Storm Hawks v1.1

Jumpchain compliant

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In the distant path, a sudden cataclysm nearly destroyed the world. The Earth was cracked and burned by unending seismic activity, and continent-spanning toxic clouds killed many of those who managed to escape their crumbling cities. As chaos raged around them, people took shelter in places high above the poison, the heat, and the monstrosities that consumed the surface of the world.

Now the name 'Terra' is reserved for those few places that can support life. In the world of Atmos, these mountaintop kingdoms are protected by oath-bound squadrons, aerial combatants known and respected as Sky Knights.

While there are many independent Terras and minor powers, two blocs dominate the known world – The democratic Sky Knight Council attempts to wrangle the squabbling Terras into something resembling unity, acting as mediators to promote trade and settle disputes. The Cyclonian Empire is an expansionist, militaristic society that has retained more old-world technology than any other Terra, and wishes to see civilization rebuilt and past glory reclaimed…which they believe can only happen once Atmos is united under a single banner.

A decade ago, a conflict erupted between these two powers that saw several Terras destroyed. A daring assault on Terra Cyclonia itself by a coalition of Sky Knights failed after the inexplicable betrayal and defection of one of the original Storm Hawks. The war reached a stalemate, and the two sides agreed to a cease-fire that has so far kept an uneasy peace between them.

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Atmos is a world ruined, with scattered pockets of civilization connected by daring travellers and skilled navigators. Terras are isolated by a volcanic wasteland under a toxic cloud layer, while massive creatures swim within the lava and fly among the clouds. Pirate clans hide where oceans once existed, living within ships modified to survive the pressure of the deep murk, mutated through generations of inbreeding and exposure to toxins.

And in the forgotten corners of the world exist wonders of a lost age...

You have 1000cp to spend, and ten years to explore this world.

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Roll 14+1d8 for your age and keep your gender from the previous Jump, or pay 100cp to change either result.

Location: Roll 1d8 or spend 100cp to choose.

1 - Terra Atmosia

The Sky Knight Council is situated here, one of Atmos' most heavily populated Terras. Protected by the Red Eagles, it also holds the Aurora Stone, one of the most powerful crystals known to exist. Its emanations reach every corner of the known Atmos and are used as a navigational beacon.

2 - Terra Cyclonia

Center of the Cyclonian Empire, this is the largest Terra on Atmos. A hundred jagged spires have been hollowed out and connected by bridges, its people existing under a perpetual storm. Life here is harsh and strictly regimented, for while Cyclonia boasts the world's greatest military force and industrial capacity, the Terra is unsuitable for growing food and the fragile supply from Cyclonian colonies are stretched to the limit by state-mandated asceticism.

3 - Terra Neon

A glittering Terra dominated by a popular amusement park, this Terra survives by virtue of its popularity. The park is distinguished as much for its constant activity as the occasionally perilous rides and attractions.

4 - Terra Tropica

A tropical jungle surrounded by clear blue water within a massive caldera. While peaceful and popular as a vacation spot, it suffers from the occasional freak storm.

5 - Terra Wallop

Home of the Wallops, two linked mountaintops with a distinct resemblance to clenched fists. Somewhat isolationist, non-Wallops are not particularly welcome here.

6 - Terra Blizzaris

Re-named after a group of Blizzarians managed to push out the local Reptons, who occasionally make raids in retaliation. The Absolute Zeros squadron is based here, and transformed the former desert into a frozen tundra through the use of a powerful Blizzard Crystal.

7 - Terra Bogaton

Covered in sparse trees and sweeping grasslands, this is the home Terra of the Repton race. Intruders that survive the surprisingly sophisticated anti-air defense system are hunted on the ground by the current ruling warlord and his cronies. Reptons consider eating defeated enemies an excellent method of proving their superiority over other races.

8 - Your choice

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Backgrounds:

Drop-in - You arrive in this world as you are, with no memories or knowledge of it. You have identification that allows for your presence upon the Terra you arrived at, and local coinage enough for a few day's stay at a decent hotel.

Technician (100cp) - You were raised among machines, with a civilian job or one of the lucky few taken on as support to a Sky Knight squadron. Technicians are required to be multidisciplinary in scope, able to repair almost anything they come across. Resources are scarce in Atmos, and you're adept at performing field repairs with little more than scrap metal and twine.

Sky knight (100cp) - Through parentage or patronage, you have been accepted as a Sky Knight. Knights enjoy the respect of Atmos, and can expect small favors and preferential treatment upon any Council-aligned Terra. Though most noted for their piloting, combat may occur anywhere, and every Sky Knight is trained in survival, navigation, and to fight with both skimmers and blades.

Crystal mage (100cp) - No one can say for sure where Crystals came from...natural creations, relics of the world before, or a side-effect of the cataclysm, but a few individuals have a special connection to them. Needing no machines to control them, understanding their nature with a glance and calling forth their power with a gesture, Crystal Mages are in tune with the strange energies contained within these stones.

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Optional:

Wallop (100cp) - A race of rhino-people with small horns and rough skin. On average not very intelligent and easily confused, but are far stronger and more robust than humans. Pray you never have any tooth problems during this Jump.

Blizzarian (100cp) - A lapine species, their fur is predominately some shade of blue, but white or red highlights are common. Adapted to cold weather, they are an agile and energetic race. Polite and well-regarded by the majority of Atmos, they have a curious accent and a strange verbal tic, often finishing sentences with 'Eh.'

Aquanosian (100cp) - Amphibious and intelligent, Aquanosians rarely stray far from the few Terras that can support large bodies of water. They have colonies on almost all such Terras, providing food through aquaculture and aggressively defending these life-giving Terras with a zeal matched by few. They can see clearly in near-darkness, their eyes having distinctive bright gold irises and dark sclera of varying shades.

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100cp perks are free for your background, all others in that category are discounted.

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Drop-in

100cp – Altitude adjustment

You have acclimated to life high above ground. A rugged cardiovascular system gives you increased stamina and other incidental health benefits. Stagnant and oxygen-poor air does not bother you, and you can hold your breath for quite some time.

200cp – Ragged hood

When traveling in harsh environments, one does not always have the luxury of proper gear. With this perk, any piece of cloth large enough to cover your body will protect you as well as the best survival gear, keeping you cool in the desert, warm in the snow, and making you unappealing to insects.

400cp – Megafauna friendly

You have a facility with creatures who would otherwise view you as a tiny snack. Creatures on the scale of dinosaurs or larger do not attack you unless provoked or particularly hungry, and a heightened sense of empathy towards such creatures makes them easier to train. In the short term, a cautious approach might allow you to hitch a ride.

600cp – An ocean by any other name

Wind and waves cannot dissuade you from your path. You are at ease within a storm, able to accurately predict the weather and account for how it affects you and any craft you pilot. This Perk covers ‘weather’ in all its forms, be it solar wind and gravity tides, or even the strange energies of hyperspace and similar realms, as long as such things are a natural phenomena and part of the environment. No matter where or how you sail, you will never (permanently) lose your way, but this perk does not guarantee survival should you press your luck.

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Technician

100cp – Weatherproofing

Sand will never choke your vents, sea spray will never rust your gears. When traveling, you quickly learn how to adapt your constructions to endure existing environmental conditions. This perk will even help you adapt machines to function in outer space or even stranger places, but such esoteric engineering puzzles may take decades of work to crack.

200cp – Skimmer Tech

Besides general skill in engineering, this perk teaches you the tips and tricks in making vehicles that can transform without sacrificing performance or functionality. Unlike the clunky and off-balance vehicles that others may pilot, your craft maintain high performance in any form. In theory you could include as many alt-modes in a vehicle as you wish, but the base tech level of the Storm Hawks Jump prevents having more than one alt-mode without impacting your craft's integrity.

400cp – Arcane Interface

While many places and inanimate items are magical, magic itself normally requires a living thing to evoke it. Not so with this perk. You gain insight into creating a technological interface for magical items so that people not versed in magic can pick up and use them. Send a golem instructions through a PDA, or activate a portal with a TV remote. For those capable of magic, this Perk also gives insight into designing spells that manipulate technology, such as conjuring complex machines or altering computer data.

600cp – Universal adapter

The laws of physics state that all energy can be transformed, and this perk teaches you how. The efficiently of this process depends directly upon your skill, equipment and the energies involved – some forms of energy are simple enough, like heat or electricity, that you could produce generators powered through magic that are far better than those of 21st century Earth. In the other direction, mystical energies can be generated from mundane sources, though the process isn't terribly efficient. Some of the more esoteric energies will require truly staggering amounts of power before you can can even begin to attempt to create them.

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Sky knight

100cp – Sky-fu

You are trained in Sky-fu, a martial art emphasizing acrobatic feats and precise timing. The timing part is very important, in case you want to jump off an aircraft in flight, land on an enemy ship, stab the pilot a few times, and then jump back to your own aircraft. Which is a surprisingly common tactic in this world.

200cp – Air Assist

The very air favors you and assists your movements. The more wind blowing freely in an area, the more of a boost you receive. Run across an open plain, and feel the wind quite literally at your back, pushing you onwards. Leap across a chasm, and feel yourself lifted by a sudden updraft. Find yourself in the middle of a tornado, and make wuxia masters weep with envy.

400cp - Aerial Ace

You no longer think in two-dimensional terms like a common dirt-walker. Thinking in three-dimension space as a proper flying creature should, you are at home in the air. You are a master pilot with superhuman reflexes, and vertigo is a thing of the past. All the better to out-fly and out-shoot anyone with the temerity to challenge you in the sky.

600cp - Iron steed

Any vehicle you pilot temporarily gains a low sentience, like a well-trained horse. It instinctively understands your desires and works to support you, becoming faster, tougher, and more responsive to your commands. You will also never suffer minor annoyances like saddle sores or cramps from extended operation. This perk works on any vehicle regardless of size. This perk will never grant a craft true sapience, but the more complex the systems it possesses the smarter it seems to become. Should your 'vehicle' be a living creature or else already intelligent to a degree, the two of you form a potent empathic bond that can rapidly transmit complex information.

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Crystal mage

100cp – Desperate casting

Sometimes you don’t have the luxury of casting a proper spell. This perk allows you to rip the magical energy out of something at a split-second's notice and throw it. What happens depends upon the kind of magic you drew upon, but you have almost no control of the result which usually defaults to a blast of chaotic energy. This is a very unpleasant experience if used on people, and people will instinctively resist if you try to draw from them. Drawing energy from places of power or magical items is much easier, but can be disruptive and damaging to the source if performed more than a few times.

200cp - We did the Mash

Sometimes you don't have the right crystals, either. You can crudely-but-effectively combine multiple effects together. Create a portal that heals all who travel through it, throw invisible fireballs, or teleport and leave a illusory duplicate in your place. The combined effects are much weaker than they would have been independently, but the ability to create new tricks on the fly is often worth it.

400cp – Wireless interface

With a short ritual, you attune yourself to a magical item to benefit and draw from its power at a distance. Armor and protective talismans no longer need be worn to shield you, and the connection between you allows for activation and control without the need for command words and the like. This also grants you telekinetic abilities, using the flow of magic as a lever to move attuned items or yourself through the air. Too many connections will cause interference with each other, producing odd side-effects.

600cp – The Binding

No longer limited to forming bonds with items, you can form deep magical bonds with other people. With the right crystals to provide power, you can easily grant superhuman levels of strength or speed to others, or even allow them to fly. A fully-developed Binding allows this energy to flow both ways, sharing such powers between both you and another. These bonds are potent and not easily broken, able to support and strengthen other mystical abilities that depend on having connections with other beings. Though the Binding is normally built upon trust, friendship or other positive emotions, it is difficult but possible to use this offensively as a way to bypass an enemy's wards and protections. Beware though, for such connections cut both ways, and you will want to be discerning in who or what you open your soul to.

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Items:

Musical accompaniment (0cp, optional) - Whenever you go into battle, you may wish for a setting-appropriate entity to appear and provide an personalized musical score perfect for the situation that boosts your performance and the morale of your allies. No one considers this unusual, and the creature/person/thing can't be harmed, though it can't assist you in any way besides providing music. However, should you suffer a serious setback or even be on the end of a particularly cutting insult or remark, the musician will come to an abrupt demise. Only a pair of smoking boots, the echo of a mournful note, the smoking wreck of their instrument or some other morbidly comedic detritus will remain. Your enemies will find this so hilarious that they receive a boost to morale and ability for the remainder of the battle.

Uniform (Free) - You gain an outfit plus spares appropriate to your background. Civilian garb, sturdy coveralls, pilot's leathers, or a comfy set of loose robes with concealing hood.

Firebolt crystal (50cp) - The standard weapon among Cyclonian forces, the firebolt crystal can be set to enhance a blade, giving it an aura of intense heat, or used in a special mounting to launch fiery projectiles. This particular crystal is of excellent quality, good for about a hundred shots or an hour of continuous operation. Recharges by absorbing ambient heat.

Striker crystal (50cp) - A less lethal weapon-crystal than the firebolt, favored by Sky Knights. The striker crystal surrounds blades in an electrical aura that is tuned to shock and stun opponents. These crystals are also far more stable than firebolts, and specialized mountings are not required - a Sky knight can discharge waves of energy as he swings his weapon with the press of a button. Has roughly the same energy capacity as a firebolt crystal, but requires electricity to recharge.

Power crystal (50cp) - You gain twenty power crystals of varying size. The smallest thumb-sized crystals can easily power a skimmer for an hour of operation, while the larger crystals are used to power carriers. The larger these light blue crystals are, the more energy it can contain, but the less stable it can become during operation, so most engines are designed to draw small amounts of power from multiple crystals. Power crystals can't be recharged, their charge determined by the amount of heat, pressure and other energies absorbed during their formation.

Wing pack (50cp) - This compact, lightweight hang glider folds into a thin backpack when not in use. Often carried by Sky knights should they be knocked from their skimmers. Not capable of true flight, but there are usually strong enough air currents in the vastness between Terras for a skilled or lucky pilot to travel a respectable distance in an emergency.

Skimmer (100cp) – The weapon of choice for fighting in the sky, skimmers are transforming motorcycle/split-wing aircraft. From the standardized Talon Switchblade used by Cyclonian troops to the customized models unique to each Sky Knight squadron, every skimmer comes equipped with a radio and hardpoints for weaponry. You may instead pilot a heliscooter, a smaller rotorcraft noted for greater fuel efficiency and maneuverability.

Crystal stockpile (200cp) - You have a dozen Crystals, each able to produce effects of middling power and utility. One might record and replay messages, another might raise or lower the ambient temperature in a room, or project complex programmed illusions. Generally, each of these Crystals are able to duplicate a piece of 21st century technology in a smaller and more efficient package. If you are not a Crystal Mage, the technological interfaces needed to control these Crystal's functions are included.

Beacon Crystal (200cp) - A stronger duplicate of the Aurora Stone, this potent Crystal can be tuned to send out a signal that can easily be received through even the harshest interference. The energy released is subtle and interacts with only specifically tuned receivers, and the signal strength is directly proportionate to the amount of power you feed into it, anywhere from across a room to across a continent - or a star system. Or maybe more, should you have that much power at your disposal.

Knuckle busters (200cp) - Powered by a nimbus crystal, these Wallop weapons generate an energy field that effectively amplifies the user's strength many times over, but they require great strength to control. While a human can expect to juggle skimmers or punch through hull plating with these, even small gestures made carelessly can generate enough momentum to pull you off your feet.

Carrier (300cp) - Even the best skimmers lack amenities, and not many Terras are close enough that a trip between them can be made in a single day. Sky Knights and Cyclonian patrols alike field Carriers, mobile bases able to support a dozen crewmembers on average, though most of the space is given over to supplies, launch bays, bunking and weaponry. The versions created by the Council are most like their name implies, rapid-response crafts that get Sky Knights to where they need to go as quickly as possible. Cyclonian carriers are slower, but heavily-armored and up-gunned. Acting more like mobile fortresses, they deploy troops and then take position to support them with anti-air/infantry fire.

Crystal culture kit (300cp) - Containing heating coils, pressurized chambers, chemical injectors and monitoring equipment, the absolute smallest this machine can be is about two cubic meters. In theory, forming crystals is easy. In practice, forming capital-c Crystals is a tedious and inconsistent process that no one can ever perfectly pin down - unless one is a Crystal Mage. People that lack the 'gift' must get by with utterly byzantine procedures, and they compare notes to often find they each have different recipes for creating the same kind of Crystal. Having the Crystal Mage background makes the process much easier as you slowly develop an intuitive sense of what will or will not work, but you can still expect a lot of experimentation, trial, and error.

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You may take at most 800cp worth of drawbacks

Drawbacks:

Competent minions (+100cp) - It seems that everyone you fight has received a certain minimum of training, they will not make rookie mistakes or fall for simple tricks. Out-of-Jump abilities will still surprise them, but they will be faster to develop countermeasures and strategies to defeat them.

Hostile fauna (+200cp) - Something about you seems to irritate the wild beasts of Atmos. You'll constantly be running into irate creatures large and small no matter where you go.

Travel between Terras risks encounters with dragons or worse, and actually traveling below the cloud layer will bring forth creatures who have adapted to the crushing pressure, lethal toxins, and extreme conditions found there. The hides and claws of these beasts can match any weapon made on Atmos.

Murk raiders (+300cp) - These insane reavers have marked you as a target. Able to travel the depths of the wastes with impunity, they can seemingly strike anywhere, at any time, and care little for such concerns as collateral damage or even their own lives. Expect Terras you stay at to be bombarded with poison gas, your acquaintances to have information regarding you tortured out of them, and to quickly become a pariah as people realize what is chasing you. You may buy yourself a reprieve only by slaughtering the raiders to a man, but it seems there's always more where they came from.

Shipper on deck (+400cp) - The ruler of Cyclonia is rumored to have a strange interest in Piper of the Storm hawks. Between the banter, the one-upmanship, the knowing looks, Piper's fangirling towards powerful women, Cyclonis disguising herself to infiltrate the squadron and trying to convince Piper to return to Cyclonia with her...you'd almost think there's something going on between them. Jump-chan certainly seems to think so, and wants you to play matchmaker. The two girls must be in a genuine relationship of at least 'very close friends' by the end of the jump. Attempting to artificially induce emotions or other mental changes will count as failing and get you kicked out of the Jumps. However, conflict will break out between the Council and Cyclonia three years into the Jump, after which hooking up two people on opposite sides of a conflict may be impossible.

Starling's crusade (+500cp) - The last survivor of interceptor squadron after her teammates were eaten by a Repton warlord, Starling wages a one-woman war against Cyclonia, whom she believes is backing criminals and raiders to destabilize Atmos in preparation for a new war. Shortly after arriving here, Starling notices your unusual abilities and uses a quintet of unique crystals to take some of them for herself. Five of your powers are stolen from you, and used to Starling to accelerate her plans for revenge. She's a crafty fighter and learns how to use your powers quickly, and can't be simply talked into giving your powers back. If you cannot recover the crystals before the jump ends, those powers will stay behind with her as you move on.

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A note on Universal Adapter:

This perk can show you how to transform any form of energy into any other, full stop. There are a few things to keep in mind though.

Turning any mundane, non-magical source of energy into any other non-magical form of energy is quite simple.
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Creating mana, chi, psi, etc - from the mundane is difficult, but doable. You'll likely need a good-sized fusion reactor at minimum to kick-start the process.
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Supernatural transmutations (chakra into mana) are difficult and somewhat inefficient. A large initial 'power supply' does help, but it's less about quantity and more about getting everything fine-tuned just right.
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Yes, you can create spiritual energy, Spiral energy, Mantra, or Marvel's 'the power cosmic' with this perk. Such esoteric energies require truly massive mundane power supplies before you can even attempt experimentation. Start building dyson spheres or corralling singularities. Two or three is a good start.
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You cannot create or transmute energy of any kind without the appropriate equipment and materials. So if you want to play with magic, you'll need to find/build a device capable of gathering, transmitting, and storing magical energy. In theory, yes, your own body might work for this, if you're crazy enough.
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Blind experimentation with higher forms of energy is insanely dangerous. Like 'break the universe and piss off Jump-chan' levels of dangerous. Even if you avoid any major screw-ups, it may well take centuries, if not millennia, to create something viable and useful this way. Having a firm grasp of the scientific or metaphysical principles behind what you work towards makes using this perk much faster, easier, and safer. At the very least, having an example of the desired end result to work off of is a good way to avoid having your Jumping days come to an abrupt and anticlimactic ending.

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v1.1 changelog:

Clarified/altered wording for:
- arcane interface
- universal adapter
- the binding

drawback cp limit added
universal adapter note added.