain an additional **3 choices** for use in her actor training.

Post Fantasy +500 [*You've been issued a new objective*]

If humanity is to have a future, then someone needs to do something in order to ensure that they can survive in the present. The barrier cities may do a good job of keeping people alive, but space is limited within the barrier cities and the environment isn't exactly conducive for

raising the next generation. For some odd reason, the councils of each barrier city has elected you to be the one responsible for ensuring that Earth's reclamation is a success.

It's no small task, and in some way, it feels like you were chosen on a whim. A moment of madness on the councils' part. But at least they've agreed to provide you with what support they have available – technology, expertise, personnel. There's a catch though, if you seem like you don't know what you're doing, they'll retract that support.

So, there's the **immediate** problem that you need to deal with, and that's the Phantoms. If you're going reclaim Earth, the Phantoms need to go, or the threat that they pose needs to be neutralized. Different factions have different approaches in mind with regards to the Phantom problem, but you can choose which approach to back – or propose one of your own.

So, you take the Phantoms out of the equation, but that's only the **beginning** of the real reclamation process. The people can't live in the barrier cities forever, but the surface isn't hospitable either. The old cities are in ruins, and the Phantoms have turned most of the landscape into a wasteland due to their ability to unintentionally kill off living beings by walking through them. Which means the first order of business is to restore the flora and fauna balance across the Earth. The scientific databases within the barrier cities should contain records of the species which were lost, but figuring out how to recreate them will be your problem.

Now, technically, you don't *need* to tackle this problem, you could **instead** address the infrastructure issue and work on reconstructing the cities which are in ruins instead. But without the necessary flora and fauna foundation, it may be hard to sustain a sizeable human population even when there's plenty of room to live in.

Essentially, the first phase of reclamation involves setting up the foundation which will become humanity's new cradle. The second phase involves restoring the population back to the pre-impact levels, and this phase is what makes up the core of your objective. You need to achieve a rate of growth which will ensure that the human population doesn't suffer from any genetic bottlenecks, and **every year for the decade that you're here**, the human population needs to **double**. Ensuring that this population quota is met and ensuring that the growth rate is sustainable, well...now you're aware what the challenge behind this objective is.

In actuality, you don't have that much to work with. If residences and food aren't of any concern, people will naturally be inclined to start families, but they need a way to sustain a living. The first couple years when the population is relatively low, doubling it shouldn't be an issue. But as the population increases, keeping it sustainable will become a greater challenge, especially if some of the barrier cities are located in regions which have very little in the way of natural resources. It'll be up to you to figure out a solution to the looming logistic nightmare.

Notes

Despite its name, Spirits Within only has passing references to Final Fantasy and is a post-apocalyptic science fiction film with hostile alien ghosts and a self resolving plot that tends follows a very specific sequence of events. If it is unclear, you start at the beginning of the movie, and the plot resolves itself relatively quickly, though the starting location of New York Barrier City is potentially quite dangerous to stick around in, so there's reason to migrate if you want to wait out the plot.

The 100-tier perks of each background was used as a test bed for "table perks". Each base 100 option allows for a table of different perks, but taking it once increases the cost when it is taken again (By 100. The first one would be free within the background. The second would be 100 within the background, or 200 outside, the third would be 150 or 300, 4th would be 200 or 400, etc.). The 100 options themselves are "related" via a common theme. Arguably the system would probably work better if the 100s themselves were individually more effective. In practice, with the setting being what it is, they're more useful early than late.

Perk Notes

The Survivor	
Survival Instincts	*A set of skills aligned towards [surviving in a goddamn wasteland with ghosts]
Wasteland Rose	*You are unnaturally beautiful for someone who should have limited to no hygiene measures available to them. Infections, diseases, and illnesses have no visible effect on your physical appearance. *Dirt and grime doesn't stick to you, and when you do get dirty, a light breeze is enough to blow it off. This effect influences equipment you wear.
Alien Presence	*People that have never encountered you before, will "ignore" you, in the sense that they will not be immediately hostile or friendly towards you – regardless of whether your appearance or natural traits makes it reasonable for them to be apprehensive. *Unauthorized attempts to scan you and match you to databases or determine your identity will fail to register any matches. *This applies regardless of species (i.e. it'll also affect alien creatures)
Anti-Body	*You resist the typical effects of foreign body invasion. In context of FF:SW, this means you don't end up dying when you come into contact with a Phantom. This applies to foreign bodies such as diseases and chemical/biological agents. *Your soul/spirit is anchored to your body. Unwanted attempts at manipulating your soul/spirit will backfire on the offending party, and if they're too weak, will contaminate their spirit with yours, subjecting them to your mental influence.
The Soldier	
Combat Doctrine	*A set of skills aligned towards various aspects of military expertise.
Timely Arrival	*You have a knack for showing up at the last possible moment, be it to save someone, or stop something from happening, or meet a deadline. This doesn't actually ensure that you'll succeed, but rather that as long as you're aware of the event happening, you can arrive in time to affect the outcome. *This works using means available in the world you're in – if there is no means of transport that can get you to the location in time based on the world's

	technology/magic, it will fail.
Disproportionately Dangerous Pathing	*You have a talent for finding a way out of dangerous situations such as ambushes, being surrounded, and being trapped in a collapsing city (major disasters). Those who tag along with you have a far greater likelihood of making it out alive of dangerous situations. This protection strengthens based on your bond to the individual in question. *Flashy stunts and maneuvers are substantially less dangerous regardless of the circumstances. The flashier the maneuver, the less of a backlash it will have (i.e. jumping off a bridge is hurts you less if you make sure to kick out a window and front flip out instead of just walking out).
Thunder of Zeus	*Your weapons and attacks are more effective against entities that they should normally have no effect on (such as using physical weapons against ghosts). Collateral damage caused by your actions is increased – explosions occur more frequently and affect a greater area, chain reactions become more common. *The strength of your weapons is influenced by your emotional state, the more intense it is, the more effective your weapons become. Be wary that if you lose control of your emotional state, the strength of your weapons can start to fluctuate wildly.
The Scientist	
Scientific Foundation	*Used to attain scientific proficiency – doesn't actually use a table, uses the same cost format, allows people to just learn base scientific knowledge.
Technobabble	*People will casually accept your opinion about a subject as long as you throw in jargon/"sophisticated language", regardless of whether your choice of words has anything to do with the subject at hand. Even when talking about topics where common sense should prevail, people can still be influenced by this against common sense. *Deciphering jargon and context sensitive language becomes easier for you, even without understanding of the context.
Pneumatology	*The study of spirits – allows you to identify and discern the nature and qualities of other spirits. Allows you to interpret spirits/souls in the form of energy (bio-etheric energy), and manipulation of this energy can lead to mental changes within the associated entity. *Allows for the development of technology utilizing this energy, weapons, scientific tech, etc. - powered by the energy of spirits.
Spirits Without	*Allows you to instill spiritual energy into living beings, using your own lifeforce as a donation source if necessary. This reinforces them on a mental and spiritual level – the stronger your spirit is, the stronger the protection ward becomes. *The spiritual energy donated within a creature will grow as the creature itself grows and attains experience. The spiritual energy grows quickly as long as the host is active and accumulating experience from a variety of sources – but this growth eventually hits a plateau, depending on the base strength of the host. *A creature with any sum of spiritual energy can expend it in a quick burn to purge entities such as the Phantom, ghosts, spirits, demons and other entities which may be susceptible to spiritual force. On the other hand, if the host dies, a portion of the spiritual energy that they've cultivated will return to you, while the remainder will merge into the world, before looking for another living being to take residence in.

The Councillor	
Department Assignment	*A set of skills aligned towards [keeping people under control in an apocalyptic hellhole]
VIP	*People prioritize keeping you alive over normal priorities, and as long as other people are present (and not antagonistic towards you), they'll try their best to get you to safety in an emergency situation. *Even if your social standing is unknown, people intuitively defer to your authority as long as you seem to know what you're doing.
Emergency Protocol	*As long as you're taking charge, people around you will not panic in an emergency situation. They're capable of thinking rationally and following orders to the best of their ability. Attempts to disrupt their mental condition and awareness are suppressed as long as you continue to coordinate them. *Regardless of the circumstances, you can convince people that there is an emergency situation unfolding in order to seize control. In the event that this is a complete fabrication, eventually they'll catch on and "free" themselves from your influence, but they'll assume that it was a drill and your intentions were not malevolent.
Suppression Speechcraft	*You excel at pressuring people into reconsidering their positions, hesitating on decisions, and rethinking their positions using nothing but words. The aggressiveness of your language and your natural charisma multiplies your physical presence and diminishes the presence of those around you, passively influencing exchanges in your favor. *In an argument, if you happen to be forceful enough, people lose track of what it is that you're actually saying and those speaking in opposition to you second guess their own claims. *People motivated by you have extremely hardened resolves to the point of temporarily forgetting their moral qualms.
Others	
Crossing the Valley	*Your creations are easily mistaken for being the real thing - be it dolls, virtual simulacrums, drawings, statues, bodies – people cannot distinguish the difference unless they scrutinize it closely for a moderate period of time. *There is something inherently alluring about your creations – even if it goes against normal aesthetics. *Your creations have an effect on your reputation – the more of them there are and the more people that see them, the more people hold you in high regard – even if they've never met you in person.
Phantom Infection	*A multi-tier option that increases in effect per tier. Reflects the abilities of a Phantom.
Spirit of Rest	*Pacifies hostile spirits, and encourages them to depart peacefully. Weaker spirits are immediately purified, whereas stronger or larger spirits will typically cease activity or depart while attempting to make the least amount of disturbance possible. *Can be used to subjugate spirits entirely, the "blue ghost" effect signifies that they've been completely subjugated. Subjugated ghosts are rendered harmless towards allies, even if their normal physical traits may be harmful.