Duskara: Stormtide

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Introduction & Setting Overview

Before We Start

Content Warning: Environmental peril, resource scarcity, survival themes, psychic phenomena.

Before you start, define lines that should not be crossed. Pause or rewind the game if something uncomfortable happens during a session. Always make sure everyone is comfortable with the direction of the story.

Welcome to the Twilight

Eight hundred years ago, the colony ship *Stellar Horizon* limped into orbit around an unknown world. Navigation systems shattered by a solar storm, life support failing, the crew had no choice but to land on the only marginally habitable planet they could reach: Duskara.

This was not the promised world of Kepler-442b. This was something else entirely.

Duskara is **tidally locked**—one face forever scorched by its sun, the other frozen in eternal night. Between these extremes lies the **twilight belt**, a narrow band 200-300 kilometers wide where temperatures allow liquid water and human survival. Here, in perpetual dusk, humanity has not merely survived—it has adapted, evolved, and thrived.

A World of Extremes

The Day Side: Temperatures exceed 400°C. Radiation scours the rock. No human can survive unshielded. Robotic mining operations push into this hellscape, extracting rare alloys and crystals while fighting constant equipment failure. Salvage crews—"daywalkers" with exceptional thermal resistance—venture to the margins when machines fail, risking their lives for premium compensation.

The Twilight Belt: Home to 80% of humanity. Linear cities stretch along the habitable zone, their architecture harmonizing with the eternal wind. Temperatures range from temperate to moderately warm. Vertical farms grow crops in controlled microclimates. Every settlement is fortress and garden both, resilient and beautiful. But the wind never stops, and where hot meets cold, superstorms rage.

The Night Side: Frozen darkness broken only by auroras and geothermal vents. Cave-dwelling communities of 50,000 to 150,000 cluster around warmth sources, developing distinct cultures and psychic abilities tied to resonance and vibration. Ice harvesting sustains the twilight belt. The Deep Roads—ancient tunnel networks of uncertain origin—connect scattered outposts through kilometers of stone.

The Awakening

Duskara's harsh conditions and unknown radiations awakened latent abilities in humanity. These psychic gifts—thermal sensing, weather working, deep bonding with native fauna—represent evolutionary communion with a new home.

Weather workers shape wind to guide ships and protect settlements. **Thermal sensitives** navigate day-side margins where others would perish. **Deep-cave dwellers** communicate through resonance, voices carrying through stone. **Beastwalkers** bond with wind serpents and thermal lizards. These abilities are celebrated, taught, and integrated into daily life—but overuse leads to psychic burnout.

Eight Centuries of Adaptation

The *Stellar Horizon* carried perhaps a few thousand survivors. Now, 40 million descendants live across the twilight belt and caves. Population is tightly regulated—birth quotas maintain balance with carrying capacity. Superstorms, resource wars, and auroral disruptions have prevented unchecked growth.

Culture blends Earth traditions with Duskaran innovations. Time is measured in wind cycles, not day and night. Architecture flows with environmental forces. Festivals celebrate the Storm Seasons, Thermal Shifts, and Geothermal Awakenings. Ancient Earth satellites still orbit, their data streams partially decoded but fragmentary.

Technology is sophisticated but sustainable: wind turbines, thermal exchangers, water reclamation systems. Every drop of water is precious. Every settlement depends on its neighbors. When one falters, the entire chain feels it.

What You'll Do

In **Duskara: Stormtide**, you'll navigate this world of scarcity and wonder. You might:

- Escort caravans through superstorm-threatened routes
- Scavenge the Deep Roads for ancient Earth technology
- Mediate water disputes between rival settlements
- Track predators bonded to rogue weather workers
- Investigate psychic aberrations manifesting in storm fronts
- Salvage day-side mining operations before equipment is lost
- Explore alien structures that predate humanity's arrival
- Protect settlements from bandits exploiting resource crises

Survival requires more than strength—it demands ingenuity, cooperation, and the willingness to catch your breath and face complications head-on.

Core Mechanics

Checks

When you attempt something risky or challenging, you make a **check** to see how it plays out. If an action isn't risky, you simply succeed—no roll needed.

The GM telegraphs the risk before you roll. Then:

1. **Pick a skill** that matches what you're doing
2. **Roll the die** matching that skill's current rating
3. **Interpret the result:**

- **1-2:** You **fail**, and there's an additional **complication**
- **3-4:** You **succeed**, but there's a **complication**
- **5+:** You **succeed**. The higher the roll, the better

After rolling, reduce the skill's die rating by one step: d12 → d10 → d8 → d6 → d4. Skills cannot go lower than d4.

Group Checks

If an ally helps you, they also make a check, but they share the same risks and consequences. Both of you reduce your skill ratings. Take the highest die result.

Complications

Complications are how Duskara pushes back. They might be:

- A superstorm intensifies, forcing you to seek immediate shelter
- A predator detects your heat signature
- Your water supply is contaminated
- A rival faction notices your activity
- A geothermal vent shows signs of instability
- Psychic feedback causes disorientation

Complications escalate tension and often lead to **stress**.

Catch Your Breath

To reset all your **skills** to their original ratings, you can **catch your breath**. This is a brief respite in tension—finding shelter during a storm, taking cover in ruins, resting at a settlement.

Catching your breath can be done at any time, even during combat or crisis.

When you catch your breath, the GM looks at the scene and introduces a **new complication** for the group. The world doesn't wait while you rest.

Example Complications (GM picks or rolls on table in Section 5):

- Bandits arrive, attracted by your campfire
- The superstorm shifts course toward your position
- A water cache you were counting on has been sabotaged
- A psychic aberration manifests nearby
- A geothermal vent in your shelter begins to destabilize
- You're discovered by a hostile settlement patrol

Loot Checks

When the fiction allows it—scavenging ruins, salvaging day-side mining drones, looting abandoned settlements—you can make a **loot check**.

You start with a **d12 loot die**, which steps down after each use. You may continue using it at d4, but at your own risk. To reset your loot die, you must **catch your breath**.

Roll your current loot die and interpret the result:

- **1-2:** Trouble is here… (immediate threat manifests)
- **3-4:** There's trouble ahead… (danger is approaching)
- **5-6:** You find a **d6 item**
- **7-8:** You find a **d8 item**
- **9-10:** You find a **d10 item** or a **med kit**
- **11-12:** You find a **d12 item** or a **med kit**

Backpack

Items in your backpack can be used instead of skills for checks. They start with a die rating (d6, d8, d10, or d12) and degrade with use, just like skills.

When an item is reduced to **d4**, it either breaks, gets lost, or becomes irrelevant to the fiction. You can carry **3 items** and **1 med kit** at a time.

Med kits are special items that clear **2 stress** when used. They don't degrade—they're consumed entirely.

Stunts

When you attempt something extraordinary—a **stunt**—you roll a **d12** instead of your skill rating.

Stunts represent heroic psychic feats, desperate gambits, or acts of ingenuity under pressure:

- Channeling weather working to redirect a superstorm
- Shadow-walking through the Deep Roads to bypass a collapse
- Deep-bonding with a wind serpent to intimidate bandits
- Using thermal sense to find a hidden geothermal vent

After attempting a stunt, you must catch your breath before attempting another.

Stress

When you face complications, you may take **stress**. Stress represents physical exhaustion, psychic burnout, environmental exposure, or psychological strain.

Track stress with boxes or tally marks. If you reach **4 stress**, your character becomes **vulnerable**—failing a dangerous check could mean being taken out or sudden death.

Clearing Stress:

- Use a **med kit** to clear **2 stress**
- Rest in a secure location (settlement, fortified shelter) to clear an amount at the GM's discretion
- Narrative recovery (psychic counseling, geothermal rest chambers, communal support)

Character Creation

Step 1: Concept

Who are you? Answer these questions:

- **Name:** What are you called?
- **Pronouns:** He/him, she/her, they/them, etc.
- **Role:** What's your place in Duskaran society?

Duskaran Roles

Rather than a "job before the collapse," you have a **role** that defines your expertise:

Daywalker: Day-side salvager with exceptional thermal resistance. You venture into scorching margins to recover mining drones and rare materials.

Weatherworker: Psychic ritualist who senses and influences atmospheric patterns. You guide caravans, protect settlements, and predict superstorms.

Water Judge: Resource arbiter who manages distribution and resolves disputes. You hold power over life and death in a world of scarcity.

Caravanner: Trade guild member who knows the routes, politics, and dangers between settlements. You broker deals and navigate intrigue.

Deepkin Scout: Cave explorer from the night side. You navigate Deep Roads, harvest geothermal resources, and communicate through resonance.

Beastwalker: Fauna bonded, with a psychic connection to wind serpents, thermal lizards, or other native creatures. You're tracker, messenger, and protector.

Archivist: Lore keeper who preserves Earth knowledge and investigates Duskaran mysteries. You decode data crystals and study ancient structures.

Stormchaser: Reckless explorer who pushes into danger zones for discovery, glory, or profit. You thrive on risk and live for the next expedition.

Pick a role or create your own. It's a starting point, not a constraint.

Step 2: Skills

You have **6 skills** that represent your capabilities. By default, all skills start at **d4**. Assign one **d10**, one **d8**, and one **d6** to skills your character excels at.

The Six Skills:

Endure: Withstand thermal extremes, storms, hunger, psychic burnout, physical exertion.

Navigate: Traverse twilight belt, Deep Roads, ruins, day-side margins, storm-lashed routes.

Perceive: Thermal sensing, psychic awareness, tracking, noticing details, environmental assessment.

Commune: Weather working, deep bonding, negotiation, psychic communication, ritual.

Resolve: Repair tech, solve problems, analyze data, decode Earth archives, improvise tools.

Assert: Intimidate, defend, attack, command, physical confrontation.

Step 3: Psychic Ability (Optional)

Psychic abilities are common on Duskara but not universal. If you want one, choose from the list below or roll randomly.

Overuse causes psychic burnout—represented by stress or skill degradation. The GM decides when you've pushed too hard.

Psychic Abilities

1. Thermal Sensing: Perceive heat signatures and temperature gradients with precision. Navigate day-side margins, detect hidden life, sense geothermal activity.

2. Weather Working: Sense and subtly influence atmospheric patterns—wind speed, pressure changes, storm formation. Guide caravans, protect settlements, predict superstorms.

3. Deep Bonding: Psychic connection to native fauna (wind serpents, thermal lizards, shadow stalkers). Communicate, command, and share senses with bonded creatures.

4. Shadow Walking: Move unseen through low-light environments. Blend with darkness, traverse night side undetected, infiltrate settlements.

5. Water Finding: Sense underground aquifers, hidden water caches, and moisture in air. Invaluable in a world of scarcity.

6. Resonance: Perceive and manipulate vibrations through stone. Communicate across kilometers in cave systems, detect structural instability, navigate Deep Roads.

Psychic abilities can add narrative advantage (GM may reduce risk or allow automatic success) or **replace skills for certain checks** (use a d10 or d12 for abilities you've mastered).

Step 4: Starting Equipment

You begin with **1 item** in your backpack as a **d10 item**. Choose something that reflects your role:

- **Windblade** (curved weapon optimized for high winds)
- **Thermal pike** (mining/combat tool, heats on activation)
- **Pressure bow** (compressed air projectile weapon)
- **Geothermal suit** (protective gear for thermal extremes)
- **Wind compass** (reads current patterns for navigation)
- **Resonance crystal** (psychic focus for amplifying abilities)
- **Water reclamation unit** (personal-scale purification)
- **Data crystal** (Earth archives or settlement intelligence)
- **Climbing kit** (for towers, ruins, or cave walls)
- **Storm goggles** (protects against wind and dust)

You also start with **1 med kit** (clears 2 stress).

Character Sheet Example

Name: Kael Serin
Pronouns: They/them
Role: Deepkin Scout

Skills:

- Endure: d6
- Navigate: d10
- Perceive: d8
- Commune: d4
- Resolve: d4
- Assert: d4

Psychic Ability: Resonance (sense vibrations through stone)

Starting Equipment:

- Resonance crystal (d10 item)
- Med kit

Stress: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Equipment & Resources

Weapons

Close Combat

Windblade (d6-d10): Curved blade designed to cut efficiently in high winds. Light, aerodynamic, and ceremonial in some cultures.

Thermal Pike (d8-d12): Mining and combat tool. Heats on activation, effective against armor and ice. Requires thermal cells.

Netcaster (d6): Launches weighted nets to entangle opponents or secure cargo. Non-lethal.

Vibro-staff (d8): Resonance-enhanced melee weapon. Vibrates at frequencies that shatter stone and disorient enemies.

Ranged

Pressure Bow (d6-d10): Compressed air projectile weapon. Silent, reliable, no gunpowder. Bolts can be poisoned or incendiary.

Stormcaster (d10-d12): Electroshock weapon that discharges stored storm energy. Limited charges, devastating at close range.

Signal Flare (d4): Pyrotechnic device for distress signals or illumination. Can ignite flammable materials.

Thermal Lance (d10): Cutting tool that superheats target areas. Effective against equipment, doors, and armor. Requires thermal cells.

Armor

Geothermal Armor (d8): Insulated suit for thermal extremes. Protects against heat, cold, and minor impacts. Heavy but essential for day-side or deep-cave work.

Weather Shield (d6): Lightweight layered clothing with wind-deflecting panels. Keeps you mobile in storms.

Adaptive Layering (d4): Standard twilight belt attire. Adjusts insulation based on temperature. Comfortable but offers minimal protection.

Tools

Wind Compass (d6): Mechanical or psychic-enhanced device that reads wind patterns. Essential for navigation.

Resonance Crystal (d8): Amplifies psychic abilities. Used by weather workers, deep bonders, and resonance users.

Bioluminescent Markers (d4): Glowing organisms in sealed containers. Mark paths in Deep Roads or caves.

Heat-Resistant Alloys (d10): Rare materials salvaged from day-side. Used for repairs, trade, or crafting.

Climbing Kit (d6): Pitons, rope, harness. For vertical cities, ruins, or cave walls.

Comm Crystal (d6): Synced to settlement networks. Transmits voice over short-to-medium distances.

Consumables

Water Tokens: Small sealed vials of purified water. Function as currency and emergency resource. 1 token = 1 day's hydration for 1 person.

Glowcap Rations (d4): Bioluminescent fungal food. Nutritious but bland. 1 ration = 1 day's food.

Thermal Gel (d4): Salve for burns or frostbite. Provides temporary relief and prevents infection.

Med Kit: Comprehensive medical supplies. Clears 2 stress when used. Consumed entirely upon use.

Psychic Dampener (d6): Chemical or tech-based inhibitor. Suppresses psychic abilities temporarily. Used for burnout recovery or restraining rogue weather workers.

Loot Tables

When you make a loot check, roll for item type based on result (d6, d8, d10, or d12 item). Then roll or choose from the appropriate table:

d6 Items (Common)

1. Glowcap rations (3 days)
2. Water tokens (3 tokens)
3. Bioluminescent markers
4. Adaptive layering
5. Basic repair tools
6. Wind chimes (for early storm warning)

d8 Items (Uncommon)

1. Weather shield
2. Pressure bow
3. Wind compass
4. Climbing kit
5. Comm crystal
6. Thermal gel (3 doses)

d10 Items (Rare)

1. Geothermal armor
2. Stormcaster (3 charges)
3. Resonance crystal
4. Thermal pike
5. Data crystal (Earth archives fragment)
6. Water reclamation unit

d12 Items (Very Rare)

1. Thermal lance
2. Vibro-staff

3. Heat-resistant alloys
4. Psychic dampener
5. Ancient Earth tech fragment (functional)
6. Bonded creature egg (wind serpent, thermal lizard)

Environmental Hazards & Complications

Complication Tables

General Complications (d12)

Roll or choose when players catch their breath or checks produce complications:

1. **You've attracted attention.** Predator, patrol, or rival noticed your activity.
2. **Equipment malfunction.** Something critical jams, breaks, or runs out of power at the worst time.
3. **Weather shifts.** Wind changes direction, temperature drops/spikes, or dust kicks up.
4. **Someone needs help.** Injured traveler, trapped animal, or distress signal nearby.
5. **You're being followed.** Movement behind you. Could be hostile, could be curious.
6. **Route is blocked.** Collapse, debris, or territorial creature cuts off your path.
7. **You're running low.** Water, food, or thermal cells depleting faster than expected.
8. **Unstable ground.** Tremors, crumbling stone, or shifting sand threatens footing.
9. **Unwanted company.** Another group arrives—traders, scavengers, or faction agents.
10. **Something feels wrong.** Psychic unease, unusual silence, or environmental oddity.
11. **You left something behind.** Dropped item, forgotten cache, or visible tracks.
12. **Local complication.** Adapt to current location (ruins = structural damage, caves = echo attracts creatures, settlement = authority questions you).

Using Complications Dynamically:

These complications are intentionally generic—interpret them based on current context:

- **"You've attracted attention"** in ruins = thermal lizard. In settlement = suspicious guard. In Deep Roads = crevice eel senses vibrations.
- **"Equipment malfunction"** = whatever makes sense. Wind compass in storm. Thermal suit near day side. Comm crystal underground.
- **"Route is blocked"** = adapt to terrain. Collapsed tunnel. Superstorm ahead. Territorial wind serpent nesting site.

Don't roll and then force fit the result. Roll, read it, and interpret based on what's happening right now. Complications should feel natural, not arbitrary.

If a complication doesn't fit the scene at all, reroll or pick one that does. The goal is tension, not random chaos.

Environmental Events (d8)

1. **Thermal Inversion:** Temperature gradient reverses unexpectedly. Day side cools slightly, night side warms. Causes disorientation and ecological chaos.
2. **Dust Storm:** Day-side winds carry abrasive particles into twilight belt. Visibility zero. Exposed skin lacerated.
3. **Ice Storm:** Night-side cold front pushes deep into twilight belt. Water sources freeze. Crops threatened.
4. **Auroral Surge:** Night-side aurora intensifies, visible even in twilight belt. Beautiful but disrupts psychic abilities and tech.
5. **Geothermal Eruption:** Vent releases superheated steam and gases. Area becomes temporarily uninhabitable.
6. **Wind Shift:** Predictable wind patterns change. Navigation becomes unreliable. Caravans lost.
7. **Bioluminescent Bloom:** Glowcap spores fill the air. Beautiful but hallucinogenic. Psychics experience amplified sensitivity.
8. **Silent Zone:** Area where wind inexplicably stops. Unnerving. Often precedes catastrophic storm.

Predator Encounters (d6)

1. **Wind Serpent (Unbonded):** 30-meter flying predator. Hunts in packs. Intelligent and territorial. Vulnerable: exposed underbelly.
2. **Thermal Lizard:** Heat-seeking ambush predator. Camouflaged in ruins or day-side margins. Vulnerable: cold (ice weapons).
3. **Shadow Stalker:** Night-side apex predator. Nearly invisible in darkness. Hunts by sound. Vulnerable: light sources (bioluminescence).
4. **Glowworm Swarm:** Bioluminescent cave-dwellers. Individually harmless, overwhelming in numbers. Disorient prey with light pulses.
5. **Sand Skimmer:** Day-side scavenger. Burrows through superheated sand. Attracted to movement. Vulnerable: sonic weapons.
6. **Feral Bonded Creature:** Former Beastwalker mount gone rogue. Retains training, making it unpredictable and dangerous.

Psychic Phenomena (d6)

1. **Weather Wraith:** Psychic manifestation in storm fronts. Echoes of dead weather workers. Causes fear, disorientation, and amplified storms.
2. **Deep Resonance:** Cave system produces low-frequency vibrations. Causes nausea, hallucinations, structural instability.
3. **Thermal Ghost:** Heat signature of deceased person. Appears to thermal sensitives. May be hallucination or genuine psychic echo.
4. **Psychic Burnout Wave:** Area where overuse of abilities has created feedback loop. Entering causes immediate stress to psychics.

5. **Bonding Backlash:** Beastwalker's connection to creature inverted. Creature experiences human's emotions, becomes erratic.
6. **Storm Memory:** Superstorm "remembers" previous patterns. Weather workers sense echoes of past events encoded in wind.

Settlements & Factions

Major Settlements

Aetherion (Population: 1.2 million)

Largest twilight belt city. Built around the *Stellar Horizon* crash site. Central hub for trade, politics, and Earth archive preservation.

Key Features:

- Vertical farms produce 40% of twilight belt food
- The Vault of Echoes: repository of data crystals and Earth artifacts
- Weatherworking Academy: premier institution for psychic training
- The Windspire: kilometer-high tower for storm observation and wind energy

Hooks:

- Rival factions vie for control of Earth archives
- Storm season threatens to overwhelm defenses
- Mysterious signal from *Stellar Horizon* wreckage activates after 800 years

Khal-Rim (Population: 500,000)

Fortified settlement near day-side margin. Coordinates mining operations and salvage expeditions.

Key Features:

- Thermal forges produce heat-resistant alloys
- Daywalker guilds train specialists for extreme conditions
- The Scorched Gates: massive shield walls deflecting day-side heat
- Black market for illicit day-side artifacts

Hooks:

- Mining claim dispute escalates to violence
- Salvage crew discovers functioning day-side structure
- Thermal forges malfunction, threatening settlement's economic base

Lumina Caverns (Population: 150,000)

Largest night-side cave settlement. Built around extensive geothermal vent network.

Key Features:

- Deepkin culture emphasizes resonance and collective memory
- Mushroom farms and thermal agriculture sustain population
- The Deep Roads: ancient tunnel network of unknown origin
- The Resonance Chamber: psychic training facility

Hooks:

- Geothermal vents show signs of instability
- Deep Roads section collapses, cutting off ice harvesting routes
- Ancient structure discovered deeper than any previous exploration

Aurora Bastion (Population: 300,000)

Twilight belt settlement specializing in ice harvesting and night-side trade.

Key Features:

- Ice caravans supply entire twilight belt
- Mixed surface/cave architecture bridges day and night cultures
- The Frost Market: trade hub for night-side goods
- Auroral Observatory: studies night-side phenomena

Hooks:

- Ice harvesting grounds claimed by rival settlement
- Auroral disruption causes mass psychic feedback
- Night-side predators migrate toward settlement

Factions

Weatherworking Guilds

Power Base: Major settlements with storm observation infrastructure

Goals: Preserve and advance psychic knowledge, maintain control over storm prediction

Methods: Political influence, withholding services, training monopolies

Conflict: Internal schisms over sharing knowledge vs. maintaining elite status

Water Management Castes

Power Base: Control of aquifers, purification facilities, and distribution networks

Goals: Ensure equitable water distribution (or consolidate power, depending on settlement)

Methods: Rationing, pricing, dispute arbitration, occasional sabotage of rivals

Conflict: "Water is life" philosophy vs. "water is currency" pragmatism

Caravan Guilds

Power Base: Trade routes connecting settlements

Goals: Maintain free movement of goods, profit from scarcity, prevent inter-settlement conflict

Methods: Negotiation, protection services, information brokerage, occasional smuggling

Conflict: Loyalty to settlements vs. loyalty to guild; honest trade vs. exploitation

Deepkin Warmth Circles

Power Base: Night-side cave settlements, geothermal vent control

Goals: Preserve Deepkin culture, secure geothermal resources, maintain autonomy from twilight belt

Methods: Collective decision-making, resonance-based communication, occasional isolation

Conflict: Integration with twilight belt vs. cultural preservation

Wind-Kin Alliances

Power Base: Beastwalker communities, bonded creature populations

Goals: Protect native fauna, maintain bonding traditions, prevent exploitation

Methods: Guerrilla tactics, sabotage of ecologically damaging operations, diplomatic advocacy

Conflict: Harmony with nature vs. human survival needs

The Archivists

Power Base: Earth knowledge repositories, data crystal collections

Goals: Preserve human history, decode ancient technologies, understand Duskara's mysteries

Methods: Research, exploration, jealous guarding of information

Conflict: Knowledge as public good vs. knowledge as power

Additional Settlements

Stormwatch (Population: 200,000)

Militant settlement positioned at the most volatile storm corridor in the twilight belt. Specializes in storm prediction and meteorological research.

Key Features:

- The Tempest Wall: massive reinforced barrier system
- Elite weatherworker corps trained in emergency storm deflection
- Storm Archive: centuries of weather pattern data
- Early warning system serving entire twilight belt

Hooks:

- Weatherworker cabal accused of manipulating storms for profit
- Ancient storm patterns no longer match predictions
- Rival settlement refuses to pay for warning services
- Storm Archive data crystal stolen by corporate interests

Thermal Gate (Population: 350,000)

Border settlement at the edge of day-side habitability. Controls access to most productive mining regions.

Key Features:

- Thermal shielding technology protects settlement from heat surges
- Daywalker training academy with 90% attrition rate
- Mining equipment manufacturing and repair facilities
- The Seared Market: trade hub for rare day-side materials

Hooks:

- New mining claim discovered in unexplored day-side sector
- Shield generator malfunction threatens entire settlement
- Daywalker guild strike halts all mining operations
- Experimental thermal suit technology stolen by rival settlement

Verdant Deep (Population: 80,000)

Experimental settlement attempting to establish permanent agriculture on night-side border using artificial lighting and geothermal heat.

Key Features:

- Massive hydroponics complexes lit by bioluminescent arrays
- Research station studying Duskaran flora adaptation
- The Green Cathedral: ceremonial garden honoring Earth plants
- Geothermal regulation systems maintaining precise temperatures

Hooks:

- Crop blight threatens food security for multiple settlements
- Geothermal system overload risks catastrophic heat loss
- Research reveals plants developing psychic properties
- Corporate interests attempt hostile takeover of facility

Echo Spire (Population: 120,000)

Night-side settlement built in massive vertical cave system. Known for resonance-based communication and Deepkin philosophical schools.

Key Features:

- The Resonance Lattice: acoustic amplification network
- Philosophical academies teaching resonance meditation
- Ice harvesting operations supplying twilight belt
- The Silent Library: repository of oral histories preserved via resonance

Hooks:

- Resonance Lattice produces mysterious signal of unknown origin
- Philosophical schism threatens to split community
- Ice harvesting discovered illegal Deep Roads artifacts
- Shadow stalker pack establishes territory near settlement

Bestiary

Wind Serpent

Type: Flying predator / bondable mount

Size: 20-40 meters long

Behavior: Hunts in twilight belt thermal updrafts. Intelligent, territorial, capable of complex communication. Bonded serpents serve as mounts, messengers, and protectors.

Abilities:

- Flight (sustained by wind currents)
- Thermal vision
- Pack tactics
- Psychic receptivity (bonding)

Vulnerabilities:

- Exposed underbelly (soft tissue)
- Grounded in windless zones
- Bonding disruption causes disorientation

Encounter Notes: Unbonded serpents attack threats to territory. Bonded serpents defer to Beastwalker. Juveniles are playful but dangerous. Elders possess near-human intelligence.

Thermal Lizard

Type: Ambush predator

Size: 2-4 meters long

Behavior: Heat-seeking, camouflaged in day-side margins and ruins. Waits motionless for hours before striking. Solitary except during mating.

Abilities:

- Thermal camouflage (blends with heat signatures)
- Explosive speed (short bursts)
- Thermal vision
- Armor-plated scales

Vulnerabilities:

- Cold exposure (sluggish below 10°C)
- Poor low-light vision
- Predictable attack patterns

Encounter Notes: Often found near geothermal vents or day-side salvage sites. Can be detected by thermal sensitives as "cold spots" against warm backgrounds.

Shadow Stalker

Type: Apex predator (night side)

Size: 3-5 meters tall (bipedal)

Behavior: Hunts by sound in absolute darkness. Nearly invisible. Territorial. Avoids light instinctively.

Abilities:

- Perfect night camouflage
- Echolocation
- Razor claws and fangs
- Silent movement

Vulnerabilities:

- Light sources (causes disorientation)
- Loud noises (disrupts echolocation)
- Slow in open areas

Encounter Notes: Primary threat in Deep Roads and night-side caves. Deepkin use resonance to detect them. Carry bioluminescent markers always.

Glowworm Swarm

Type: Bioluminescent cave-dweller

Size: Individual: 10-20 cm; swarm: thousands

Behavior: Filter-feeds on airborne spores. Harmless individually, overwhelming in swarms. Light pulses disorient predators.

Abilities:

- Bioluminescence (controllable intensity)
- Synchronized light pulses (hypnotic)
- Numbers (crush threats by mass)

Vulnerabilities:

- Smoke (disperses swarm)
- Sound (disrupts coordination)
- Cold (induces hibernation)

Encounter Notes: Beautiful but dangerous in large numbers. Deepkin harvest them for lighting. Swarms indicate nearby food sources (fungal blooms).

Sand Skimmer

Type: Burrowing scavenger (day side)

Size: 1-2 meters long

Behavior: Burrows through superheated sand. Attracted to movement. Scavenges equipment, corpses, and mining waste. Cowardly but persistent.

Abilities:

- Sand-swimming (burrows rapidly)
- Heat resistance (tolerates 500°C+)
- Vibration sense
- Corrosive saliva (melts metal)

Vulnerabilities:

- Sonic weapons (disrupt burrowing)
- Extreme cold (immobilizes)
- Predictable (always approaches from downwind)

Encounter Notes: Nuisance near day-side operations. Can be lured with bait. Salvaged equipment often shows skimmer damage.

Feral Bonded Creature

Type: Former Beastwalker mount (any species)

Behavior: Psychic bond broken by trauma, death, or sabotage. Retains training but acts unpredictably. Dangerous because it understands human tactics.

Abilities:

- Species-dependent (wind serpent, thermal lizard, etc.)
- Human tactical knowledge
- Psychic resistance (rejects new bonding attempts)

Vulnerabilities:

- Species-dependent
- Psychic trauma (erratic, exploitable)

Encounter Notes: Often hunts former handlers. Deepkin see ferals as tragic. Wind-Kin attempt rehabilitation. Most must be put down.

Storm Beetle

Type: Flying insect / swarm

Size: Individual: 5-10 cm; swarm: thousands

Behavior: Native to twilight belt storm fronts. Feed on electrical discharge during superstorms. Harmless individually, dangerous in swarms when they discharge stored energy.

Abilities:

- Flight (sustained by storm winds)
- Electrical discharge (coordinated swarm attack)
- Storm prediction (appear hours before major weather)
- Chitinous armor (resistant to wind damage)

Vulnerabilities:

- Grounded in windless conditions
- Cold (induces torpor)
- Electromagnetic interference (disrupts coordination)

Encounter Notes: Weatherworkers use them as early warning system. Some settlements harvest their electrical organs for batteries. Swarms occasionally discharge into metal structures, causing fires.

Crevice Eel

Type: Burrowing predator

Size: 3-6 meters long

Behavior: Lives in Deep Roads and twilight belt crevices. Ambushes prey by erupting from stone. Excellent tremor sense. Solitary and territorial.

Abilities:

- Stone-boring (creates new tunnels)
- Tremor sense (detects movement through rock)
- Crushing bite (armored jaws)
- Slime secretion (acidic, aids tunneling)

Vulnerabilities:

- Sonic weapons (disorients tremor sense)
- Predictable (always attacks from below)
- Slow outside tunnels

Encounter Notes: Major threat in Deep Roads. Deepkin map known eel territories. Leave tremor-dampening markers to avoid attracting them. Slime is valuable for industrial applications.

Frost Moth

Type: Night-side herbivore

Size: Wingspan: 30-50 cm

Behavior: Gentle creature that feeds on ice crystals and lichen. Beautiful bioluminescent wings. Used by Deepkin as light sources and companions.

Abilities:

- Bioluminescence (controllable, multiple colors)
- Cold resistance (thrives in -100°C)
- Pheromone communication
- Ice crystal digestion

Vulnerabilities:

- Heat (dies above 20°C)
- Fragile wings (easily damaged)
- Predictable (drawn to lichen blooms)

Encounter Notes: Domesticated by night-side communities. Wings used for decorative purposes and ceremonial garments. Wild migrations signal seasonal ice shifts. Poaching is illegal in most settlements.

Thermal Bloom

Type: Plant / ambulatory organism

Size: 1-2 meters diameter

Behavior: Semi-mobile plant that migrates toward heat sources. Roots can detach and re-establish. Absorbs thermal energy for sustenance. Neither predator nor prey—environmental hazard.

Abilities:

- Thermal absorption (cools surroundings)
- Slow mobility (roots as limbs)
- Heat tracking
- Spore release (irritating to lungs)

Vulnerabilities:

- Cold (enters dormancy)
- Fire (destroys rapidly)
- Dehydration

Encounter Notes: Found near geothermal vents and day-side margins. Can cool settlement heating systems if not removed. Farmers use them to regulate greenhouse temperatures. Spores are medical ingredient (anti-inflammatory).

Creating Custom Content

Designing New Settlements

1. Choose Scale: 50,000-150,000 (cave/outpost), 200,000-500,000 (mid-size), 500,000-2,000,000 (major city)

2. Define Location:

- Twilight belt position (closer to day or night?)
- Cave system or surface
- Proximity to resources (geothermal, water, ice, mines)

3. Establish Specialty: What makes this settlement unique?

- Resource: water management, ice harvesting, mining, agriculture
- Service: trade hub, research center, military garrison, pilgrimage site
- Culture: weatherworking tradition, Earth preservation, experimental governance

4. Create Conflict: Every interesting settlement has internal or external tension:

- Resource scarcity vs. neighboring claims
- Traditional faction vs. progressive reformers
- Isolation vs. integration with broader Duskara
- Psychic abundance creating social hierarchy

5. Add 3-4 Key Locations: Market, government center, unique landmark, dangerous underbelly

Example: Windrift Station (Population: 180,000) - Twilight belt settlement built on ancient bridge spanning kilometer-deep canyon. Specializes in wind energy research and aerial courier service. Internal conflict: canyon erosion threatens structural integrity; mayor refuses to evacuate despite engineer warnings. Key locations: The Suspension Market, Canyon's Edge Observatory, The Anchor Towers, Sub-Bridge smuggler dens.

Creating Factions

1. Define Core Goal: What does this faction want?

- Control resource (water, energy, knowledge, psychic training)
- Ideological mission (preserve Earth culture, embrace Duskaran evolution, expand settlements)
- Practical objective (profit, survival, political power)

2. Establish Methods: How do they pursue goals?

- Diplomatic: negotiation, alliance-building, legal frameworks
- Economic: trade manipulation, resource control, employment
- Militant: sabotage, raids, threats, open warfare
- Subversive: espionage, propaganda, blackmail

3. Create Internal Divisions: Factions are never monolithic

- Moderate vs. radical wings
- Generational disagreements (elders vs. youth)
- Regional chapters with competing priorities
- Personal rivalries among leadership

4. Establish Relationships: How do they relate to other factions?

- Allies: who do they cooperate with?
- Rivals: who competes for same resources?
- Enemies: who actively opposes them?
- Neutral: who do they ignore or coexist with?

Example: The Horizon Accord - Faction believing humanity must prepare to leave Duskara and find new world. Goals: decode *Stellar Horizon* systems, build interstellar capability, preserve genetic diversity. Methods: aggressive artifact acquisition, radical research, recruiting engineers and psychics. Internal division: "Returners" want to find Earth; "Seekers" want any habitable world. Allied with Archivists (knowledge exchange); rivals with Weatherworking Guilds (distraction from Duskaran adaptation); enemies with Wind-Kin (see Duskara as temporary prison).

Inventing Creatures

1. Choose Niche: What role does this creature fill?

- Predator (hunts humans or other fauna)
- Prey (food source, companionship)
- Symbiote (mutual benefit with humans or environment)
- Hazard (environmental feature that happens to be alive)

2. Adapt to Environment:

- Day side: extreme heat resistance, radiation tolerance, heat-seeking
- Twilight belt: wind adaptation, thermal flexibility, storm survival
- Night side: cold resistance, bioluminescence, cave navigation
- Deep Roads: vibration sense, darkness adaptation, stone-boring

3. Add One Weird Trait: Make it memorable

- Absorbs psychic energy
- Fossilizes when killed (valuable resource)
- Changes color based on atmospheric pressure
- Communicates via ultrasonic song
- Hibernates during superstorms

4. Define Human Interaction:

- Dangerous: threat level, vulnerability
- Useful: resource harvested, service provided
- Neutral: indicator species, ecosystem role
- Bondable: requirements for psychic connection

Example: Pressure Slug - Twilight belt creature (size: 20-50 cm). Feeds on atmospheric pressure differentials. Appears before superstorms, frantically feeding on pressure changes. Vibrates rapidly, producing audible hum. Domesticated by weatherworkers as storm warning system—hum frequency indicates storm intensity. Harvested mucus used in barometric instruments. Weird trait: explodes if exposed to stable pressure for more than 48 hours. Neutral to humans unless threatened.

Developing Psychic Abilities

1. Choose Sensory or Motor: Does it enhance perception or allow manipulation?

- Sensory: detect something humans normally can't (metal, water, emotions, future echoes)
- Motor: manipulate something physically or psychically (gravity, minds, biology, time)

2. Tie to Duskara: How does this ability relate to the environment?

- Survival advantage on tidally locked world
- Evolution from specific Duskaran radiation/pressure
- Connection to native life, geological features, or atmospheric phenomena

3. Establish Limitations: Overpowered abilities break tension

- Range limits (touch, line of sight, 100 meters)
- Duration limits (seconds, minutes, hours)
- Exhaustion (stress per use, requires rest)
- Conditions (only in specific environments, requires focus)

4. Add Drawback: Interesting abilities have costs

- Psychological: paranoia, empathy overload, temporal disorientation
- Physical: nosebleeds, tremors, temperature sensitivity
- Social: feared, envied, ostracized
- Practical: attracts predators, disrupts technology, damages user

Example: Pressure Sight - Sensory psychic ability. User perceives barometric pressure gradients as visible "flows" in air. Allows prediction of wind direction, storm formation, and optimal wind energy placement. Range: line of sight. Limitation: requires concentration; combat makes it unusable. Drawback: constant headaches from atmospheric noise; users become irritable and isolation-seeking. Exhaustion: 1 stress per hour of active use. Tied to Duskara: evolved from generations navigating twilight belt's chaotic wind patterns.

GM Guidance

Core GM Principles

1. Telegraph Risk: Always tell players what they're risking before they roll. "If you fail, the superstorm will catch you before you reach shelter—that's 1 stress per hour exposed."

2. Fail Forward: Failure shouldn't stop the story. Complications create new challenges: "You don't find water, but you notice tracks leading deeper into the ruins. Something else is looking for water too."

3. Respect Resources: Water, food, energy, and psychic stamina matter. Track them lightly but consistently. When players catch their breath, introduce resource-related complications.

4. Make Duskara Feel Alive: The wind never stops. The sky never changes. Settlements depend on each other. Actions have consequences across the twilight belt.

5. Say Yes, Then Complicate: Players want to attempt something cool? Let them try. Use checks for risky actions, then introduce complications on partial successes.

GM Guidance

Campaign Frameworks

1. Caravan Expeditions

Premise: Players escort trade caravans between settlements, dealing with superstorms, bandits, predators, and inter-settlement politics.

Structure:

- Session = one journey segment (settlement to settlement)
- Introduce complications at halfway point and destination
- Build reputation with factions over time
- Escalate threats: minor predators → bandit ambushes → sabotage plots

Key Tensions:

- Protect cargo vs. protect lives
- Loyalty to employer vs. moral choices
- Speed vs. safety
- Faction allegiances

2. Settlement Management

Premise: Players are leaders/caretakers of a struggling outpost. Must secure resources, maintain infrastructure, and navigate external threats.

Structure:

- Session = one crisis (water shortage, superstorm, diplomatic incident)
- Use "catch your breath" to introduce new settlement problems
- Track population morale, resource stockpiles, faction relationships
- Long-term goal: achieve stability or relocate

Key Tensions:

- Survival vs. ethics
- Self-sufficiency vs. dependence on neighbors
- Tradition vs. innovation
- Individual needs vs. collective good

3. Ruin Exploration

Premise: Players investigate Deep Roads, ancient alien structures, or day-side ruins. Uncover Earth technology, psychic artifacts, and mysteries.

Structure:

- Session = one expedition into dangerous territory
- Use loot checks to find clues and equipment
- Build mystery over multiple sessions
- Introduce rival explorers, hostile factions

Key Tensions:

- Knowledge vs. safety
- Preserve artifacts vs. exploit them
- Share discoveries vs. hoard power
- Understanding vs. survival

4. Psychic Mystery Investigation

Premise: Players are troubleshooters for Weather Wraiths, bonding backlashes, and psychic phenomena. Blend detective work with action.

Structure:

- Session = investigate incident, identify cause, resolve/contain threat
- Use psychic abilities as investigation tools
- Complications escalate psychic phenomena
- Build toward larger conspiracy or natural disaster

Key Tensions:

- Help victim vs. eliminate threat
- Science vs. spirituality
- Control vs. freedom (for psychics)
- Short-term fix vs. long-term solution

Session Structure

Opening: Establish scene, location, immediate goal. "You're two days from Khal-Rim when the wind shifts. Your weather worker senses a superstorm forming."

Rising Action: Players make checks, skills degrade, complications arise. Let them decide when to catch their breath.

Complication (Catch Your Breath): When players reset skills, introduce new threat from complication table. Don't punish them—escalate tension.

Climax: Major challenge that resolves immediate threat but opens new questions or long-term consequences.

Resolution: Breathe. Reward progress. Tease next session.

GM Guidance

Using Complications Effectively

Complications aren't predetermined events—they're prompts you interpret based on what's happening right now.

Roll "You've attracted attention":

- In ruins exploring ancient tech? A salvage crew from rival settlement heard noise and investigates.
- Camping in twilight belt? Wind serpent circles overhead, curious about campfire.
- Deep Roads navigation? Your resonance crystal's frequency attracted something in the dark.

Roll "Equipment malfunction":

- During combat? Weapon jams, forcing tactical improvisation.
- Extreme environment? Thermal suit regulator fails—take stress or retreat.
- Critical moment? Comm crystal dies mid-transmission, losing vital intel.

Roll "Route is blocked":

- Pursuing bandits? They collapsed tunnel behind them.
- Escaping superstorm? Debris avalanche cuts off shelter path.
- Routine travel? Territorial creatures nest across your route—detour or confront.

Key Principle: Let context shape complications. Don't introduce superstorms in caves or predators in settlements unless it makes fictional sense. The complication table is a springboard, not a script.

Frequency: Complications happen often in Breathless—multiple per session. Keep them quick and tactical. Save major plot events (settlement disputes, ancient reactivations, faction wars) for deliberate story moments, not random complication rolls.

GM Guidance

Balancing Resource Depletion

Don't micromanage. Track water, food, and energy loosely. Use scarcity as narrative flavor, not tedious accounting.

Make resources matter during complications. "You find shelter, but there's no water source. How do you ration what you have?"

Reward clever thinking. Players improvise water reclamation? Reduce stress or avoid complication.

Use abundance sparingly. Finding a hidden cache feels meaningful when resources are usually tight.

GM Guidance

Psychic Abilities and Balance

Psychics aren't mandatory. Non-psychics contribute through skills, equipment, and ingenuity.

Overuse has consequences. After 2-3 psychic feats in a session, impose stress or require rest.

Psychic abilities create opportunities, not solutions. Weather working can't stop a superstorm, only redirect it. Deep bonding doesn't make creatures invincible.

Narrative power is fine. If a player's thermal sensing creates a cool moment, let it happen without a check.

Responding to Player Actions

RPG storytelling emerges from player choices and system interactions. Don't plan outcomes—respond dynamically using Breathless mechanics and Duskaran context.

Players Track Bandits Into Ruins

Player Action: "We follow the bandit tracks into the abandoned settlement."

GM Thinking: *They're pursuing actively. Risk is moderate—bandits might be waiting, ruins might be unstable. I'll use complications to add texture without blocking progress.*

GM Response: "Make a Navigate check to follow the tracks through the debris."

Player Rolls: 3-4 (success with complication)

GM Improvises Complication: "You follow the tracks to a collapsed building. The bandits definitely went inside, but you hear movement—could be them, could be something else nesting in there. Also, your wind compass is acting erratic. Metallic interference from the ruins, maybe?"

Key Principle: Let the check result tell you what happens next. Don't pre-plan the bandit ambush—let complications build toward it organically.

Players Repair Geothermal System

Player Action: "I want to jury-rig the regulator with parts from our thermal lance."

GM Thinking: *Creative solution. Resolve check, but risky—one mistake and the vent could destabilize faster.*

GM Response: "Love it. Make a Resolve check. If you fail, the lance is destroyed and the vent becomes more unstable."

Player Rolls: 1-2 (fail with complication)

GM Improvises Complication: "The lance shatters from thermal stress. Molten components spray—everyone take 1 stress from heat exposure. The vent's pressure is building faster now. You've got maybe hours instead of days."

What Happens Next: Let players respond. Do they evacuate? Find another solution? Call for outside help? The story emerges from their choices under pressure.

Key Principle: Player creativity deserves checks, not automatic success or denial. Complications make their choices matter.

Players Negotiate With Hostile Faction

Player Action: "I offer them half our water tokens to let us pass."

GM Thinking: *Reasonable offer. But these aren't reasonable people—they're desperate. Commune check.*

GM Response: "Make a Commune check to see if they accept."

Player Rolls: 5+ (success)

GM Response: "The leader eyes your tokens. 'Half. Plus information. Where'd you come from? What's happening in Khal-Rim?' They're suspicious but willing to deal."

Alternative Roll (3-4): "They take your tokens but demand you leave your thermal suits too. 'Insurance,' they say. You can pass, but you'll be vulnerable to the cold ahead."

Key Principle: Success doesn't mean "get everything you want." Complications shape how success looks. The story continues either way.

Improvising During Complications

Situation: Players catch their breath after escaping predator. You roll on complication table: "You're running low on water."

Don't: Narrate "Your water is mysteriously gone."

Do: Build from context. "As you're checking supplies, you notice your water reclamation unit took damage during the chase. It's leaking. You've got maybe a day's water left unless you repair it or find more."

Then: Let players respond. Do they repair immediately? Risk pressing forward? Detour to known water source? Their choice creates the next scene.

When Players Surprise You

Player Action: "Can I use my Deep Bonding to ask the wind serpent where the bandits went?"

GM Thinking: *Not what I expected, but it's cool and uses their ability. How does this work in the fiction?*

GM Response: "Interesting. The serpent's been with you—it might have sensed them. Make a Commune check, and if you succeed, it can show you impressions of their scent trail."

Player Rolls: Success

GM Response: "Through the bond, you feel the serpent's predatory focus. It detected multiple human scents moving underground. There's an entrance to the Deep Roads you hadn't noticed—partially hidden."

Key Principle: Say yes to creative ideas. Use checks to see how well they work. Let complications emerge from the fiction, not from blocking player agency.

GM Guidance

Pacing Long-Term Campaigns

Sessions 1-3: Establish Stakes

- Introduce settlements, factions, key NPCs
- Focus on simple missions (caravan escort, salvage, resource gathering)
- Let players experience core mechanics without overwhelming complications
- Build investment in community or faction

Sessions 4-6: Escalate Tension

- Introduce faction conflicts, political intrigue
- Increase environmental hazards (superstorms, predator attacks)
- Begin long-term mystery threads (ancient structures, psychic phenomena)
- Force difficult choices (rescue vs. profit, loyalty vs. ethics)

Sessions 7-10: Crisis Point

- Major catastrophe threatens settlement or region
- Multiple factions mobilize, players caught in middle
- Ancient mysteries begin revealing connections
- Resource scarcity reaches critical levels
- Boss encounters (rogue weatherworker, feral creature pack, corporate army)

Sessions 11+: Resolution and New Beginning

- Immediate crisis resolved but consequences remain
- Political landscape shifts based on player actions
- New threats emerge from resolved plots
- Players establish legacy (settlement founded, faction leadership, legendary status)

GM Guidance

Managing Multiple Storylines

Main Plot: Overarching campaign goal (stop rogue faction, decode ancient mystery, survive mega-storm season)

Subplot A: Character-driven personal goal (find lost family, master psychic ability, build reputation)

Subplot B: Faction relationship (earn trust, expose corruption, mediate conflict)

Environmental Thread: Ongoing Duskaran challenge (water shortage, predator migration, geothermal instability)

Rotate focus each session: Session 1 advances main plot, Session 2 focuses on subplot A, Session 3 environmental crisis, etc. Let complications organically connect threads.

Handling Player Creativity

Player: "Can I use weather working to create a localized fog to hide our approach?"

GM Response: "That's awesome. This isn't a standard use, so it'll be a Stunt—roll d12 for Commune. If you succeed, you'll need to catch your breath before attempting another stunt, and the psychic effort will be draining."

Player: "Can my thermal sensitive detect if someone's lying by reading micro-temperature changes in their face?"

GM Response: "Absolutely. Make a Perceive check. On 5+, you sense deception. On 3-4, you get a vague impression but aren't certain. On 1-2, you misread the signals and might make a false accusation."

Player: "Can we befriend this wind serpent instead of fighting it?"

GM Response: "Maybe. It's territorial and aggressive, but if one of you has Deep Bonding, you could attempt to establish a connection. That would be a series of Commune checks over time. Without that ability, you'd need to find another way to earn its trust—offering food, protecting its nest, proving you're not a threat."

Key Principle: Say yes to creative solutions. Use Risk Oracle to assess difficulty. Let complications emerge naturally from bold choices.

Solo Play Rules

9.1 Solo Game Loop

Solo play follows this iterative structure:

Step 1: Establish the Scene

Where are you? What's happening?

Use the **Location Generator** (Section 9.4) or decide based on your character's goals. Set stakes: "I'm escorting a caravan through the twilight belt when a superstorm warning arrives."

Step 2: Frame Your Intent

What do you want to accomplish?

Be specific: "I want to find shelter before the storm hits" or "I want to investigate the ruins for salvageable tech."

Step 3: Consult the Oracles

Use the Question Oracle if your character isn't directly acting: "Is there shelter nearby?"

Use the Risk Oracle if your character is performing an action with uncertain outcome: "Can I navigate to shelter in time?"

Step 4: Resolve Actions

If the Risk Oracle says you need to make a **check** or **perilous check**, roll skills as normal. Reduce skill ratings after rolling.

Interpret results with complications. Use tables in Section 5 or improvise based on context.

Step 5: Update Resources

Mark stress, reduce skills, track water/food/equipment usage. Duskara is unforgiving.

Step 6: Catch Your Breath

When skills are depleted (all at d4 or close), catch your breath. Reset skills but roll on the **Complication Table** (Section 5) to introduce new threat.

Step 7: Advance the Story

Interpret oracle results narratively. Update your character journal. Introduce new challenges based on complications.

Repeat the loop.

Question Oracle

Use this when your character isn't directly involved, or when you need to disclaim decision-making.

Ask a yes/no question. Imagine the outcome. Roll a die based on the **likelihood:**

- **Very unlikely:** d4
- **Unlikely:** d6
- **Likely:** d8
- **Very likely:** d10
- **Almost certain:** d12

Interpret the result:

- **1-2:** "No, and…" (introduce Duskaran complication)
- **3-4:** "Yes, but…" (success with Duskaran cost)
- **5+:** "Yes, and…" (success with Duskaran benefit)

Duskaran Complications (No, and…)

- Storm worsens, forcing immediate shelter
- Predator detects you
- Water source is contaminated
- Equipment breaks
- Rival faction arrives
- Geothermal vent destabilizes

Duskaran Costs (Yes, but…)

- Find shelter, but it's occupied (bandits, predators)
- Locate water, but it attracts attention
- Reach destination, but faction dispute delays you
- Salvage tech, but it's unstable/dangerous
- Bond with creature, but it's wounded/aggressive

Duskaran Benefits (Yes, and…)

- Find cache with extra supplies
- Befriend helpful NPC or faction agent
- Discover shortcut or safe route
- Learn valuable information
- Recover rare/powerful item

Example Question Oracle Use

Question: "Is there a settlement within a day's travel?"

Context: You're lost in the twilight belt after your caravan was ambushed.

Likelihood: Likely (d8) — settlements are common along routes

Roll: 3 → "Yes, but…"

Interpretation: "You spot Aurora Bastion's windspires on the horizon, but a dust storm is rolling in from the day side. You'll need to navigate through reduced visibility, and the settlement gates may close before you arrive."

Risk Oracle

Use this when your character attempts something challenging with uncertain outcome.

Assess your **level of control** over the situation. When in doubt, use **precarious** (d6).

Roll a die based on control level:

- **Chaotic:** d4 (superstorm, psychic aberration, major predator)
- **Precarious:** d6 (unstable Deep Roads, hostile faction, resource scarcity)
- **Manageable:** d8 (routine caravan travel, minor salvage)
- **Predictable:** d10 (safe settlement activity, familiar tasks)
- **Stable:** d12 (complete control, home base)

Interpret the result:

- **1-2:** Situation is **very risky**. Make a **perilous check**.
- **3-4:** Situation is **risky**. Make a **check**.
- **5+:** Not risky. You simply do it.

Assessing Control Levels

Chaotic (d4):

- Navigating superstorm
- Confronting Weather Wraith
- Fighting wind serpent pack
- Day-side equipment failure during heat spike
- Geothermal eruption in progress

Precarious (d6):

- Negotiating with hostile faction
- Traversing unstable Deep Roads section
- Tracking predator through ruins
- Rationing last water tokens
- Repairing critical equipment under time pressure

Manageable (d8):

- Escorting caravan on clear route

- Routine salvage in explored ruins
- Trading with friendly settlement
- Navigating familiar twilight belt terrain
- Using psychic abilities within limits

Predictable (d10):

- Resupplying in safe settlement
- Repairing equipment with proper tools
- Communicating via comm crystal
- Resting in secure shelter
- Routine weather working

Stable (d12):

- Activities at home base
- No time pressure or threats
- Full resources available
- Complete knowledge of situation

Example Risk Oracle Use

Intent: "I want to navigate through the dust storm to reach Aurora Bastion before the gates close."

Assessment: Precarious (d6) — dust storm reduces visibility, but you know the general direction.

Roll: 4 → "Risky. Make a check."

Check: You roll your **Navigate** skill (currently d8). Result: 5 → Success!

Interpretation: "You push through the dust storm, wind compass guiding you. As the settlement walls loom through the haze, you hear the warning bells—gates closing in minutes. You sprint the last hundred meters and slip through just as the heavy doors grind shut."

Consequence: Reduce Navigate skill to d6. You're exhausted—mark 1 stress.

Solo-Specific Tables

These tables help generate content when you need inspiration.

Mission Generator (d12)

1. **Locate Water Source:** Find hidden aquifer, repair cistern, or negotiate access to controlled reservoir.
2. **Deliver Supplies:** Escort caravan, protect cargo, navigate hostile territory or weather.
3. **Investigate Ruins:** Explore Deep Roads, day-side salvage site, or alien structure. Recover artifacts.
4. **Mediate Dispute:** Resolve inter-settlement conflict, faction rivalry, or resource allocation disagreement.
5. **Track Predator:** Hunt dangerous creature threatening settlement or caravan routes.
6. **Recover Lost Caravan:** Search for missing traders. Determine if they were lost to weather, predators, or bandits.
7. **Repair Critical Infrastructure:** Fix geothermal vent, wind turbine, or water purification system under time pressure.
8. **Escort Dignitary:** Protect important person (Water Judge, Weatherworker, Archivist) through dangerous territory.
9. **Contain Psychic Aberration:** Investigate Weather Wraith, bonding backlash, or other psychic phenomena. Contain or eliminate threat.
10. **Establish Outpost:** Scout location, secure resources, defend against threats to create new settlement.
11. **Retrieve Ancient Tech:** Infiltrate restricted area, negotiate with faction, or brave environmental hazard to recover valuable Earth artifact.
12. **Survive Catastrophe:** React to superstorm, geothermal eruption, auroral disruption, or other disaster. Protect others if possible.

Location Generator (d12)

1. **Twilight Belt Settlement** (Aetherion, Khal-Rim, Aurora Bastion, or create new)
2. **Deep Roads Section** (ancient tunnels, geothermal chambers, resonance nodes)
3. **Day-Side Outpost** (mining operation, salvage site, thermal research station)
4. **Night-Side Cave** (Lumina Caverns, ice harvesting grounds, fungal farms)
5. **Geothermal Vent** (natural hotspot, settlement heat source, alien structure)
6. **Abandoned Settlement** (ghost town, ruins, recent evacuation)
7. **Caravan Route** (trade road, open twilight belt, superstorm path)

8. **Ancient Ruins** (Earth technology cache, alien structure, Deep Roads entrance)
9. **Wind Farm** (energy generation facility, turbine forest, maintenance towers)
10. **Ice Fields** (night-side glacier, harvesting camp, frozen tundra)
11. **Storm Observation Post** (Weatherworker station, auroral observatory, signal relay)
12. **Hidden Cache** (secret water reserve, smuggler's stash, forgotten supply depot)

NPC Encounters (d12)

Roll for **attitude** separately: 1-4 = hostile, 5-8 = neutral, 9-12 = friendly.

1. **Caravan Trader** (hauling goods, offering information or trade)
2. **Daywalker** (day-side specialist, scarred and intense)
3. **Weatherworker** (psychic ritualist, concerned with storms)
4. **Water Judge** (resource arbiter, wielding significant authority)
5. **Deepkin Scout** (cave-dweller, speaks via resonance or translator)
6. **Beastwalker** (bonded with wind serpent or thermal lizard)
7. **Bandit** (desperate or opportunistic raider)
8. **Archivist** (lore keeper, seeking artifacts or knowledge)
9. **Settlement Refugee** (fleeing disaster, superstorm, or conflict)
10. **Rival Explorer** (competing for same goal or resources)
11. **Faction Agent** (guild representative, enforcer, or diplomat)
12. **Psychic Seeker** (individual experiencing awakening, needs guidance)

Environmental Events (d8)

1. **Superstorm Approaches** (wind increases, pressure drops, hours until impact)
2. **Auroral Disruption** (electromagnetic interference, psychic feedback)
3. **Thermal Inversion** (temperature gradient reverses, causes chaos)
4. **Dust Storm** (day-side winds carry abrasive particles into twilight belt)
5. **Geothermal Tremor** (ground shakes, heat spikes, risk of eruption)
6. **Wind Shift** (predictable patterns change, navigation unreliable)
7. **Bioluminescent Bloom** (glowcap spores fill air, hallucinogenic effects)
8. **Silent Zone** (wind stops inexplicably, precedes catastrophic storm)

Solo Campaign Frameworks

Choose one framework or blend elements to create your own.

1. Lone Wanderer

Concept: You're a solo explorer, trader, or exile surviving across settlements. Build reputation, gather resources, and carve out a place in the world.

Structure:

- Session = one mission or journey
- Track reputation with factions (5-point scale: hostile to allied)
- Build resource stockpile over time
- Long-term goal: establish home base, gain faction membership, or achieve legendary status

Key Mechanics:

- Use Mission Generator for each session
- Track water tokens, equipment, and faction standing
- Introduce recurring NPCs (allies, rivals, contacts)
- Catch your breath = arrive at new settlement or find shelter

2. Settlement Caretaker

Concept: You manage a small outpost (20-50 inhabitants). Deal with resource shortages, external threats, and internal disputes.

Structure:

- Session = one crisis (water shortage, superstorm, diplomatic incident)
- Track settlement resources: Water (1-10), Power (1-10), Provisions (1-10)
- Track population morale (1-10)
- Long-term goal: achieve stability (all resources 7+) or relocate

Key Mechanics:

- Use Complication Tables to generate crises

- Each session, roll d6: 1-2 = resource depletes 1 point, 3-4 = stays same, 5-6 = improves 1 point
- Morale changes based on how you resolve crises
- Catch your breath = one week passes, resources shift

3. Caravan Escort

Concept: You're a trader or guard protecting caravans between settlements. Navigate weather, predators, and politics.

Structure:

- Session = one journey segment (settlement to settlement)
- Create route map with 3-5 waypoints per journey
- Roll for complications at each waypoint
- Track cargo (type and value), employer reputation
- Long-term goal: join caravan guild, establish trade monopoly, or retire wealthy

Key Mechanics:

- Use Location Generator for waypoints
- Use Environmental Events and Predator Encounters at each waypoint
- Catch your breath = reach settlement, resolve cargo delivery
- Build relationships with recurring employers and rivals

4. Ruin Seeker

Concept: You investigate ancient Earth technology and Duskaran mysteries. Explore Deep Roads, day-side ruins, and alien structures.

Structure:

- Session = one expedition into dangerous location
- Use loot checks to find clues and artifacts
- Build mystery over multiple sessions (e.g., "What caused the *Stellar Horizon* to crash?")
- Track discoveries in journal
- Long-term goal: decode major mystery, recover legendary artifact, or publish findings

Key Mechanics:

- Use Location Generator (focus on ruins, caves, day-side)
- Use Complication Tables for environmental hazards
- Introduce rival explorers and faction interference
- Catch your breath = return to settlement, catalog findings

Journaling Prompts

Solo play benefits from journaling. After each session, answer one or two prompts:

1. What did you discover today?
2. Who did you meet? Will you see them again?
3. What resource are you running low on? How will you resupply?
4. What complication do you fear most?
5. What's the most beautiful thing you saw in the twilight?
6. What do you miss from before? (Earth, another settlement, a person)
7. What's one thing you learned about Duskara today?
8. If you could change one thing about your situation, what would it be?

Extended Solo Play Example

Premise: You're Kael Serin, a Deepkin Scout escorting a small caravan from Lumina Caverns to Aurora Bastion. You carry resonance crystal (d10), climbing kit (d8), and a med kit. Your skills: Navigate d10, Perceive d8, Endure d6, others d4.

Turn 1: The Journey Begins

Establish Scene: You're two days into the journey. The caravan consists of three ice haulers and their wind serpent mounts. The route follows the twilight belt, but you notice unusual wind patterns.

Frame Intent: "I want to use my resonance to sense if there are any cave systems nearby where we could shelter if weather turns bad."

Question Oracle: "Are there caves within half a day's travel?" Context suggests it's the twilight belt with some cave access, so "Likely" = d8. Roll: 6 = "Yes, and..."

Interpretation: "My resonance picks up extensive cavern networks just below the surface—larger than expected. They connect to the Deep Roads. There's shelter, but also potential danger."

Update: Note cave location on mental map.

Turn 2: Weather Trouble

Establish Scene: An hour later, your weather-sensitive mounts grow agitated. Storm coming.

Frame Intent: "I want to navigate to those caves before the storm hits."

Risk Oracle: "How dangerous is this?" The storm is approaching but you know where caves are—"Manageable" = d8. Roll: 4 = "Risky. Make a check."

Check: Roll Navigate d10. Result: 7 = Success! "I guide the caravan to the cave entrance just as the first gusts hit. We descend into darkness."

Consequence: Reduce Navigate to d8.

Turn 3: Inside the Caves

Establish Scene: The caves are warmer than expected. Bioluminescent fungus provides dim light. The caravan sets up temporary camp.

Frame Intent: "I want to explore deeper to ensure no predators are near."

Risk Oracle: "How safe is exploration?" Unknown cave, possible threats—"Precarious" = d6. Roll: 2 = "Very risky. Make a perilous check."

Perilous Check: Roll Perceive d8. Result: 3 = "Success, but complication."

Interpretation: "I detect no immediate threats, but my resonance picks up something else—rhythmic vibrations from deep below. Not natural. Not predator. Something mechanical."

Consequence: Reduce Perceive to d6. Mark 1 stress (perilous check complication).

Turn 4: The Discovery

Establish Scene: Curiosity wins. You venture deeper alone while caravan rests.

Frame Intent: "I want to locate the source of the mechanical vibrations."

Risk Oracle: "Can I reach it safely?" Deeper caves, unknown danger—"Precarious" = d6. Roll: 5 = "Not risky. You simply do it."

Interpretation: "Following vibrations, I discover a chamber with ancient machinery—Earth tech from the *Stellar Horizon* era. Lights flicker weakly. A control panel shows partial functionality."

Action: You decide to investigate the panel. "Can I interface with it?" Question Oracle: "Likely" = d8. Roll: 4 = "Yes, but..."

Interpretation: "The panel responds to touch. A holographic display activates showing a map—but it's in a code you don't recognize. You'll need an Archivist to decode it."

Loot Check: You search the chamber. Roll d12 loot die: 9 = "You find a d10 item."

Loot Roll (d10 items table): 5 = Data crystal (Earth archives fragment)

Interpretation: "Secured in a compartment is a data crystal, intact and functional. This could be invaluable to Aetherion's Archivists."

Consequence: Reduce loot die to d10.

Turn 5: Catch Your Breath

Establish Scene: You return to caravan. They've rested and eaten. Storm has passed. Time to continue.

Catch Your Breath: Reset all skills to original ratings. Loot die stays at d10.

GM Complication Roll: (Using General Complications table, d12): 9 = "Unwanted company. Another group arrives."

Contextual Interpretation: *We're in twilight belt near cave exit. Who would be here? Aurora Bastion is nearby—probably a patrol.*

Interpretation: "As you emerge from caves, you encounter an Aurora Bastion patrol. Three guards block your path. The leader steps forward: 'These caves fall under our territory. You're carrying commercial cargo. That requires inspection and access fees.'"

Turn 6: The Negotiation

Establish Scene: Three armed guards block your path. Your ice haulers look nervous. Paying the fee would consume most of your profit.

Frame Intent: "I want to negotiate, pointing out we only used the caves for storm shelter, which is traditional right-of-passage."

Risk Oracle: "How receptive are they?" Guards are rigid but not hostile—"Precarious" = d6. Roll: 3 = "Risky. Make a check."

Check: You don't have good Commune, but you could use Perceive to read their body language and find the sympathetic guard. Roll Perceive d8: 6 = Success!

Interpretation: "One guard—younger, less rigid—nods slightly when you mention traditional rights. You direct your argument to them. After tense discussion, they convince their commander to let you pass with reduced fee."

Consequence: Pay 2 water tokens. Reduce Perceive to d6.

Turn 7: Arrival

Establish Scene: Aurora Bastion's ice walls loom ahead. Journey almost complete.

Frame Intent: "I want to deliver the ice cargo and negotiate sale of the data crystal to the Archivists."

Question Oracle: "Are there Archivists in Aurora Bastion?" "Likely" = d8. Roll: 10 = "Yes, and…"

Interpretation: "Not only are there Archivists, but a visiting senior Archivist from Aetherion is currently studying auroral phenomena at the observatory. They're very interested in your discovery."

Negotiation: You propose a trade: data crystal and location of the chamber for generous payment and Archivist escort back to examine the site.

Question Oracle: "Do they agree?" "Very likely" = d10. Roll: 8 = "Yes, and..."

Interpretation: "The Archivist agrees enthusiastically and offers bonus payment. They also promise to put in a good word with the Weatherworking Guild—your reputation grows."

Session End: Update Character

Stress: 1 box marked (from perilous check)

Skills: All reset (caught breath earlier)

Loot Die: d10

Resources:

- Water tokens: Started with 10, paid 2 to guards, earned 15 from contract + 8 bonus = 31 total
- Glowcap rations: Adequate
- Reputation: Improved with Archivists

Inventory:

- Resonance crystal (d10)
- Climbing kit (d8)
- Med kit (unused)

Journal Entry: "*Found ancient Earth machinery in caves below twilight belt. Data crystal recovered—Archivists extremely interested. Guards tried to shake us down but negotiated through. Storm nearly caught us but instincts saved the day. Beginning to wonder how much old tech is hidden beneath our feet. The Archivist mentioned the machinery's code might be similar to Stellar Horizon systems. Could there be a connection?*"

Next Session Hook: The Archivist proposes accompanying you back to the chamber for full investigation. But Deep Roads are dangerous, and someone else might have noticed your discovery...

Random Tables

Locations (d20)

1. **Aetherion Central Market** (bustling trade hub, vertical farms visible)
2. **Khal-Rim Thermal Forges** (heat shimmer, hammering sounds)
3. **Lumina Caverns Resonance Chamber** (echoing voices, bioluminescent glow)
4. **Aurora Bastion Ice Fields** (wind-scoured tundra, harvesting crews)
5. **Abandoned Mining Outpost** (day-side margin, partially buried in sand)
6. **Deep Roads Crossroads** (ancient tunnels, multiple paths, eerie silence)
7. **Geothermal Vent Hotspot** (superheated steam, unstable ground)
8. **Wind Farm Turbine Forest** (hundreds of spinning blades, deafening)
9. ***Stellar Horizon* Crash Site** (twisted metal, pilgrimage destination)
10. **Storm Observation Tower** (kilometer-high spire, panoramic view)
11. **Caravan Waystation** (fortified rest stop, mixed travelers)
12. **Fungal Farm Cavern** (glowing mushrooms, humid air, Deepkin workers)
13. **Bandit Hideout** (hidden canyon, improvised defenses)
14. **Ancient Alien Structure** (smooth black walls, no visible purpose)
15. **Water Purification Plant** (settlement lifeline, heavily guarded)
16. **Thermal Research Station** (day-side margin, heat-resistant dome)
17. **Auroral Observatory** (night-side, electromagnetic equipment)
18. **Vertical Farm Hydroponics** (artificial lighting, controlled climate)
19. **Windwalker's Nesting Grounds** (wind serpent breeding site, sacred to Wind-Kin)
20. **Data Crystal Archive** (restricted vault, Earth knowledge repository)

Missions (d20)

1. Your settlement's water cistern is poisoned. Find the culprit and new water source.
2. A caravan is three days overdue. Search for survivors or recover cargo.
3. Day-side mining drone returned with unknown artifact. Investigate its origin.
4. Superstorm predicted to hit settlement in 48 hours. Reinforce defenses or evacuate.
5. Weatherworker reports Weather Wraith manifesting in storm fronts. Contain it.
6. Rival settlement claims your ice harvesting grounds. Negotiate or fight.
7. Deepkin scout brings news: Deep Roads section collapsed, cutting off trade route. Find alternate path.
8. Feral wind serpent attacks caravans. Track and eliminate or rehabilitate.
9. Geothermal vent shows signs of eruption. Evacuate nearby settlement.
10. Archivist hires you to recover data crystal from restricted alien structure.
11. Bandit gang demands protection payment from your settlement. Pay, fight, or negotiate.
12. Psychic seeker experiencing uncontrolled awakening. Train them or bring to Weatherworker.
13. Ancient Earth satellite begins transmitting. Decode signal and investigate source.
14. Water Judge accused of hoarding resources. Investigate and deliver verdict.
15. Night-side aurora intensifies, disrupting all communications. Deliver urgent message manually.
16. Settlement elder dies, leaving succession dispute. Mediate or support candidate.
17. Beastwalker's bond inverted—creature becomes aggressive. Diagnose and fix.
18. Day-side salvage crew discovers functioning structure. Secure it before rivals arrive.
19. Thermal inversion causes ecological chaos. Protect crops and livestock.
20. Mysterious signal from uncharted Deep Roads section. Investigate with scout team.

Complications (d20)

Use these when players catch their breath, fail checks, or you need sudden drama.

1. Superstorm intensifies; wind speed doubles, visibility drops to zero.
2. Water cache you were relying on has been sabotaged—poisoned or stolen.
3. Weather Wraith manifests, causing fear and disorientation.
4. Wind serpent pack circles overhead, territorial and aggressive.
5. Thermal lizard ambush—heat-seekers attracted to your campfire.
6. Equipment failure: critical item breaks (wind compass, comm crystal, thermal suit).
7. Geothermal vent destabilizes; ground tremors, heat spikes, eruption imminent.
8. Bandit ambush—raiders demand supplies, information, or toll.
9. You're out of water tokens at the worst possible moment.
10. Ancient structure reactivates—lights, sounds, unknown purpose.
11. Inter-settlement dispute escalates—you're caught in the middle.
12. Auroral disruption causes electromagnetic interference; comm crystals fail.
13. Deep Roads section collapses behind you—must find alternate exit.
14. Shadow stalker tracks your group through night-side caves.
15. Psychic burnout wave—area of residual psychic feedback causes stress.
16. Dust storm from day side reduces visibility and lacerates exposed skin.
17. Ice storm from night side threatens to freeze water sources and crops.
18. Feral bonded creature attacks—former mount gone rogue.
19. Faction agent arrives with demands, threats, or inconvenient timing.
20. Silent zone—wind stops inexplicably, precedes catastrophic storm.

Weather Events (d12)

1. **Clear Twilight:** Gentle winds, moderate temperature. Rare and cherished.
2. **Dust Storm:** Day-side winds carry abrasive particles. Visibility zero. Skin lacerations.
3. **Ice Storm:** Night-side cold front. Water sources freeze. Crops threatened.
4. **Superstorm:** Wind speed 150+ km/h. Temperature swings. Shelter mandatory.
5. **Thermal Inversion:** Temperature gradient reverses. Ecological chaos.
6. **Auroral Surge:** Night-side aurora visible in twilight belt. Electromagnetic interference.
7. **Wind Shift:** Predictable patterns change. Navigation unreliable.
8. **Bioluminescent Bloom:** Glowcap spores fill air. Hallucinogenic. Beautiful but dangerous.
9. **Silent Zone:** Wind stops inexplicably. Eerie. Precedes catastrophic storm.
10. **Geothermal Eruption:** Vent releases superheated steam. Area temporarily uninhabitable.
11. **Pressure Drop:** Barometric plunge. Headaches. Storm imminent.
12. **Thermal Spike:** Day-side heat pushes into twilight belt. Heatstroke risk.

Loot: Ancient Earth Tech (d12)

When you loot ruins or salvage day-side operations, you might find:

1. **Data Crystal Fragment** (corrupted Earth archives, requires decryption)
2. **Medical Nanites** (heal 3 stress, one-time use, unstable)
3. **Portable Solar Charger** (powers equipment, fragile)
4. **Cryo-Preserved Seeds** (Earth crops, potential agriculture revolution)
5. **AI Core Fragment** (partial *Stellar Horizon* AI, personality intact)
6. **Atmospheric Analyzer** (detects environmental hazards, battery low)
7. **Grav-Compensator** (reduces weight of carried items, unreliable)
8. **Encrypted Communicator** (long-range, requires decryption)
9. **Thermal Regulator** (maintains body temperature, limited charges)
10. **Biometric Scanner** (identifies biological signatures, needs calibration)
11. **Holographic Projector** (displays 3D images, entertainment or communication)
12. **Weapon Prototype** (Earth-tech weapon, powerful but unstable)

11. Appendices

Glossary of Duskaran Terms

Auroral Disruption: Night-side aurora intensification causing electromagnetic interference and psychic feedback.

Beastwalker: Individual with psychic bond to native fauna (wind serpents, thermal lizards).

Catch Your Breath: Game mechanic where skills reset but new complication is introduced.

Daywalker: Day-side specialist with exceptional thermal resistance. Salvages mining operations.

Deep Bonding: Psychic connection to native creatures, allowing communication and shared senses.

Deep Roads: Ancient tunnel network beneath Duskara's surface. Origin unknown.

Deepkin: Night-side cave-dwelling culture. Communicates via resonance.

Duskaran Accord: Political confederation uniting twilight belt and cave settlements.

Geothermal Warmth Circle: Deepkin community centered around geothermal vent.

Glowcap: Bioluminescent fungus. Primary food source in caves.

Psychic Burnout: Mental/physical exhaustion from overusing psychic abilities.

Resonance: Psychic ability to perceive and manipulate vibrations through stone.

Shadow Walking: Psychic ability to move unseen in low-light environments.

***Stellar Horizon*:** Colony ship that brought humanity to Duskara in ~2250 CE.

Superstorm: Catastrophic weather event with winds exceeding 150 km/h. Common where hot and cold air masses collide.

Thermal Sensing: Psychic ability to perceive heat signatures and temperature gradients.

Twilight Belt: Habitable zone 200-300 km wide circling Duskara's meridian. Home to 80% of humanity.

Water Judge: Resource arbiter managing water distribution and resolving disputes.

Weather Wraith: Psychic manifestation in storm fronts. Echoes of dead weather workers.

Weather Working: Psychic ability to sense and influence atmospheric patterns—wind, pressure, storms.

Wind-Kin: Alliance of Beastwalker communities and bonded creature populations.

Quick Reference: Core Rules

Making a Check

1. GM telegraphs risk
2. Pick skill, roll matching die
3. Interpret: 1-2 = fail + complication, 3-4 = succeed + complication, 5+ = succeed
4. Reduce skill by one step (d12→d10→d8→d6→d4)

Catch Your Breath

- Resets all skills to original ratings
- Can be done anytime, even in combat
- GM introduces new complication

Loot Checks

- Start with d12 loot die, step down after each use
- Roll: 1-2 = trouble here, 3-4 = trouble ahead, 5+ = find item (die rating matches result)
- Reset loot die when you catch your breath

Stunts

- Use d12 instead of skill rating for extraordinary actions
- Must catch your breath before attempting another

Stress

- Track complications and damage with stress boxes
- 4 stress = vulnerable (failure could mean death)
- Clear 2 stress with med kit or rest in secure location

Character Sheet Template

Name: _____
Pronouns: _____
Role: _____

Skills

- **Endure:** [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]
- **Navigate:** [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]
- **Perceive:** [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]
- **Commune:** [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]
- **Resolve:** [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]
- **Assert:** [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]

Psychic Ability (Optional)

Backpack (3 items max + 1 med kit)

1. _____ [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]
2. _____ [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]
3. _____ [d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]

Med Kit: [ ] (clears 2 stress)

Loot Die

[d4 / d6 / d8 / d10 / d12]

Stress

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
(4 stress = vulnerable)

Notes / Resources

Water Tokens: _____
Glowcap Rations: _____
Faction Reputation: _____

Solo Oracle Cheat Sheet

Question Oracle (Yes/No Questions)

- Very unlikely: d4
- Unlikely: d6
- Likely: d8
- Very likely: d10
- Almost certain: d12

Results:

- 1-2: "No, and…" (complication)
- 3-4: "Yes, but…" (cost)
- 5+: "Yes, and…" (benefit)

Risk Oracle (Action Outcomes)

- Chaotic: d4
- Precarious: d6
- Manageable: d8
- Predictable: d10
- Stable: d12

Results:

- 1-2: Very risky → perilous check
- 3-4: Risky → check
- 5+: Not risky → succeed

Solo Game Loop

1. Establish scene (location, goal)
2. Frame intent (what you want to accomplish)
3. Consult oracles (question or risk)
4. Resolve actions (checks if needed)
5. Update resources (stress, skills, supplies)
6. Catch your breath (reset skills + complication)

7. Advance story (interpret results, journal)

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