Coefficient, Chronicler

Biography:

Under constant strain, even the sturdiest thread of patience will eventually wear down to a rail-thin line. That is where Coefficient is right now.

Her assignment has been the same one for the past decade. A sorry excuse of an alcove is her home, located near a Clanner village on the outskirts of Territorial Region I, right at the foot of the mountains. Staring at the rock, the snow, the clouds, waiting for some useless Scrapper of the Full Barrel Band – yes, they call themselves that in earnest – to show up at her door and present her some even more useless junk that is as far removed from Bygone High Tech as Gendo droppings.

Her years wane away in this forsaken spot. She just turned forty-two, and she has nothing to show for. Her score is frozen in time, it seems. Long gone are the dreams of moving further up the ladder to one day become a Streamer. Last time she actually saw another member of her cult? It's been years. Of course, on the radio, there they are. Constantly asking for updates on her mission, constantly prying into her status, constantly suggesting recalibrations to her mission execution parameters. These voices change from time to time. Coefficient stays.

Living in such close proximity to a Clanner village has had its merits, though. Coefficient has been helping the Clanners out with some small favors, like weather forecasts, small repairs and the like. In return she is receiving food, village gossip and general kindness – paired with a respectful distance, of course. The mask stays on at all times and the vocoder remains charged.

Then, suddenly, a breakthrough. The useless Scrappers played around with some TNT in the mountains and caused an Avalanche. Three of them are dead and a concrete building of remarkable proportions has been revealed. Metal signs on concrete posts. An electric fence, withered away through the centuries. A bygone facility, in almost pristine shape, preserved by the ice. Her chance to unfreeze her score, finally.

Coefficient as an Ally:

The usual Modus Operandi would be simple. Let the Scrappers clear out the place, assess anything of value, print and fork over some drafts for the wonders of the ancient world. Unfortunately Coefficient knows the Full Barrel Band too well. Drunkards, fools and idiots. They won't recognize the actually valuable tech inside the facility and just bring her more trash. Unfortunately, they also won't let anyone near their newfound base of operations they affectionately call "Beer Hall". The Cluster could be asked to send some help in the shape of some Shutters, sure, but then she might need to share her score with her peers.

Then again, if some third party like the characters could be talked into clearing out the place and removing the Scrappers without paying too much attention to all the tasty tech, wouldn't that be the kicks? How convenient that Coefficient the Mediator is a really, really convincing talker and can ask for such a favor in a much nicer manner than your average Chronicler, if need be. Significantly improved relations with the tech toads and an eternally grateful, newly promoted streamer will be the rewards for the group upon completion of the mission.

Coefficient as an Adversary:

Of course, the group could also stumble upon the bygone facility by chance or in the interest of someone else. In that case, Coefficient will undoubtedly recognize them as rivals, but she won't need to face them alone. A few choice words from Coefficient to the villagers to collect long-owed favors will be all that is needed to rile them up against the "intruders", and soon the group will face the wrath of a whole village, in addition to some scrappers reluctant to leave their cozy spot.



Potentials:

Number Cruncher (1), Upload (2)

Celia Mazotti , Hellvetic

Biography:

Her Sergeant calls twenty-four year old Celia Mazotti "quite possibly the worst soldier to ever don a harness." And there is some truth to it: Who is always last to report to the Fortress after a tour of duty, usually radioing the tower only five minutes before curfew? Celia. Whose last shot on the shooting range always misses? Celia's. Which Trailblazer can easily be told apart from all the others in the locker by the shoddy cleaning and miscalibrated sight? Hers, of course. Who is last on the ten kilometer obstacle course training run, barely matching the minimum required time to avoid extra hours in the gym? You guessed it, Signorina Mazotti.

The rest of her surviving family, consisting of grandparents, uncles and cousins, have carved out a fine reputation for themselves in the Hellvetic cult while obtaining Corporal, Sergeant and in one case even Major ranks. Most of her peers in the trenches look down on her and often suspect that it is only the family name that keeps her from being dismissed from service in a dishonourable manner, but they are on the wrong track. As lacking as Celia is as a soldier grunt, she makes for a perfect low-key social operative. And this fact is well known to the higher-ups in the command chain.

While her combat skills are run-of-the-mill at best and her physical shape just about average, she is a profound deceiver, observant investigator and gregarious rascal. And although her antics, conspicuous laziness and dismissive attitude of military customs drive her immediate superiors mad, those above them steer her assignments carefully to villages and towns on the edge of Territorial Region III, where Apocalyptic Burn smugglers, recalcitrant Clanners and unpredictable Jehammedans are a constant source of concern. Celia appears as the disgruntled soldier who is willing to look the other way, the sloppy guard, the weakest link in the chain, just long enough to lure the opponents of the Hellvetics into a false sense of security before they overplay their hand and the trap springs.

This act works very well, in no small part due to the fact that it isn't one. Celia truly loathes the strict confinements of the Fortress, the bellowed orders and the spartan life. But she also believes the Hellvetics hold the key to humanity's future in their hands with all the tech and firepower at their disposal. If only they could be convinced to use it to create a society that is actually fun living in...

Celia as an Ally:

Celia has zero qualms about working together with just about anybody who seems to truly have humanity's best interest at heart and doesn't care about rules or regulations in the process. Her only red tape is called Burn: Whoever seems addicted to the drug or connected to the smuggling trade can't gain her favor no matter what. For anybody else she deems on her side, she will spill out the locations of hidden ammo caches, part with knowledge about patrol routes in the Alps and offer any other conceivable support, including roles as a scout and sniper for hire.

In case one or more Hellvetics are with the group that behave by-the-book and overly sincere, Celia will do her utmost to embarass them and rile them up.

Celia as an Adversary:

It is very possible for the group to find themselves as the fly in the spider's net while they are looking for a non-sanctioned crossing of the Alps or dealing in other shady business in the region. Celia will appear vulnerable and exploitable to them until it is too late and volleys from trailblazers rain down on the characters.



Potentials:

Infiltration (2), Mole (1)

Franziskus Mahnkopf, Judge

Biography:

Franziskus was born and raised in Leadfield. When he was fourteen years of age, he witnessed a party of Judges save his twin sister Theresa from a bunch of stone-drunk, out-of-luck Scrappers with highly unsavioury thoughts on their mind. The picture of the hammer cracking the skull of the reeking Scrapper just as he was about to tear Theresa's dress apart has been ingrained in Franziskus' mind ever since. After that, there was never any question about what he would do with his life once he would become of age.

Twelve years later Franziskus has been made City Judge, while his sister runs a successful bakery near the Forecourt. He is already being mentioned by senior Judges as a role-model for aspiring Vagrants. His knowledge of the Codex is comprehensive, his demeanor is sincere and his behaviour towards the citizens and guests of Justitian is impeccable at all times. He is always dutiful and thorough when dealing with misdemeanors like pickpocketing, vandalism and similar offences, and petty criminals cannot expect any leniency from the City Judge once caught.

However, when he is asked to help investigate assaults, rapes and other crimes against the physical inviolacy of the respectable inhabitants of Justitian, Franziskus switches into another gear. He will not eat, rest or sleep until he has delivered the culprit to justice, shunning no effort and no matter the cost to him personally.

Even if parts of the society in Justitian view the Judges' rule over the city as too tight a chokehold, Franziskus has earned the respect and goodwill of everyone who has been wronged due to his willingness to go above-and-beyond what is needed to put justice for all into effect. While his demeanor is a bit stiff overall and light-hearted jokes usually fly over his head, he undoubtedly means well, and his good reputation extends from the Bottomlands over Brennen all the way to the Stukov Quarter.

Lately, his sister has gotten into trouble with the Carrion Birds. The bulky loafs of bread sold in her shop would make for excellent packaging for burn cusps inside to distribute to the Bird's customers without attracting unwanted attention, and the Apocalyptics have asserted some pressure on the young lady to make her compliant with their scheme. But Theresa has refused to play along, and her wellbeing is now in considerable danger. She confided this matter to her brother and without a doubt Franziskus will not turn a blind eye to her plight.

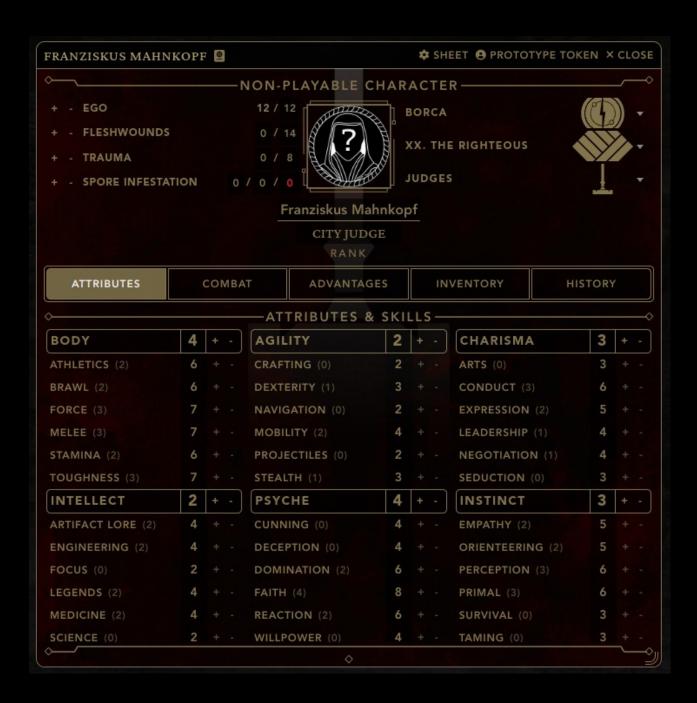
Franziskus as an Ally:

There are two ways to bring Franziskus into play as an ally to the group, one through the situation involving his sister, the other one through a serious crime committed against a member or acquaintance of the party. As long as the characters act supportive to the victims, they can be sure that City Judge Franziskus will swing the hammer and shoot the musket at their side, never wavering, never relenting.

A special situation may arise when the group successfully helps Theresa against the Carrion Birds. Over the course of time, Franziskus will gain reputation, influence and rank rapidly within the Judges cult and continue to repay the characters for their help with whatever resource he has at his disposal, including Black Judges supporting the character's endeavours in faraway regions.

Franziskus as an Adversary:

Unsurprisingly, characters who raise a hand against any honest citizen of Justitian for whatever reason may soon find themselves in the crosshairs of Franziskus, who will not be bribed or shooed away by any means. Additionally, should the characters be in league with the Carrion Birds or somehow be connected to the plot against Theresa, they will have a persevering nemesis on their heels.



Potentials:

Justice for All (2), Stampede (1)

Jean-Marc Bonné, Spitalian

Biography:

Jean-Marc, born a Touloni, has seen both of his older brothers die during the madness of Operation Mirage. It devastated him. The Resistance officer who led the command they belonged to had extended her condolences and told him in the same sentence: "Now it is your turn to fight for Free Franka!"

Jean-Marc sighed and shook his head. "Merci Madame, I've seen enough of Free Franka to know I want no piece of it." Soon after, he heard stories of how valiantly the Spitalians had fought to liberate the Neolybian Academy and treated the many wounded students. Healing the wounded? That sounded like something Jean-Marc could get behind. After all, his soul could use some healing, too. Maybe he would receive some when he applied some? Keeping his mind occupied with a career as a Spitalian sounded like a good idea to him. To cut all ties to his past, he reported directly to the Spital instead of staying in his homeland.

Two years later and Jean-Marc is thoroughly downbeat. Although well in his twenties by now and given a lot of support by his superiors to jumpstart the career of the passionate volunteer, he is still just an Orderly. He struggles with everything that is more complicated than a bandage or a splint. He struggles with the language, his South Franka accent betrays his origin at every turn. He struggles with his conviction. Becoming a Spitalian, was that really the right choice?

Lately, he has been assigned to help an overzealous couple of Famulancers, and witnessed them harassing a family of providers because of an allegedly spore-infested sack of grain. Jean-Marc had seen the test tube, and the result was inconclusive at best – but the Famulancers wouldn't let it go. The situation escalated and it came to blows with the head of the family. The Splayers made short work of the man. The agonizing screams of his wife and daughter still echo in Jean-Marcs ears.

This is enough. His erstwhile admiration for the Spitalians has turned into nothing but disdain. He wants out. He wants to be free. He wants to be in a place where there is no more suffering. He will leave the cult, of that there can be no doubt. But first, the doctors in black and white need to feel the suffering they bring themselves.

Jean-Marc as an Ally:

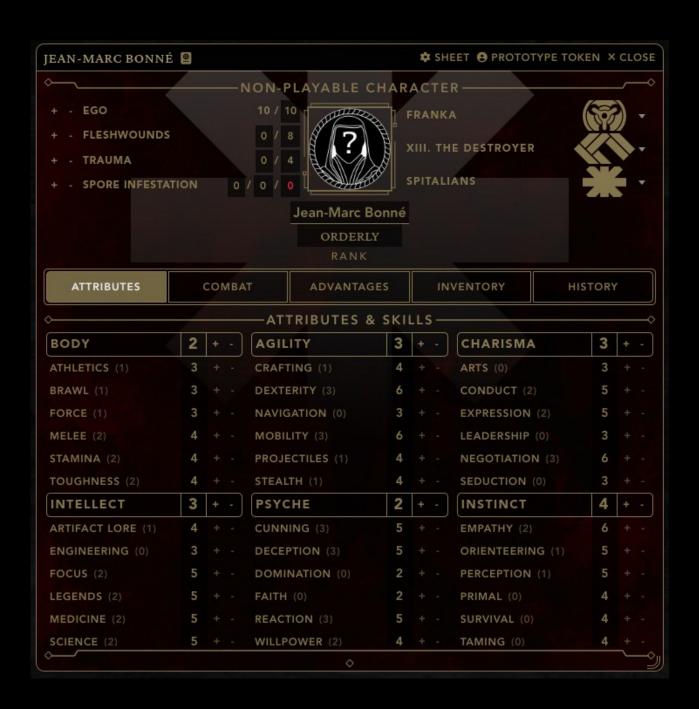
At his heart, Jean-Marc is highly cautious to the point of being cowardly, and would rather not act alone. A group who might find themselves at odds with the Spitalians for whatever reason might be viewed as a perfect set of allies by Jean-Marc to help him both assert his moral high ground and provide him a way out of the cult. He might try to use them for a smear campaign against his cult and have them advocate against the tight yoke the Spitalians exert on the providers, with the goal of having them incite a riot against the routine checks the Spitalians do on the provider's goods.

In exchange, he will offer to smuggle Ex and other valuable medications out of the Spital to bribe the group. Additionally, he has picked up one or two compromising secrets about the Spitalians and is willing to share them with the group, if they help him.

Jean-Marc as an Adversary:

The higher-ups in the Spital are concerned by recent rumours among the Famulancers. The Providers in the Rubble seem to know they are coming for unannounced tests of their harvests. The group is engaged to investigate this secretly.

It will require some legwork and convincing among the providers to find out the leak is a simple Ordinary by the name of Jean-Marc Bonné. If the players confront him, he will do his utmost to lie and misdirect the group before trying to convince him of this point of view. He will not engage in a fight unless in self-defense, and will cease to resist as soon as he suffers any trauma damage.



Potentials:

Rebel (1)

Teodor of the Brenni, Clanner

Biography:

The Brenni Teodor is a burly man in his forties. He runs a Scrapper's drinking hole called *The Smoker* in Mobilis, together with five of his relatives – a sister, two cousins and their spouses. The place is old, the barstool legs are creaking, the wooden tables have darkened over time and there is not much else on the menu than two kinds of beers and whatever the Brenni ladies can whip up in the small kitchen that's located behind the oaken bar, but the local workers love the place. Sporting the same rustic charm and simple honesty than his establishment, "Big Teo" is well-liked by his patrons and will always lend a sympathetic ear to anyone who needs to drink away the sorrows of the day at his place.

There is another side to *The Smoker*. While the beer flows, jokes are told, dice are thrown and all-too-rowdy patrons are being escorted out of the tap room, a trap door to the cellar is locked and one of the Brenni starts to tend to a "special guest" in a dimly-lit room just below. This special guest may be a Scrapper who made a recent fortune on artifacts found at a secrect digging site, a Judge with the knowledge of the recently-changed patrol routes or the Stukov housekeeper of House Salvano, but they all have three things in common: They are not here of their own volition, they possess knowledge Teodor wants, and however long it takes, the Brenni will make them part with this knowledge. Iron chains, crude devices and robust argument enhancers are at the ready to accelerate the conversation and the Brenni make liberal use of them. Whether the special guests leave *The Smoker* alive or cut up and stuck in a barrel, depends on how convinced Big Teo is that they will keep their mouth shut. He is a hard man to convince.

Very few people in Mobilis know this, but every now and a patron arrives at the bar from Justitian, Bassham or even further away to pay Teodor for a jug of beer and some information of interest that he and his gang have obtained from his special guests. This side business not only keeps the bar afloat. Already, a hefty sum has been set aside – not much longer, and the Brenni can retire comfortably.

Teodor as an Ally:

Teodor will not be much of an ally, but he is willing to sell information to anyone that pays him a sufficient amount. The reputation of a man that "just knows it all" can reach the group as soon as they enter Mobilis, and the group may very well never uncover that it's not simply drunk patrons at *The Smoker* that accidentally spill the beans in front of Big Teo.

<u>Teodor as an Adversary:</u>

A member of the party who is not careful enough and makes it apparent they have or know something of interest to Teodor may well end up becoming a special guest of the Brenni, who will either lure this character away or simply perform a brute-force abduction at night to get a hold of them. The group will have to be very fast to rescue their party member in time from the brutal clutches of the Brenni.

Of course, it is also easily possible that the group simply investigates the sudden disappearance of one of their contacts, which will as well lead them to the door of *The Smoker*.



Potentials:

Danger Sense (2), Moving Mountains (1)

Acid Alfred, Scrapper

Biography:

Around the Protectorate, Alfred Koltarevsky is only known as "Acid Alfred", named for the visible acid burn scars on the right side of his face that result from a horrific accident he suffered as a teenager while still in Pollen. He roams the dusty streets of the Borcan soil, sitting atop of his oxen cart and sells tinkering services and metal tools to whoever needs them and is willing to put up with his taciturn demeanor and foul mood.

Very few people remember today that Alfred used to be the head of the scrapper band White Wolves, which, as legend has it, have made it into the old ruins of Exalt and escaped alive. This story is a half-truth – members of the Wolves did in fact enter the Grindworks and escaped with loot that would water the eyes of the most cynical Chronicler – but to call them "alive" is an exaggeration, as only frayed strands of their sanity remain and they spend their days vegetating in near-catatonic states, hiding their sordid existence in the shadiest corners all over the Protectorate.

Alfred never went to Exalt. The expedition was led by his second-in-command Wally, and conducted against Alfreds orders. He roams the protectorate in the disguise of a tinker looking for clues and witnesses of the time, trying to find the artifacts his erstwhile brothers and sisters have hidden before they went completely mad. As the years he spends on this quest stretch to decades, his mood is becoming worse and worse, but his resolve never falters.

Alfred as an Ally:

Alfred could be a chance encounter for the group on the roads of the Protectorate. Despite his obsession with the Exaltian artifacts he remains a first-class craftsman and will offer to customize the party's gear for a discount price. During the conversation, he will casually ask for information on some of his former comrades and their whereabouts, offering even further rebates for detailed accounts.

Alfred as an Adversary:

If the group follows up on the questions and hints Alfred dropped, they may soon stumble upon parts of the treasure Alfred seeks. The old Bear will hardly let that go, and apply all necessary force to obtain what the party took.



Potentials:

Junker (2), Darwin (2)

Zouba Dahwa, Neolybian

Biography:

Zouba Dahwa is a fish out of water, a barely 18-year-old African boy hustling through the streets of Justitian, with letters and ledgers tucked under his arm, his eyes firmly fixed on the road ahead as the curious looks and inquisitive gazes of the local populace accompany him.

When he agreed to spend his apprenticeship in service to the highly reputable and magnaminous Trading House of Jemma Alba, Zouba thought he'd spend his days proofreading letter copies and recalculating account balances, sitting on a soft pillow in a cozy palace in Tripol. Instead, he was sent to a cramped, old house at the edge of the Forecourt in Justitian, where the red dust creeps through the windows and doors that do not properly close.

The elderly Consul Jemma Alba has almost forgotten about this little import/export endeavour of her empire and cares little for it. Too many dinars flow into her coffers from her outposts in Franka and Purgare, and the Hellvetics steadily increase their tolls for using the safe passage through the Alps which drains the profits from business with the Protectorate. A few crates that enter or leave the small building now and then provide barely enough to cover the expenses.

Therefore, Zouba is stuck with a single washed-up Merchant and his three lazy Scribes that are all too conscious of the futility of their enterprise and have long given up on trying to improve their lot in life. Their self-pitying lamentations suck the oxygen out of the air around them, and Zouba feels like he is slowly suffocating.

Since there is nothing he can learn from these people, he has to take matters in his own hands to avoid his career becoming a failure before it even had a chance to start. He has begun to talk to some young shop owners whose businesses are just being set up and worked out the first deliveries of African products to them. He misappropriates the seal of the Merchant he is working for and forges some letters so these contracts remain in place after being scrutinized in Tripol. Given enough time, he will turn the little outpost in Justitian into a bustling enterprise, of that he is sure.

Zouba as an Ally:

Zouba is always on the hunt for people interested in his goods and as such might seek out a far-travelled group of characters in case they are interested in commerce. While this may very well not be the case, Zouba promises to organise just about anything from the African continent if paid for this in advance – or the characters help him with an especially delicate forgery.

While the immediate promise Zouba gives to the characters does not materialize, he will not forget their help if the group shows leniency to him. A long time later, when he has become the new Merchant in charge of a suddenly flourishing business, he will pay back the characters with interest – and they will have gained a very affluent friend to rely on in the future.

Zouba as an Adversary:

As small as the business of Jemma Alba may be on the outside, it does own a rather spacious and mostly empty warehouse near the Harbour. In a city as starved for space as Justitian, this is an affront to many entrenched merchants and traders who would like to use it as their own – but the Neolybian in charge of the enterprise is simply too lazy to respond to any requests for purchasing or even lending the space. Some less patient locals may hire the group to exert some pressure on the Neolybians, and suggest they abduct the weakest link to send a message – Zouba, who will not put up much of a fight but is also just too stubborn to make for a convenient hostage.



Potentials:

Ecstasy of Gold (1)

Vivi, Apocalyptic

Vivi was created as a player character in a Degenesis campaign I had the pleasure to run for a couple years. Her backstory and artwork are included here courtesy of her player: www.twitch.tv/itsadaisyy

Biography:

Vivi was born in Toulon in 2573, to a pair of burn-addicted and neglectful parents. She spent the first years of her life in a sheet metal shack in Saint Chenil with a leaky roof and a moth-ridden blanket, surviving on the scraps the Touloni fishermen would gift her out of pity for her situation. Her fate changed when her parents, in a desperate attempt to pay off some debts and acquire more burn, sold her to the Stork of a semi-migratory Frankan flock of Apocalyptics.

For most of Vivis Finch years, the flock was based in the area around Rennes, running the usual blend of smuggling, burn-selling and prostitution operations in the towns and villages of the area. During this time, Vivi earned the respect of Jairo, leader of the Battle Crows of the flock, who helped harness her talent to fight; and she began to establish rapport with the flocks mid-rank personnel, including Storks, Magpies and Vultures.

Eventually, the flock was betrayed to the Spitalians of Rennes by an associate, a simple villager making deliveries for the Apocalyptics. When Vivi successfully tracked him down and killed him in single combat, she was proclaimed the flock's Owl by the Raven, an imposing but aging man named Yann Le Fleuret.

The flock still needed to flee the Rennes area and migrated to Born in the Protectorate. After setting up shop in Born's old sawmill in 2596, they began to expand their influence into other areas in the Protectorate and finally into Justitian itself, cutting into the cake that belongs to the Carrion Birds.

Nowadays, Vivi is often deployed as a problem-solver and last resort measure for the flock, eliminating threats to their operations in the Protectorate and furthering the schemes of Yann. On these missions, she prefers to appear unremarkable and inconspicuous, quietly stalking her prey and employing a decent bit of charm to her act before striking in quick and ruthless fashion, ideally in close quarters that will limit her opponent's options to shoot or flee. Her weapon of choice is a Neolybian hunting knife, with a heavier blade than standard knives but still small enough to be easily hidden from prying eyes. Vivi also likes to wrestle and brawl with friends and foes alike, and loves to throw unassuming Finches into the dirt for fun.

With Yann growing older seemingly by the day, the question of his succession looms over the flock. Both the Senior Stork Marilynne, who predominantly raised Vivi during her first years with the flock, and the Senior Magpie Therèse have strong ambitions to take up the Raven's mantle once Yann inevitably steps down (or is made to). However, the powers that be at the very top of the Apocalyptic cult monitor this situation closely, and have their own ideas regarding the new Raven – ideas that involve Vivi...

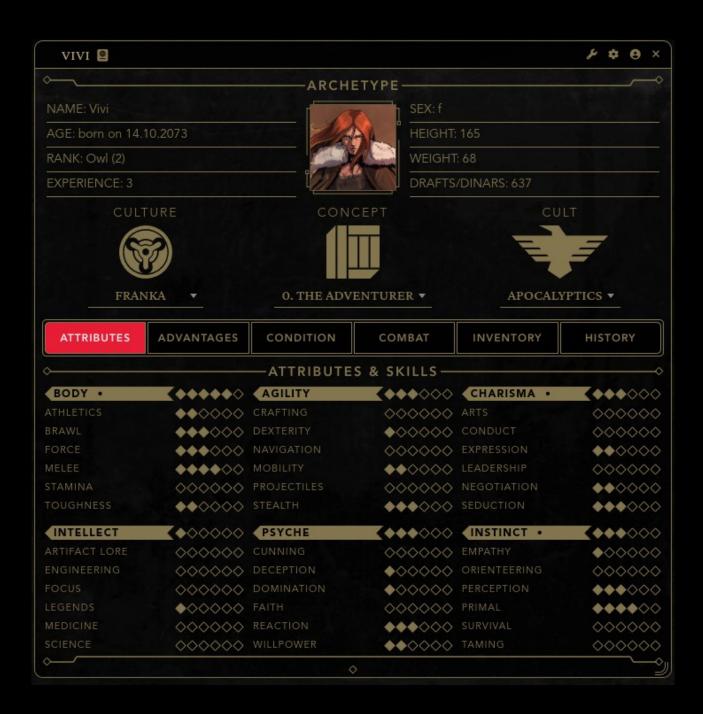
Vivi as an Allu:

If the group's operation involves acting against the Carrion Birds interest, it is very possible they find themselves on the same side than Vivi. She can lend assistance in a fight or help spy on a common foe, but will ask for something in return that either helps her flock or furthers her own interests – and her help won't come cheap or easy. She does have a soft spot for fellow southern Frankans, especially Touloni, though.

Should she already have assumed the Raven's mantle, her support may be less direct but even more impactful, as she can facilitate deliveries of contraband, question the tarot, or lend capable fighters to the group.

Vivi as an Adversary:

If the party is perceived as somehow detrimental to the flock's interest, Vivi might be set upon their trail - with potentially dire consequences, should she happen to catch a member of the party isolated and off guard. In that case, only one will leave the scene alive.



Potentials:

1,000 Ways (2)

Artwork:

