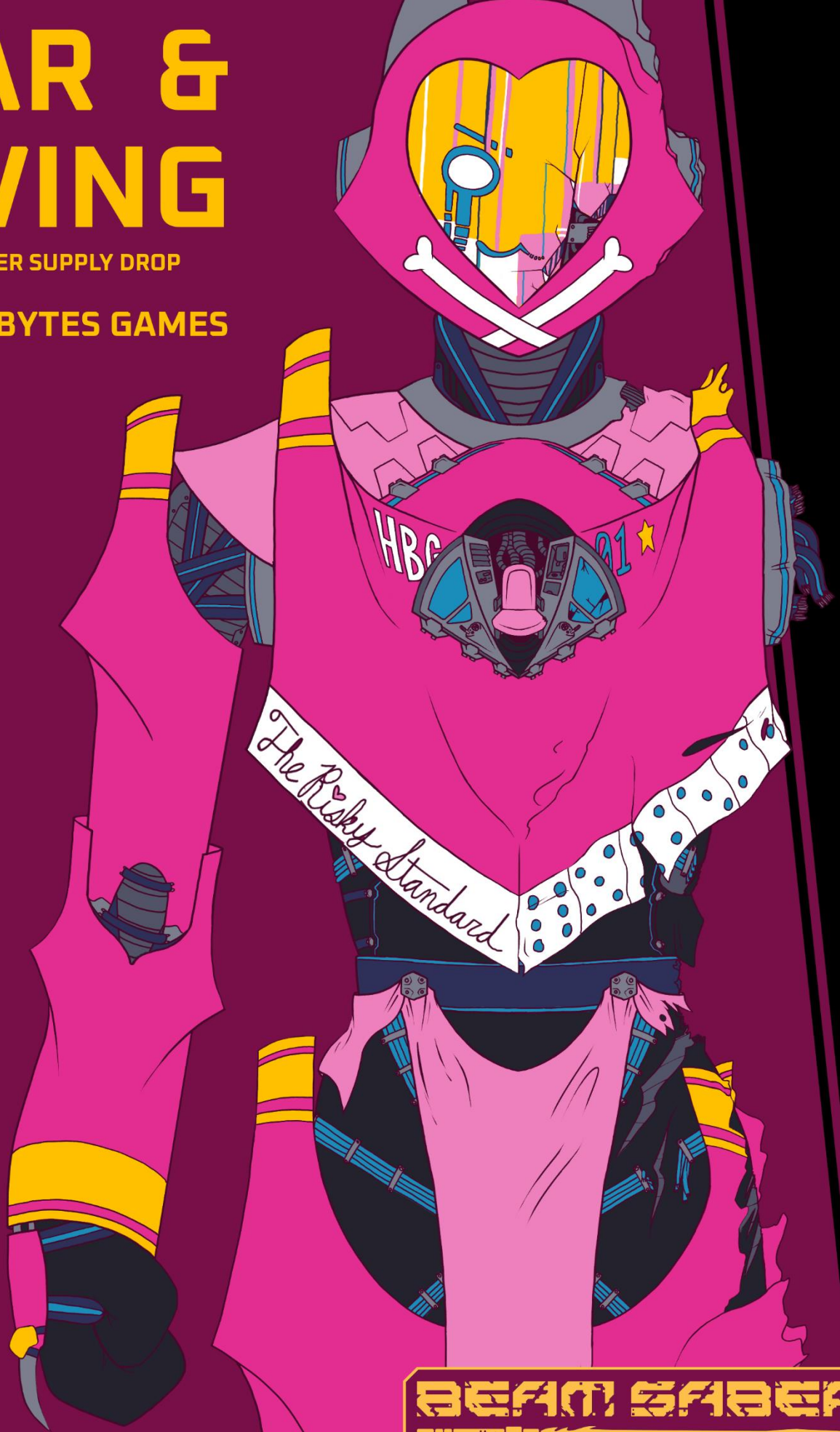


FEAR & LOVING

A BEAM SABER SUPPLY DROP

FROM HELLABYTES GAMES



BEAM SABER

SUPPLY DROP

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CREDITS & LEGAL STUFF

Fear & Loving is written and illustrated by **Saturn**, who can be found at @celestialmecha on Twitter. This is a **Hellabytes Games** project, which can be located at hellabytes.net and hellabytes.itch.io. You can listen to me GM *Beam Saber* on the podcast **Big Gay Nerds**, at soundcloud.com/biggaynerds.

This is a supplement for *Beam Saber*, a game by **Austin Ramsay**. *Beam Saber* is a Forged In The Dark game, using gameplay systems coined by *Blades In The Dark*, a game by **John Harper**. The form-fillable character sheets linked on PG.4 were made using a blank template created by **Erik Rådman** for use with *Beam Saber*.

Special thanks to **Juliet Louis** for helping refine these playbooks. Their writing and games can be found at mousewifegames.itch.io.

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Beam Saber, and by extension, *Fear & Loving*, is based on *Blades in the Dark* (found at bladesinthedark.com), product of One Seven Design, developed and authored by **John Harper**, and licensed for our use under the **Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license**. (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)

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INTRODUCTION

Fear & Loving contains 3 Pilot playbooks. These are:

- **THE ANGEL**, *a playful and rebellious fuck-up, who opens up to the enemy.*
- **THE DARLINGS**, *an energetic and unbreakable duo, who leave a wake of destruction.*
- **THE WITCH**, *a cryptic and powerful messenger, who draws on strange and terrible power.*

The pilot playbooks play with ideas of romance, tenderness, possibility, uncertainty -- “fear and loving”, to wit. They are designed to explore the relationship between pilot and pilot, as well as the relationship between pilots and their vehicles; bonds that reify us, and in some cases, bonds that terrify us. Each is accompanied by a driving anxiety, too: vulnerability, codependence, submission.

Beam Saber playbooks are often defined more by their literal capabilities than specific character traits -- a functional approach, but one sometimes lacking in flair. Conversely, playbooks based on a specific character “arc” can often end up feeling prescriptive and limited, like they’re telling you what’s gonna happen before it happens. My intent with *Fear & Loving* is to land somewhere in between: providing the framework to make a character concept shine without actually telling you what to do with it.

PILOT PLAYBOOKS

FORM-FILLABLE SHEETS

You can find form-fillable sheets for the playbooks in this supplement at docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FXPzjAdUTpw4BF-MsscqOod9XRRrGCkS3_lug1B19Ro/. To use it, simply right-click the name of the playbook you want to use and copy it to a new Google Sheet. *Voila!* (You can also just make a copy of the whole thing in the File options if you want.)

IF IN DOUBT...

The rules stretch as far as the fiction allows. If you're not sure if a special ability or playbook feature *should* allow this or that use-case, ask: would it make sense for the story we've portrayed through the game thus far? If so, it's probably cool.

Some of the playbooks in *Fear & Loving* might intersect with the core rules in unusual ways. While I've put effort into making sure nothing *contradicts* the rules-as-written, it's entirely likely you'll run into conflicts or points of uncertainty. You are encouraged to figure out what works for your table. (And tell me about it after, if you want!)

BEFORE YOU PLAY

Some of the playbooks in this supplement are built, implicitly, to tackle potentially uncomfortable themes. If you end up wanting to use one of these playbooks in your game, I'd encourage you to check its subheading in the **Table Safety** section at the end of the supplement. If I missed something in my own write-up that you think would be prudent to include, please let me know!



THE ANGEL

THE ANGEL

We'll all make it out of this alive if you have anything to say about it.

“War is hell” is a played-out aphorism. Like, *sure* -- The War is blood, and bullets, and explosions, and hunger, pox, ruin, rot, ravage, and the utterly inexorable encroach of Death. But “hell” is an inescapable thing, with no place for joy, love, or *any* warmth that isn’t the purgative fire. *And that’s not true!* This horrorshow of ours is not so absolute nor so forever as hell. Even if it’s only me, with my ephemeral thrills and impossible dreams, I *will* prove that heaven is within our grasp.

What joy compels you to fight? How do you defy your superiors’ expectations?

CONTENT WARNINGS: Willfully self-destructive behavior; drugs.

CHOOSE THE ANGEL IF YOU WANT TO...

- Play with your Rival (and make it high-stakes).
- Make problems. Or make them worse by trying to fix them.
- Find out if love can bloom on the battlefield.

TOUCHSTONES

Kaworu Nagisa (*Neon Genesis Evangelion*), Anemone (*Eureka Seven*), Saturn (*Heaven Will Be Mine*), Mikazuki August (*Iron Blooded Orphans*), EVA (*Metal Gear Solid 3*), Big Boss (specifically, *Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker*), Mercy (*Overwatch*), Spike Spiegel (*Cowboy Bebop*).

PLAYING THE ANGEL

You might play The Angel as a flirty burn-out, a charming stranger, a feisty brat, a good-hearted grunt, or something else entirely. The playbook encourages you to open yourself to threats, fuck around and find out, and turn suffering into love (to quote Worst Girls’ *Heaven Will Be Mine*). Also, did I mention your rival? This playbook encourages you to mess with your rival very aggressively.

XP TRIGGER

The Angel earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with *Compassion* or *Vulnerability*.

ANGEL ACTIONS

+2 Battle, +1 Sway

ANGEL SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Light “Uniform”** [Load 0 if worn, Load 1 if carried as a secondary outfit]: An attention-getting get-up that’s easy to get in and out of.
- **Angel’s Grace** [Load 1]: 2 uses. A dangerous cocktail of painkillers, palliatives, and stimulants. Use allows the recipient to ignore mechanical penalties for Harm (including death, if recent) for a couple minutes. When it wears off, they take the Level 3 Harm “Crash”.
- **CUPID 1-shot Vehicle Grappler** [Load 2]: An anti-vehicle harpoon launcher that causes momentary system disruption. Retracting the harpoon while it’s connected will “pull you towards it at unsafe speeds”, which the instruction booklet “warns against”.
- **Fine Unusual Weapon** [Load 1]: A capture-whip, or a glue-web shooter, or rubber bolas, or something like that. A tool for tying someone up, or putting them down gently.
- **Your Custom Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It’s represented by the vehicle entry on your pilot sheet.

ANGEL SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Cozy Cockpit** [Load 0]: As much a home as anything else -- which is to say, there’s a coffee machine and a personal computer. Plus, the pilot chair reclines!
- **“Recently Played With” User Lookup** [Load 0]: A social app that remembers the encrypted comm-IDs of every vehicle you’ve crossed blades with (literally or figuratively).
- **Fine Melee Weapon** [Load 1]: Disruptor claws, or a photonic partizan, or something like that.
- **Gravitic Override Device** [Load 2]: “GOD” manipulates local relativity to allow a vehicle to maneuver in exotic environs (like space, or the deep sea) with unparalleled speed and grace -- and it doubles as a conventional Mobility Suite, too. It is, however, exceptionally delicate.
- **Fine Forcefield** [Load 1]: A defensive field generator capable of blocking not only weapons fire, but digital transmissions, psionic effects, or other ‘ambient’ dangers. Like bulletproof glass, it’s not designed to withstand continued bombardment.

ANGEL ABILITIES

- **Absolute Terror** *When creating The Angel, take this ability and no others.* Whenever you fill your rival's connection clock, tick your Drive Clock. You always have improved effect when taking Desperate Actions against your rival. When you spend a Drive Clock to help someone else, take 1 XP.
- **Button Mashing:** When you Sway or Battle your rival, take +1d. If you suffer Risky or Desperate consequences from the action and resist none of them, recover 1 stress.
- **Love Bites:** Permanently fill a Stress box for each Rival you currently have (normally, 1). Whenever you suffer consequences from a Rival Move, you can immediately take a Flashback affecting that Rival for free.
- **Reach Out & Touch Faith:** You can tend to wounds and other ails like a Doctor, but you roll your Connection with the patient instead of an action rating. *(Roll 0d to treat yourself.)* You may spend Spark to negate a Rival Move, or to immediately fill someone else's Healing Clock.
- **The Devil Makes Three:** You can have two rivals at once. When the fiction would allow it, you can spend your once-per-session ability to declare a contact to instead declare that one of your Rivals is present.
- **I Was Born To Meet You:** Add +1d to Engagement rolls on missions if you know your rival will be present. When you gather information about your Rival, you can forego rolling and automatically succeed like you rolled 6 -- your rival gets a free extra Rival Action instead.
- **Foes With Benefits:** During a mission, if you unambiguously help your Rival achieve one of their goals, take a free Long Term Project action during the next Downtime phase.
- **I Have Never Betrayed Anyone In My Entire Life:** When you take action that would intentionally violate a Rule Of Engagement or advance your Rival's goals, you can Push Yourself for free. After a mission, if your squad loses Trust with its employer overall, recover as much Stress.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What do I have that they need?
- What would they do to get [X]?
- Who's the most dangerous here?

- Why do they want [X]?
- Where am I most vulnerable?
- Where are they most vulnerable?
- How can I push their buttons?

EXAMPLE STARTING ANGEL BELIEFS

- They could do to be a little less buttoned-up. Maybe I can help?
- They think they're so cool! And the worst part is: *they are* so cool!
- They've got a tough shell, but I bet *they're* soft inside.
- They don't really 'get' me, but hey: it's mutual.

EXAMPLE ANGEL ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Cassini, a feisty delinquent
- Heliopause, a kindhearted revolutionary
- Anderson Council, an aloof veteran
- Perigee, a world-weary mentor

EXAMPLE ANGEL BUILDS

- **Lifesaver:** Reach Out & Touch Faith, Engineer +2, Wreck +1, Finesse +1
- **Unholy Trinity:** The Devil Makes Three, Sway +1, Maneuver +2, Manipulate +1
- **Thirst Follower:** I Was Born To Meet You, Study +2, Survey +2
- **Judas:** Foes With Benefits, Consort +2, Interface +2



THE DARLINGS

THE DARLINGS

It takes two to tango, and baby, The War is our dance floor.

Nuclear fusion: the hydrogen wedding! A calamitous rupture of such enormity you need to set off a fission reaction *first*, just to light the *wick*. Fusion, fission -- coming together, coming apart. The War threatened to separate us, to break us, to *boil us down* into something incandescent and insubstantial. While others *melt* in its blood-soaked gunsmoke, we are forged ever stronger! We will fight fire with *fire*, and we will *still* be burning bright when everything else has turned to ash.

How did you come together? Is your relationship platonic, romantic, or something else? Is your relationship symmetrical?

CONTENT WARNINGS: Open-ended / non-exclusive relationships; tracking devices.

CHOOSE THE DARLINGS IF YOU WANT TO...

- Play two (or more) entwined characters.
- Draw strength from your relationship.
- Destroy anything that would come between you.

TOUCHSTONES

016 & 002 (*Darling in the Franxx*), Raleigh & Mako (*Pacific Rim*), Renton & Eureka (*Eureka Seven*), Episode 09 of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, Project C (*100ft Robot Golf*), Amethyst-84 & Amethyst-33 (*Land of the Lustrous*), Denji & Power (*Chainsaw Man*).

PLAYING THE DARLINGS

You might play The Darlings as star-crossed lovers or the very best friends, a single consciousness shared between multiple bodies, eerie twins or identical clones, perfectly synchronized total opposites, or something else entirely. The playbook encourages you to stretch the limits of your bond, to open your love to others, and to find strength in completion.

XP TRIGGER

The Darlings earn end of session XP when they address a challenge with *Coordination* or *Mayhem*.

DARLINGS ACTIONS

+2 Destroy, +1 Command

DARLINGS SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Paired Style** [Load 0]: A detail, accessory, article of clothing, or outfit that makes it clear your Darlings are some number of peas in a pod.
- **MAG-NET Local Positioning System** [Load 1]: Paired collars that can track each other's positions. They have an effective range of a few miles, but become less accurate over distance, and are susceptible to interference.
- **Redundant Gear** [Load 1 each]: Mark 1 Load to duplicate a previously marked Gear item for one of your Darlings. (*You usually only need to do this if a Darling is acting independently.*)
- **A Mundane Nicety** [Load 1]: A common convenience, a simple pleasure, or a small gift -- an utterly unassuming icebreaker, or an inexpensive (and limited) bribe.
- **Your Custom Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the vehicle entry on your pilot sheet.

DARLINGS SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Tandem Cockpit(s)** [Load 0]: The vehicle's main control system, requiring (at least) two pilots to operate. There's not much room for anything but the pilots.
- **Fine Choreography Program** [Load 1]: A complex digital system that makes it easier to synchronize or coordinate actions across connected vehicles.
- **A Devastating Energy Weapon** [Load 2]: A climactically destructive chromatic beam weapon without equal. Requires multiple pilots to operate. There's a charge-up before firing, and a long refractory period afterward -- it's hard to use against fast-moving targets.
- **Prosthetic Operator Plug** [Load 1]: The "PrOp" Plug allows a Darling to control their vehicle without their counterpart. This control is less effective, and prolonged use is dangerous.
- **Neural Network** [Load 0]: Partially decentralized core systems that are resistant to conventional hacking methods.

DARLINGS ABILITIES

- **Twain:** *When creating The Darlings, take this ability and one other.* You are a pair of pilots, sharing a Custom Vehicle designed for tandem operation. You both count as the same character for any mechanics that would target one (Consequences, Cutting Loose, so on.) Your Darlings take -1d to rolls when acting independently of one another.
- **Polycule:** You've picked up another Darling. Add their name, callsign, look and so on to your sheet. When all your Darlings are together, you're a small gang.
- **Open System:** Take +1d when Commanding a Cohort. When you spend a downtime action to Recover from Harm, you can roll Recovery for a cohort as well.
- **Multi Track Drift Compatibility:** Your Darlings are always aware of what the other(s) are thinking, feeling, or sensing. When you spend Stress to assist a teammate, you can temporarily extend this bond to them.
- **Covalent:** You may spend Spark to assist a teammate without spending Stress, or to resist consequences when your Darlings are acting independently.
- **When Doves Cry:** When you take a Dire Action as a pilot, you can continue to act on a 4-6 (instead of just on 6s). Take a bonus die to Dire Actions for each Scar you have until you stop taking Dire Actions.
- **Legendary Defenders:** Your Custom Vehicle is capable of splitting into some number of autonomous parts. Your vehicle Load limit is split approximately evenly between the pieces. This allows your Darlings to act independently with vehicle actions.
- **Dirty Pair:** Take +1d to Destroy and Wreck when your Darlings are together. After a mission, if you would lose Trust from your employer for causing unwarranted collateral damage, you can spend Stress 1-to-1 to negate it.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- How can we make them [X]?
- What's the best way to break through?
- What do they intend to do?
- Who here seems cooperative?
- How can we find [X]?
- What here is fragile?

- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING DARLINGS BELIEFS

- They wanna do everything themself. Not if we have a say!
- Us and **them** together would make an unstoppable team!
- They wouldn't know 'a good time' if it flipped their vehicle over.
- They're jealous of what we have.

EXAMPLE DARLINGS ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Rotterdam, a gallant captain
- Victoire, an overworked officer
- Jaguar, a wily scientist
- Abe, a seedy politician

EXAMPLE DARLINGS BUILDS

- **Red & Blue:** Legendary Defenders, +2 Battle, +1 Maneuver, +1 Bombard
- **Triple Threat:** Polycule, +1 Struggle, +2 Wreck, +1 Finesse
- **Party People:** Open System, +2 Sway, +1 Command, +1 Consort
- **Hivemind:** Multi Track Drift Compatibility, +1 Interface, +1 Study, +1 Survey, +1 Scan



THE WITCH

THE WITCH

You hold a burning light in your hands, and it casts a long cold shadow.

The most basic existential state is *parasitism*. Sometimes mutual, mostly asymmetric. Our purpose in The War is to serve our masters and champion their interests; if we are 'good soldiers', they will protect us in kind. Perhaps your master is the crown, or the council, or the cartel, or the clergy. Perhaps you submit to the will of mindless subsistence -- claiming no master but your own need to survive. Either way: *all* of us wear leashes. I can *touch* what is holding mine. Can you?

How did you become The Vehicle's pilot? Does it speak to you? Why do you serve it?

CONTENT WARNINGS: Abuse from / exploitation by an authority figure; non-reciprocal violence.

CHOOSE THE WITCH IF YOU WANT TO...

- Attain great power at grave cost
- Play with the more mysterious aspects of the setting
- Bring magic to a world without it (or something alien to a world with it)

TOUCHSTONES

The Witch in Glass and Perennial (*Friends at the Table: PARTIZAN*), The Guardian, The Ghost, & The Traveler (*Destiny*), Emet-Selch and Zodiark (*Final Fantasy XIV*), Warlocks (*Dungeons & Dragons*), Mae and The Entity (*Lies Beneath*).

PLAYING THE WITCH

You might play The Witch as a grim oracle or a wizened wizard; perhaps someone cursed and confused or simply reckless and inquisitive. You might be a priest, or an avatar, or Chosen... or, simply, in the wrong place at the wrong time. Either way, you wield powers not entirely within the realm of your understanding, at the behest of an entity that is still further beyond.

XP TRIGGER

The Witch earns end of session XP when they *fulfill The Vehicle's will* or address a challenge with *Transgression*.

WITCH ACTIONS

+2 Interface, +1 Engineer

WITCH SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **FamiliAR** [Load 0]: An entity that serves as your connection to The Vehicle when you are apart from it. Has some simple programs. May or may not be sapient.
- **Repository Fork** [Load 2]: A staff imbued with specialized programs and data-stores for attacking, repelling, or capturing AR entities. Sturdy enough to be used as a polearm.
- **A Fine Ritual Blade** [Load 1]: An unusual knife of dubious significance. Its wickedly sharp cutting edge is also an AR interface that can collect or inject data.
- **Distinctive Ornamentation** [Load 0]: A big hat, mysterious orb, supernatural physical feature, or surreal aura that identifies you, unmistakably, as The Witch.
- **The Vehicle** [Load 0]: The Vehicle is suitable to your needs, and you to its. It is represented by The Vehicle entry on your pilot sheet.

WITCH SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine Anti-Infantry Defenses** [Load 1]: An indiscriminate near-proximity emission weapon, like myriad needles or hard-light dust or anathema radiation. Ruins flesh and light objects with horrific ease.
- **Transverse Passenger Space** [Load 1]: The Vehicle has an interior space capable of supporting several passengers, as well as an isolated AR environment. The two functions may or may not be distinct.
- **Reality Augmentor** [Load 2]: A subtle toolset capable of modifying large objects and AR objects. Causes the boundaries between the two to thin and blur.
- **Cause-Effect Denial Armor** [Load 3]: "It just works." Inexplicable defenses that utterly nullify an instance of incoming Damage. Refreshes between missions, but only if you completed your Covenant objective.

WITCH ABILITIES

- **Covenant:** *When creating The Witch, take this ability and no others.* The Vehicle imbues you with strange power... at a cost. Once per mission, at any point, the GM privately gives you an additional Objective. If you fulfill it, after the mission The Vehicle fills its Repair clock and ticks Enhancement once. If you fail, take the Level 3 Harm "Useless", which can be resisted as normal. If The Vehicle is ever destroyed or retired, you are too.
- **Koschei's Needle:** Whenever you take Level 4 Harm, or The Vehicle takes Level 4 Damage, instead of dying or being destroyed, you and The Vehicle immediately exit the mission. After the mission, lose 2 Reputation and roll an additional entanglement.
- **Blood Drinker:** In Downtime (or when you'd have time to rest), you can erase your own Harm(s) by inflicting equivalent Harm(s) on someone either willing or helpless.
- **Magic Missile:** You can produce energy as a pilot-scale weapon. Spend at least 1 Stress to do so, and then 1-for-1 for additional features: *it travels far and fast -- it explodes on impact -- it homes to its target -- it disrupts technology -- it's less-than lethal -- you can exclude something (specifically or categorically) from its effects.*
- **Incantation:** You can spend Spark in place of Stress to activate apps, or to resist consequences from AR entities.
- **Cauldron:** Take +1d to Manufacture during Downtime. You can spend Quirks 1-for-1 to substitute Materiel when improving the quality of a creation.
- **Necronomicon:** Take +1d to Gather Information on AR entities or AR anomalies. When you complete The Vehicle's objective, you can choose for it to give you a Primordial Code for app development instead of the usual reward.
- **Faustian Pact:** If you roll less than a 4 on a pilot action, you can immediately take the Harm "Overdrawn" to increase the result. Take a Level 1 Harm to increase it to 4-5, Level 2 for 6, or Level 3 for Critical Success. This Harm cannot be resisted.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What's really going on here?
- How close does danger lurk?

- What is the AR capable of here?
- Who is holding their leash?
- What do they want?
- What here hides secrets?
- What would The Vehicle have me do?

EXAMPLE STARTING WITCH BELIEFS

- They stand to benefit from my favor, which must be why they seek it.
- They were built from the ground up to be a nuisance to me specifically.
- They are dependable and resilient... perhaps, a good assistant...?
- The Vehicle does not trust *them*. Nor do I.

EXAMPLE WITCH ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Noña, a resourceful crook
- Armitage, a beleaguered researcher
- Mare, an ominous hermit
- Grasp, a kismet stranger

EXAMPLE WITCH BUILDS

- **Vampire:** Blood Drinker, +1 Study, +1 Survey, +2 Consort
- **Sorcerer:** Magic Missile, +2 Finesse, +2 Wreck
- **Manhattan Project:** Cauldron, +1 Engineer, +2 Manipulate, +1 Scan
- **Ill-fated:** Necronomicon, +2 Struggle, +2 Prowl

TABLE SAFETY

Beam Saber has its own “table safety” principles. Some of these are system-agnostic practices, like Lines and Veils. *Fear & Loving*’s Table Safety section is not a replacement for these. Rather, this is additive information: an overview of some of the components of the playbooks in this supplement that might need special attention when thinking about your table’s tone.

THE ANGEL

The Angel is best described as a “good-hearted sexy disaster”. The middle word is optional. As far as some of its touchstones go: the Angel’s inherent tenderness is often accompanied by sensuality -- a gentle and loving touch as opposed to cold and distant violence. Some Angels excel at being delicate, while others struggle; regardless, if you intend to play an Angel who’s “touchy-feely” in the suggestive sense, make sure it gels with the tone at your table.

The Angel is also a self-destructive playbook, and self-destructive behaviors can have consequences for the rest of your squad too. Many of the playbook’s touchstones are sad, broken people, who plaster over their sorrows with stoic determination or devil-may-care flash. I’d advise against going too deep down this rabbit hole: the Angel doesn’t have to be an optimist *per se*, but they also wouldn’t be the way they are if they didn’t have *some* zest for living.

The *I Have Never Betrayed Anyone In My Entire Life* special ability benefits you when deliberately breaking the Rules Of Engagement. It’s worth noting, however, the Angel is meant to address problems with compassion and (their own) vulnerability. Though your table’s tone or boundaries may differ, this ability is not written to encourage deliberately endangering or hurting civilians.

The *Angel’s Grace* pilot gear is designed to help someone push through their problems without addressing them. Its given flavor hearkens to the use of highly addictive and potentially lethal medicines to help soldiers ‘soldier on’, as it were – however, the invocation of drugs may not be welcome at your table. Don’t hesitate to replace Angel’s Grace with something more technological,

magical, or anything else if you feel the need. The important principle is that, whatever Angel's Grace is, it's a temporary reprieve from problems left unsolved (and, if anything, complicated by its use).

The *Fine Unusual Weapon* pilot gear is intended to help you employ or retaliate to violence without escalating it: the examples are all weaponized physical restraints. However, an important thing to understand is that there is no such thing as a non-lethal weapon, only an infrequently-lethal one. Though you can count on your Fine Unusual Weapon to subdue your rival, this isn't a stealth or superhero video game where you can wallop someone on the head with a blunt object and then move on, resting assured that you didn't inflict lethal violence. It is not a tool, like regular handcuffs might be -- it's a weapon. You can cause injury and death if you misuse it.

THE DARLINGS

The Darlings are intended not to be just the two-or-three pilots you control, but their relationship too. Harm and Scars implicitly reflect across each of you, whether you're together or not. How that looks, and how that works, may potentially step into some dark waters: the Darlings' bond might be unbreakable, but it doesn't mean that coldness, mistrust, and abuse can't creep in.

To whatever extent your group 'discusses' Lines & Veils, it's probably a good idea to solicit your table to include any "relationship anxieties or dysfunctions" that would sour their experience. Either way, you might want to broadcast any shifts you have planned before committing to them, so other players have a chance to speak up if you're entering territory they're not comfortable with.

The *Multi Track Drift Compatibility* special ability is an implicitly psychic connection (though, depending on the fiction, might not be). Temporarily extending the bond to a teammate can step into potentially uncomfortable territory, depending on how this temporary mind-link behaves. What kind of information is exchanged, and how? Much like The Empath from *Beam Saber's* core rulebook, you are expected to be thoughtful about how you broach compromising the privacy of another character's mind. Depending on your table you may want to avoid this ability completely.

The *MAG-NET Local Positioning System* pilot gear is there to make it easier for your Darlings to find each other when separated. However, it is a physical, personal tracking device. Bluntly: it is not especially uncommon to encounter people who've had traumatic experiences relating to a loved one tracking them through GPS. Brushing against this anxiety is intentional, but you should be very mindful of how you depict this gear in your game.

The *Prosthetic Operator Plug* vehicle gear is a temporary way of allowing one Darling to pilot their vehicle without the other(s). It raises important questions, though: for one, how does it actually *replace* a Darling's piloting functions? On the other hand, why is it "dangerous" to use for a prolonged time? The PrOp Plug's primary inspiration is the "dummy system" from *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, as well as the R.A.G.E. system from the core rulebook's Ace playbook. However, in a vehicle that needs multiple pilots, who are ostensibly 'compatible' in some nebulous way, the answers to the questions this gear raises are potentially unsettling.

THE WITCH

The Witch isn't an inherently dark playbook, but it does play in some spaces well suited to darkness. The relationship between pilot and vehicle is very different than it is for a lot of other pilots: The Vehicle is not an extension of your will so much as you are an extension of its. The Vehicle imbues you with strange power, and makes demands of you in exchange -- and if you fail to live up to its wants, its scorn is heavy and sharp. It holds your leash, after all. Be sure to talk with your GM about what the relationship between your Witch and The Vehicle is like. That relationship might be *inflicted* on you as a part of consequences or drama, so it's a good idea to set expectations and boundaries ahead of time.

I'd also advise you to be mindful of some of the more 'religious' connotations of this playbook. Many of its touchstones involve someone being the servant of a deific force -- very often a literal god, but sometimes a near-deific being, like a powerful demon, or a demiurge, or an ancient entity from beyond our star. Your relationship with The Vehicle doesn't necessarily have to be a religious one --

in fact, most of its text is written assuming your relationship is primarily transactional. It *can* be religious, though; if it is, you are expected to depict that religion with the sincerity, honesty, and respect the setting demands.

The *Blood Drinker* special ability is, without question, the most sinister thing in this entire document. Its purpose and drawbacks should be obvious without my saying so. Two important things: first, its name is not necessarily literal. Harm is not necessarily physical in *Beam Saber*, so defining what “trading away harm” looks like is on you. Second: your subject can be “willing or helpless”, because the important part is that they don’t fight back -- whether it’s because they can’t fight back or because they’ve chosen not to. However, even if you *never* use Blood Drinker without negotiating consent first, the nature of the move ensures that even the most ‘considerate’ application of it will always be unsafe and self-serving. You should expect that the Lines & Veils or general tonal expectations of a lot of tables will render this option completely un-selectable.

VERSION HISTORY

Version 1.0 // 01 . JAN . 2021

- Initial release; includes The Angel, The Darlings, and The Witch.

// END OF TRANSMISSION.
