Hints for Players

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1 Glossary

Ability Cards Some mechanics are simple enough that they fit on a small card, in which case they are often passed to you in the form of ability cards. Ability cards have two sides: one which explains how the ability works ("You have the power to make someone's head explode. Just show them this card."); and one side which explains what happens to the person you use it on or what people see when you use it ("Your head explodes. Roleplay accordingly."). Show only the second side to other people. Ability cards and greensheets take precedence over what is said in the rules.

Bluesheets Bluesheets explain groups and organizations that your character is involved in. If your character sheet and a bluesheet conflict, your character sheet overrides the bluesheet. However, you may wish to pretend that it doesn't so that the rest of your group doesn't take you out. (If you have a bluesheet that explains you work for the organization SWORD and you're trying to brainwash the world for SWORD's leader, WARLOCK, but your character sheet says that you really hate WARLOCK and want to kill him, you probably want to kill him.) If it's not clear to you that your character sheet is in fact correct, ask a GM. Bluesheets are also not in-game items.

Character Sheet Your character sheet explains who you are, what you want and why you want it. Information in the character sheet supercedes information in your greensheets and bluesheets. Character sheets are not in-game pieces of paper, which means that no one else can read them, steal them, etc. Accordingly, you shouldn't write on them, because anything you write on in game becomes a game item.

Character vs. Player You are the player. The character is the entity in the game world who you are playing when you are playing the game. Your player should not lie to another player (this will cause mass confusion if you do). However, your character can lie to other characters as much as you deem necessary.

Common Room Games usually have rooms that are designated as Common Rooms, where players are likely to congregate. Hanging out in the common room can be a good place to find the people you need to talk to, discover new resources you didn't know existed, and figure out

what everyone else is up to. On the other hand, never leaving the common room means that you miss everything that's going on elsewhere, that everyone else can figure out exactly what you're up to, and that someone who wants you (or just anyone) dead can find you pretty easily.

Common Room Massacre The phenomenon in which a small number of people (or one very good person) completely wipes out all players in the common room. This is often done to as a convenient way to wipe out enemies and collect RTIs.

Game Break Many games have a game break during which no game action may occur. In general, you shouldn't take actions in character nor should you have in-game conversations. (Some games will allow phone/email contact, but no mechanics or game actions. Check with your local GM). Game breaks are handy for catching up on sleep and/or homework.

Game Halts Game halts are called for NPs and for situations when a GM is needed to resolve a dispute or an effect. No game action is allowed until resume is called by a GM. Walking into an area where there is a game halt generally means that you have just expanded the halted area. The complexity that can arise from expanding game halts is a good reason to avoid them if at all possible. Time halt is synonymous with game halt.

Game vs. Real World This is a game. This is not the real world. Your character may well be doing death-defying stunts, but your player should not be doing anything dangerous or illegal while you are playing the game.

Ghosts There may be people who are wearing white headbands or have badges that say "Ghost" or "Observer." These people are not playing the game, but are watching and perhaps helping the GMs run it. Ghosts should not reveal in-game information to any players or get in the way. If there is a ghost around who is bothering you, feel free to ask them to leave. They should do so. Ghosts are particularly handy for finding a GM for you when you need one.

GMs The GMs are the Gamemasters, the people who wrote the game. If you have questions about your character, your goals, or anything else about the game, the GMs are the people to talk to. In situations where players cannot agree on what just happened, it is often best to find a GM and ask. In situations like this, GMs are often called upon to make a ruling on what happens. GMs will make mistakes, but their word is the reality of the game universe. If you disagree with a GM ruling, feel free to bring it up with the GM, but the GMs know a lot more about the game and often have reasons that they can't tell you for their ruling. All in all, though, they are here to make the game run and be enjoyable for the players.

Greensheets Greensheets explain mechanics that your character understands to some degree. A mechanic is a method by which something that exists in the game universe but not in the real one is interacted with. Greensheets explain the procedures by which you can manipulate constructs which exist only in the game world (like magic, hand-held supercomputers, intergalactic economies, etc.) or exist in the real world, but can't really be done (like hacking into computers or lockpicking). Read your greensheets carefully and ask the GMs to clarify anything you don't understand before game. Greensheets are not in-game items.

I'm not here Name badges can be turned around to say "I'm not here." You should only go not-here when directed by a mechanic–if your character is dead, going through a secret passage, invisible, or some other reason. Seeing someone who's not-here is metagame information.

Don't use anything you see while not-here in game. Players who are not-here usually put a hand on their head because it's easy to see from a distance.

Kludge Sometimes, it is just impossible to make a realistic in-game reason for why a mechanic works the way it does. Then, it's a kludge. If the GMs say "it's a kludge," what they're saying is that you shouldn't try to figure out a way to play with it based on an in-game explanation. ("But what if I get an acetyline torch and try to cut through it?" "It's a kludge." "Oh.")

Martial Attack "Martial Attack" should always be responded to with "Martial Defense." Saying "Martial Attack" is declaring that you're attacking someone. If someone attacks you, and you don't say Martial Defense quickly after, they automatically win the combat. In order to initial martial combat, you need to be in ZOC of your target.

Memory Packets Some people will have memory packets, which are small manilla envelopes or small square folded pieces of paper with stuff written on the outside. When you see/hear whatever is written on the outside, you should open the memory packet to find out what you just remembered. Your character does not know that the memory packets exist and shouldn't take action based on the fact that your player knows they exist (if you have a memory packet that says "Moby Chick" on it, you shouldn't go around trying to get people to say "Moby Chick" to you). If you see someone opening a mem packet, ignore it; your character didn't see anything.

the Metagame Technically, metagame refers to "things about the game." Metagame information is information your player has about the game that your character does not. Your character should not act on metagame information. Metagame information can vary from "oh my, the GMs all just ran off to building 36. I wonder what's happening there" to "Tom just accidentally dropped his character sheet in front of me and I saw that he's trying to destroy the world" to "hmm, Charles is a nice guy who'd never get cast as someone trying to kill me" to "look, there are Greek letters on all these signs". The term "metagaming" refers to making use of such information and should not be done. If you're playing in a familiar universe (Star Wars: The Game or Charlie Brown: The Game or something), you need to be especially careful about using the information you know from the out-of-game material.

Name Badge The name badge tells the rest of the players that you're playing the game. It usually has vital game information on it, like your name, your character's name, a description of what you look like and a badge number. You should be wearing your name badge in a visible location whenever you're playing the game.

Non-players There are lots of people around who aren't playing the game and who enjoy causing trouble when irritated. Go out of your way to avoid annoying non-players (often referred to as "NP"s). Being loud where NPs are trying to work, having conversations about killing people or sacrificing people to Cthulhu or whatnot in their hearing, and having combat near them are all sorts of things that shouldn't happen. If an NP shows up and you're doing something that shouldn't be done in front of one, call a non-player halt ("NP Halt."). Everyone within hearing should freeze. When the NP is gone, call a resume ("3-2-1 Resume."). See the rules for more details.

NPCs Non-player characters are people who are in the game world but aren't being played by a player like yourself. Sometimes they are played by GMs, sometimes by Ghosts, and sometimes

they're just a sign on the wall that reads, "There's an NPC guard here. Don't do anything he wouldn't like." They generally represent useful (to someone) people who aren't interesting enough to be real characters. Older players will sometimes refer to NPs as NPCs.

OOC Comments Players will sometimes speak out of character. It is to be avoided, but it happens. If you have to do it, you should put your hand on top of your head (to put on your "player hat") or over your badge.

Packet You should have a character packet before game starts. This packet contains your character sheet, as well as any bluesheets, greensheets, items, abilities, memory packets, etc. that you should have. This packet has what information you have about the world as well as most of your resources for accomplishing your goals. Losing it can be unfortunate. If you have questions about information that's in your packet, ask the GMs. Usually, the best way to get ahold of them before game starts is by email or by grabbing them at packet handout when you get your packet.

Plants There is sometimes a person playing a part that is in some way less than a full part. It might be a character who is pre-arranged to die on the first night or a demi-god that has very limited ability to affect the game. The difference between plants and NPCs is that players should not have any idea that the plant is a plant and not a full character. They can often affect the game more than NPCs can.

Psychlims Psychlims (Psychological Limitations) are limits on the behaviour of your character. They are usually stated on cards labelled "Psych Lim." Psych lims are things like, "Honest: You do not lie," "Pacifist: You will not attack anyone," "Cthulhu Worshipper: You exist only to serve the whim of Cthulhu and to bring him into the world so that he can destroy it." The best way to handle psychlims is to roleplay them to the hilt; if you have the "Mute" psychlim, have fun grunting and holding up little signs to show people what you want to say instead of sitting in a corner and thinking about how hard this made your plot.

Physrep Physical Representation. The real-world object that represents something in the game world. Disc guns are common phys reps for pistols. Boffers are cylindrical pieces of foam that represent melee weapons. Foam pellets (boffers chopped into inch wide pieces), ping pong balls, and spell packets (pieces of fabric tied around beans, rice, or other fabric) often represent grenades or magic.

Reality Warp A nasty event usually caused by a GM or player error. Some game event is retroactively decreed to not have happened or to *have* happened after all. These usually create a mess and some hurt feelings, but are often unavoidable.

Scenario The scenario is general information that everyone in game knows. (Welcome to Berlin 1941. There are Nazis!) This information is certainly incomplete and may even be just plain wrong.

Searching In order to search someone, say "I search you" while in ZOC. If no one stops you, the player should hand you everything they're carrying. They shouldn't try to drag this out too much. The same goes for bags. If you find a bag you want to search or steal and no one is around, leave a note on it saying it was searched and go tell a GM. They will tell the player whose bag it is and get you the items.

"What do I see?" Sometimes, you'll see something and you're not quite sure what it represents in game. Asking "What do I see?" will remind the other player to let you know what your character is seeing. Asking from a safe distance is a good idea. That green headband Heather's wearing could mean she's wearing a Peace Corp uniform, but then, it could mean she's really Godzilla and will eat you if you get too close. "What do I see?" or similar questions are also useful for situations where you don't know if what you're seeing is in game. Is that a plastic disc gun, or is it a Phased Plasma Gun? You won't know until you ask, in many cases. Are those two people holding hands because their players are dating, or is it because that anti-Axis politician has been having an illicit affair with an SS assassin for the past few years, or is it because their mechanic to form an unstoppable machine meant to take out everyone on a floor requires them to hold hands while they walk down the hall?

Wrapup Wrapup, which happens right after sweep (clean-up - remember, there are signs all over campus that need to be taken down. Don't forget the discs everywhere!) for most games and the day after game end for ten-days, is where the GMs attempt to explain everything that was going on in game, how everything came about, and why you really shouldn't kill them for having written the game. Plugs (announcements of upcoming games) are made, and there's usually a dinner mob afterwards where you can finally tell everyone exactly what your character was up to, how you almost managed to ambush the pirate captain and kill him without anyone ever suspecting, or the stupid way your character died.

ZOC Your Zone of Control is the area of space that is no further away from you than your outstretched hands. In general, in order to affect a physical object (switch, knife, body) you need to be in ZOC. Two people are in ZOC of each other if they can touch each other's finger by stretching their arms towards each other. If you want to do something to someone apart from attack them, you generally need to be in ZOC of them and have them either acquiesce or be unable to resist. If you want to stop someone from doing something when they're in ZOC of you, saying "I stop you" is generally sufficient. Martial combat is a big exception.

Shadowrun A shadowrun is usually representing some kind of tricky mechanic. Like breaking into a high-security location. This often involves having the skills or RTIs to bypass traps and allow you to the prize at the end.

RTI Random Technical Item. A cool widget which may or may not be useful to someone's mechanic. It could be anything - a signet ring, a vial of blood, or even a tiny elephant that can sing showtunes.

2   So you want to play an Assassin Game

You're new. You're clueless. You know it.

The other more experienced players know it too. And guess what? They're going to lie to you, cheat you, use you, and in general take shameless advantage of you. All in the spirit of good fun, of course.

But you're going to surprise them. You're going to give as good as you get, or better. You're going to go out there and lie to them, cheat them, use them, and in general take shameless advantage of them.

And they won't be expecting it, because you're new. Give them half a chance to underestimate you, and they will. Make the most of it. It's the only advantage you've got.

Remember: You're trying to have fun. If you manage that, you've won, even if you don't accomplish a single one of your goals. Ignore anyone who tells you differently.

3   I'm a janitor who wants to take over the world?

Yes. Before you do anything else, read the rest of your packet. Finished? Now read it all again. Now that you've done that, make a list of your questions and ask the GMs. Never ask the GMs questions without reading your sheet; they gave it to you for a reason.

The best time to ask the GMs questions is at packet handout, because they're probably sitting there afterward for the express purpose of answering all your questions. If they're mobbed or you don't have time to hang around, email them. They'll usually email you back the answers, or possibly talk to you before game starts and fill you in. The worst thing to do is to wander up to them just before game start and hand them a two-page list of questions. GMs are busy people, especially when they're trying to coordinate anywhere from 15 to 80 people into a semi-coherent whole. You won't get good answers and you won't have time to absorb them, and you'll be distracting the GMs from making sure the game is ready to start. If you have to ask them questions before game, try to get there at least half an hour early. You don't want to delay game start.

Check your packet and make sure that you have everything you're supposed to and that you don't have anything extra. Sometimes sheets, cards or mem packets get stuffed in the wrong packet. There's usually a list of what you're supposed to have on the back of your character sheet.

If you can, you should memorize things like names, code phrases, passwords you're listening for, and anything else that seems important. Highlighting parts of your sheet is a good call. Still, things will come up in game that you didn't realize you needed. Keeping your sheets with you will help you out with that once-seemed-irrelevant detail.

Try to make some kind of plan to achieve your goals before game starts. If you're allowed to contact other members of groups you're part of, do so. Changing the plan is always an option - unless you don't have one.

If you have some sort of secret identity that you should be hiding - wait. This is a Guild game. Of course you have a secret identity. So come up with a cover story to hide that secret identity - before game. You don't want to stumble over your tongue when someone asks you what you're up to in the first ten minutes of game. Some characters come with a premade cover story, but the GMs will often leave it all up to you. You could just tell the truth, of course, but that's usually not the best course, and information is always the prime currency in games. It's a good idea to keep some secrets. The best lie, naturally, has some truth in it, and the most obvious one is the one you just made up.

Reread your packet a couple of days into game. You'll be amazed at how much new information you'll get out of it. If you think of more things the GMs didn't include, go ahead and ask. It's never too late.

4   Oh my god, what am I going to wear?

You can dramatically increase the amount of fun you have in a game by preparing well.

Wear comfortable shoes. If you're going to costume, that's wonderful. But you need to remember that you're going to be walking all over campus and those shoes that look so perfect might give you painful blisters that will make it difficult to crawl campus. Men's dress shoes have no traction. If it's not absolutely necessary for your costume, wear sneakers. You'll be able to walk quietly in them and they're comfortable.

Wear comfortable clothes. Again, if you're going to costume, wonderful. But try to remember that you're going to be wearing these clothes all night, and if you wear something that restricts your movement or is too warm or not warm enough, you will probably be miserable by the end of the night. Also, don't wear noisy jewelry. It could ruin your perfect ambush. Loose clothes with lots of pockets are generally a good call. You can get really good BDU vests from The Army Barracks on Newbury St. if you're willing to spend a bit of money. If you're not wearing clothing with pockets, you'll want a light bag to put ability cards, money, weapons and mem packets in.

Bring your character packet with you. You don't want to carry the whole envelope, though. It's awkward and annoying to carry around. It also makes it hard to draw a gun in case you get in trouble. Stash the contents in your various pockets. It's a good idea to have a different pocket for each category of thing, i.e, ability cards, money, mem packets. It helps to separate your in-game things (items, guns, notes) from your out-of-game things (sheets, wallet, keys) in case somebody searches you. Make sure your gun is easily drawable. The last thing you want to do is stash it in your back pocket and then discover that your jacket covers it so it's nearly impossible to get out quickly.

Your badge holder is a good place to put memory packets. If you have lots of them, you might want to write the triggers down on a sheet of paper so you don't have to remember all of them or go digging through them all the time. Ask the GMs first, though.

Bring a disc gun, a dart gun and ammo. Even if you don't start with a weapon, you might acquire one during game, and you'll need a physrep. Test them and check to see that they work. If you don't have one, you can buy one from the Guild for a couple of dollars pre-game. Lucky, because guns are very easy to lose. Make sure you label your guns with your name to decrease the chances of losing them. If you need some special type of gun, like a Laramie, the GMs will supply you with one.

You should also have an accurate watch (turn off the alarm!), your wallet, tape, a small pair of scissors, aspirin and kleenex if there is any chance you might need them, money in small amounts, a pen and small pad of paper. Tape your change together so it doesn't give you away when you're trying to sneak down the hall. Scissors are useful for lots of things, including cutting up your cards at the beginning of game. You'll want to have money for getting snacks from vending machines. Paper to write down the location of that shadowrun you have to do is almost essential, but remember that most things you write down in game become in-game items, which means that other players can take the paper you've written on away from you if they search you.

Before game: eat and go to the bathroom. The fewer distractions, the better. Load your gun and test fire it to make sure it still works and that the disks aren't jamming. Whenever you load a disc gun, make sure you're only putting discs in. T tokens and pennies will fit, but if you try and fire

them, you'll break your gun.

Don't bring a heavy bag or other things you don't want to carry all night. You can put stuff in the control room if you really need to, but there's no guarantee of anyone being there to watch it, so it can easily be stolen.

In general, pack your pockets for being out a lot later than you thought you'd be. It might be overkill, but at least you won't be at a secret meeting with hunger pains and a headache.

Show up on time. In fact, show up early. Most games can't start if everyone's not there, and you don't want to be the one holding everyone else up.

5   Whose fault is this plot, anyway?

The people who wrote the game and run it are called Gamemasters, or GMs for short. The most important thing to remember is that they're human. They make mistakes. However, they do want the game to go well and all the players to have fun. When you come out on the short end of a GM decision, remember that the GMs have more information about game as a whole and any decision that they have to make in favor of one player over another is very hard for them.

The GMs are the only people who can make final rulings on what happened to who and how in the game universe. If you need a ruling made, you'll need to find a GM. Sometimes, if you're lucky, a GM will be nearby. Other times, you'll be able to ask a ghost to go find you a GM. If you have to go fetch one yourself, please be patient. Remember, there are a lot more players than GMs, and individual GMs don't always know what's going on with all the plots in a game. If you have a character question, try to figure out which GM wrote your sheet and ask them; they'll know your character best and give you the most useful answer.

Try to know the GMs by sight. Sometimes they'll have badges that say GM or Gamemaster on them, but other times they'll only be identifiable as GMs by the smug look they're wearing as a result of players just having discovered their pet plot twist.

If you are the victim of a GM screwup, please don't take it out on them. GMing is hard, and they're not infallible. Bring it to their attention, politely, and as soon as possible after the screwup happened. If you're lucky, it won't be irreversible, and the GMs might be willing to either warp reality to fix things or make it up to you in some way. If you're not, they may not even admit it was a screwup. Let it go. Grumble under your breath and carry on as best you can. There will be other games.

6   "Well, I'm a federal agent sent to ensure your safety; there have been threats of - you're not playing, are you?"

People who aren't playing fall into two basic categories: ghosts and NPs. Ghosts wear white headbands and you don't have to stop game action around them. NPs are random non-players whose territory you may wander into in the course of game, and you need to watch what you do in their sight and hearing.

The MIT campus is full of people who are not playing the Guild game. The very first rule is not to annoy them. Don't be too noisy outside the labs where they're trying to work, don't wave guns around when they're in view, and don't talk about shootings or bombs or murders or raising Cthulu in their hearing. Don't ever engage in combat in the presence of an NP. Complaints from NPs about the Guild can get the Guild shut down, so do whatever you can to ensure they have nothing to complain about.

Ghosts are people who are not players but are still involved in the game in some way. They should be wearing white headbands. If you see a ghost who isn't wearing one, send them to the common room or control room to get one. These will probably also be people who haven't played a game before and are ghosting to find out what the Assassin's Guild is all about. Be nice to them, but if they are standing in your way, talking too loudly with other ghosts, or doing other things that annoy you, you have the right to politely ask them to leave. However, remember that these are prospective new players for the Guild. Don't scare them away. Experienced ghosts will usually stay out of your way without being asked. You can ask them for general Assassin advice and stories, and if you're nice, they're often willing to go find a GM for you if you need one.

7 Trust no one.

Game has started. What do you do now? The beginning of a game is when everyone is trying to figure out who their friends and enemies are. It's very rare that a plot doesn't have player opposition, so there will likely be at least one player who wants to stop you from accomplishing your goals. Finding out how to keep them from stopping you should be one of your priorities. Another should be figuring out what everyone else is up to and whether you can help them in return for their aid. The start of a game is all about alliances.

Even when you're sure another player has no reason to lie to you, assume he is. You're probably not telling him the whole truth about yourself; why should he be telling you the truth? Most games don't have ways to tell if someone is telling you the truth, and even when they do, those ways might not work on certain people. That said, you'll have to trust someone or you'll never get anywhere, and just because someone isn't in your sekkrit group doesn't mean they're automatically against you. Just because someone is in your sekkrit group doesn't mean they're not against you, either. Being a SWORD agent does not preclude SHIELD having sent that person in to infiltrate SWORD. And information is power. Everyone keeps some secrets.

Explore game space and keep your eyes open. If possible, explore with another character you trust or with a group of people. Going off on your own means you can find lots of neat stuff and not have to share it, but it can also get you killed very easily if you wander into the wrong player at the wrong time and in the wrong place. Large, randomly formed mobs, especially early in game, aren't likely to get you killed, even when they include someone who wants to gun you down. As long as the rest of the mob doesn't also want to kill you, your enemy won't have a chance of doing it without attracting attention that will get them killed as well. On the other hand, don't go off alone with someone you don't know you can trust. If you do, it's a good idea to tell everyone else "I'm going to go talk to this person. If I don't come back, they killed me." If they do kill you, someone might remember and go after them. Don't think that they won't kill you just because you don't think they have a reason to. Even discounting in-game reasons you might not know about, they could be after you because someone else lied and told them you have the family heirloom

they're looking for.

By the middle of a game, people become much more reticent about talking to characters they haven't established can help them. Making yourself as useful as possible to the widest range of people you can early on will ensure that you have lots of resources to draw on later. This will also give you information on a bunch of other plots. For example, you might be able to stop that nice old lady trying to speak with her dead husband beyond the grave when you find out that she's actually trying to raise a horde of zombies under his control so she can kill the mayor.

Playing well is a balancing act that takes practice. You shouldn't trust anyone, but you'll have to trust someone at some point. You shouldn't give away any information, but at some point you'll have to if you want to get any information back. Don't be embarrassed if you make mistakes. Learn from them, and use your experience on the next new player you encounter.

8   Finding the seven virgins you need to finish your research and raise Cthulu

So you've survived the first couple of days (or hours) of game. You're starting to get somewhere with your plots. You think you know who you can trust and who's out to get you. Even so, never assume you're safe going off with someone just because you can't think of any reason they'd want to kill you. The other person could easily have reasons you don't know about, ranging from "I'm a psychokiller out to kill everything that moves" to "That guy over there told me you were a bad guy out to destroy the world" to "You wouldn't sell me the Puce Frazbobble, so I have to kill you to get it."

On the other hand, the shoot-first-in-defense approach probably isn't the best choice. You shouldn't be killing randomly, unless that's your game goal. It's very easy to do more harm than good this way. "Oops...I just killed the only guy left who knew how to fix the nuclear reactor, so now we're all going to go splodey..." It's also dangerous to your character; if the other players decide you're a loose cannon, one of them may decide to get rid of you as a public service. But don't hesitate to kill when you need to! Just try to plan it ahead of time and always have an excuse ready in case you get caught. "She attacked me!" is usually worth a shot (especially if it's true!), although if you shot the other player in the back, no one will believe you.

Remember to search bodies, even if you didn't create them. You never know what interesting items they might have–a better weapon than you, money, or just the special item you need to do your ritual.

Don't carry all your important items with you! Find some nice secret places and hide the stuff you don't need right then. That way, if you get mugged or arrested, you'll still have some of your possessions, even if what you had on you got stolen or confiscated. But make sure you remember where you stashed, and remember that if someone else finds your stash or finds out where it is, there's nothing to stop them from taking it. If you write down stash locations, that paper becomes an in-game item, and other players can take it from you.

Play your character. Pay particular attention to playing your character's psychological traits. Have fun, and don't be afraid to look a little silly (or even a lot silly, if the character calls for it.) Don't be afraid to embellish and develop your character, but if you're making "checkable" facts, let the

GMs know.

Play fair. Guild games run on an honor system. Sometimes, it's very easy to cheat and get away with it. Don't do it. If the argument that "Winning by cheating isn't winning at all" doesn't sway you, keep this in mind: you will get caught, eventually. And once you get a reputation for cheating, no one will want to cast you, no one will want to team with you, and you won't be able to play at all anymore. It's just not worth it.

That said, there's no reason you can't look for loopholes in the rules. Just make sure that the GMs don't object. If you find an original way to accomplish your plot (like hiding a body at the end of a shadowrun), they probably won't stop you. They want their game to go well.

Remember, assassins are people, too! They get stressed as game goes on and they're not getting their plot done fast enough, and stress turns the most amiable player into an overirritable minion of hell. Remember that in dealing with other players, and try not to let things get to you.

Even if the situation looks hopeless, don't give up. Keep trying; something may turn up, or the situation may not be as hopeless as it appears. A lot of players have kicked themselves for giving up too soon or too easily when victory was in their grasp; a lot of players have also wrenched victory from the jaws of defeat through clever play or just good old-fashioned luck. Remember, there's always a lot you don't know about what's really going on.

9   *clickclickclick* "Shit, I'm out of ammo!"

Combat is probably some of the most adrenaline-filled time you'll get in a game. Most people aren't conditioned to react quickly the first time they get into a combat situation. You can remedy this by practicing the hand to hand combat rules with someone else before game. If you get used to saying "Martial Defense" when someone says "Martial Attack" instead of "...what?", you'll have a significantly better chance at surviving when someone attacks you.

Even experienced players sometimes go "...what?". Always try to surprise the enemy, and stay alert so that other players can't do the same to you. Use a gun if you don't think your stats are better than theirs, but don't get too close - within ZOC (five feet or so), disarms and martial combat can be used. Also, if you're using an attack that simply renders someone unconscious for some length of time, you should pay close attention to the time, and tie them up if you're not going to kill them right away. They'll be timing by the second so that when the period is up, they can leap up, shoot you, and escape.

Make sure your gun is loaded. Testfire it before game starts and make sure you have a good sense of how it shoots. You can compensate for a flaw like "always fires slightly to the right", but not if you don't know about it. And you don't want to run out of ammo in the middle of a firefight.

Many people have hard-wired defensive moves. If something sudden happens, they go for cover. Doing something stupid around them or trying to shoot or attack them usually won't get you shot. Others have hard-wired offensive moves. If something sudden happens, they have their guns out and ready reflexively. Attacking them is extremely likely to prove fatal if you don't succeed.

Acting combat-heavy can often get you out of a tight situation - people will tend to not try to attack you without backup. Therefore, you are less likely to be attacked, because it is fundamentally

harder to coordinate a multi-person ambush than a single-person one. On the other hand, the odds of you surviving said ambush are greatly decreased, and quite likely zero unless you pull something devious and escape or actually are as combat-heavy as you pretend. On the other hand, acting combat-squishy will make it easier for you to convince people to walk down dark alleys alone with you, and people are less likely to perceive you as a direct threat, but they will be less hesitant to attack you.

Never drop a gun unless you feel like being used for target practice. The distinctive clatter guarantees that everyone else will have their guns drawn and pointing at the person who dropped it.

Don't do anything dangerous to yourself or others. It's easy to get carried away when you're getting into the game action and the adrenaline starts pumping. Don't run or jump down staircases. Be careful when diving under desks to avoid gunfire. Don't ever strike or touch another player in a violent manner. Don't snatch items out of other players' hands or try to rip guns or boffers from their grip. Don't ever hit another player with anything other than a soft foam boffer, foam pellet, or other approved simulated weapon.

10   Kill! Kill! Kill!

Sometimes you'll realize that you need to kill someone in a game. Often this is your time to shine and prove yourself as an Assassin.

The best way to kill someone is from behind, so that if they get resurrected, they don't know who did it. Even if the game doesn't have a resurrection mechanic, ambushing someone in an out-of-the-way spot is a much better strategy than walking into the common room and pulling out a gun.

How do you get them alone so that noone will notice? This is a point that is often discussed. Sometimes just figuring out the general path a particular person takes is sufficient. If you know that they always go into the tunnels at a particular place at a particular time, then it's a good place to stake out. A tactic that some people use is to notice when someone is walking down a hallway, then go up a down or floor and sprint to their endpoint and waste them there.

If you can do it, having allies help is the best way to ensure that your target does not turn the tables. Plan your tactics and make sure everyone in your group knows exactly what the plan is. Beware of having too many people involved, as that makes it harder to deploy when the time is right.

The choice of time is important. Late at night fewer NPs will be wandering around. Also, many people's reflexes will get slower as the evening goes on. But remember that this can go both ways. You will also be more likely to drop you gun, get dstracted, or make noise.

Make sure that your gun works, and will work even if you draw it quickly. Many people have failed because their gun jammed at an inappropriate moment. You might want to make or purchas a holstering mechanism that allows you to conceal the gun but also get at it quickly. Practicing drawing and firing smoothly often helps. Speed is useful, but reliability is more useful.

Joe recommends talking to the target both before, during, and after you execute them. This often

gets them off-guard, much like some people have trouble chewing gum and walking at the same time. Most people become suspicious when there is silence. Don't let them get to that point.

Have a disposal plan. What are you going to do once you've shot them. Are you planning on taking them to a room, fixing them up, and interrogating them? Make sure you know what rooms are nearby, or it's not going to work. Depending upon what the rules of the game are later, you may have a preferred place to dispose of the body.

11 "shhh! They'll hear us!"

Watch out for the huge floor-to-ceiling glass walls and other reflective or transparent surfaces around campus. Your victim won't walk into your ambush if he can see you. They're useful to check out areas when you think *you* might be walking into an ambush, though.

If you're trying to listen in on secret meetings, try the windows. People rarely check windows when they're looking for eavesdroppers. In summer, the windows will frequently be open, making it even easier to hear. This option will be much less attractive in the winter, though.

If you're allowed to use elevators in game, don't. They're death boxes. They ding when they arrive on a floor, and if there's anyone there who doesn't want you dropping in on them, you're a sitting duck. If you're having a secret meeting near an elevator and it dings, be prepared to have a player walk out, but don't shoot any NPs by accident!

Make sure you know what doors physplant is leaving unlocked. You don't want to flee across Killian Court to lobby 10 only to find that you're trapped against a door that won't open by the Russian agents pursuing you.

12 "Your head explodes in a shower of red gore."

Many rules of the game can be superseded by special abilities. If you see someone doing something that you think is against the rules, for example, going through a door that has a "This Door Does Not Exist" sign on it, you should politely ask them if they are aware that they are breaking a rule. Don't just start yelling at them – you'll feel foolish when they pull out their ability card.

If you see something that you think is in-game but looks odd, feel free to ask the player "What do I see?" If someone's badge is not visible, ask them to show it to you. If you can't tell the color of their headband from across the room, ask. If you see someone you know is a player carrying a large stuffed animal, ask him what it is you're really seeing. It could be a large stuffed animal–or it could be a body. This is also what you should do if you see a player holding a weird looking toy weapon or some kind of throwable in his or her hand – "What do I see?" Alternately, if you see a player holding something that might be dangerous (toy guns of any sort and most throwables fall into this category), and you don't want to stick around to find out what it is, you can leave the area and later ask a GM, "I saw Jerry carrying around a patrol gun with blue tape on the barrel – what did I see?" The answer might be "His hand was crackling with blue lightning," or it might be "Uhh...you saw a patrol gun with blue tape on it. I have no idea why he put blue tape on it."

Don't mix up the game and real life. It's okay to walk off with someone's item cards if they leave

them lying around. It is not okay to walk off with someone's backpack. Don't ever think you can get away with breaking real laws in the name of game play. If you want to do something like walk off with someone's backpack, there are ways to simulate that in the rules. Follow them. If you do something illegal, neither the Guild nor the GMs will protect you in any way.

13   In conclusion...

Play safe and play fair. Don't annoy the NPs, but try to stay in character and interact with other characters. Remember your goals. Be polite and patient with the GMs–after all, they put a lot of work in so you could play the game–but don't be afraid to ask for help or argue your case with them, within reason, of course.

Most of all, remember that the point of the game is for everyone to have as much fun as possible.

14   Acknowledgements

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