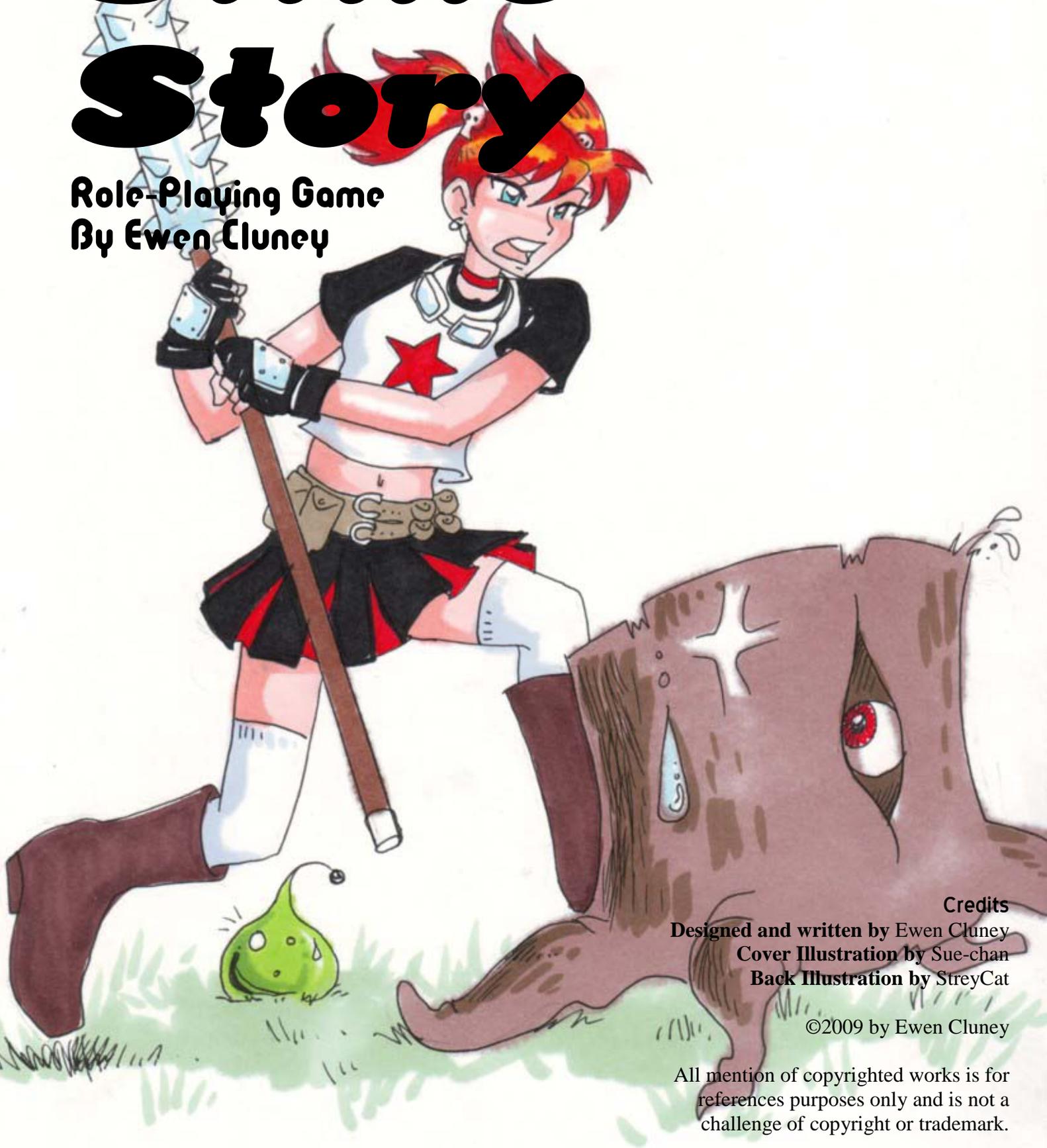


# Slime Story

Role-Playing Game  
By Ewen Cluney



## Credits

Designed and written by Ewen Cluney  
Cover Illustration by Sue-chan  
Back Illustration by StreyCat

©2009 by Ewen Cluney

All mention of copyrighted works is for  
references purposes only and is not a  
challenge of copyright or trademark.

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>TRAITS.....</b>	<b>26</b>
PLAYTEST VERSION 2 .....	3	CLIQUES.....	26
ROLE-PLAYING GAME .....	3	CLASSES.....	29
REQUIRED MATERIALS .....	5	TALENTS .....	33
<b>MONSTER HUNTING .....</b>	<b>6</b>	GEAR.....	35
NEWS OF PORTALS .....	6	PROTECTIVE GEAR .....	38
IN A SMALL TOWN .....	6	OTHER GEAR .....	38
PORTALS .....	6	<b>SECONDARY CHARACTERS.....</b>	<b>39</b>
MONSTERS.....	7	1. SELECT CLIQUES.....	39
MONSTER HUNTERS.....	7	2. CALCULATE ATTRIBUTES .....	39
THE MONSTER HUNTER SUBCULTURE .....	9	3. TALENTS.....	40
AROUND THE WORLD .....	10	4. GEAR.....	40
HUNTER GLOSSARY .....	11	5. PERSONAL DATA.....	40
<b>PRE-PLAY .....</b>	<b>12</b>	SAMPLE SECONDARY CHARACTERS .....	40
PARTICIPANTS .....	12	INCIDENTAL CHARACTERS .....	40
DISCUSSION .....	12	<b>EPISODES.....</b>	<b>41</b>
PROTAGONISTS.....	13	ROLE-PLAY AND NARRATION.....	41
SECONDARY CHARACTERS.....	14	PREPARATION .....	41
WRITE ISSUES .....	14	CONNECTIONS IN PLAY.....	42
INITIALIZE CONNECTIONS.....	15	ACHIEVEMENTS .....	42
ADDING NEW CHARACTERS .....	16	CHECKS.....	44
<b>QUICK PROTAGONIST CREATION .....</b>	<b>17</b>	STRESS.....	45
WHAT THINGS MEAN.....	17	ENCOUNTERS .....	45
CUSTOMIZATION.....	17	INTERLUDES .....	52
ARCHETYPES .....	18	HAPPENINGS.....	57
PERSONAL DATA.....	21	FINISHING UP AN EPISODE.....	57
<b>PROTAGONIST CONSTRUCTION .....</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>MONSTERS .....</b>	<b>60</b>
1. SELECT CLIQUE .....	22	COMMON MONSTERS .....	60
2. SELECT CLASS .....	22	MONSTER DESCRIPTIONS .....	60
3. ATTRIBUTES .....	23	MAKING NEW MONSTERS.....	66
4. TALENTS.....	24	<b>WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF SLIME STORY .....</b>	<b>67</b>
5. PLAY STUFF.....	24		
6. INFLUENCE AND GEAR.....	24		
8. PERSONAL DATA .....	25		

## Introduction

I had the idea for the Slime Story setting while I was playing a free Korean MMORPG. My character was a girl with red pigtails, and thanks to paying for some customization, she was running around in a pleated skirt, raglan T-shirt, red tennis shoes, and headphones, swinging a big spiked pole arm thing at cute monsters. I wondered what kind of world she might live in, and Slime Story was born.

One-way magical portals provide a constant stream of cute monsters, and many teenagers go out and hunt those monsters. They collect parts from the monsters, and trade those in at the Monster Mart at the mall. They get exercise, spending money, and time with friends. Of course, that doesn't stop them from acting like teenagers. They make friends and sometimes enemies, they fall in or out of love, they piss off their parents, and so on. There are other things going on in the world—there are distant countries where men are fighting bloody wars over control of portals—but here and now, there are teenagers living their lives and hunting monsters to stay sane in a little town where nothing ever really happens.

## Playtest Version 2

This is my second attempt at a playtest version of *Slime Story*, which is practically a different (and hopefully altogether better) game from last time. I've been flailing around trying to work on this thing for so long that I literally can't remember everything I've changed and added since the last playtest version (which never actually got playtested). But, this is the real version, the place where the game *really* begins. There's a tremendous amount of stuff here that to me looks really awesome on paper, that gets me excited about playing the game, but it definitely needs plenty of playtesting.

Unlike the last draft, in this version the selection of special abilities (now called Talents) is severely limited. I've only included the "Base Talents" for each clique and class, and not the numerous additional talents I intend to create. I already caused myself a lot of pain trying to write them up before only to have to toss most of that work out on account of having so drastically changed the rules. On the other hand, the Base Talents will hopefully give characters enough interesting things to do for right now. The selection of monsters is also limited, and there are some other things here and there that I've left out. Notes on that kind of thing appear in square brackets.

The primary purpose of this playtest draft is to look for problems with the basic system. If you have any specific feedback about this game, please send it my way.

## Role-Playing Game

*Slime Story* is a role-playing game. If you decide to play it (and I really hope you will), you'll need to get together with some friends. Through talking, scribbling on paper, and rolling dice you'll tell stories. I'll explain the rest as we go along, but if you're not familiar with these games, the "role-playing" part will need some extra explanation.

Role-playing is an activity where the participants take on the role of other people. Teachers sometimes use this to help students understand things better, or to practice certain skills (like speaking a foreign language or doing job interviews), and psychologists sometimes use role-playing as a tool to help people with their problems. Whatever the purpose of the role-play, you are pretending to be someone in a certain situation, and you can speak and act how you think they would. In the more useful kinds of role-play you may in fact be taking the part of yourself in a particular situation, but in a role-playing game (RPG) you're taking the part of a fictional character that you create.

Different people role-play in different ways. For some it's a calculated performance or moving a game piece around, while for others it's more like slipping into another self for a little while. However you do it, you need to consider what your character is thinking and feeling, and express that though his or

her words and actions. Your character's emotions and biases may lead him or her to do things that are illogical and disadvantageous. That's fine. People are irrational creatures, and the overriding goal of playing a role-playing game isn't to "win" anything, just to tell an interesting story.

One of the important differences between a role-playing game and most other kinds of role-play is that for an RPG you don't physically act out what your character is doing. You can use some gestures if you think it will help, but for the most part you just describe your character's actions verbally, so that everyone else understands what your character is trying to do. For some things you might want to do, you'll have to engage the game rules to see if you can succeed, and what happens as a result. In *Slime Story* you mainly do that when you're in some kind of conflict with someone (or something) else.

Another important issue in any kind of role-play is of control. There are distinct limits to what you can and can't put into the fictional world you and your friends share. This is perhaps easier when you're role-playing a job interview, because unless the interviewee happens to be Superman, you can't start flying or shooting beams from your eyes. In an RPG, the fictional worlds tend to be a little more complicated than just an office where job interviews are held, so consistency is important. If you're a player of a conventional RPG, you have control over what your character thinks and does, but nothing else. You might well have a character who can fly or has heat vision, but that will be because you and your friends established his or her superhuman powers before you started playing, and not because you just happened to feel like it all of a sudden. *Slime Story* doesn't work quite like a conventional RPG, but it's different in very specific ways, which we'll explain later. If you're not sure whether your character should be able to do something, first remember that this is a game about normal teenagers. They can be very talented and clever, but they're still normal humans. If that doesn't answer the question for you, try asking the people you're playing with what they think.

Finally, the most important thing to remember about role-playing games is that their purpose is to be fun. If you're not enjoying yourself, talk to your friends about why. Sometimes you need to adjust how you're doing things for your friends, and sometimes the game you're playing isn't quite right for what you want. If that happens, you and your friends can try changing how the game works or (gasp!) play some other game that works better for you.

## Required Materials

Like most role-playing games, *Slime Story* doesn't quite come with everything you need to play. The things you do need are pretty easy to come by though.

- **Six-sided dice.** These are perfectly ordinary dice, as found in some board games and other random places, though hobby stores have them in more interesting colors. Ideally, each participant should have two dice on hand.
- **Paper and pencils.** Copies of the character sheets are best for recording characters (we have PDFs on our website), but you can use normal paper. Scratch paper is handy too. Pencils are better than pens because you can erase things.
- **Friends.** In order to play this game, you definitely need a group of around three to six people who can get together for a few hours at a time. This game is at its best when you play on a regular basis, but you can play a single session if you prefer.
- **Action Cards:** These are cards with the names of characters on them that are important for battles and other conflicts. There is a PDF of such cards on the website, but you can just as easily scribble names on index cards and leave it at that.
- **Battlefield Map and Tokens:** In this game, battles take place on an abstract "battlefield map." It's possible to keep track of stuff in your head, but using the map and tokens makes it much easier. You can download and print a PDF of this stuff from our website, though you can recreate the battlefield at any time by just drawing seven boxes arranged vertically on a piece of paper. If you don't like using paper tokens to keep track of characters, you can use colored pawns, metal or plastic miniatures, gachapon figures, etc.

# Monster Hunting

The world of *Slime Story* isn't quite like the world we live in. It's very close, but ten years ago something important happened, and certain things changed. This chapter gives you a quick overview of the *Slime Story* setting. Other parts of the book give you different bits and pieces about the setting, and your group will have to invent some new details here and there (especially with regard to the town), but this is where you should start for learning about the game's world.

## News of Portals

When you were little, it seemed like everything that was interesting and wondrous in the world had a way of turning out to not be real. Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy were only the tip of the iceberg. All the good stuff was fake, and all the real stuff was boring.

And then one day your parents were watching the news, and it said something about portals. *Magic* portals that were spitting out *real* monsters. The adults were scared. Some of them were really, really scared, and started buying guns or praying, or just got jumpy whenever something moved in the shadows. There was a lot of talking that, being so young, you didn't understand at the time. But monsters were real, and they came through magic doorways. And nothing would ever be the same again.

## In a Small Town

Ten years later, things have changed, and so have you. Not everyone is thrilled about portals, but they're a fact of life. The town where you live is small and boring, and the high school you now attend is more like a place for your parents to dump you while they work. The town isn't so small that you know everyone, but it's not so big that teenagers can avoid each other.

Some kids hang out at the mall, and some are into skateboarding, or playing guitar, or doing drugs. Everyone needs something to pass the time until they can graduate and leave the town for somewhere more interesting. For you and your friends, and a lot of others, that's monster hunting.

## Portals

When the portals first appeared, they threw the world into a panic. People feared the End Times, or an enemy attack, but however much people freaked out, the portals resolutely refused to do anything catastrophic. It's certainly *possible* that someone deliberately created the portals for some purpose, but however much monster hunters love to bullshit about it on message boards, it's all academic. The portals are reality, and no amount of speculation has gotten anyone anywhere.

A portal appears as a disc of glowing bluish-white light that hovers in the air. An average portal is four to six feet across, though people have found portals as small as ten inches or as big as twenty feet. From a short distance it emits a low hum. Anyone foolish enough to pass through a portal will find it totally insubstantial, but from the inside it emits a piercing, high-pitched sound. Some portals are fixed to one place, while others appear and disappear within a given area, or glide around. People inevitably try to anticipate where the local portal will show up, but a lot of them are random enough that they're virtually impossible to track. Some portals only dispense a monster once in a blue moon, or only spit out certain kinds of monsters, but most of them provide a good variety of monsters, and average at least one monster per 10 minutes. There's no rhyme or reason to the selection of monsters though, and they do sometimes put them into wildly inappropriate environments. There's one portal that dutifully dumps salamanders into the Antarctic, where they die within minutes.

As you might imagine, the portals appeared wherever they wanted, without much consideration for any

plans people might've had. Some people had to abandon their homes to escape a continual stream of monsters into their kitchens, and similar problems afflicted factories, office buildings, villages, power plants, and so on. It's been a decade since the portals opened, so while people have largely adjusted, there are still some husks of buildings abandoned to the monsters. On the other hand, there are some cases of a portal revitalizing an area. In a few cases a ghost town has filled up again as a company set up facilities to harvest monsters from a stationary portal, and in Albuquerque, New Mexico an abandoned mall became the world's first indoor monster hunting park.

Science is still working on unraveling the mysteries presented by the portal phenomenon. These portals just go outside of what we presently have the ability to understand. Scientists have found that the presence of a portal slightly raises the background radiation in the area (by about 100 milisieverts), but no one really knows what that means. There are many hypotheses about what might be going on, which get into some fascinating territory in theoretical physics, but very little concrete information. It's been in the news lately that a team from Stanford wants to set up a particle accelerator to fire at a portal in the hopes that it will provide insight into how they function.

Religious reactions to the portal phenomenon vary. There were entirely too many groups that had convinced themselves that Armageddon had finally come and set about doing profoundly stupid things, but for the most part they've since calmed down. Some people are resolutely convinced that the portals are the work of Satan, but most accept them as something we just don't yet understand. There are of course a number of fringe religions based around worshiping the portals, the monsters, or some hypothetical being that created them, but for the most part these have remained small and harmless.

## **Monsters**

Monsters often approximately resemble species native to earth—boars, cats, fish, etc.—but they display properties not found in previously known organisms, such as shooting fire or electricity. They are not especially dangerous, but people can't afford to let them go unchecked. A ten-year-old can fend off most any single monster with a rake, but he could be in real trouble if ten or twenty of the same monster showed up at once. Likewise, monsters can burn, freeze, or poison crops, kill animals, and set fire to buildings.

There are some more dangerous monsters, though fortunately they're quite rare. Encounters with manglerfish tend to be unpleasant, while encounters with dragons can turn lethal, and the appearance of an arbogeddon or meteor monster can require calling in the National Guard.

Biologists have found monsters to be a difficult but fascinating new field of study. The genetic structure of a monster is based on DNA, but there are slight differences in how the proteins are assembled that raise major questions about how these creatures might have evolved. However, it also means that monster flesh is inedible. The mechanisms by which they do things such as breathe fire or shoot electricity tend to stretch the boundaries of plausibility, but have thus far had scientifically verifiable causes.

## **Monster Hunters**

Neither philosophical masturbation nor scientific inquiry into the natures of portals and monsters can directly help with the question of what people need to do about these creatures invading their daily lives. People deal with monsters in different ways, depending on the area. Where there are stationary portals, they'll often fence them off and set up people and machines to harvest the monsters. In many big cities, local governments often hire public servants specifically to eliminate unwanted monsters. In other areas, especially small towns, a subculture of monster hunters has developed.

## How It Started

History records a housewife named Mary Hurst as the first monster hunter, and she was also the original inventor of the recipe for healing potions. She just fought off monsters with yard tools to protect her kids, and shared her discoveries on the internet. The practice of hunting spread like wildfire. People from every walk of life have tried their hands at it, but because nerds with decorative swords ordered out of catalogs joined the fray early on, the hobby has a geeky tinge to it. That's probably how a lot of vocabulary from MMORPGs became common among monster hunters.

As people discovered more and more uses for monster parts, the interest in harvesting and hunting monsters grew. People started to find that nearly every monster had something useful in it somewhere, sometimes miraculously so. It was entirely too easy to figure out that the glowing orange crystals inside salamanders would explode with a sufficient impact, but healing potions are what really turned monster hunting into the phenomenon it is today. Squishies are capable of binary fission, but otherwise monsters have never been known to reproduce, so farming them isn't really possible. People kept finding more miraculous ways to use monster parts. Hospitals, ambulances, and first-aid kits have healing potions of course, but there are also monster parts with valuable industrial applications, and some (such as dragon crystals) that are highly valuable just for their rarity. And for all of these, hunting is the only practical way to harvest them.

Early on the growth of monster hunting with melee weapons created a bunch of problems with the law. In some places blades over a certain length were illegal, and in most areas having a concealed blade was and still is illegal. Between lobbying by both citizens and the nascent Monster Mart, and hunters paying closer attention to local laws (such as by making sure their weapons are clearly visible), these problems have mostly disappeared. On the other hand, criminal penalties for assaulting another person with such weapons have been increased in many areas.

In some places organizations collect all the monsters from a given portal and extract the parts to sell in bulk. However, when it comes to individuals selling monster parts gained through hunting, Monster Mart was right at the center of things from the beginning.

## Monster Mart

Depending on who you ask, Monster Mart is either the Google or the Wal-Mart of monster hunting. What's certain is that monster hunters can hardly get away from it. Anywhere you can find a decent population of hunters, there is almost always a Monster Mart store. While you can find people to sell and trade with, Monster Mart can store trade-ins in special patented containers, and ship them out daily in special refrigerated trucks.

Each tiny store is also a one-stop shopping destination for pretty much everything a monster hunter might need, including weapons, potions, storage bags, backpacks, and so on. For that matter, they carry books, toys, T-shirts, and other merchandise, to help draw in non-hunters and turn kids into future hunters. Major manufacturers have caught onto this, and they supply Monster Mart with Nike branded swords and Adidas athletic wear intended for hunting.

Not everyone is happy with how Monster Mart does business, and critics say the stores have been reducing their trade-in values for monster parts more and more, taking unfair advantage of the isolation of their average customer. Furthermore, their business model is more or less based on completely dominating all of the potential business in a given area, so Monster Mart has bought out or put out of business nearly every competitor that has come along. There are only a handful of exceptions, notably a company called Monster Mania that's been focusing on small kiosks in particularly isolated locations, and Monster Supply, which dominates the Canadian scene and has made inroads in the northern U.S.

Monster Mart's biggest virtue is probably the way it treats employees. As mall jobs that will hire

teenagers go, it's one of the best-paying you could get. Unfortunately, there are rumblings that changes at Monster Mart corporate may result in MM becoming as crappy as every other retailer, with lousy pay and employees being evaluated on their ability to push arbitrarily-chosen crap onto customers.

## The Monster Hunter Subculture

Monster hunters started as a mixture of random people wanting to defend their homes and random geeks wanting to do the ultimate live-action role-playing. The geeks like to think of themselves as representing the “real” form of the hobby, and they get into a lot of identity politics over what should and shouldn't be characteristics of a “true” monster hunter. It's still kind of a fringe hobby, so the people who are into it think of themselves as special. They have to put up with widespread attitude that monster hunters are wasting their time doing something that the government, or at least experienced adults, should be taking care of instead. There are also the likes of PETM who object to any killing of monsters.

## Mainstream Acceptance

The hobby is in a strange transitional phase right now, becoming sort of mainstream but not quite. It looms large to the people who are into it and follow the countless blogs, web forums, podcasts, etc. on the subject, but its mainstream traction is limited. There have been some TV shows about monster hunters, but they've mostly been short-lived and only one (*My Life as a Teenaged Monster Hunter*) became popular with actual hunters. Monster hunters actually aren't much for video games, least of all ones that are poor imitations of what they do in real life, but they do exist. An MMORPG called *MonsterQuest* is probably the most influential, and some of the terminology from the game has leaked into the real version of the hobby, most notably the tendency to call hunters who use missile weapons “rangers.”

## DIY

By and large, monster hunters are big into customization and making things. Noobs have stock weapons from Monster Mart, but experienced monster hunters' weapons will be heavily modified, for both functionality and style. Plenty of people also get into creating useful stuff out of monster parts on their own, rather than just selling things to Monster Mart. Not everyone takes the time to learn how to do this kind of stuff themselves, but where there's a halfway decent monster hunting community there will also be people who offer do “crafting.”

“Alchemists” are the folks who get really deep into crafting. Some stick to tried and true stuff like brewing healing potions, while others go nuts experimenting with different combinations of monster-derived substances.

## Weapons

Although persistent lobbying has helped ensure that in most places monster hunters can own and use the tools they need for hunting, the public is still a bit leery of lots of teenagers running around with weapons. There are incidents in the news from time to time, ranging from self defense to psychosis and murder, but the prevailing attitude among monster hunters is that violence against other human beings is unacceptable. Even when hunters are willing to get into the occasional fistfight, they won't use their weapons against people if they can help it. It goes without saying that game hunters with rifles know better than to point their weapons at other people, but it can be a lot more tempting to take a whack at someone with a staff or a baseball bat. Blunt trauma isn't as likely to outright kill someone as a gunshot wound, but it can too easily spiral into a concussion or a fractured skull, to say nothing of what a spiked mace can do to the human anatomy.

Most monster hunters would contend that they can control themselves perfectly fine, they face a good

amount of concern and even paranoia over safety. It's still very illegal to carry such weapons to school or into government buildings in most areas, and there's a whole cottage industry of safety courses and equipment for concerned parents to force on their kids.

## The Issue of Guns

Monster hunters have a strange relationship with firearms. Using guns of any real power to hunt monsters presents some practical problems, since they're much more likely to destroy valuable monster parts. Anything bigger than a .22 will make a squishy outright explode. That looks neat on YouTube, but doesn't accomplish much. Against a salamander a bullet can detonate the crystal inside, which can be outright dangerous. Furthermore, as most monster hunters are minors, guns are both prohibitively expensive (a rifle can easily cost over \$1,000) and very tightly regulated. In areas with a very strong culture of gun ownership, people tend to think monster hunting with guns is perfectly fine, but the prevailing monster hunter subculture is largely against using firearms\*.

As you might imagine, this creates all kinds of friction when these different factions meet. Monster hunters and game hunters have gotten into all kinds of arguments and confrontations, especially when they get in each other's way. Some monster hunters even go so far as to look down on game hunters for killing "real" animals, even as they rack up dozens of monster kills in a single run. Monster hunters who naively try game hunting find that, unlike monsters, cutting up a deer for the useful parts is a time-consuming and messy process, and amongst other things, people don't like it when you leave the carcass on the ground. Monsters typically have one useful bit that's pretty easy to pull out, and the carcass decomposes completely in a day or two (and squishies dissolve in a matter of hours). That's part of why to many game hunters monster hunting is a "dumbed down" kind of hunting.

Monster hunters themselves get into long, convoluted arguments about the pros and cons of firearms too, but it's all gone nowhere. Basically, many monster hunters aren't fans of guns, but they're far from unanimous about it. If you're hanging out with hunters and you want things to remain civil, it's a topic best avoided.

## Around the World

The United States is far from homogeneous. In the Deep South there isn't anywhere near as much of a dividing line between regular hunting and monster hunting. Hunting is a way of life, and if people can earn real money rather than just venison and trophies, they're not about to complain.

The portals are a worldwide phenomenon too. Most industrialized countries have some monster hunting activity going on, though the culture can vary quite a bit. In some places it's something children do, and adults do the "real" hunting. This is the case in most Scandinavian countries, and in Japan it's split between kids and twenty-something otaku. In others the government, industry, or organized crime dominates the scene, and it's people rather than monsters that make it too dangerous for children.

The U.S. is too big and has too many portals for the government or any other organization to have any substantial control over them. In other parts of the world, portals can become another resource for people to fight over. It's not unusual for the news to carry stories of warlords fighting over portals, terrorists or guerrillas using monster parts, and other unpleasantness stemming from the portal phenomenon. On the other hand, there are third-world countries where healing potions have saved countless lives and monster parts have rescued flagging economies. In the final analysis, things are just *different*, and there are no signs that we'll ever be able to go back.

---

\* This book does not have rules for guns, though if I do a supplement for this game it definitely will.

## Hunter Glossary

Monster hunters have their own distinct slang terms, which are a mixture of geek-talk, MMORPG terms, and new stuff that's popped up as the subculture evolved. You don't have to use all of this stuff in the game; some hunters lay on the slang much more thickly than others. The Monsters chapter (p. XX) contains all of the names of monsters, so we won't repeat them here.

**alkie (n.):** Short for "alchemist". Used for exactly the kinds of bad jokes you would expect.

**casual hunter (n.):** Someone who hunts occasionally and not very seriously. Casual hunters often use improvised weapons.

**dragonslayer (n.):** A hunter who has faced and defeated a dragon. Dragonslayers are supposed to be afforded some considerable respect, even if they've only faced a single dragon.

**mon (n.):** Short for "monster."

**party (n./v.):** A group of people who go hunting monsters together. Often used as a verb. ("Want to party Friday after school?")

**potion (n.):** A healing potion, derived from stumpy leaves. Sometimes called a "pot", which sometimes leads to unfortunate misunderstandings, and often leads to bad jokes.

**quest (n.):** A short paid job offered to monster hunters by locals, typically involving clearing out monsters from private property or recovering specific monster parts.

**run (n.):** A session of monster hunting.

**spawn (n.):** A group of monsters as they are usually encountered in the wild.

**SPM (n.):** Short for "squishies per minute". Basically, the average number of squishies a given person can take out with a given weapon. Hunters use this as the standard way to evaluate the effectiveness of people and especially weapons. Sometimes called "squee" or "spam."

**squishyslayer (n.):** An insult, used to mock unskilled hunters, especially ones who try to brag. Implies they want respect for taking out a squishy.

**theorycrafting (n.):** "Theorycrafting" is basically sitting around crunching numbers about monster hunting, and a favorite pastime among the geekier monster hunters.

**zone (n.):** An area where monsters appear. An area that a portal can populate with monsters.

## Pre-Play

“Pre-play” is the stuff you need to do to get ready to play the game for the first time. Once you have all of your characters and such ready you can keep on using them, so you won’t need to do this pre-play stuff again. I think it’s best to do the pre-play stuff together sitting around a table, but you can do it over the internet or whatever ahead of time in order to jump into the actual play part more quickly if you prefer. You also might want to meet up to do the pre-play, then meet again later to start playing, so that you have some time to mull things over and brainstorm what you might want to do with your characters, but there’s definitely nothing wrong with jumping straight in.

## Participants

The most important ingredient in a good game of *Slime Story* is the people who will take part. Everyone who plays the game is called a participant. One person needs to know the rules and to be able to explain the setting to everyone else. If you’re the only one who can do that, you’re probably going to be the **Game Master**. Everyone else taking part in the game is a **player**.

### Game Master

One of the people participating in the game will have to become the Game Master, or GM. The GM’s job is to be a sort of referee and ringleader. You have to manage the rules, and get everyone to role-play and contribute. In practice the GM is often the person who organizes for everyone to get together and play.

This game is designed for the GM’s job to be fairly easy, and it shouldn’t involve too much work. You’ll need to create and run encounters (fights with monsters), control some secondary characters, and to a lesser extent represent the larger world. However, for the most part the game progresses with everyone working equally to push things forward.

Although the GM is the final arbiter of the rules, the game belongs to everyone who’s participating, so you need to be ready and willing to listen to everyone’s opinions on things. You’re not the Voice of God, just first among equals.

### Players

The rest of the participants are players. That means that you don’t have the GM’s responsibilities, but you have a *protagonist*. You get to play one of the main characters in the stories you and your friends will create, and you have a responsibility to help make stories happen. That means that you should offer up suggestions and feedback to the group, and most important of all, have your protagonist strive and do interesting things.

## Discussion

First, you need to take some time to talk about the world where your game takes place, and what it will entail. The Setting chapter before this one gives a good overview of the *Slime Story* world, though there’s more info about it throughout the book. Get everyone on the same page as to portals, monsters, hunters, and so on. Then, you can start figuring out some things about what you want in your game and where it will take place.

### Themes

*Slime Story* is kind of like high school in that what you’ll get out of it heavily depends on what you put into it. It can be a fluffy slice-of-life story about friends hanging out, a monster hunting soap opera, or a dark high school melodrama full of betrayals, with drug use and the occasional suicide attempt. I’m of

the opinion that the game is at its best when the characters have some definite interpersonal conflicts going on without them overriding the fun atmosphere too much. However, when you're playing it's your game, and my opinion doesn't mean all that much. Having a clear idea about this is important, since everyone is going to be making the major characters for the game together.

## Content Guidelines

*Slime Story* is about teenagers, and teenagers think about sex. A lot. Many people don't want to deal with such things, especially when sitting around a game table with friends, and doubly so through characters they identify with so intimately. On the other hand, some people don't mind at all. You could get fairly graphic if you're so inclined, or keep the details off-camera, or keep any romance fairly chaste, or just not deal with it at all. Talk about what you do and don't want to see in the game. Respect everyone's comfort zones, but don't wuss out either. You don't have to come to perfect consensus so long as it's clear what you do and don't think is okay.

The same goes for other things that you think might make people uncomfortable. *Slime Story* can potentially explore things like a gay character coming out, confronting racism, religious differences, and so on, but there's no shame in having a light and fun game that doesn't delve into difficult social issues if that's what you prefer.

## Your Town

Next, think about the town where the game will take place. I like to use a town off of that desolate stretch of highway in California between the Bay Area and Los Angeles, but you can put it wherever you want. The town can be anywhere in the U.S., or in another country. The important thing is that the town has a portal that provides a supply of monsters to hunt and a Monster Mart (or similar) where hunters can trade in parts and buy supplies.

The town is important both as a backdrop and to facilitate the kinds of stories you want to tell. Your hunters could be hiking through rocky desert terrain in New Mexico, dodging through trees in New England, or tromping through swampland in Louisiana. It could be a tiny little town with nothing to do, or a decent-sized one with plenty of other distractions. The local culture could be anywhere from welcoming to outright hostile towards monster hunters. It's a lot of fun to take somewhere you know from real life and make the *Slime Story* version of it, but anywhere that you find *interesting* is fine.

These details will help you figure out what kinds of scenes the story will entail, and what kinds of characters you need.

## Protagonists

Each player makes a primary character, called a **protagonist**. These protagonists are all teenage monster hunters who live in the same town and like to go hunting together on a regular basis. There are two ways to create protagonists. Quick Creation and Construction.

*Quick Creation* means you pick out an archetype (see p. XX), add some character details, possibly tweak a few things, and get going.

*Construction* (see p. XX) means you build a character from the ground up by making various choices. It takes a little longer, but you'll get more precisely the character that you want, and you'll probably understand the nuts and bolts of things better.

You can make your protagonist ahead of time or at the table before you play your first session. Regardless, each player should take a turn introducing his or her protagonist, and everyone should make some brief notes about the other participants' protagonists.

## Secondary Characters

Secondary characters are the other major characters that will figure prominently in the game without taking up too much screen time. You will need to decide how many secondary characters to make, and who will control them in the game. I recommend having about as many secondary characters as there are protagonists, but what you really need are enough other characters for the protagonists to play off of in different ways. Don't worry about getting it right when you're just starting out. If there aren't enough you can make new ones later, and if there are too many you can start leaving some out of the game.

The easiest thing for the players is for the GM to control all of the secondary characters; a lot of RPGs work this way, after all. It can be interesting to instead let a player also have a secondary character to control, but it can also be hard to juggle two characters at once, especially if their interests intersect in some way. Playing just a secondary character can also be a good way for someone who's feeling intimidated by the game to try it out a little bit, but secondary characters are a bit limited in the things they can do.

The rules for actually creating secondary characters are on p. XX. Secondary characters are not the main focus of the story, so there aren't as many rules for them. You should give your secondary characters names, personalities, and especially connections to the protagonists, but in terms of rules we keep things simpler. As with protagonists, introduce the characters you've created to the other participants, and let everyone make a note about each one.

Note that although they do not take part in the story per se, you can include incidental characters (see p. XX) in the game wherever appropriate.

## Write Issues

All of the characters in the game have what we call "issues". An issue is something in life that bothers the character, something that will spur him or her to action.

Protagonists have two issues, while secondary characters have only one. You can do these in any order you want, but you should do them as a group.

Protagonists can afford to have one issue that doesn't involve others ("I want to save up to buy a car") but otherwise you should try to have your issues point towards other characters as much as possible. This doesn't have to lead to vicious, desperate conflicts ("I hate Kyle for stealing my girlfriend"), but it should lead to something happening in the game. Likewise, if someone announces an issue that you think can lead to stuff with one of your characters, make a note of it, and consider giving that character an issue that will point back at them. In a sense, your protagonist's Issues are a way of explicitly telling the other participants that you want the game to have parts that are about a certain thing. As a rule, protagonists should be active and secondary characters should play to them rather than each other.

You can make an issue specific to a particular character ("I'm head-over-heels in love with Rita"), but think about what it will mean for the game, especially if you're not sure that everyone will be able to attend the game consistently. Being obsessed with Rita would be hard to do much with if Rita isn't showing up. However, once you start playing you'll be writing a goal for your protagonist for each session, which can very easily be related to a specific character.

Below are some examples of issues. However, this is a very important part of your monster hunter, and you should give it a little more thought than just picking from a list.

- I want a girlfriend.
- I hate being poor, especially when most of my friends aren't.

- My life is going nowhere.
- No one respects me.
- No one understands me.
- I wish I could tell people that I'm gay.
- I need real friends.
- I absolutely love high-tech gadgets.
- I really want to get laid.
- I'm fat, and I hate it when people make fun of me for it.
- Everything seems pointless.
- I want to be more popular.
- I wish my parents wouldn't give me a hard time about having too many white friends.

## Initialize Connections

Connections are special traits that represent the bonds between people. If you have a strong connection to someone, you're better able to influence them, but they're also better able to influence you. A connection is one thing that two characters share, so if it goes up or down, it does so for both of you. The ranks of connections are as follows:

Rank	Description	Notes	Help Bonus
-1	Stranger	Someone you've never met. (An incidental character.)	+1
0	Acquaintance	Someone you know but aren't too close to.	+1
1	Casual	A friend you can hang out with.	+2
2		A family member you're on speaking terms with.	+2
3	Close	A friend you can talk about your problems with.	+3
4		A close family member. A significant other.	+3
5	Deep	A friend who knows you better than you know yourself.	+4
6		A lover who you might marry some day.	+4

If you're using the actual character sheet, you'll notice that your list of characters also has spaces for connections and their ranks. To start with, all of the protagonists have Rank 1 (Casual) connections with each other. They're friends, and they like each other at least enough to hang out and go hunting together. Secondary characters all have Rank 0 (Acquaintance) connections with everyone else.

Now comes the interesting part. Each participant gets free connection ranks equal to the number of participants. You can place these on either of your characters' connections to any other characters. Take turns going around the table increasing connection ranks until everyone has used up all of their free ranks. Each time you raise a connection, get the recipient's consent, and describe something that happened that brought the two characters closer.

Once that's done, write a description of the nature of your characters' connections. This isn't important for the game mechanics, just for you and everyone else participating to have some idea what's going

on. A rank 3 connection could mean you have a one-sided crush on a girl who you're otherwise friends with, or that you look up to a fellow hunter, or that you like hanging out with your kid brother, or you respect someone as a rival, or any of a million other things.

Connections will naturally grow over time depending on what actions you take. We'll explain this in detail in the Episodes chapter.

## **Adding New Characters**

Sometimes over the course of the game you might wind up shuffling around the selection of secondary characters or even protagonists.

If you want to "promote" a monster hunter secondary character to a protagonist, just fill out the character with the remaining details (Talents, issues, gear) as per a starting character.

If you want to introduce a new character from scratch, you can first create the character as usual, then make adjustments as follows:

- If the character theoretically knows people in the area, he or she can initialize connections like a starting character.
- If the character is new to town and doesn't know anyone, he or she gets only one free connection rank, and otherwise has a rank 0 (Acquaintance) connection with everyone else.
- New protagonists get 4 Character Points and 2 Influence per session played previously by the group. Go ahead and use these to level up your character and buy additional gear as much as you wish.
- New secondary characters can increase an attribute by +1 for every two sessions player previously by the group.

## Quick Protagonist Creation

Quick creation is where you make a protagonist by picking out an archetype and adding/tweaking some personal details. We've included six archetypes, which include one example of each class and clique between them.

### What Things Mean

**Cliques** are archetypes that represent your character's place in the social order and how he or she deals with people.

**Classes** are archetypes that represent how your character hunts monsters.

**Attributes** are a set of four numbers that represent your character's competence in different areas. The four attributes are Guild, Wiki, Hunter, and Warrior.

**Defenses** represent how hard your character is to harm in an encounter or social conflict. Physical Defense is equal to the sum of your Hunter and Warrior, while Social Defense is equal to the sum of your Guild and Wiki.

**Talents** are special abilities and knacks that a character possesses. Base Talents are talents that every member of a particular class or clique possesses.

**Gear** is the equipment your character uses for monster hunting and such.

### Customization

You can tweak your protagonist a little bit if you wish.

- **Attributes:** Each archetype lists off the attribute ranks it gets from its class and clique, plus one bonus point (two for the Joe Hunter archetype). You can move the bonus point(s) to other attributes if you wish, so long as you only put one discretionary rank on a given attribute. If you change these, you will need to recalculate your character's defense ratings (Physical = Hunter + Warrior, Social = Guild + Wiki).
- **Base Talents:** Base Talents are determined by a character's class and clique and can't be changed.
- **Gear:** Starting characters can have up to 30 Influence worth of gear. If you don't like what the archetype has by default, you can go in and fiddle with stuff. Note that alchemists receive an alchemy kit for free, and cannot remove it. See p. XX for an assortment of gear.
- **Issues:** You normally write new issues together with the other participants, and make them relate to other characters. The ones included here are just examples to help you get started, and I highly recommend coming up with new ones unless you're really short on time.

## Archetypes

### Dedicated Archer

*“Monster hunting is a great way to keep in shape, and it’s way more exciting than the track team.”*

You put a lot of energy into being on the school’s archery team. You’re not the best there is, but you’ve placed in some championships here and there. However, at a certain point you got tired of just shooting at paper targets. Moving targets give you a better challenge, and fighting monsters lets you exercise your legs and get some spending money.

**Clique:** Jock

**Class:** Ranger

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Clique</b>	<b>Bonus</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Guild</b>	3	3		6
<b>Wiki</b>	4	2		6
<b>Hunter</b>	5	4	1	10
<b>Warrior</b>	2	4		7

**Defenses:** Social Defense 12, Physical Defense 17

**Base Talents:** Favored Missile Weapon (bow), Intercept Shot, Second Wind, Sports Hero

**Gear:** Compound Bow (Standard Missile Weapon), 2 Healing Potions

**Issues:** My other friends give me a hard time for hanging out with monster nerds. I need to save up for college or my parents will disown me.

### Joe (Jane) Hunter

*“Hey, what else am I going to do in this boring town?”*

You’re not the guy (or girl) that everyone pays attention to, but no one minds having you around either. You’re not sure what you want out of life, but hunting monsters is definitely better than being bored or doing drugs. You get plenty of exercise, you make money, and you’ve made some good friends.

**Clique:** Average

**Class:** Fighter

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Clique</b>	<b>Bonus</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Guild</b>	3	4		7
<b>Wiki</b>	4	3	1	8
<b>Hunter</b>	2	3		5
<b>Warrior</b>	5	3	1	9

**Defenses:** Social Defense 15, Physical Defense 14

**Base Talents:** Don’t Mind Me, Favored Melee Weapon (sword), Social Chameleon, Up Close

**Issues:** I want a girlfriend/boyfriend. I want to save up to buy a car.

**Gear:** Longsword (Standard Melee Weapon), 2 Healing Potions, 5 Influence

## Karate Star

*“I won my division at the last Tae Kwon Do tournament, but monster hunting is where the real challenge is.”*

Taking martial arts classes was your parents’ idea originally, but you stuck with it, and got really good at it. People respect you for it, and combined with your natural charisma, you’re more than a little successful with the opposite sex. Still, as happy as you were to win some trophies, there’s something unsatisfying about martial arts tournaments decided by points instead of actual hits. You used to roll your eyes at the nerds who went around hunting monsters all the time, but then you realized that monsters are something you can beat up without any repercussions. It turns out that those monster nerds are actually cool people, and your skills are getting sharper than ever.

**Clique:** Popular

**Class:** Monk

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Clique</b>	<b>Bonus</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Guild</b>	2	5	1	8
<b>Wiki</b>	4	2		6
<b>Hunter</b>	3	4		7
<b>Warrior</b>	5	3		8

**Defenses:** Social Defense 14, Physical Defense 15

**Base Talents:** Cheer On, Iron Fist, Razor Wit, Shove

**Gear:** 3 Healing Potions, 15 Influence

**Issues:** I want to find a boyfriend/girlfriend with some actual substance. No one really understands me.

## Monster Lover

*“I call this one Slimy! Isn’t he cute?”*

You got interested in monsters not because it’s fun to kill them, but because you like the monsters themselves. With much practice, you’ve learned how to handle a monster without fighting it. It takes tremendous patience, but you can actually train a monster to be a loyal pet that will fight alongside you. On the other hand, you’re much better with monsters than people. That doesn’t necessarily mean you dislike dealing with people, but it doesn’t come to you naturally.

**Clique:** Weirdo

**Class:** Monster Tamer

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Clique</b>	<b>Bonus</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Guild</b>	2	2		4
<b>Wiki</b>	5	4	1	10
<b>Hunter</b>	4	4		8
<b>Warrior</b>	3	4		7

**Defenses:** Social Defense 14, Physical Defense 15

**Base Talents:** Freak Out, Pet Monster, Screw This

**Gear:** Long Melee Weapon, 2 Healing Potions

**Issues:** I can never tell people what I really feel. People think I’m strange for talking to monsters.

## Monstercancer

*“Most people just use the crystals from salamanders, but the pharynx contains special glands that contain a highly flammable fuel. It’s tricky to extract, but it’s worth a lot if you do... like so!”*

For you, dealing with monsters is more an intellectual challenge than a physical one. Monsters—and especially the awesome parts you get out of them—are like a puzzle to solve. If you use your head, you can take a monster apart, even if it’s still alive, and put the parts to good use. Your friends tend to make themselves useful by beating the crap out of monsters, but when it comes to the end goal of making money, you’re more helpful than any of them.

**Clique:** Geek

**Class:** Alchemist

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Clique</b>	<b>Bonus</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Guild</b>	2	2		4
<b>Wiki</b>	5	5		10
<b>Hunter</b>	4	4	1	9
<b>Warrior</b>	3	3		6

**Defenses:** Social Defense 14, Physical Defense 15

**Base Talents:** Brew Potion, Min-Maxing, Monster Encyclopedia, Use Parts

**Gear:** Alchemy Kit, Improvised Melee Weapon (Shovel), 1 Healing Potion, 2 Firethorn, 2 Ice Shards

**Issues:** I’m not sure my friends actually respect me. I spend way too much money on gadgets.

## Suburban Ninja

*“I’m a ninja. I can flip out and kill people whenever I want.”*

When you were little, you had a knack for getting into places you weren’t supposed to and pulling off really elaborate pranks. Other monster hunters are all about hitting things with swords or arrows or whatever, but why play fair? They’re *monsters*. You set traps, you sneak up on them from behind, and you take them out before they even know what’s going on. Sure, you might steal a few more kills than your friends would like, but it’s their fault for being so slow.

**Clique:** Punk

**Class:** Ninja

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Clique</b>	<b>Bonus</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Guild</b>	2	4		6
<b>Wiki</b>	4	3		7
<b>Hunter</b>	5	4	1	10
<b>Warrior</b>	3	3		6

**Defenses:** Social Defense 13, Physical Defense 16

**Base Talents:** Jump, Stumble, Watch My Awesome, Well-Connected

**Gear:** Small Melee Weapon (Ninja Sword), Standard Missile Weapon (Throwing Daggers), 1 Healing Potion

**Issues:** One day my friends will understand the genius of the Ramones.

## Personal Data

With the simple game stuff out of the way, it's time to add something of a spark of life to your protagonist. See p. XX for some advice.

# Protagonist Construction

This section gives you rules for creating a protagonist from scratch. If you have time, it's a good idea to go over this section even if you're using quick creation, since it explains what goes into a protagonist in more detail.

Although you can just jump in and start picking stuff to see what emerges, it doesn't hurt to have some kind of concept in mind before you begin. The rules might not let you create *exactly* what you want, but it will help guide your choices.

## Party Balance?

*Slime Story* is meant to have just enough tactical stuff in it that battles can be fun to play, but not so much that you need to sweat over whether you've made a balanced party of monster hunters. If you want to make a balanced party, you should try for a good mixture of melee and ranged classes, and don't have too many "support characters" (alchemists and monster tamers). For the most part, as long as you have a decent amount of variety, you should be just fine.

## 1. Select Clique

A clique is an archetype of where you are in the social order. This in turn helps determine your attributes and what Talents you can choose from. Below is a quick list of the various cliques; see p. XX for more detailed descriptions.

- **Average:** You're an ordinary guy (or girl) that no one objects to. You're good at getting along with people and blending in.
- **Geek:** You're a nerd who prizes obscure information. You know a lot about monsters and such.
- **Jock:** You're focused on physical stuff, and probably an athlete. You don't have to be a stereotypical football-playing troglodyte, just very athletic.
- **Popular:** You're one of the popular kids, and you know how to navigate social circles.
- **Punk:** You're pretty sociable, but you're only at your best within a fringe subculture. You can be independent, but you also can draw strength from others.
- **Weirdo:** You're kind of strange and you don't know how to deal with people, but there's a lot going on in your head.

## 2. Select Class

Your class is an expression of how your character goes about fighting monsters. Below is a quick list of the various classes; see p. XX for more detailed descriptions.

- **Alchemist:** You're very good at using monster parts, both in battle and to make stuff.
- **Fighter:** You fight by swinging a sword or other melee weapon. It's a simple way to fight, but it's not as easy as it looks.
- **Monk:** You've adapted your martial arts training to let you fight monsters with your bare hands.
- **Monster Tamer:** Although it's very difficult, you have learned how to coax and even tame monsters.
- **Ninja:** You fight using sneak attacks and guile. You have to be athletic and capable to pull this

off.

- **Ranger:** You fight using a bow and arrows, or some other ranged weapon. Fighting from a distance keeps you safer, but you can't handle yourself as well if something gets too close.

### 3. Attributes

Attributes are a set of numerical values that show how competent your character is at certain things. When you use an attribute during play, you roll two six-sided dice, and add your attribute rank.

The ranks of your other attributes depend on your class and clique; look at the table below, and add together the numbers from each. After that, you can add one extra point one attribute of your choice (two attributes if your clique is Average), though they can't go any higher than 12, ever.

- **Guild** is a character's ability to handle themselves in social situations, including persuading people, being popular, and making the most of your material resources.
- **Wiki** is a character's knowledge of monsters and other arcane matters, and ability to craft items.
- **Hunter** is a character's ability to find and interact with monsters, and to engage in ranged combat.
- **Warrior** is a character's overall physical condition, and ability to engage in melee combat.

Class	Guild	Wiki	Hunter	Warrior
Alchemist	2	5	4	3
Fighter	3	4	2	5
Monk	2	4	3	5
Monster Tamer	2	5	4	3
Ninja	2	4	5	3
Ranger	3	4	5	2
Clique	Guild	Wiki	Hunter	Warrior
Average	4	3	3	3
Geek	2	5	4	3
Jock	3	2	4	4
Popular	5	2	4	3
Punk	4	3	4	3
Weirdo	2	4	4	4

#### Physical Defense

Physical Defense is a special rating that you use during encounters to determine how hard a character is to hit. Physical Defense is equal to the sum of Hunter and Warrior.

#### Social Defense

Social Defense is a similar rating, which shows how hard it is for others to get your character flustered or upset in a social conflict. Social Defense is equal to the sum of Guild and Wiki.

## 4. Talents

Talents are special abilities that help you in various ways. Each class and clique includes one or two **Base Talents**; characters from a given class/clique get these Base Talents automatically.

[The final version of *Slime Story* will include a large selection of additional Talents for protagonists, but for now I need to get the base rules tested enough before I start seriously writing them.]

## 5. Play Stuff

There are certain things on your character sheet that aren't really a part of character creation, but will become important over the course of the game.

- **Level:** Each character has a "Level" that indicates how experienced and accomplished they are at monster hunting and life in general. A newly-created character starts at Level 1. You can gain levels by spending Character Points.
- **Character Points:** These are a measure of the general positive energy of your life that drives personal growth. You start out zero points, but you should earn more over the course of each session. Between sessions, you can spend these points, on improving your character; see p. XX for more details.
- **Achievements** are things a protagonist has accomplished that make him or her known to the monster hunting community. Newly-creating protagonists don't have any achievements yet. See p. XX for more details.
- **Renown:** Renown represents how well-known you are overall within the community. A protagonist starts with a Renown rating of zero, but it goes up a little bit with each Achievement. Renown can reduce the Influence cost of things.

## 6. Influence and Gear

Influence is a measure of your character's financial resources and his or her ability to pull in favors and such to get the things he or she wants. Influence can mean cash money, but it can also mean favors owed and so forth.

Protagonists start with 30 points of Influence. You can use as much or as little as you want to buy gear for monster hunting. I recommend getting one good weapon, and one or two healing items, but some classes practically demand buying certain extra things. An alchemist needs an alchemy kit to make things, a fighter needs a good melee weapon, a ranger needs a good missile weapon, that kind of thing. Look at the Gear section (p. XX) to see what you can buy.

Characters are not particularly limited in terms of what kinds of gear they can use, but attributes and talents can make a character dramatically better at some things than others. Since ranged attacks use Hunter and melee attacks use Warrior, your character will be more effective with whichever one he or she has a higher value with.

### Everyday Possessions

*Slime Story* protagonists are high school students with families and such, so within reason they will have everyday items. Every protagonist will have clothes, a backpack, glasses and such if they need them, and so on. They can also have things like a cell phone, mp3 player, computer, game console, bicycle, etc., but you'll have to spend Influence on anything relating to monster hunting.

## 8. Personal Data

“Personal data” is what we call further details about who your hunter is. Although for this game we assume that hunters are high school students, they can be male or female, and they can be of any race and pretty much any background. America’s neat that way. If you have the time and inclination you can go ahead and write a detailed biography for your character, but it’s enough to give him or her a name and establish what he or she is like in broad strokes. Most people need some time to get to know their characters as the game progresses.

### Name

Give your protagonist a name. In present-day America people can be from just about anywhere, so I won’t tell you what kinds of names you can and can’t have. Just make sure it makes sense for your protagonist, and aim for something your fellow participants can easily remember and say. If you’re stumped for a name, ask your friends for ideas, or use an online resource like the Story Games Names Project or Seventh Sanctum.

### Looks

What does your protagonist look like? Concentrate on details that stand out. No one cares that your character weighs 137 pounds, but you might write down “skinny” or “fat” if it’s important to how he or she looks. Here are some things you might include in describing your protagonist’s looks:

- Always dresses in athletic wear.
- Ice-blue eyes.
- Has a nice figure and wears tight jeans and camisoles to show it off.
- Vivid red hair.
- Always has an iPod with the white earbuds.
- Wears T-shirts from nerdy webcomics.
- Wears a denim jacket with patches of different punk bands.
- Wears emo glasses.
- Tall and scrawny.
- Short hair dyed bright blue.
- Shaved head.

### Personality

Your class and clique should help point towards what your protagonist’s personality is like, but there’s still an awful lot of room for interpretation and creativity. For example, geeks are stereotypically introverted and into collecting arcane knowledge, useful or otherwise, but if you make a Geek character, you still have a whole lot of possibilities. Is your character shy, chatty, annoying, whiny, witty, stubborn, easy-going, cheerful? Or does he buck the stereotypes completely? As with looks, just write some stuff in broad strokes to get you going.

## Traits

This chapter has detailed descriptions of the various traits that characters can have.

### Cliques

Your character's clique represents where he or she falls in the social order. Each clique description lists some concepts (quick character ideas), the ranks it contributes to your attributes at character creation, and its Base Talents.

#### Average

Joe (or Jane) Average is someone that no one objects to, yet no one is especially excited about. They tend to be the people who fade into the background or adapt to whatever group they're in, and can wind up taking a leadership role seemingly by accident. Average is the most balanced and adaptable of the cliques.

**Concepts:** Bland, Social Chameleon, Reluctant Leader

**Attributes:** Guild 4, Wiki 3, Hunter 3, Warrior 3, +1 to one Attribute of choice.

#### Base Talents:

**Don't Mind Me**

##### **Encounter, Scene Talent**

Sometimes you can use your tendency to fade into the background to your advantage, and get even monsters to ignore you. Use this talent when a monster is about to attack you. Make a Wiki check against a target of 14. If you succeed, the monster simply doesn't attack, and its action is used for nothing.

**Social Chameleon**

##### **Special, Episode Talent**

You can make single use of a clique-based talent (it must be an Enhancement, At-Will, or Scene talent) possessed by someone with whom you have a connection of rank 2 or higher.

### Geek

In many places it was geeks who all but created the monster hunting hobby, to the point where it still comes off as a somewhat geeky pastime. Geeks usually aren't as physically oriented, but they tend to have a positively obsessive level of knowledge.

**Concepts:** Blogger, Gamer, Monster Encyclopedia, Scientist

**Attributes:** Guild 2, Wiki 5, Hunter 4, Warrior 3

#### Base Talents:

**Min-Maxing**

##### **Special, Episode Talent**

You have a knack for analyzing things in a methodical way and finding the absolute best advantage. Once per episode, if you get a result you dislike on a die roll, you can roll again and take the higher roll. In the story, this is because you'd been meticulously

researching that particular topic.

### **Monster Encyclopedia**

#### **Encounter, Enhancement Talent**

You've put a major amount of time and effort into researching monsters on the internet and in books. Add a +3 bonus to Wiki checks for monster knowledge.

### **Jock**

Although monster hunting attracts lots of nerds, there are jocks who're into it too. A character with the "jock" clique doesn't have to be a stereotypical football-playing troglodyte, just someone who's focused on the physical over the mental.

**Concepts:** Bully, Player, Track Star, Karate Student

**Attributes:** Guild 3, Wiki 2, Hunter 4, Warrior 4

#### **Base Talents:**

##### **Second Wind**

#### **Encounter, Maneuver Action, Scene Talent**

You can take a Breather action as a Maneuver Action.

##### **Sports Hero**

#### **Interlude, Scene Talent**

Being so physically accomplished has its perks. Once per interlude you can use your Warrior attribute in place of Guild.

### **Popular**

The popular kids don't usually bother with monster hunting, but there are those who do, whether to help keep up an expensive lifestyle, a guilty pleasure, or to take part of the only real action in town. Popular kids know better than the rest how to look cool and deal with social situations.

**Concepts:** Drama Queen, Rich Kid, Mr./Miss Perfect, Stuck-up cheerleader

**Attributes:** Guild 5, Wiki 2, Hunter 4, Warrior 3

#### **Base Talents:**

##### **Cheer On**

#### **Encounter or Social Conflict, Maneuver Action, At-Will Talent**

You can use a Maneuver Action to help someone on their next check. You need to make a check to help them like usual though.

##### **Razor Wit**

#### **Enhancement, Interlude, Social Conflict**

When you cause Stress to a target in a social conflict, increase the damage you do by 1.

## **Punk**

This clique is kind of a catch-all for people who connect to a subculture. Punk rockers are probably the most prominent example in SoCal, but skaters, metalheads, goths, hip-hoppers, etc. can all fall under this clique.

**Concepts:** Anarchist, Artist, Metalhead, Rocker, Hip-Hopper, Musician, Goth

**Attributes:** Guild 4, Wiki 3, Hunter 4, Warrior 3

### **Base Talents:**

#### **Watch My Awesome**

##### **Scene Talent**

Whether because you get fed up with people just sitting there, or just because you feel like it, sometimes you really want to try something crazy. Add half (rounded down) of your Guild to your result points for one action.

#### **Well-Connected**

##### **Enhancement**

You know lots of people. You get an extra three ranks to assign to connections, but you can only use these for connections with secondary characters.

## **Weirdo**

“Weirdoes” are like Geeks taken to the next level, the quiet kids who have serious trouble dealing with people, but can have some really incredible stuff going on inside their heads.

**Concepts:** Bookworm, Hippie, Emo, Outcast, Poet, The Quiet One

**Attributes:** Guild 2, Wiki 4, Hunter 4, Warrior 3

### **Base Talents:**

#### **Screw This**

##### **Interlude, Episode Talent**

Sometimes you just blow off your friends to clear your head. Whatever is going on, even during an encounter, using this Talent lets you have a “private” interlude. You leave the current scene (if it’s during an encounter or social conflict, any temporary Stress from it becomes permanent), and you do an interlude without any of the other protagonists where you can spend 1 or 2 Action Points. If you don’t have Action Points to spend you can’t use this talent.

#### **Freak Out**

##### **Scene Talent**

Add your current Upset Stress (temporary and permanent) to your result points for one offensive action. Ignore the penalty from hurting status for this check.

## Classes

### Alchemist

Alchemists are monster hunters who've taken the time to learn how to work with monster parts themselves, rather than relying on the professionals at Monster Mart. This means that given enough time and the right materials, they can do things like brew healing potions for cheaper than they're sold in stores. However, they do in fact know how to make themselves useful in a fight, as they can deliver offensive and defensive items with much greater accuracy than most.

**Concepts:** Anarchist Cook, Chemist, Pyromaniac

**Attributes:** Guild 2, Wiki 5, Hunter 4, Warrior 3

#### Base Talents:

##### Brew Potion

##### **Interlude, Active Action, Crafting, Scene Talent**

It takes a lot of practice to get it just right, but you've mastered the art of making various kinds of potions. You will need an Alchemy Kit to use this Talent. If you have an appropriate monster item and 3 Influence worth of materials, you can make a Wiki roll, and produce one potion per 4 result points. Using this with a stumpy leaf lets you make healing potions.

##### Use Parts

##### **Encounter, Enhancement**

Alchemists are particularly adept at making use of items derived from monster parts. +1 to accuracy when using offensive items.

**Special:** An alchemist receives an Alchemy Kit (see p. XX) for free.

### Fighter

Fighters are the most common type of monster hunter. They mainly get up close and personal using melee weapons of one sort or another. A lot of them use swords, but as manufacturers have tried to produce more and more different kinds of weapons, it's become a hobby in itself for fighters to debate the relative merits of different kinds of melee weapons. This is the easiest form of fighting to get into, but it's much harder to master than people realize.

**Concepts:** Big Bruiser, Fencer, Swashbuckler, Swordsman

**Attributes:** Guild 3, Wiki 4, Hunter 2, Warrior 5

#### Base Talents:

##### Favored Melee Weapon

##### **Encounter, Enhancement**

Select one type of melee weapon (swords, pole arms, staves, clubs, yard tools, etc); your accuracy with that type of weapon goes up by +1.

Up Close

**Encounter, Enhancement**

You receive special bonuses of +1 to accuracy and +1 to damage against targets at a Range of 0.

**Monk**

Monks, as they are jokingly called, are the rare monster hunters who use martial arts skills to fight monsters bare-handed. Lots of people have taken some martial arts classes, but it takes a fair amount of skill to hit hard enough to be an effective monster hunter, plus the rules are a bit different when it comes to non-human anatomy.

**Concepts:** Dedicated Disciple, Hereditary Martial Artist, Karate Star

**Attributes:** Guild 2, Wiki 4, Hunter 3, Warrior 5

**Base Talents:**

Iron Fist

**Encounter, Enhancement**

Your martial arts training has made your unarmed strikes as effective as a weapon. Your unarmed attacks cause 4 damage.

Shove

**Encounter, Maneuver Action, At-Will**

Treat this as an attack, except that if it hits it does no damage and the target is forced to move one area backwards. Add +2 to your result points for this action if you hit the target with another attack during your current turn.

**Talent Pools:** Athletics, Self

**Monster Tamer**

Monster tamers are a rare breed who can tame and use monsters to hunt more monsters. This is a difficult and at times rather dangerous hobby, since it involves getting and staying very close to what are ordinarily hostile creatures.

**Concepts:** Monster Lover, Monster Rancher

**Attributes:** Guild 2, Wiki 5, Hunter 4, Warrior 3

**Base Talent:**

Pet Monster

**Special**

You have a monster that you have tamed to the point where it can fight alongside you. Choose a monster whose X rating is equal to or less than your Hunter attribute rank. This monster will receive the benefits provided by any Monster Tamer talents you might have.

In encounters, the monster has its own action card, but it always shifts this card one closer to yours before the encounter begins.

You can issue commands to your pet monster as a Maneuver Action. When you do so, you can direct it to use its actions like a normal character, and it will do so when its turn

comes up. You can tell your monster to simply attack enemies within its reach, or to attack a specific target, but you must specify a particular attack, and its action will be wasted if it can't attack an appropriate target as ordered. You can also tell your pet monster to simply do nothing without using an action.

If you do not issue your pet monster a command, it will do the following:

- If your pet monster was attacked since its last turn, it will use a Maneuver Action to move as close as it can to that target, and a Full Action to attack.
- If your pet monster was not attacked since its last turn, it will use all of its available actions to move as close to you as possible.

If your pet monster takes damage equal to or greater than its Hits rating, it has been severely wounded. You may be able to nurse it back to health. You must make a Wiki check and get a result of 16 or higher (add +2 to the roll if you use a healing potion) to do so. If you cannot do this, your monster is dead, and you will have to start using a new one.

Monster tamers normally work training several monsters at once, so you can retrieve a new monster from home by spending an Action Point. However, for this new monster to receive enhancements from your Monster Tamer talents, you will have to spend 1 Character Point for each talent you wish to “transfer” to the new monster.

## **Ninja**

Ninjas are what people call a kind of highly mobile monster hunter. They're adept at getting in behind enemy lines and messing them up. Some ninjas learn the proper art of stealth, while others just adopt some of the trappings and jump around a lot. There are entirely too many who are obsessive anime fans trying to play out *Naruto* in real life. Many of them learn the hard way that they should be fighters instead, but a few are irritatingly effective while insisting on using kunai and shuriken and wearing a metal headband.

**Concepts:** Ninja Fanboy, Suburban Commando

**Attributes:** Guild 2, Wiki 4, Hunter 5, Warrior 3

**Base Talent:**

**Jump**

**Encounter, Maneuver Action, At-Will**

You move two areas at once, and you can move past areas occupied by enemies.

**Stumble**

**Encounter, Maneuver Action, At-Will**

Treat this as an attack, except that if it hits it does no damage and the target is forced to move one area forwards. Add +2 to your result points for this action if you hit the target with another attack during your current turn.

## **Ranger**

Rangers are monster hunters who use ranged weapons. Tolkien fans are not happy about this terminology, but it's what caught on. Most monster hunters consider firearms as something of a taboo (as they're more likely to destroy valuable monster parts) except in areas with exceedingly dangerous monsters, so rangers mainly use bows, and sometimes things like throwing knives or slings. They have the advantage of staying out of the fray, but the cost of arrows can add up after a while.

**Concepts:** Archery champion, Bowman, Knife Thrower, Legolas wannabe

**Attributes:** Guild 3, Wiki 4, Hunter 5, Warrior 2

### **Base Talents:**

#### **Favored Missile Weapon**

##### **Encounter, Enhancement**

Select one type of missile weapon (bows, knives, throwing axes, slings, etc); your accuracy with that type of weapon goes up by +1.

#### **Intercept Shot**

##### **Encounter, Reaction, At-Will**

You can fire a quick shot that can potentially interrupt an enemy's attempt to attack you or an ally. Make an attack against that enemy; if you succeed, you do damage and the enemy's attack automatically fails.

## Talents

Talents are special abilities that help protagonists in various ways.

[This playtest version only includes the Base Talents that come with classes and cliques. However, this section is necessary for its explanations of the descriptions of how Talents work.]

### Talent Pools

Talents are divided into twelve Talent Pools, groups centered around different themes, each of which contains 8 Talents. Your Class and Clique each give you access to two Talent Pools, and you can open up more later on if you wish.

- **Alchemy Talents** relate to harvesting and using monster parts in different ways, and making things, whether with monster parts or more mundane materials.
- **Athletics Talents** are all about physical power and stamina.
- **Hunting Talents** deal with tracking and trapping monsters before combat really begins.
- **Knowledge Talents** relate to in-depth knowledge of monster hunting and related topics.
- **Manipulation Talents** deal with getting people to do what you want.
- **Melee Talents** are for close-up combat with swords or other melee weapons, or just hand-to-hand combat.
- **Missile Talents** are for using ranged weapons in combat.
- **Monster Talents** relate to handling monsters as pets.
- **Resources Talents** let your protagonist have extra resources, and make the most of the ones he or she already has.
- **Self Talents** deal with a protagonist's inner self, his or her mental discipline and ability to hold on to his or her own beliefs.
- **Social Talents** let you deal with and help other people.
- **Tricky Talents** help you fight using deception and guile.

### Talent Descriptions

#### Powerful Blow

#### **Encounter, Full Action or Reaction, Scene Talent**

When the time is right, you deliver a powerful strike. Add +2 to the damage caused by a successful attack or clash with a melee weapon or unarmed strike.

#### Talent Type

The Talent Type refers to the general environment in which you can use a given talent.

- **Crafting** talents are for creating or modifying items. These are a subset of Interlude talents, and are always considered active actions.
- **Encounter** talents are for use during encounters, battles with monsters.
- **Interlude** talents are for interlude scenes.
- **Social Conflict** talents specifically apply to social conflicts that might happen within an

interlude.

### Action Type

Many talents count as actions during encounters, social conflicts, and interludes, when the number of actions a character can take is at a premium.

- **Full Actions and Maneuver Actions:** During an encounter or social conflict, a character can normally take one Full Action and one Maneuver Action (or two Maneuver Actions) on his or her turn. Full Actions are important, active actions (like attacking) and maneuver actions are secondary actions that put you in a better position (like moving).
- **Reaction:** Reactions allow you to act out of the normal action order during an encounter or social conflict, but effectively use up your next turn.
- **Active or Passive:** Interlude talents can be active or passive actions. An active action costs one Action Point to use, while a passive action does not.

### Timing

“Timing” refers to how often you can use a given Talent.

- **Enhancement** Talents permanently make your character better at something.
- **At-Will** Talents can be used (within reason) whenever you wish.
- **Scene** Talents can only be used once per scene (Encounter or Interlude).
- **Episode** Talents can only be used once per episode.

You might be wondering why it is your character can only pull off a certain stunt once per scene or episode. This is a meta-game conceit, by which I mean the rules are that way first and foremost because they work really well as game rules. A Scene or Episode Talent is something a protagonist can only pull off every so often, through an unusual bit of luck, focus, exertion, or whatever. Your protagonist isn't thinking “I can only use Berserker Attack once this episode!” He's just only going to get that crazy or lucky at most once, because it takes a lot out of him, and as the player sitting outside of the action you get to decide when that happens.

## Gear

### Weapons

Most monster hunters need some kind of weapon to get by. For the purposes of this game, the weapon rules are pretty simple and abstract (because I hate writing up lists of weapons and such), but you can and should add more detail in the story. Rather than just a “Standard Melee Weapon,” tell us how your character has a Nike Cortana that he saved up for, but kind of went out of style like a month after he bought it.

To create a weapon, first pick one of the five basic weapon types, then apply one or more of the modifiers if you wish.

**Improvised Melee Weapon (0 Influence):** Rather than buying a “proper” weapon at a store, you can just use something reasonably offensive found around the house. A lot of casual hunters just bring an aluminum baseball bat or a shovel. 4 damage, +0 Accuracy, Range 0.

**Small Melee Weapon (5 Influence):** This is a smaller close-combat weapon, such as a knife. It’s not nearly as powerful as other kinds of melee weapons, but it’s a bit more accurate. A good bowie knife is also handy for retrieving monster parts once a battle is over. 3 damage, +1 Accuracy, Range 0.

**Standard Melee Weapon (15 Influence):** This is a typical weapon meant for close combat, such as a sword, pole arm, mace, etc. 5 damage, +0 Accuracy, Range 0-1.

**Long Melee Weapon (20 Influence):** This is a melee weapon with some amount of reach, like a spear or pole arm. 5 Damage, +0 Accuracy, Range 0-2.

**Big Melee Weapon (25 Influence):** These are unusually large close combat weapons. They tend to be oversized versions of the Standard Melee Weapons, such as broadswords, huge axes, giant warhammers, etc. 6 damage, –1 Accuracy, Range 0-1.

**Unarmed Attack (0 Influence):** In a pinch, you can try to fight monsters with your bare hands, but except for those who are highly trained (i.e. of the Monk class) it’s not exactly a great idea. But if you insist: 2 damage, +0 Accuracy, Range 0-1.

**Slingshot (5 Influence):** The humble slingshot isn’t the most effective weapon against monsters by itself, but it makes an excellent delivery system for elemental bits and other offensive items. As a weapon by itself, you can use it to attack with small rocks and other random objects. 2 damage, +0 Accuracy, Range 1-4. When you use it to deliver an offensive item, you get to use that item but with the slingshot’s range.

**Small Missile Weapon (10 Influence):** This is a smaller missile weapon such as a short bow or throwing knives. 3 damage, +0 Accuracy, Range 1-3. However, for every two Encounters in which you use this weapon, you use up 1 Influence worth of ammunition.

**Standard Missile Weapon (20 Influence):** This is a fairly powerful missile weapon such as a full-sized bow. 4 damage, Range 1-4. However, for every three Encounters in which you use this weapon, you use up 1 Influence worth of ammunition.

**Crappy (-5 Influence):** The item is cheaper than usual, but its quality suffers accordingly. It causes one fewer damage (this can go negative), and it just looks cheap.

## Weapon Upgrades

Most monster hunters don't just use stock weapons bought from Monster Mart, at least not for very long. Instead, they put a lot of time, energy, and resources into modifying their gear, whether by doing it themselves, buying swappable parts, or getting others to do modifications. Of course, there's a limit to how much stuff you can put into a single weapon. At a certain point it starts to become an engineering challenge to effectively pack stuff in.

An unmodified weapon is considered a Level 1 weapon (or Level 0 if it's Crappy or an Improvised Melee Weapon). Each upgrade increases its level, up to a maximum of Level 10, and also increases the cost of the upgrades. Upgrading an item by one level costs Influence equal to five times the next level (or 5 if you're upgrading a Level 0 weapon), and you cannot skip levels. For example, adding a Cartridge System to a Level 1 weapon would make it a level 4 weapon, so you'd have to pay  $10+15+20=45$  Influence for the upgrade.

If you want to make upgrades during Pre-Play you'll have to buy what few you can get with your starting Influence, but during play characters can potentially make upgrades more cheaply by themselves.

**Balance (+1 Level):** Balance makes a weapon easier to handle and more accurate. +1 to Accuracy. A weapon cannot have more than 2 levels of balance.

**Blaster (+1 Level):** A "blaster" is a special container for elemental bits and other offensive consumable items, so that you can deliver a regular melee attack and hit with the item at the same time. It takes an action to load a blaster during an encounter, but when it's loaded, a successful attack with your weapon automatically gives you a successful attack with the item as well.

**Cartridge System (+3 Levels):** A cartridge system is a more sophisticated version of the blaster. It can hold up to six items, and loads them into place one at a time without the wielder having to use an action to refill it.

**Damage (+1 Level):** There are all kinds of ways to make a weapon more damaging. One level of Damage adds +1 to the damage it causes. A weapon cannot have more than +3 from Damage.

**Range (+1 Level):** This can only be applied to missile weapons. Enhancements to the weapons power and aerodynamics let it go further, increasing its Range by 1. You cannot add more than 2 levels of Range.

**Style (+1 Level):** There's something to be said for having a weapon that looks cool. Once per scene you can try to use it to your advantage for a social roll of some kind, and add a +2 to your check. You can only give a weapon one level of Style.

## Consumables

**Antidote (2 Influence):** When consumed (considered a Maneuver Action during encounters, and a passive action during interludes), this removed Poisoned status. It is effective against all types of venom from monsters as well as normal animals (so it's effective against snake bites and such).

**Blaster Arrow (1 Influence):** These are special arrows with a holder in the tip that lets you insert an offensive item. When it hits, it causes damage per the usual bow, and the item as well.

**Brain Fudge (3 Influence):** This is a kind of baked treat that includes some of the gel from a floating eye. It doesn't necessarily have to be chocolate (there are also "brain lemon bars" and such), but fudge seems to be the best thing for covering up the gel's taste. Eating a piece of brain fudge will temporarily make your mind sharper. As it is something of a "performance-enhancing drug" for the mind, it's created a fair amount of controversy, but policies about it vary wildly. Consuming a piece of brain fudge gives you a +2 bonus to Wiki checks and a +1 bonus to Hunter checks for the rest of the scene, but the crash gives you a -1 penalty to all checks during the next scene.

**Elemental Bit (6 Influence):** This is the slang term for monster parts that unleash a burst of some kind of "element" (fire, ice, electricity, etc.) when they collide with something hard enough. The most common elemental bits are Firethorns (from flamehogs), Ice Shards (from ice stabbers), Shadow Fangs (from shadow dogs), and Thunderstones (from zapcats). 6 damage (fire, ice, shadow, or electricity), +0 Accuracy, Range 1-2, Burst.

**Happy Ball (4 Influence):** This is a sort of fast-acting antidepressant, in the form of a kind of cake ball or doughnut hole. The ones they sell at Monster Mart come in different bright colors, though some alchemists make them yellow with a happy face. Eating one will take off five ranks of Upset status, but it also relaxes your nervous system a little too much, so that you take a -1 penalty to offensive actions until the end of the next encounter.

**Healing Potion (5 Influence):** A healing potion is a small bottle of a viscous, dark green liquid derived from stumpy leaves. Despite manufacturers' best efforts to improve the taste, it tastes vile, and most people gag on it the first few times they drink one. But its effects are undeniable; wounds close, and bones mend themselves in seconds. Drinking a potion immediately removes 5 ranks of Tired status.

**Muscle Juice (5 Influence):** This is one of the more problematic items to come from monsters, since it lets people get the most out of their muscles for a brief amount of time. It's not totally clear how it works, but it's apparently something to do with adrenaline. Consuming muscle juice gives you a bonus of +1 to damage with melee attacks, and a +2 bonus to any checks relating to raw physical strength for the rest of the scene, but you take two ranks of permanent Tired status afterwards.

**Poison Claw (6 Influence):** This is a fang from a slithery, which you can throw at monsters as an offensive item. 3 damage (and Poisoned status), +0 Accuracy, Range 1-2.

**Salamander Crystal (12 Influence):** These orange crystals found in salamanders glow from within. They are similar to elemental bits, but far more powerful. 12 damage (fire), +0 Accuracy, Range 1-2, Burst.

**Slime Cola (4 Influence for a 12-Pack):** In case you were wondering what Monster Mart does with all the slime cores it buys, this is the answer. Although squishies themselves are among the most toxic of monsters, a very small amount of slime core extract gives people an exceptional energy boost. Monster Mart sells that in the form of "Slime Cola," a soft drink of sorts, in order to make the taste more bearable. Many monster hunters acquire a taste for it (even though it costs a fortune compared to normal soda), but most people can't stand it. Drinking one can removes 2 ranks of Tired status. However, it takes a while to drink this stuff. You can only drink two cans during an interlude, and it takes two maneuver actions to drink a can during an encounter.

**Sticky Ball (3 Influence):** This is a mass of very sticky glue, put into some kind of container that breaks open on impact. There are a couple of different ways to make them, but most recipes involve slime cores and shroom spores. No damage (causes Entangled status), +1 Accuracy, Range 1-3.

**Sylph Crystal (6 Influence):** This curious crystal unleashes a very powerful torrent of wind when it shatters. If you use it well, you can push enemies around the battlefield map. +1 Accuracy, Range 1-2, Burst. All targets hit are forced to move back 1 Position.

**Vine Bola (5 Influence):** This is a simple and disposable offensive item made from the younger vine tentacles of a Jupiter Flytrap. 2 damage (and Entangled status), +0 Accuracy, Range 1-3.

## Protective Gear

Monster hunters by and large look down on protective gear. Most monsters aren't powerful enough to cause major injuries, and when they are, they can overwhelm any armor that's still light enough to be practical for hunting. Still, if you insist (or if your parents force you to), Monster Mart does stock some armor.

**Light Armor (15 Influence):** This is basically a protective vest with arm guards. Reduce damage from physical attacks by 1 (it's ineffective against fire, electricity, etc.), but you take a -1 penalty to non-attack Hunter and Warrior checks, and you automatically take 1 rank of permanent Tired status at the end of each encounter.

**Heavy Armor (30 Influence):** The heavier armor suits tend to make you look either like a SWAT cop, or just ridiculous. Such a suit will consist of thick clothing for your whole body, arm and shin guards, a protective vest, and a helmet. Reduce damage from physical attacks by 2 and other attacks by 1, but you take a -2 penalty to non-attack Hunter and Warrior checks, and you automatically take 1 rank of permanent Tired status at the end of each encounter.

## Other Gear

**Alchemy Tools (10 Influence):** Alchemist characters will have to invest in certain materials if they want to use Talents like Brew Potion. This represents the standard set that Monster Mart sells (or something comparable an alchemist would put together), and is basically a special chemistry/dissection kit geared towards working with monster parts.

**Bags (3 Influence)**

**Gloves (3 Influence)**

**Holsters (5 Influence)**

**Leather Jacket (15 Influence)**

**Part Containers (2 Influence)**

## Secondary Characters

Secondary characters aren't as important to the story as the protagonists, so the rules for them are a bit less complicated.

### 1. Select Cliques

To make a secondary character, just pick out two cliques (or a clique and a class, if you want them to be a monster hunter).

#### Secondary Character Cliques

Since secondary characters can include adults, and other people who aren't bored teenagers, here are some special cliques. These don't have any Talents associated with them.

- **Blue Collar:** This is someone who makes a living through manual labor and stuff that requires working with your hands. These folks are hard-working adults, and while they likely have the strength and stamina to hunt monsters, they typically don't have all that much time for it.
- **Brat:** Younger secondary characters don't have to have this clique—many of the standard ones are fine for making kids—but a “brat” is a kid who generally likes to run around and play and occasionally make life for difficult for others. They often want to hunt monsters, and might even sneak out with a baseball bat to try it out despite their parents' objections.
- **Pro Hunter:** Most monster hunters give up the hobby when they become adults, but a few find some way to make a living from hunting. Some get on monster hunting TV shows like American Monsters or M-Crawl, but most just hunt monsters day in and day out and make enough from trade-ins and such to scrape by. It's not a good way to live, frankly, and while teenage hunters can get by with healing potions and such, for the pros it all takes its toll on the human anatomy in the long term.
- **White Collar:** This is someone who works in an office job or similar, relying on their brains more than their bodies to make a living. These people rarely have time for monster hunting, but hunters can run into them most anywhere.
- **Woodsmen:** A “woodsmen” is someone who's big into the great outdoors and possibly game hunting too. Some will happily hunt monsters as well as normal animals, while other people fit this clique more because they're big on hiking.

### 2. Calculate Attributes

Calculate attributes based on the secondary character's clique(s) and class, just like with a protagonist, including assigning one free point where you wish.

Clique	Guild	Wiki	Hunter	Warrior
Blue Collar	3	2	2	4
Brat	3	2	4	2
Pro Hunter	3	5	4	4
White Collar	4	3	2	2
Woodsmen	3	3	4	4

### 3. Talents

Secondary characters receive the Base Talents of their Clique(s) and Class, but do not get to select any other Talents.

[I'm planning to give the Secondary Character Cliques their own Base Talents later on.]

### 4. Gear

If a secondary character is a hunter, you can assume they have reasonable gear for hunting—a weapon, one or two healing potions, etc. Regardless, as with protagonists you can assume that they have everyday items appropriate to who they are.

### 5. Personal Data

Finally, fill in some basic Personal Data, much like you would for a protagonist. Secondary characters don't need quite as much detail.

### Sample Secondary Characters

To save some time, here are an assortment of secondary characters you can use as-is or tweak for your own purposes.

Alice (monster biologist) White Collar/Woodsman

Billy (geek who's fascinated by monsters) Geek/Weirdo

Brent (overworked Monster Mart manager) Blue Collar/Geek

Claire (stuck-up cheerleader) Popular/Popular

Kyle (bullying jock monster hunter) Jock/Fighter

Jessica (attractive Monster Mart employee) Popular/Average

Stanley (overprotective father) White Collar/Average

### Incidental Characters

Needless to say, the world has more people in it than the number of participants times two. Your protagonists and secondary characters are meant to simply be the range of people that will be important in the stories you tell through playing the game. You might change the selection of characters, or introduce new secondary characters if you think they'll make things more interesting, but otherwise all of the other potential people are what we call "incidental characters." They're in the background to make the world make sense, and you can even give them names if it comes to it, but unless you want to "promote" one to secondary character status, they don't take part in the story.

The GM always controls incidental characters, though they don't need much controlling in the first place. If you somehow find yourself needing to make a check for an incidental character, either make stats as per a secondary character, or just use 7s for everything. Incidental characters will also often be strangers to the participants' characters, and thus effectively have a connection with a rank of -1.

## Episodes

An “episode” is one session of the game, one instance of you and your friends sitting down to play for a few hours. An episode is divided up into a series of scenes. Usually you’ll alternate between Encounters (scenes where your protagonists fight monsters) and Interludes (which concern recovery and social stuff). Sometimes you can have two scenes of the same type in a row, though this can make things unduly hard or easy for the protagonists. One episode roughly corresponds to one monster hunting run, so it can have something like three to six encounters, with interludes between.

Before we get into how encounters and interludes work, we first need to explain how you get ready to start the game and how to roll dice.

## Role-Play and Narration

This chapter outlines a lot of rules for you to utilize during play, but when all is said and done, the rules are a skeleton waiting for you to add some flesh. When you play *Slime Story*, you talk and role-play with your friends to create an imaginary world with an imaginary progression of events. Without that, the game devolves into a series of disconnected actions and fights. This is important in a lot of different ways. It’s a big part of what makes the game fun, of course, but it also gives you stuff to do during interludes besides recovering, and helps you earn achievements which will in turn let you improve your protagonist’s abilities.

Here as elsewhere, the GM’s job is to lead the way while taking input from everyone else. Although we know that in an episode of *Slime Story* the protagonists are out hunting monsters, it’s up to you to figure out what time of year it is, what the weather’s like, what kind of terrain these hunters come across, and so on. Whatever the characters are doing, the participants should have some idea where they’re doing it, what’s around them, and so on. Everyone can help contribute to this side of things, but here as elsewhere the GM needs to take the lead.

I’ll talk about it a bit more as we go along, but role-playing can permeate every part of the game. You have a lot of decisions to make as you play the game, and while you can step back and think in terms of what’s best for success in the game, it’s often more fun to think in terms of what your character wants.

## Preparation

Once you’ve done all of the pre-play stuff, you’re pretty much ready to get your episode under way. This is not the kind of game where the GM has to plan out an adventure for each session. It doesn’t hurt to think about what the various characters want to do before you get started, but you definitely shouldn’t get too attached to anything.

One thing the GM can do to prepare, if you are so inclined, is plan out some encounters and happenings. You can just roll for random monsters to throw at the protagonists and bring happenings in on the fly, but planning stuff out in advance can be fun too. Just don’t get too attached to your plans.

## Write Goals

Before you begin each episode proper, each player gets to write up a Goal for his or her protagonist. This is something the protagonist wants to accomplish during that session, and probably something that relates to one or both of his or her issues. A goal should be something you can realistically accomplish during a session, but not something so easy that success is guaranteed. “Get a salamander crystal” is okay and “Ask Rita on a date” is great, but “Kill one squishy” or “Eat a hamburger” are lame. Also, don’t keep doing the same goal over and over. That’s both lazy and boring.

Each player reads his or her goals aloud to the group before you start, and you can take this opportunity

to offer suggestions.

## Connections in Play

Connections don't just stay the same, of course, though they do take time to grow. Over the course of the game you can accumulate "marks" on connections.

- The first time you Help someone with a check during a scene.
- Certain actions you can take during an encounter or social conflict let you put a mark on a connection with someone if successful.
- During an Interlude you can spend an Action Point to try to bond with someone (see p. XX).
- At the end of each session, each character can put a mark on one of their connections with another character.
- Put one mark on all connections between participating protagonists at the end of each episode.

Each time you accumulate ten marks on a connection, it goes up to the next highest rank, and you erase all of its marks. When this happens, you gain Character Points equal to the connection's new rank.

## Achievements

Achievements represent things in the game that a protagonist becomes known for in the monster hunting community. During the episode, the GM hands out achievements as he or she sees fit, and afterwards everyone gets to suggest and create achievements.

There are three kinds of achievements: Minor, Major, and Legendary. The bigger the accomplishment, the higher up the achievement is on this scale. When you receive an achievement, first write it down on your character sheet.

Type	Renown	Character Points/Influence
Minor	0.1	2/6
Major	0.2	4/12
Legendary	0.4	7/21

Each achievement you get permanently increases your character's Renown rating; this lets you get equipment a bit more cheaply during Supply Run interludes (see p. XX). Whenever you get a new achievement, increase your Renown by the amount noted in the table above.

You can also "cash in" an achievement at any time. This basically means that you're using the fame the achievement has gotten you to get ahead in some way. When you cash in an achievement, you can get 2, 4, or 7 Character Points (for Minor, Major, or Legendary achievements, respectively), and you can change any portion of those Character Points into Influence at a 1:3 ratio. When you cash in an achievement you still keep it on your character sheet (and you still can't get that same achievement a second time), but you can no longer cash it in.

## Standard Achievements

Here is a set of achievements that you can use for most any *Slime Story* campaign.

Achievement	Type	Requirement
True Love	Major	Get rank 6 in a romantic connection.
BFFs	Major	Get rank 6 in a friendship connection.
Dragonslayer	Legendary	Kill a dragon
Playboy	Major	Have romantic encounters with 5 different characters.
Apprentice Craftsman	Minor	Craft 60 Influence worth of items in one episode.
Journeyman Craftsman	Major	Craft 120 Influence worth of items in one episode.
Master Craftsman	Legendary	Craft 180 Influence worth of items in one episode.
Bling-Bling	Major	Spend 30 or more Influence on something gaudy.
Seasoned	Minor	Play a protagonist through 6 episodes.
Seriesed	Major	Play a protagonist through 13 episodes.
Campaigned	Legendary	Play a protagonist through 22 episodes.
Killtacular	Minor	Kill 3 enemies in one turn.
Killtastrophe	Major	Kill 6 enemies in one turn.
Killionaire	Legendary	Kill 9 enemies in one turn.
Moneybags	Major	Accumulate over 300 Influence.
Slime Addict	Major	Drink 8 cans of Slime Cola in one episode.
K. Owned	Minor	Get taken out in an encounter.
Untouched	Major	Complete an episode without taking any Tired stress.
Medic	Major	Apply healing items to others 6 times in one episode.
Firestarter	Minor	Use Firethorns or Salamander Crystals five times in one episode.
Bit by Bit	Minor	Use elemental bits six times in one episode.
Ground Hugger	Major	Get forced Off-Balance four times in one episode.
Something Kinky	Major	Get entangled four times in one episode.
Bleep-Bloop	Minor	Brag about nonsensical stuff as though it were an achievement three times.
Fumbleocity	Major	Roll five fumbles in one episode.
Crititude	Major	Roll five criticals in one episode.

## Creating New Achievements

Creating new achievements is a largely free-form endeavor. You just come up with an accomplishment, and declare whether it's Minor, Major, or Legendary. Because this is a tabletop game, achievements should be based on things that either happen all at once, or things that are very easy to keep track of. An achievement for "killing 200 monsters" seems neat, right up until you realize that you'd have to total up every single monster that every character kills throughout the whole game, and do similar stuff for every other achievement like it. On the other hand, as the examples show, achievements don't have to be for things that are good per se. Just because you're well-known doesn't mean it's for stuff you want to be known for.

As you can see from the examples above, achievements can be based on the game mechanics, pure role-playing, and some of each. Rules-oriented mechanics call attention to crazy stuff that can happen in the game, and they're just plain fun. Role-playing achievements are a way to reward players for making the game more interesting through how they play their characters.

The GM can (and probably should) put together some achievements tailored to the protagonists and the

details of the town. Also, the tone of the game you want to have can inform the kinds of achievements you create. If the group has agreed that the game will have a lot of romance, you can come up with several achievements for different aspects of characters falling in and out of love.

## Checks

A “check” is where you attempt to do something and roll dice to see if you succeed. You mainly make checks for conflicts, but there are a bunch of special things where you make checks for other purposes.

**To make a check**, you roll two six-sided dice, and add up the numbers of the dice and the rank of a particular attribute. If you have 6 or more levels of Stress, you’re hurting and you take a –2 penalty to all checks. In some cases you’ll have to apply other modifiers, good or bad.

The total amount you get from adding up your die roll, attribute, and modifiers is called your **result points**. When you’re dealing with monsters, there are certain things where characters will have a fixed result rather than rolling; apart one side not having to roll dice, things work exactly the same.

If you get a tie with both sides rolling dice, each side rolls a single extra die and adds it to their result to get a clear winner (repeat if necessary). If you get a tie when one side is using a static number (like when you make an attack against someone’s Defense rating) whoever’s rolling dice will win the tie.

## Fumbles and Criticals

If both dice come up as 1s, you automatically fail whatever you’re doing; this is a “Fumble.” If both dice come up as 6s, you automatically succeed at whatever you’re doing; this is a “Critical.” If two characters are rolling against each other and both manage to get Criticals, compare their total result points like usual.

If you get a Critical on an attack or other offensive action that causes damage, it causes 1d6 additional damage. If you get a critical on a check where the result points are relevant to how effective you are, add 1d6 to the result points.

## Helping

Characters have to make checks on their own, but you can still offer assistance to your friends. If you’re the only one trying to give help, you add your connection’s help bonus to their result points, and that’s that. (The help bonus of a connection is equal to its rank, divided by two, rounded up, plus 1.)

If there are multiple helpers, each one after the first has to make a check with an appropriate attribute (usually but not always the same one as the one making the original check) and get a result of at least 7, plus two times the number of prior helpers. If you can pull that off, you’ll get to give the other participant another helping bonus. If you get a critical while rolling to help someone, add another 1d6 to their result points. If you get a fumble while rolling to help, subtract 1d6 from their result points. Other people can continue trying to help after one person fails, but the required result still goes up.

The first time you successfully help during a given scene, put a mark on your connection to the person you helped, even if the check you’re helping with fails.

## Bribery

Sometimes it takes more than words to sway someone. Money talks and all that. This rule lets you attempt to use Influence to help you persuade someone. You can get a bonus from a Trendy item (see p. XX), but you can also spend Influence directly on the attempt to persuade someone. Spending 4 Influence gives you a +1 bonus, and spending 8 Influence gives you a +2 bonus. Anything more than that gets kind of creepy, so the bonus maxes out at +2.

## Stress

“Stress” is wear and tear, emotional and physical, that makes characters less effective at what they do. Stress is divided into Tired and Upset, reflecting physical and emotional “damage”. Regardless, if you have 6 or more ranks of accumulated Stress you are considered “Hurting,” and you take a –2 penalty to all checks.

During encounters and social conflicts you take **temporary Stress** when you suffer attacks (or lose clashes). Mark temporary Stress on your character sheet’s Stress track by putting a slash through the highest open column.

At the end of a conflict, the winner has the option to either extract a concession, or convert the loser’s temporary Stress into **permanent Stress**. Mark off the permanent stress by putting another line through the slash to form an X. Any temporary Stress not converted in this way gets erased at the end of the conflict.

You can remove temporary Stress by taking a Breather action during a conflict, you can remove permanent stress by taking a recovery action during an Interlude, and you can remove either by using an appropriate item. Items that remove Stress are limited in terms whether they can fix Tired or Upset. A healing potion only helps with Tired; it can’t help clear your head.

### Taken Out

A character that takes 12 or more total ranks of Stress is **taken out**. That means you’re too exhausted and/or emotionally freaked out to function properly. You automatically lose the encounter or social conflict you’re in, and if you take 12+ permanent Stress, you won’t be able to participate in Encounters or spend Action Points on anything other than recovery actions during interludes until you get down to 11 or fewer ranks of Stress. On the plus side, you also can’t be pulled into social conflicts while you’re taken out.

A monster that takes more ranks of Stress than its Hits rating is killed, and no longer a part of the encounter.

## Encounters

In the course of an episode, the protagonists go through several “encounters” where they find and (usually) fight some monsters. The GM gets to decide what kind of monsters the protagonists are going to fight, either by picking from the book or rolling on the Encounter Table; the Monsters chapter (p. XX) explains this in more detail. In this game the GM plays the part of the monsters. Keep in mind that the goal is to make things interesting, not to screw over the players.

Encounters go much more smoothly if you take a little bit of time to prepare some materials. You’ll need the battlefield map of course, and it also pays to have the matching sets of generic monster tokens and action cards available from the website. You can get more elaborate, but with those you can keep track of everything pretty easily.

### 1. Scouting

Before an encounter fully begins, the hunters have a chance to try to figure out what it is they’re dealing with, and get into a more advantageous position. You don’t have to bother with scouting, but it definitely helps.

### **Monster Knowledge Check**

Characters don't necessarily know about a given monster or how best to fight it. If you haven't encountered a monster before, you can make a Wiki check to see if your character knows about it. You need to get a result equal to or better than the monster's Obscurity rating. If you succeed, the GM will have to show you the monster's full description.

Certain very common monsters have an Obscurity rating of zero. Everyone involved in monster hunting (and plenty of people who aren't) know about these monsters, so you don't need to make a check to see their descriptions.

### **Positioning Check**

A positioning check lets you get into a more favorable position. One character in the group makes a Hunter check for positioning (though other characters can help), and the GM makes a check using the highest Hunter value from among the monsters.

If your side wins the positioning check, you get one "shift" per 4 result points. You can use your shifts on action shifts (which change the order in which characters act) or position shifts (which change where characters start on the map).

### **Escape Check**

If you don't like what you're dealing with, you can attempt to get away before the encounter proper begins. To do this you need to get a Hunter check result that's better than the monster's Pursuit rating. If you succeed, you get away from the monsters and there is no encounter. If you fail, the encounter starts and the monsters have an Advantageous Position.

## **2. Initialize the Action Stack**

The action stack is a set of cards that you'll use to keep track of who is going when. Each character involved—each protagonist and monster, and any secondary characters who are taking part—needs one action card. The GM then shuffles all of the action cards; that will determine who goes when.

Certain things let characters do an "action shift." This means you get to move your card one position up or down in the action stack (your choice). The side that wins the positioning check has the option of using their shifts from the roll for action shifts for any of the characters on their side.

## **3. Set Up the Battlefield**

The "battlefield" is a special map we use to keep track of characters' positions in a somewhat abstract way. The battlefield has a total of seven possible positions, numbered 1 to 7, where 1 is the protagonists' starting side, and 7 is the monsters' starting side.

### **Understanding the Battlefield**

The battlefield map is a bit abstract, so it helps to understand what exactly it's meant to represent:

- The seven positions represent what can meaningfully be called a part of the encounter. If you try to go past positions 1 or 7, you're leaving the bounds of the battle.
- Being in the same position as someone means being in close quarters. Being in adjacent positions means you're still close enough to hit with melee attacks.
- Range is counted in positions relative to one's own. A range of 0 means you can only affect a target within the same position as yourself. A range of 1 means you can affect a target one position away (e.g., if you're in position 3, you can affect targets in positions 2 or 4).

## Initial Setup

In a normal battle Protagonists can start anywhere in positions 1 through 3 while monsters can start anywhere in positions 5 through 7.

The side that lost the positioning check has to choose positions first. The side that won can use their shifts on “positioning shifts.” A positioning shift lets you move one character from either side one position.

## 4. Take Turns

Once you’ve gotten everything set up in steps 1-3, the encounter proper can finally begin. Whoever’s card is on top of the Action Stack gets to take a turn first. Then his or her card goes to the bottom of the stack, and whoever’s on top after that gets to go. If your card is face-down (certain things, most notably using a Reaction, will make this happen), the GM turns it face-up and puts it on the bottom of the stack (and you don’t get to take your turn until your card comes around again).

Each character gets to do one of the following on his or her turn:

- Take a Full Action and a Maneuver Action.
- Take two Maneuver Actions.
- Skip one or both of his or her actions. Skipped actions are lost.
- Recover from having done a reaction (turn your action card face-up when it comes up in the action stack).

A **Full Action** is something that takes up the majority of your time, such as attacking. A **Maneuver Action** is something that helps you otherwise gain an advantage in the conflict, like moving around the battlefield or switching weapons.

There are also **Reactions**. A reaction is something you do in response to someone else taking an action. If you use a reaction, you can ignore the action stack order and take that action right away, but the GM finds your card in the stack and turns it face-down. While it’s face-down, you can’t do any more reactions, and the next time it comes up in the stack your turn will be used up turning the card face-up. As a result, a reaction basically means you use your turn up early. You also only get to use the reaction, and you can’t take a maneuver action in addition to it.

Not everything a character might do takes up so much time that it counts as an action in game terms. Within reason you can do things like call out to your friends without using up an action.

## Basic Actions

Here are the basic actions that all protagonists (and secondary characters) are capable of. Monsters can’t perform Assist, Breather, Change Weapon, or Give Item, but can do all of the others. Talents and Items can provide you with several actions not covered here, but they will always fall into one or more of the basic action types. Attack and Move are the most basic an important, but all of them are useful.

### Assist

#### *Full Action*

An Assist is similar to helping, but involves setting up an attack that coordinates with an ally’s. To do this, you have to declare an Assist before they act, and wait for them to make an attack of some kind to have it kick in. When your ally is about to attack, you make your attack first. If your attack hits, you give your ally a helping bonus per your connection. If your attack misses, they take a –2 penalty to their attack check. If both of your attacks hit, add a mark to your connection.

## **Attack**

### *Full Action*

Needless to say, this is where you use the means available to you to harm one of your enemies. The target needs to be within a number of positions appropriate to the Range rating of your weapon. With a sword with a range of 0-1 you can attack enemies in the same position or one position away, while with a bow with a range of 1-4 you can't actually attack enemies in the same position, but you can attack enemies 1 to 4 positions away.

You need to make a Hunter (for ranged attacks) or Warrior (for melee attacks) check against a target's Physical Defense rating. A successful attack causes damage, though the amount varies depending on the weapon (or other mode of attack) being used. People can take temporary Tired Stress, while monsters lose Hits.

If you're stuck without a weapon, an unarmed attack does 2 damage and has a range of 0-1.

Certain attacks have the **Burst** feature. This means that an attack inflicts its usual damage on every target within one area for which the check's result points exceed a target's Physical Defense rating. It is not possible to Clash against an attack with the Burst feature.

## **Breather**

### *Full Action*

It's hard to recover in the middle of battle, but you can nonetheless give yourself a quick breather. One per encounter you can use a Full Action to take a breather and remove three ranks of temporary Stress.

## **Change Weapon**

### *Maneuver Action*

If you have more than one weapon on hand, you can switch between them with a maneuver action.

## **Charge**

### *Maneuver Action*

If you are outnumbered in your current position and you have no allies in the next position, you cannot move past your current position with a normal move. Instead, you'll have to Charge. To make a charge, you need to beat the enemies' highest Physical Defense rating (+1 per ally they have in the current position in excess of you) with a Warrior Check. If you fail, you stay put.

## **Clash**

### *Reaction*

If someone is attacking you, and your weapon enables you to attack them back, you can do a clash against them as a reaction. The two characters each make an appropriate check, and the winner causes damage to the loser as per an Attack.

**Feint***Full Action*

A feint is a tricky attack that attempts to bypass the target's defenses. This is a more difficult attack to pull off, but it puts the Off-Balance status on the target. A feint works like either a normal attack that causes Off-Balance status instead of damage if it hits, or both causes damage and Off-Balance, but has a -2 penalty to the check.

**Flee***Full Action*

If you are at the far end of the battlefield (positions 1 or 7), you can attempt to flee the battle entirely. To do this, make a Hunter check, with a -1 penalty for each enemy in the same position as you. If you can beat the enemies' highest Pursuit rating, you leave the encounter. Remove half of the temporary Stress you've taken from it, and the other half becomes permanent.

**Full Defense***Full Action*

Rather than trying to attack or otherwise be active, you can spend a turn concentrating on defense. This raises your Defense ratings by 2 until the start of your next turn.

**Give Item***Maneuver Action*

Giving an item you have to another character during an encounter counts as a maneuver action. Handing someone an item has a range of 0-1, but you can throw an item to someone within a range of 2-4 if both of you can make successful Hunter checks with a target number of 7 plus the range. If one of you fails, the recipient will have to use a maneuver action to pick the item up before he or she can use it.

**Move***Maneuver Action*

The most common type of maneuver action is to simply move around the battlefield map. One maneuver action lets you move by one position, forward or backward.

If there are more enemies in your current position than allies, and no allies in the next position, you can't move there with the normal Move action; you'll have to use Charge instead.

**Status Recovery***Special*

You can attempt to recover from your own Off-Balance or Entangled status, or try to help someone else out of theirs.

For Off-Balance, you can use a Full Action to make yourself or someone else automatically recover. If you don't want to use your Full Action to recover from Off-Balance, you can instead use a Maneuver Action make a Hunter check against a target number of 14. If you succeed, the target is no longer Off-Balance.

Entangled is a little harder to recover from. To recover on your own, you'll have to take a Full Action and make a Warrior check of 18 or better. To recover someone else, you'll have to take a Full Action and make a Warrior check of 14 or better.

## Statues

Characters can also be affected by "statues," conditions that impair them in various ways. There are four main statues in *Slime Story*, each with different penalties. If you're subject to multiple statues at once, all of those penalties are cumulative.

- **Entangled:** Whether through covering you with sticky stuff or wrapping you up in vines, there are certain attacks that "entangle" a character and limit his or her movement. If you're entangled, you take a -2 penalty to your Defense rating and checks for offensive actions, and you cannot move from your current position. You can remove Entangled status with a Status Recover action, and if you're still entangled at the end of the encounter, getting out during an Interlude is a passive action.
- **Hurting:** When you've got 6 or more ranks of Stress, you're considered to be Hurting, and you take a -2 penalty to all checks. If you don't like taking this penalty, do something to remove the Stress.
- **Off-Balance:** This means that your footing is unsure, you're being backed into a corner, or something else happens that makes it hard for you to fight effectively until you have a moment to recover. While Off-Balance you take a -2 penalty to offensive actions, and a -2 penalty to your Defense rating. You can remove Off-Balance status with a Status Recover action, and it goes away automatically at the end of an encounter.
- **Poisoned:** Being poisoned slowly eats away your stamina. Certain monsters can poison hunters, and certain items (mostly derived from those same monsters) let hunters poison monsters back. While you're poisoned, each time your action card comes up you take one rank of permanent Tired Stress from the poison, until either the encounter ends or you use an antidote item to remove the poison. If you're still poisoned at the end of an encounter, you take another 3 ranks of Tired stress at the end of the next Interlude unless you have an antidote during it, but after that you're no longer poisoned.

## 5. Ending the Encounter

If the protagonists wipe out all of the monsters, they win the encounter. They can erase any temporary Stress they've taken over the course of the battle, and they get to see what kind of monster parts they can recover.

However, if things are starting to go badly for the hunters, they have the option to Give, which means the GM gets to assign consequences to them. If the hunters are all taken out, the GM likewise gets to throw consequences at them, probably some pretty serious ones.

### Giving

If you decide you've taken enough of a beating, you can give in. In an encounter this typically means the hunters are running away and generally having a crappy and ignoble time. Everyone on the losing side must agree to giving in, but they can do so at any time between turns. Once you've decided to give, the encounter ends and you move on to assigning consequences.

If you have 6 or fewer ranks of Stress when your side gives, you take another 3 temporary Stress before consequences are assigned.

The GM can opt to have the monsters give, but this essentially means that they get killed or chased off

by the hunters (the players get to decide which). This is handy if the monsters are very clearly going to lose (like if a handful of squishies are fighting competent hunters) or you're short on time in real life.

## **Assigning Consequences**

When you lose a battle, there will be consequences. There are two forms of consequences: Stress and Concessions. The winner can either try to get a concession from the loser, or lock in Stress.

### **Concessions**

A concession is where the winner of the conflict asks if the loser is willing to have a certain thing happen in the game's fiction. The loser can negotiate, but the winner cannot force the loser to accept a concession. When the GM assigns consequences for hunters losing an encounter, it can be things like getting weapons broken or otherwise losing items, being humiliated among the other hunters in town, having their clothes ruined, that kind of thing.

Concessions have the potential to be much more interesting than Stress, and I strongly encourage you to use them without hesitation. In particular, don't deny someone the chance to get a concession if another rank of Stress will take them out. That's when you have them against the ropes, so it's all the more reason to use the opportunity to do something *interesting*.

### **Stress**

The winner's other option is to "lock in" the damage the loser has taken. The loser has to convert any temporary Stress into permanent Stress (put a second line through the slashes to turn them into Xs), which stay until you remove them with a recovery action and/or items.

### **Hunters Defeated?**

This is a game about teenagers hunting cute monsters for spending money. Although they aren't always going to win when they start fights with monsters, this is *not* a game about teenagers trying to hunt monsters and getting killed. You could do it that way if you really insist, but it's better for the GM to start extracting harsh concessions so the hunters can escape with their tails between their legs. Don't let them off easy by any means. Take the opportunity to savage their gear and their pride. If the protagonists are cornered by strong monsters, have some weapons get broken and such. If the protagonists are overwhelmed by what should be relatively weak monsters, have all the other monster hunters in town laugh at them for a while.

### **Recovering Parts**

After the characters slay whatever monsters are confronting them, they can try to recover monster parts. For each monster, the GM will have you roll one die and check the number against the possible results for that monster. For each type of monster present, roll the dice for their parts all at once. If there are seven squishies, roll seven dice, and note down a slime core for each one that comes up as a 4, 5, or 6. Make a note of what parts you've managed to pick up, so you can trade them in later.

### **Encounters and Role-Playing**

The encounter rules can kind of let you get caught up in playing a combat mini-game. That isn't a bad thing in and of itself, but it does help to remember that you're here to role-play too. The encounter rules include all kinds of stuff that lets protagonists protect and assist each other, and that in turn lets you make choices with the rules that reflect your character's motivations and such. If your protagonist has a crush on another monster hunter, he might put himself in harm's way to protect her a lot. If he's been arguing with one of his friends, he might withhold Assists and other forms of help, or overcompensate and try to help out too much.

You can also give the game some of your character's distinct flavor regardless of how you're playing with the rules. Does your character shout "Boo-yah!" or loudly hum the *Final Fantasy* victory fanfare whenever they win a battle? Does he swing his sword wildly or carefully pick his openings? Does he beg for help with a panicked cry, or ask for assistance with a subtle, confident nod of the head?

## Interludes

The other kind of scene in *Slime Story* is an interlude. This is where you try to do social stuff, trade in items, recover from Stress, and so on.

Characters have a limited supply of Action Points that they have to spend to do stuff during an interlude. All characters get one Action Point at the start of each episode, and protagonists receive another at the start of each Interlude. You can also get more Action Points through Happenings (see p. XX). Any Action Points left over at the end of an episode are lost. An activity that requires spending an Action Point is called an "active action." There are also "passive actions," anything that is either something quick and easy, or a reaction to someone else's action.

The limit on Action Points is to keep interludes quick and to the point. The GM can let the protagonists have a second consecutive interlude to get things done if it really makes sense given the situation, but players should keep in mind that the protagonists are in an area with wandering monsters, and that time spent yammering or whatever is time not spend killing monsters and making money.

If you're doing an active action, you can bring any other character into the scene. You need to be able to satisfactorily explain why that character is present, but then your protagonists won't be too far apart, and your secondary characters are supposed to be people they'll run into while hunting.

The following things count as an active action during interludes:

- Starting a social conflict. This could be an attempt to persuade someone, an out-and-out argument, or even an actual physical confrontation.
- Bonding and Breaking; actions that can raise or lower the rank of a connection
- Doing a supply run (considered passive during the first or last scene of an episode)
- Recovery
- Assisting someone else with their Recovery
- Using a Talent that is listed as counting as an active action
- Crafting (making or modifying items)

On the other hand, most other things do not:

- Being pulled into a conflict by someone else
- Helping someone else with a check
- Using an item to remove Stress
- Role-playing that doesn't involve rolling dice

## **Role-Playing During Interludes**

An Interlude is what happens between encounters, and you have a lot of room to role-play it in various ways. You don't have to decide what mechanical thing you're going to do before you start role-playing something. If your character calls up the girl he likes to ask her out, just announce that, and start role-playing the call with whoever controls that character. If you have to persuade her, you can turn it into a social conflict, or if you want to get closer to her you can turn it into a bonding scene, or you can just treat it as pure role-playing and leave it at that. If she says yes, you might even treat it as a recovery action, with the good news making your character feel better (and thus removing some Upset Stress).

## **Flashbacks**

The stuff that happens during an interlude doesn't necessarily have to take place right then and there. You can have certain things—social conflicts, bonding, etc.—be flashbacks. This can be a convenient way to bring in events from outside of a monster hunting run, but it also makes it a little harder to keep track of everything.

I like players to frame flashbacks as though their protagonists are telling a friend a story. “By the way, did I tell you about what happened with Jessica at Monster Mart last Tuesday?” From there you can do the role-playing and dice rolling for what happened last Tuesday and retroactively apply its effects. Thus, Doug's player could relate how he went into Monster Mart and kissed his girlfriend Jessica, and then he and the participant who plays Jessica could do a bonding scene. Of course, this means you need to be reasonably sure nothing happened during the game so far that would contradict this. If it was already established that Kelly was the only one working there on Tuesday, or that Jessica had broken up with Doug and wasn't speaking to him on Sunday, it could make things kind of weird.

## **Bonding**

If you spend an Action Point on bonding, you try to do something to deepen your connection with another character. What this involves really depends on the other character and your character's relationship with them. If it's romantic, the two characters might just be sneaking off somewhere to make out, while close friends could have a frank discussion instead, and so on.

Regardless, you're basically trying to make a check in order to add marks to your connection with someone. This doesn't work if the other party doesn't consent. Have both characters make Guild checks and add their connection modifier, then look at the higher of the two results. For every 6 result points, put one mark on their connection. If you get a fumble, you get no marks. If you get a critical, you get as many as your result points indicate, plus one extra mark for free.

Depending on how you role-play a bonding scene, you may wish to take the opportunity to rewrite the description on your characters' connection.

## **Breaking**

Sometimes you get closer to someone than you want, and you feel the need to create distance. “Breaking” lets you spend Character Points to reduce the rank of a connection. This cost both reflects the fact that it's always a somewhat destructive act (even if there are times when you'll be better for it in the long run), and serves a game balance function.

Role-play a brief scene where your characters do something expressing how they're putting some distance between each other. Between the two characters, they must spend Character Points equal to two times their current connection rank in order to reduce it by one.

## Recovery

This is where you try to recover from permanent Stress you might've suffered. You can recover from both Tired and Upset with one Action Point.

For **Tired** status you pretty much just need to rest and catch your breath. If you sit down and rest a bit, you can automatically remove four ranks of Tired status.

For **Upset** status you have to sit down and clear your head a bit. Other characters can help you to recover if they're willing to spend an Action Point on it, but you have to be using yours for a recovery in the first place. Make a Guild or Hunter check; for every 4 result points, you can remove one rank of Upset status. If someone assists you, they can make a Guild check with your connection rank as a bonus, and add half their result points to your total. If you assist someone with their recovery, add two marks to your connection. Rolls to recover do not take the usual penalty from Hurting status (i.e., the -2 from having 6+ ranks of Stress), but rolls to assist do.

## Social Conflicts

Sometimes characters get into conflicts with each other rather than the monsters. When this happens, you can spend an Action Point to use the social conflict rules to resolve the matter. The rules for social conflicts are very similar to encounters, but a bit simpler, especially since they don't use the battlefield map.

Just because your characters are having an argument, or one is trying to persuade the other to go on a date or some such, doesn't mean it has to be a social conflict that uses the rules. A social conflict costs an Action Point, and the rules give it teeth, allowing the winner to either saddle the loser with Stress or extract a concession from them.

### 1. Define Sides and Objectives

First, make it clear what the conflict is about and who exactly is involved. In order to start a conflict with person, a character has to spend an Action Point. You can start a conflict against more than one other character with a single Action Point if you really want, but it's not to your advantage. If someone starts a conflict with you, you're forced to participate, but you don't have to spend an Action Point to do so. If you want to fully jump into the conflict on one side or the other, you do have to spend an Action Point. If you're not participating directly, you're on the sidelines, and unless you spend an Action Point, you can only step in by Helping a participant with a single check during the conflict.

The characters participating need to have some general objectives in mind. What exactly are you trying to achieve? It doesn't have to be super-specific (and the flow of the conflict could lead you to change your mind before the end) but you do need to have some idea what's going on.

### 2. Initialize Action Stack

Set up the Action Stack just like in an encounter.

### 3. Take Turns

For a social conflict, the participating characters take turns, using the action stack like usual. Flee and Move are the only basic actions that aren't available; running away is effectively Giving here, and since you're not using the map, Move isn't applicable. Attacks and Clashes use Guild if they're based on emotions and Wiki if they're based on logic and reason, and you can choose to add your connection modifier if you're Attacking (but not Clashing with) someone. An Attack that exceeds the target's Social Defense is successful. Successful attacks and clashes cause 3 ranks of temporary Upset Stress, though there are Talents that let you cause more.

It may be a little weird to take the different combat maneuvers and try to imagine them applying to an argument, but they're not hard to map over. Attacks are where you press your point, a feint is an underhanded or distracting argument, defensive actions let you steel yourself against oncoming rhetoric, and so on. Be as creative as you want to be, and try to do a snippet of role-playing before you declare your actual action in game terms and pick up the dice.

#### 4. Ending the Conflict

As with an encounter, a social conflict carries on until one side is either taken out or gives, and then you move on to assigning consequences. Consequences work exactly the same as in encounters, except that here you have people assigning consequences to other people, which potentially makes things much more interesting.

If you win a conflict where you're trying to a girl out on a date, you could ask for that participant to accept the date as a concession, but you couldn't actually force her to take it; she could opt to take the Stress instead.

A concession can be a bit open-ended if you like. Instead of "You trip and fall on your face and look like a doofus in front of Rita," you could just say, "You embarrass yourself in front of Rita," and let the other player figure out how exactly. However, concessions have to affect the actual loser of the conflict; you can't fob your loss off on someone else.

#### Scuffles

Sometimes things get heated and people are dumb enough to start a brawl with a friend. Attacking with fists causes 2 ranks of Tired status, and you can bring Talents meant for encounters into the social conflicts, but otherwise things work pretty much the same. Most monster hunters seriously look down on those who use their weapons on other people (which can be fodder for Concessions), but if you do, it causes its usual damage.

Monks, with their Never Unarmed base talent, have a major advantage in a scuffle, but starting a fistfight with a well-trained martial artist *is* kind of dumb. If you're playing a monk and you want to go easy on someone, you can opt to do the normal 2 damage instead.

#### Where's the Role-Playing?!

If you're not used to this style of game, it might seem a little strange to settle an argument by rolling the dice rather than straight-up role-playing. Part of the trick here is that the rules can't actually force your character to do something. They might make it much more desirable, but your character never loses his or her free will to the roll of the dice. The other thing is that you should never actually stop role-playing. The rules here are meant to chuck you into situations where you'll do more role-playing, and definitely not to let you slide by with doing less.

For example, suppose I'm playing Doug and you're playing Jessica. I decide I want to do a scene where Doug asks Jessica out on a date. If you want her to just accept, we'd move on to a bonding interlude (see p. XX), but if you want to put up a fight, we'd do a conflict. Supposing I came out on top, I could offer you a concession of having Jessica accept his invitation. You don't have to take that offer, but if you don't I could give you a bunch of Upset Stress ranks. Since I won the conflict you have an *incentive* for going the way I want, but you can still role-play Jessica however you think is appropriate.

#### Crossing the Streams: Mixing Social Conflicts and Encounters

Sometimes, characters want to mess with each other during an encounter. It's kind of a screwed-up thing to do, but people sometimes do screwed-up things. Any action that you could take during a social

conflict counts as the same kind of action during an encounter, so doing a social attack is a Full Action, and takes away the opportunity to actually attack the monsters that turn.

In an encounter, a social attack has a range of 0-4. If someone is at the opposite end of the battlefield they're not likely to be able to hear whatever you're saying to mess them up. Everything else—including the Upset Stress it causes—work like usual. At the end of the encounter, you can negotiate for a concession or make the stress permanent like usual as well.

Also, if you use a Scene Talent meant for social conflicts during an encounter, it's still unavailable during the next Interlude.

## **Supply Run**

A supply run is where the protagonists go to buy and sell stuff, whether doing trade-ins and purchases at the local Monster Mart, bartering with an alchemist friend, or by other means. Supply runs can be kind of dull, though you can add more interesting interludes and conflicts relating to each other or the people they meet along the way. Each monster description gives the values of the parts (if any) that hunters can recover from it, and the Gear section (p. XX) lists the costs of different items.

The hunters themselves will have to decide to divvy up the money they get from trade-ins. The most common way to handle this is for everyone who went on the run to take an equal share.

If it's the first or last interlude of the episode, protagonists can do a supply run without spending any Action Points.

## **Using Renown**

Protagonists can use their Renown ratings to get things more cheaply. Take a look at your Renown, and ignore what comes after the decimal point; if you have at least 1 full point of Renown, you can use it in this way. When you go to buy an item, make a Guild check against a target number of 16. If you succeed, reduce the Influence cost of the item by your Renown, though this can't reduce the cost by more than half (rounded down) of its base cost.

Using your Renown means that you're somehow using your accumulated fame and goodwill to your advantage. That means that you're not simply getting a discount at Monster Mart or another ordinary retailer. Those stores don't do haggling or favors, unless the manager has something the store was going to get rid of anyway. However, by getting stuff from alchemists and other people in the community, by trading, by getting the occasional gift, and so on, you can use your fame to your advantage.

## **Crafting**

“Crafting” is where a character sits down and makes or modifies stuff. In order to do crafting, a character must have a Talent that covers making/modifying that particular kind of item. To craft, spend an Action Point and follow the rules outlined in your Talent.

## Happenings

“Happening” is a game term for events that pop up to make a protagonist’s life more complicated, in exchange for an Action Point. They’re both a fun toy that the GM can use to make the hunters’ lives more interesting, and a way for the players to get more Action Points when they need them.

The GM can prepare some happenings in advance, and they can also be generated randomly (with one of the tables below) or suggested by a participant. Regardless, they should be something that comes out of left field to strongly affect a protagonist, and you don’t get an Action Point just because things didn’t go your way. A Happening can come into play at any time during the game, even during an Encounter. If a protagonist’s girlfriend is going to call to have an argument, she could very easily do it while he’s trying to fight monsters, after all.

Happenings can’t force a player to take a particular course of action, though of course it can be awesome when players help make the game more interesting that way. Still, it’s often better to have Happenings involve incidental characters, nature, or outside events that are beyond any protagonists’ or secondary characters’ control. The tables below provide over a hundred examples.

Also, Happenings can make great inspiration for achievements. If a protagonist has a run-in with the cops and gets away, he might get an “I Fought the Law” achievement, for example.

[The random happening tables are going to take some time to put together, so I’m leaving them out for now.]

## Finishing Up an Episode

There aren’t any hard and fast rules for ending an episode, but generally speaking three to six encounters, with enough interludes around them to be interesting, it about right. Once the protagonists do a supply run to trade in their accumulated parts, you’re just about done. However, there are a few things you need to do before you pack up and go home.

### 1. Healing

In this game we assume that characters will get some amount of help for whatever statuses they might have suffered during the course of the episode.

You can outright erase all of your Tired status ranks. A good night’s sleep will get rid of general fatigue, and your parents won’t let you go around injured, especially when a healing potion should get rid of all of it.

Being Upset can stick around a little longer. If you have any left at the end of the episode, make a Hunter or Guild check. For every 4 result points, remove one rank of Upset status.

### 2. Evaluation

“Evaluation” is where you go around the table and look at everyone’s issues and goals. When it’s your turn, read off your protagonist’s Goal and Issues, and explain why you think he or she achieved that Goal and did something that addressed those Issues. If you achieved your goal, you get 4 Character Points. If you brought an Issue to the fore, you get 2 Character Points. As a rule of thumb, you can get an award for an Issue about people if you change a connection appropriate to that issue, and you can get an award for an Issue about material stuff if you put at least 15 Influence towards that issue in the session. If you have an Issue about wanting a girlfriend, you’d definitely get Character Points if you increase the rank of your connection to a girl you like. If you have an Issue about being obsessed with gadgets, splurging on a new myPhone would qualify you for the reward.

## **Resolving Issues**

If you accomplish the thing one of your Issues is about, you may treat it as resolved, or let it stay there, depending on whether or not you think it will be relevant. If your issue is “I want a girlfriend,” getting a girl to go out with you is the beginning of a journey, not the end, and you could continue writing Goals that relate to your relationship. Remember that having an issue on your character sheet means you’re asking your friends to help you tell stories about it. You could replace “I want a girlfriend” with “I hope Jessica doesn’t leave me,” but then you should expect your protagonist’s relationship to have some tensions.

On the other hand, you could resolve a simple material issue (“I want to buy a car”) pretty easily by getting enough money together; see p. XX for some guidelines on buying toys.

If everyone agrees that you’ve resolved an Issue in a positive way, you get a special award of 10 Character Points, and you’ll have to come up with a new Issue.

## **3. Mark Connections**

Connections get a couple of additional marks put on them at the end of each episode.

1. Add one mark to the connections between all of the protagonists who participated in the episode.
2. Each character can add one mark to his or her connection with one other character.

## **4. Nominate Achievements**

This is where you really get to recognize the other players’ accomplishments. If you think someone did something particularly deserving of recognition, suggest an achievement. Talk about it as a group, decide what type (Minor, Major or Legendary) it should be, and if you can come to some kind of consensus, add the achievement both to that protagonist and the list of achievements available in the game. Remember, achievements are the main way you can reward players for making the game more fun through role-playing.

## **5. Advancement**

Characters can of course improve over time; for protagonists that’s the ultimate purpose of accumulating Character Points. To improve your protagonist’s abilities, you need to increase his or her level by spending Character Points. Each time a protagonist gains a new level, he or she improves in some way.

### **The Cost of Leveling Up**

To raise a protagonist’s level by one, you must spend Character Points equal to his or her current level times ten. So to go from level 1 to level 2 only costs 10 points, but it gets progressively more expensive from there.

### **Effects of Leveling Up**

At each new level, a protagonist receives the benefit(s) listed in the table below. You will always get some kind of new Talent at each new level, and on every 4<sup>th</sup> level you’ll also get to increase one attribute by 1 rank.

Attributes cannot go higher than 12, even if you have the bonus to apply from your new level.

Unless noted otherwise in its description, you can take a given Enhancement or At-Will Talent only once, but you can take a Scene or Episode Talent a second time, earning your protagonist a second usage of that Talent per scene or episode. You can only take a given Class/Clique Talent once.

Level	Cost	Benefit
2	10	New Scene Talent
3	20	New Episode Talent
4	30	New At-Will or Enhancement Talent, +1 to one Attribute
5	40	New Scene Talent
6	50	New Episode Talent
7	60	New At-Will or Enhancement Talent
8	70	New Scene Talent, +1 to one Attribute
9	80	New Episode Talent
10	90	New At-Will or Enhancement Talent
11	100	New Scene Talent
12	110	New Episode Talent, +1 to one Attribute
13	120	New At-Will or Enhancement Talent
14	130	New Scene Talent
15	140	New Episode Talent
16	150	New At-Will or Enhancement Talent, +1 to one Attribute
17	160	New Scene Talent
18	170	New Episode Talent
19	180	New At-Will or Enhancement Talent
20	190	New Scene Talent, +1 to one Attribute

#### Advancement for Secondary Characters

Secondary characters also get to improve, but for them it's a lot simpler. Just increase one attribute by one point at the end of each episode. As with protagonists, an attribute can't go over 12.

# Monsters

This chapter covers the various kinds of monsters that hunters can find, and how to use them in the game.

[For this playtest document I've only included the eleven "common" monsters, on account of I don't want to write up descriptions for the other thirty-some monsters and then have to re-write them to fit with stuff that comes up in playtesting. If you have ideas for monsters, feel free to send them my way; there's some notes on creating monsters at the end of this section.]

## Common Monsters

Where the standard encounter table gives you a wide variety of monsters, the Common Monster Table serves as a "shortlist" of the most common monsters. You shouldn't use it all the time, but using it fairly often will help make the common monsters as common as they're theoretically meant to be.

Roll (2d6)	Monster	Page
2	Doomspider	
3	Shadow Dog	
4	Firebats	
5	Stumpy	
6	Shroom	
7	Squishy	

Roll (2d6)	Monster	Page
8	Flamehog	
9	Evil Eye	
10	Rocktopus	
11	Salamander	
12	Ice Stabber	

## Monster Descriptions

**Behavior:** This is an explanation of how the monster behaves. Some are relatively cunning, while others are very, very simple.

**Number Appearing:** This is how many of that kind of monster one typically comes across at one time.

**Stats:** Monsters have a set of attributes and other numerical values, similar to characters.

- **Obscurity:** A monster's Obscurity is how difficult it is for hunters to recall details about a given monster. If they can make a Wiki check that beats its obscurity rating, the GM shows the players the monster's description from the book.
- **Attributes:** Monsters have *Hunter* and *Warrior* ratings like human characters, but not Guild or Wiki ones.
- **Physical Defense:** Likewise, they have Physical Defense ratings, though these don't always equal the monster's Hunter + Warrior as with characters.
- **Hits:** This is how much damage a monster can withstand before it's taken out.
- **Pursuit:** This is how tenacious the monster is at preventing hunters from running away. Characters attempting to run away from a monster will have to make a check that matches or beats this number.

**Attacks:** This describes the monster's mode(s) of attack. This will include what attribute it uses and any special effects. These descriptions are mostly the same as for weapons and consumable items, except that the accuracy is the monster's total bonus to the check, including its relevant attribute (to make things a little quicker for you).

Most monster attacks work just like the kinds of attacks that monster hunters have (melee, missile, burst, etc.), but some possess “aura” attacks:

- **Aura:** An “aura” refers to when the monster is surrounded by something damaging, such as a corona of fire or just a lot of spikes. Rather than an attack in itself, the aura automatically turns any melee Attack into a Clash against it without using up any of the monster’s actions.

**Special:** Certain monsters have special abilities, similar to Talents. Here are the special abilities they can have.

- **Resistance:** The monster takes less damage from certain kinds of attacks. If a monster is hit with an attack of the type(s) noted in the resistance, reduce the damage by that amount.
- **Vulnerability:** Some monsters are vulnerable to certain kinds of attacks, and take extra hits from them. If a monster is hit with an attack of the type(s) noted in the vulnerability, increase the damage by that amount.

**Parts:** This tells you what parts defeating one of these monsters will yield. Normally you roll a single die to see what each monster yields.

### Doomspider

Hopefully you’re not afraid of spiders, because the doomspider is basically a big spider, about 12 to 18 inches across, with a shiny black carapace. Its bite is painful, and the things are surprisingly fast.

**Behavior:** Doomspiders are cunning creatures, and display some amount of coordination with their fellows.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6+1

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 6, Wiki 2, Hunter 7, Warrior 8, Physical Defense 14, Hits 10, Pursuit 14

**Attacks:**

- **Spider Thread:** Doomspiders can shoot their web at close range to immobilize enemies. No damage (causes Entangled status), Accuracy 8, Range 0-2.
- **Spider Bite:** Doomspiders deliver painful, but thankfully non-poisonous, bites with their fangs. 4 damage, Accuracy 8, Range 0-1.

**Special:** A doomspider can move 2 positions as a Maneuver Action, and never needs to charge regardless of how many enemies are present.

**Parts:** 1-2: Nothing. 3-5: Doom Web Gland (5 Influence). 6: Doom Shell (8 Influence).

### Firebats

Firebats are pretty aptly named, being bats that are constantly on fire. They’re annoying to fight because of how they flutter around and then explode upon dying, and you never actually get anything for your effort.

**Behavior:** Firebats are fairly mindless creatures, and they simply fly at anything hostile and make Fire Flap attacks.

**Number Appearing:** 2d6

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 7, Wiki 0, Hunter 6, Warrior 6, Physical Defense 12, Hits 4, Pursuit 14

**Attacks:**

- **Death Pyre:** When a firebat is killed, its remaining flammable stuff combusts all at once. A

firebat automatically uses this attack as soon as it takes more damage than its Hits. 4 damage (fire), Accuracy 5, Range 0, Burst.

- **Fire Flap:** Firebats mainly attack by flapping into targets while on fire. 3 damage (fire), Accuracy 6, Range 0-1.

**Special:** Fire Resistance 2, Cold Vulnerability 2

**Parts:** None

### Flamehog

A flamehog looks like a wild boar with flaming spikes running down its back. They're not very smart, but they can charge and knock you down.

**Behavior:** Flamehogs are relatively smart monsters, but very aggressive. If someone does damage to a flamehog, it will doggedly attack them over and over.

**Number Appearing:** 1d3

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 7, Wiki 1, Hunter 4, Warrior 9, Physical Defense 13, Hits 9, Pursuit 16

**Attacks:**

- **Tusks:** Flamehogs will attempt to gore enemies with their tusks. 4 damage, Accuracy 9, Range 0-1.
- **Fire Charge:** Flamehogs also like to charge into people to knock them down. 5 damage (fire, plus causes Off-Balance Status), Accuracy 8, Range 0.

**Special:** Fire Resistance 2, Cold Vulnerability 2

**Parts:** 1: Nothing. 2-6: Firethorn (elemental bit; 6 Influence).

### Evil Eye

As you might imagine, an evil eye looks like a big floating eyeball. It attacks by emitting some kind of low-frequency vibration that people and most other organisms find intensely painful.

**Behavior:** Evil eyes are not particularly active creatures. They will mostly float into range and use their vibration attacks, and try to stay out of the reach of melee attacks.

**Number Appearing:** 1d3

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 4, Wiki 2, Hunter 9, Warrior 4, Physical Defense 15, Hits 7, Pursuit 12

**Attacks:**

- **Evil Vibration:** The eye emits a painful low-frequency vibration. 3 damage (sonic), Accuracy 10, Range 0-3, Burst.

**Special:** Sonic Resistance 3

**Parts:** 1: Nothing, 2-6: Eye Gel (5 Influence). This is a gelatinous substance used for certain industrial and alchemical purposes.

## Ice Stabber

Ice stabbers are strange, scuttling creatures with outer shells made of ice that, while they're still alive, stays cold in all but the hottest sun. They have two great ice-spikes that they try to stab you with, hence the name. The cold comes from the "ice shard" inside of them.

**Behavior:** Ice stabbers display a moderate amount of intelligence for monsters, and will move in and out of close combat.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 7, Wiki 1, Hunter 7, Warrior 7, Physical Defense 14, Hits 8, Pursuit 10

### Attacks:

- **Ice Mist:** Ice stabbers can emit icy vapors that are painfully cold. An ice stabber must spend a turn to activate this, and it will last until the end of its next turn, after which it can no longer use the power during that encounter. 3 damage (ice), Accuracy 8, Aura.
- **Ice Pincers:** Ice stabbers' main mode of attack is to pinch with their cold, sharp claws. 4 damage (cold), Accuracy 7, Range 0-1.

**Special:** Ice Resistance 2, Fire Vulnerability 3

**Parts:** 1: Nothing. 2-6: Ice Shard (elemental bit; 6 Influence).

## Rocktopus

The rocktopus is a little reddish-orange octopus-like creature that swallows and spits rocks with surprising accuracy.

**Behavior:** Rocktopi will mostly sit in one area, shifting around just enough to avoid being hit, and spit rocks at anything they find threatening.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6+1

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 5, Wiki 1, Hunter 8, Warrior 6, Physical Defense 14, Hits 7, Pursuit 13

### Attacks:

- **Spit Rocks:** Rocktopi attack by spitting rocks. 3 damage, Accuracy 8, Range 1-3.
- **Tentacle Lash:** If you corner a rocktopus, it will try to hit you with its tentacles, though it's not very effective at it. 2 damage, Accuracy 5, Range 0.

**Special:** None

**Parts:** 1-2: Nothing. 3-6: Rock Calamari (3 Influence). The oils in rocktopus flesh are used as an industrial lubricant.

## Salamander

Salamanders are less like the little amphibians and more like the fire creatures of myth. They have serpentine bodies with two limbs that they use as legs or arms at need, and they're quick, clever creatures in battle. However, they almost always contain salamander crystals, which are both a potent weapon and a valuable part.

**Behavior:** Salamanders are clever monsters, and try to get an advantage over enemies by knocking them down with tail swipes and luring them into attempting close attacks despite the salamanders' fire aura.

**Number Appearing:** 1d3

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 4, Wiki 3, Hunter 8, Warrior 10, Physical Defense 17, Hits 16, Pursuit 17

### Attacks:

- **Bite:** Salamanders have sharp teeth and their bites are vicious and painful. 4 damage (fire), Accuracy 10, Range 0-1.
- **On Fire:** The most annoying thing about salamanders is that they're always on fire. 3 damage, Accuracy 6, Aura.
- **Tail Swipe:** Salamanders can swipe with their tails to knock enemies over. 3 damage (and causes Off-Balance status), Accuracy 9, Range 0-1.

**Special:** Fire Resistance 3, Cold Vulnerability 2

**Parts:** 1: Nothing. 2-6: Salamander Crystal (12 Influence).

## Shadow Dog

Whatever your opinion of dogs, you probably won't like shadow dogs. They are inky black, to the point where it's hard to discern their features, and they seem to have some kind of black mist wafting off of them. Science explains this as an oily and mildly toxic substance they secrete from their skin, but some people think of them as "shadow elemental" creatures anyway. They are quick and cunning creatures, and not to be taken lightly.

**Behavior:** Shadow dogs are cunning hunters, but prone to focus too much on the single target they find the most threatening.

**Number Appearing:** 1d3

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 7, Wiki 2, Hunter 7, Warrior 9, Physical Defense 16, Hits 12, Pursuit 18

### Attacks:

- **Shadow Howl:** Shadow dogs can unleash a howl that sends out a wave of cold, black wind. 4 damage (shadow), Accuracy 7, Range 0-3, Burst.
- **Bite:** Shadow dogs are also into biting people. 4 damage, Accuracy 9, Range 0-1.

**Special:** Shadow Resistance 2

**Parts:** 1-2: Nothing. 3-6: Shadow Blob (elemental bit; 6 Influence).

## Shroom

Shrooms are big mushrooms, about a foot or two tall, that hop around. They're only slightly more dangerous than squishies, so not very.

**Behavior:** Shrooms are rather mindless creatures, and mostly just toss themselves at anything they find hostile. They will typically use their spore cloud attack the first chance they get after someone hits them.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6+3

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 7, Wiki 2, Hunter 6, Warrior 7, Physical Defense 12, Hits 8, Pursuit 10

### Attacks:

- **Fungus Bump:** Like squishies, shrooms sort of throw themselves against you. 3 damage, Accuracy 7, Range 0-1.
- **Spore Cloud:** Once per scene, a shroom can emit a cloud of spores. 3 damage, Accuracy 6, Range 0, Burst. (Shrooms are immune to damage from this attack.)

**Special:** None

**Parts:** 1-2: None, 3-6: Shroom Spores (2 Influence).

## Squishy

Squishies are probably the most common type of monster, and the most trivial. They appear to be little dollops of red, green, blue, or orange gelatin, about 4 to 18 inches across, with two little black dots for eyes. Squishies do attack, but an individual one can't muster much more than the force of a light punch.

They are the only monster that is known to reproduce, and they do so by binary fission (i.e. they split into two). They are basically very large single-celled organisms, and they're detritovores, feeding mostly on dead leaves and such. There are rumors of squishies of other colors, and of squishies that exhibit more sophisticated behavior, but none of these have been substantiated.

**Behavior:** Squishies are very simple creatures. They can recognize other squishies as friendly (owing to a particular chemical they secrete), but otherwise they instinctively throw themselves at anything that moves. Each squishy will move closer to an enemy with a Maneuver Action and do a Slime Tackle with a Full Action. That's it.

**Number Appearing:** 2d6.

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 8, Wiki 0, Hunter 3, Warrior 6, Physical Defense 10, Hits 5, Pursuit 12

### Attacks:

- **Slime Tackle:** Squishies can throw themselves at hunters with the force of a light punch. 2 damage, Accuracy 6, Range 0-1.

**Special:** None

**Parts:** 1-2 Nothing. 3-6: Slime Core (1 Influence). This is a ball with viscous goo inside, and easy to break. It is only useful as an ingredient or for trade-in.

## Stumpy

A stumpy looks like a tree stump with one bulging, bloodshot eye. They walk around using their roots. Some stumpies have leaves attached to them, and these are the basis of healing potions.

**Behavior:** Stumpies skitter around with seemingly random movements, and won't attack unless someone attacks them first.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6

**Stats:** Obscurity 0, Guild 7, Wiki 0, Hunter 4, Warrior 8, Physical Defense 12, Hits 20, Pursuit 7

**Attacks:**

- **Tree Tackle:** Stumpies attack by ramming into things they perceive as enemies. 3 damage, Accuracy 8, Range 0-1.

**Special:** Fire Vulnerability 1

**Parts:** 1-4: Nothing. 5-6: Stumpy Leaf; worth 6 Influence. Alchemists with the Brew Potion Talent can use them to make healing potions.

## Making New Monsters

It would be boring if the monsters were always exactly the same, especially if you keep playing the game for a while. For that matter, you might want to customize the selection of monsters for wherever the game is taking place. If the small town is up north, you might want to have more ice monsters and few if any fire creatures, even if it's only because the fire monsters tend to die out after coming out of the portal. People discover new monsters every now and then, and there might be places where something unnatural is causing monsters to mutate.

There aren't any formal rules for creating monsters per se, but here are some guidelines:

- Monsters are never humanoid and never artificial. There are no goblins, wolf-men, golems, clockwork monsters, etc. You can change that if you're so inclined, but that's not how it works in the default setting.
- *Slime Story* is not based on the idea that monsters should be fair. They only directly reward PCs through monster parts, and how much so doesn't necessarily correlate with the monster's power level. Firebats are meant to be sucky to fight.
- Where possible, give a monster's features some kind of mechanical representation. If a monster is made of ice, give it some kind of ice attacks. If a monster is quick, give it special movement abilities and possibly a high Pursuit rating.

## Welcome to the World of Slime Story

As soon as school gets out, I go home, get my Spikinator™, and go hunt monsters.

When I was little, it seemed like everything worthwhile, everything wonderful, turned out to be a lie. Santa Claus was just the tip of the iceberg. The world is such a messed-up place, and we're just little specks in it. No dragons, no magic, no nothing.

Then came the portals. Magic portals, spitting out magical monsters. Suddenly the world became something like the place I'd always thought it should be.

I've fought squishies and stumpies and shadow dogs. I've collected magic crystals and drank more healing potions than I can count. I've even slain a dragon. With some help from my friend Doug.

People call me a "monster geek" and tell me to get a life. A lot of the time we are just doing glorified pest control for money, but I have friends, I go on real adventures, and I live in a world that appreciates me.

Oh, and please remember to subscribe to my YouTube channel!

– Rita

*Slime Story* is a tabletop role-playing game, best experienced with a group of 3-6 friends. You'll need some six-sided dice, pencils and paper, and imagination.

