

Phanta



KEGANEXE



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By Keganexe

Thank you for supporting
Phanta! Hope you enjoy the
strange world of Eldorado
Springs, Colorado.

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What is this: *Phanta* is a tabletop RPG designed for 2-5 players, about surviving against the odds. When the meteor, Icarus, destroyed most of the earth 42 years ago, *The Children of the Flowers*, and the citizens of Eldorado Springs, Colorado, were some of the few to survive the impact. It would be a stretch to say anyone is thriving, but the meteor didn't manage to destroy all life on earth.

What do you need: To play *Phanta*, you need at least 2 six-sided dice (d6s), and 2-5 players. One player will take on the roll of the **Arbiter**, and takes on the roles of: playing as the people you come across, moving the game from scene to scene, when to roll your dice, and what happens as a result of the rolls. Each other player is a **Survivor**, who is just trying to stay alive in this new world.

Who are you: You are a survivor, one of a handful of babies born from *The Children of the Flowers*, hidden away in the virtually untouched city of Eldorado Springs, Colorado.

How to Play

During play, the Arbiter will describe what is going on in the world, and the Survivors will respond. When the Survivors do something, and failure is a possibility, or there are consequences for what they want to do, we can roll dice. Generally, we will avoid rolling dice if failure isn't both possible, and interesting to the story.

Every time you roll dice, you are rolling 2 d6s, and adding their total together to see what happens. If you have training in a skill you're making a roll for, roll 3 d6s, and take the highest total between 2 of them instead. If you have a choice (such as between Success with a Minor Consequence, or Failure) it is up to the Survivor to decide.

- **2:** Failure with a Major Consequence or Minor Injury
- **3 - 5:** Failure with a Minor Consequence
- **6 - 8:** Success with a Minor Consequence, or Failure
- **9 - 11:** Success
- **12:** Success with a Boon

Minor Consequences:

When a Survivor rolls a Minor Consequence, they gain either a Mental, or a Physical Stress. Survivors can take differing amounts of Stress depending on who they are, but the Arbiter will decide exactly what sort of stress you take when you do. For example, Rain is trying to use some old technology, they make a tech roll and score a 6. They can either either succeed, but take some stress, or they can chose to fail to make the tech work, taking no stress instead. They choose to take a Minor Consequence, and the Arbiter decides that the tech is being unusually stubborn, and because of that it stresses Rain out, so they take a Mental Stress.

Major Consequences:

When a Survivor rolls a Major Consequence, something bad generally happens in the story, or the Survivor becomes injured. Choosing between a Major Consequence and an Injury is the Survivors choice. For example, Skyler is trying to hide from an unknown enemy in an abandoned house. They make a roll using their stealth, and score a 2. They are going to fail either way, but they can choose to take a Major Consequence or become injured. Skyler chooses a Major Consequence, and the Arbiter decides that not only is the enemy alerted to their location, but there are more enemies than they previously thought.

Boons:

If a Survivor does something especially great in the story, or they roll really well, the Arbiter can grant them a Boon. Boons look different depending on what exactly caused them, but generally are effects that last for one session or longer. Some examples might be:

Thyme is trying to barter with a trader in town, and rolls a 12 with their communication skill, scoring themselves a boon. The Arbiter decides that the trader remembers Thyme's father was a friend of theirs, and permanently gives Thyme better deals, and rarer stock in their shop.

Rain is by themselves in an old house, and rolled a 12 on their awareness roll, getting themselves a boon. The Arbiter decides that not only does Rain know there is something else in this house, but they know approximately how big it is, and how many of them there are.

Skyler rescues a woman who got hopelessly lost in the woods, and helps her get back to town. After getting her back home safely, Skyler also gives the woman their only map, so they can be positive she doesn't get lost in the future. The Arbiter decides that this is especially great, and grants Skyler a boon. Now Skyler finds that they always know what direction is north.

Skills:

There are a few skills which are useful for surviving in Eldorado Springs, that are represented here. While hardly all encompassing, skills give you an idea of what your survivor is good at. If you make a roll that uses a skill you have training in, you may roll an extra dice and take the highest 2 results. The 10 skills are:

- **Athletics** - Feats of athleticism such as running fast, jumping far, or lifting heavy things.
- **Awareness** - This includes both being aware of potential dangers in your surroundings, and catching on to subtitles and subterfuge in someone's speech.
- **Communication** - Any time you are talking to someone, and you need to convince them (be it of something true, or a lie) you use this.
- **Knowledge** - This covers general knowledge such as the history of the region, different factions you might come across, and the religions still practiced in Eldorado Springs.
- **Medicine** - Medicine is both your ability to help someone with injuries, and your ability to make poultices and other cure-alls.
- **Melee** - This is your ability to fight someone at close range, either with a weapon, or with your fists.
- **Nature** - If you need to figure out your position on a map, find safe water, or identify animal tracks, you'll need Nature.
- **Ranged Weapons** - This is your ability to hit a target with a ranged weapon, like a rifle or a bow.
- **Stealth** - This is your ability to hide from folks, and move quietly.
- **Tech** - This covers your ability to use old world technology such as rotary-dial phones.

Stress:

When you take a Minor Consequence, or damage during combat, you will usually take it in the form of Physical or Mental Stress. At character creation, you will determine how much of each type of stress you can take. If you ever would take a stress, but can't take any more, you take a Minor Injury instead and then clear the appropriate stress.

At the end of each session of play, your stress will generally clear, and there are a few ways to clear it in game as well. During down time, a Survivor can narrate what they are doing to clear a type of stress, and then make a roll using their skills if possible. Only one type of stress can be helped during a single down time, and the rolls for it are a little different. A Survivor will still roll 2d6 (3d6 if they have a skill that matches their description), but the successes and failures look a little different.

- **2:** - Fail to clear your Stress, and instead gain one Stress.
- **3 - 5:** Clear one Stress.
- **6 - 8:** Clear two Stress.
- **9 - 11:** Clear three Stress
- **12:** Clear all of one type of Stress, or clear 2 Stress for you, and 2 Stress for an ally.

Injuries:

There are two types of injuries you can suffer in *Phanta*, and they effect Survivors in different ways. If a Survivor takes a Minor Injury it effects whichever skill triggered the injury, or whichever skill the Arbiter thinks makes the most sense, until it is cleared up. If you have a Minor Injury, you roll an extra d6 whenever you use that skill, and take the lowest result among them. If you are already rolling an extra dice (because of training in a skill for example), you roll 2d6 instead of getting the extra dice your training usually grants you. Minor Injuries generally clear at the end of a session, or can be cleared if you spend your down time nurturing your injury. If you would ever take a Minor Injury in a skill, and you already have one in that skill, it becomes a Major Injury instead, and you clear your Minor Injuries.

Major Injuries represent a bigger problem faced by a Survivor. If you have a Major Injury you roll all of your skills as though you were injured in them, and unlike Minor Injuries they don't clear at the end of a session or on a short downtime. To clear a Major Injury you might need to take a significant amount of down time, complete a mission for someone in Eldorado Springs who might be able to help, or both. Generally, clearing a Major Injury requires working with the Arbiter to figure out what works best for the story.

You can still accrue new Minor Injuries while you are suffering from a Major Injury, and these will not effect your rolls. If you would gain a Major Injury while you're already suffering from one, your Survivor becomes unplayable. This might mean your Survivor dies, but it also might mean you enter a state where you can't continue to be a part of the group for other reasons. If this happens to you, work with the Arbiter to determine why your Survivor is no longer a part of the story.

Combat:

Combat in *Phanta* is light, narrative, and designed to be finished fairly quickly. At the start of combat each Survivor, and the enemies, make an Athletics roll, determining their position in initiative based on how higher their rolls are. In the event of a tie, Survivors choose who goes first.

There are three ranges in *Phanta*. **Close Range**, **Mid Range**, and **Far Range**. At **Close Range** combatants can reach each other, but are too close to effectively use most Ranged Weapons. At **Mid Range** combatants are out of arms reach, but within range of most Ranged Weapons. At **Far Range**, you don't stand a chance of realistically hitting someone, even with most Ranged Weapons.

On each turn, a combatant can make a single action. This can either be moving one range, making an attack, or using a skill. To make an attack, a combatant can make a roll using Ranged Weapons, Melee, or another skill at Arbiter approval. On a successful weapon attack, the combatant deals two Physical Stress, from a weapon, or one Physical Stress from a fist, unless a skill, or ability state otherwise.

Unlike a Survivor, when an enemy combatant takes too much stress, they are removed from play entirely, instead of taking injuries. This means they either die, or are otherwise no longer an immediate problem for the Survivors who are engaging them.

Building a Survivor:

Building a Survivor in *Phanta* is easy to do. First, take a look at the Survivor Playbooks, and decide what sort of Survivor you'd like to play. There are 5 classes, each with different starting skills, and amounts of Stress they can handle. In short, the **Engineer** excels at Tech and Stealth, the **Healer** excels at Medicine and Knowledge, the **Hunter** excels at Ranged Weapons and Survival, the **Slugger** excels at Melee and Athletics, and the **Strategist** excels at Communication and Awareness.

After choosing a playbook, fill out some basic information about your Survivor such as your name, your pronouns, and your general aesthetic. Normally Survivors start at Level 1, with no advancements, but check with the Arbiter to make sure that's the case. As a group decide what sort of equipment each of you might be carrying, including what sorts of weapons you use if you use them at all.

Each Survivor starts the game with at least 1 Relationship with another person living in Eldorado Springs. Talk it over as a group to see who knows who, and try to really flesh out some of the folks you might come across before you start playing. If a lot of you know the same people, it will make you immediately feel more like a cohesive group.

During character creation is a great time to talk about the safety tools everyone would like in play during games of *Phanta*. I recommend discussion in the form of **Lines and Veils**, but other great consent tools exist as well. Note the Lines and Veils (or other safety tools) that are discussed in the notes section of your Playbook. Remember when playing that you can **always** say "no", change consent, or leave bad groups at any time.

Lines represent hard boundaries, and subject matter you don't want touched at all.

Veils represent soft limits, where discussion of the subject matter in game should move quickly, or be hand waved away when possible.

Leveling Up:

Phanta uses a milestone leveling system, which is to say that Survivors level up when it makes the most sense in the story. Upon leveling up you can increase your Survivor's level by 1 on their playbook, and choose any Advance that you have not chosen before. Many of the Advances will permanently change your sheet somehow, in letting you take extra stress, or training you in a new skill. Some of the other Advances might change how you play the game, or how the world responds to you. The Advances presented are a great jumping off point, but if you run out of them, feel free to make some new ones alongside your Arbiter!

Ending a Session:

At the end of a session, you will generally clear your Survivor of all their Stress, and Minor Injuries, while leaving their Major Injuries and Boons alone. *Phanta* is designed to run a mission or two per session, but if you ever have to end a game before a mission is over, double-check with the Arbiter about whether or not resetting your playbook makes sense.

Post session is also a great time to talk about **Stars and Wishes**, which is shorthand for "things you liked about the game" and "things you wish happened in the game". This is a nice wrap-up tool because it lets everyone shape the narrative of *Phanta*, and ensures everyone is having the most fun possible. Stars and Wishes is also a great time to talk about adding things to the Lines and Veils (or other safety tools) list you made when your first built your Survivors, if something new or unexpected comes up that made you (or could make you) uncomfortable.

The World of Phanta

The Meteor: In 1968, Prophet Don, the leader of *The Children of the Flowers*, predicted that the incoming meteor, Icarus, would set in motion a series of events that would destroy most of the earth. People at the time thought him mad, and ignored his portents of things yet to come, but quickly *The Children of the Flowers* saw that every call he made was true. In the aftermath of Icarus, only two places are known to have survived, untouched safe havens despite the utter collapse of the world around them. Zhangmu Town in the Shigaste Prefecture of Tibet, and Eldorado Springs in the state of Colorado in the United States.

The Fallout: In the years after Icarus, the governance of Eldorado Springs was in flux as the *The Children of the Flowers*, who had been prepared for doomsday, found themselves warring with the long-time residents of the city, who formed a militia known simply as *The Residents* to fight. This war was bloody, and saw the deaths of a lot of the initial survivors on both sides, including the unexpected death of Prophet Don himself. Fearing the war would never end, *The Children of the Flowers*, under the leadership of Faith Leilani, The Prophet's wife, made a deal with *The Residents*. They would end the war permanently, if the *Children* would be allowed to continue living and farming the land, peacefully, on the outskirts of the town.

A New Future: In the 40 years following Faith's peace agreement with Eldorado Springs, *The Children of the Flowers* have made good on their agreement to stay peaceful, and keep their land on the outskirts of the city. Life here is hardly idyllic, but *The Residents* and *The Children* have had enough time and experience together, that the events of *The Fallout* are but a memory for many of them, and a story for the younger people in town.

On the morning of June 14, 1968, a group of hippies fled to the mountains of Colorado to wait for doomsday, as the meteor, Icarus, neared Earth. Prophet Don, the leader of the doomsday cult, reported that after the meteor struck the planet, California would slide into the ocean, the land would be plagued with horrible earthquakes, and society as we knew it would collapse. Don was correct.

The Periphery: In recent years it has become safer to leave town limits, and the two groups have started to send out joint scouting parties to explore the world around Eldorado Springs. This area is referred to by Survivors as The Periphery. Historically The Periphery has been inhospitable, filled with poisoned gasses, frenzied wildlife, and other untold dangers that seem to lurk just outside of city limits. Waiting. It is unclear as to why, but many of the dangers The Periphery has held are no more. The air is breathable, new plant life has grown, and the frenzied animals are missing altogether.

The Missing Scouts: Cyprus Mystery, leader of the scouts, has reported that a few of the recent groups they have sent out haven't reported back yet. They have some worries about these specific groups having gone missing, because they represent some of the most seasoned scouts in Eldorado Springs. For them to have lost contact completely, something major must be amiss.

Blips in the Dark: Because of how strange The Periphery is, the town has long kept radars pointed towards it, just so that everyone has a good idea of what exactly is going on outside of the city limits. Eclipse Polaris, head scientist in Eldorado has recently claimed the radar has been picking up massive signatures from right outside of the city. It is unclear if these are glitches with the radar itself, or if something much more sinister is afoot.

The New Prophet: Faith Leilani has begun seeing visions, much like her late husband, The Prophet. This is a new experience for her, and she hasn't learned exactly how to interpret them yet, but what she has seen has her scared. She claims that in her dreams she can see the spirits of those that died from Icarus, and they whisper terrible things to her. She can make out figures, lost in the woods, being pulled towards the heavens in a beam of light. These figures look towards the skies as they float away, screaming, and begin to dissolve into smoke. Faith doesn't know what it means, but she wants answers, and she's willing to make sacrifices to get them.

The Arbiter's Section

Children of the Flowers name generator. Roll a d12 for first and last name.

First Name	Last Name
1. Citrus	1. Moss
2. Moonbean	2. Mist
3. Heart	3. Jones
4. Star	4. Hammer
5. Elm	5. Oh
6. Milo	6. Whisper
7. Rain	7. Nova
8. Moss	8. Washington
9. Tranquility	9. Orion
10. Freedom	10. Truth
11. Sierra	11. Maple
12. Destiny	12. Aries

The Residents name generator.

First Name	Last Name
1. Mackenzie	1. Wong
2. Griff	2. Mulaney
3. Lukas	3. Jones
4. Oz	4. Walter
5. Ash	5. Oh
6. Morgan	6. Adams
7. Fox	7. Chapman
8. Red	8. Washington
9. Lee	9. Wolf
10. Gray	10. Briggs
11. Alex	11. Sinclair
12. Max	12. Morales

Running the Game

Phanta is designed to be easy to run, and to that end, there isn't too much you are expected to learn as Arbiter, that is less important for other people to know. This final section of the book is mostly focused on explaining plot hooks, giving some general advice for being The Arbiter and running the game, and some sample enemy stats.

General Advice: Running games like this is easiest when everyone is in on the world building, and feels like they have a personal stake in what's happening. If you're ever at a loss for what to do next, or what should happen after an unexpected decision made by a Survivor just poll your group! Remember that *Phanta* is a collaborative story telling game, and that it never needs to be exclusively on you to come up with what happens next. Always try to remember that "yes, and" is a great response when polling your players for ideas on what happens next. It is very easy to forget as the defacto leader of the group that this is supposed to be fun for you as well.

Having a "Session 0", to build characters, talk about the setting, and put into place the safety tools discussed in the **Building a Survivor** section can be super helpful in establishing a tone, and world that is easy to tell stories in. *Phanta* is not designed to require a lot of prep, and the system is flexible enough to handle a good deal of different situations, which is to say don't feel like you have to know exactly where the story is going when you first start playing. Don't stress about having a mastery of the system before your group starts playing, if and when you forget a rule just make one up instead, and keep it moving.

Plot Hooks: There are a few easy to use Plot Hooks presented in the previous section. **The Missing Scouts**, **Blips in the Dark**, and **The New Prophet** are each open ended story starters designed to make getting into the game easy for new Survivors. Consider using these plot hooks as a way to introduce your players to Eldorado Springs, The Periphery, and the story at large, but don't feel like you have to if you don't vibe with them

personally. Each of these plot hooks is designed to introduce your group to the idea that there is a bigger and unknown danger lurking right outside of the city limits. My idea in writing them was that eventually your Survivors realize that *Icarus* wasn't a freak accident, but an act of war from a force no one even knew existed (but what if it was known?) that slowly morphs *Phanta* into a game about surviving or destroying an extra-terrestrial threat.

Enemies: Enemies should be super easy to make on the fly in this system. Generally they should provide a challenge for the group, and enemies with the same stats should go on the same turn/roll initiative together. I've put together some sample stats just as a jumping off point.

Sample Enemy Stats:

- **Weak Bad Guy:** 1 Physical, 1 Mental Stress Box, Melee or Ranged Training, 1 Physical Stress on hit.
- **Tougher Bad Guy:** 4 Physical, 2 Mental Stress Box, Ranged and Awareness Training, 2 Physical Stress on hit.
- **Stealthy Bad Guy:** 2 Physical, 4 Mental Stress Box, Ranged and Stealth Training, 4 Physical Stress if they hit from Stealth, 2 otherwise.
- **Baddie with a Rocket Launcher:** 6 Physical, 4 Mental Stress Box, Training in Ranged and Athletics, Hits every player at mid-range simultaneously, deals 2 Physical Stress on a hit.
- **Weak Martian Bomber:** 1 Physical, 4 Mental Stress Box. Ranged Training, 1 Mental Stress on hit. Explodes upon death dealing 1 Physical Stress to anyone at Close Range of them.
- **Martian Menace:** 10 Physical, 14 Mental Stress Box, Training in everything, 1 Mental Stress on hit, acts once between each Survivor's initiatives. If a Survivor would be downed by it, it possess them instead.

Boons: Boons are another super light system, like enemies are, designed to give Survivors permanent, but minor boosts to things they already do well, or got really lucky with. In combat your boons could be in the form of extra damage, extra information about enemy weaknesses, or something else entirely. Here are some examples of our of combat boons for each stat.

Permanent Boons:

- ■ **Athletics:** You've found that your ability to climb tough surfaces, even in the worst of conditions, is significantly better.
- ■ **Awareness:** You can always tell when someone is thinking about you.
- ■ **Communication:** Strangers always remark on how friendly you are, and you find that few people can stay mad at you for long.
- ■ **Knowledge:** You've begun to have prophetic dreams, and sometimes wake up with the knowledge of what the day has in store for you.
- ■ **Medicine:** In reading old medical journals, you've realized that a plant that is uncommon to the immediate area can provide relief from minor stresses. If you come across it you can make a Medicine Roll to heal one Minor Injury.
- ■ **Melee:** You have fists of steel, and your unarmed strikes deal an extra 1 Physical Stress.
- ■ **Nature:** You can look at any tracks, and immediately know who or what left them.
- ■ **Ranged Weapons:** You find a scope for your weapon, and can use it as binoculars.
- ■ **Stealth:** Sometimes, people swear you weren't around, even when they saw you clearly.
- ■ **Tech:** You discovered a back door into the radar computer, and can let yourself into it easily.

Equipment: The base rules for Phanta never get into it, but you can always introduce new items for your players that change how some things work in game for them. Here are some examples of equipment, mainly weapons, that I might add to a game of *Phanta*.

Example Equipment:

- ■ **Sniper Rifle:** Requires Ranged Weapons training to use. Using the Sniper Rifle you can hit targets at Far Range (within reason). Deals 3 Physical Stress on a hit. On a miss, it jams, requiring a full action to make it operable again.
- ■ **Scattershot:** Requires Ranged Weapons training to use. Using the Scattershot you can hit targets at Close Range, instead of Mid Range. Deals 1 Physical Stress to up to 2 targets within range.
- ■ **Martian Blaster:** Requires Tech training to use. Using the Alien Blaster you can hit targets at Mid Range by making a Tech Roll. Deals 2 Physical Stress on a hit. Explodes dealing 3 Physical Stress to everyone within Close Range (including yourself) if you roll a 2 to fire it.
- ■ **Guarding Poultrice:** Requires Medicine training to use. In combat you can make a Medicine roll to prevent the next 2 Physical Harm a target of your choice would take. Prevent all Physical Stress on a roll of 12.
- ■ **Theodore the Friendly Wolf:** Requires Nature training to command, shares an initiative with you. Once per turn, you may make a Nature roll to command Theodore to attack a target. On a success, Theodore deals 2 Physical Stress to a target. Theodore can take 6 Physical Stress, or 4 Mental Stress before he runs back to The Periphery.
- ■ **Climbing Gear:** Lets you treat your Athletics as though you have training in it, to climb mountains and cliffs. If you already have training in Athletics, you instead roll 4 dice, choosing the best 2.



