

THE WHEEL AND THE BALANCE

RPG STARTER KIT

A no-combat decision RPG about
pressure, silence, and consequence.

VELOS
⚡

PONDERA
⚖️

RESON
🎯

NUL
🚫

YOU ARE NOT DEFINED BY WHAT YOU ARE.
YOU ARE DEFINED BY WHAT YOU CHOOSE.

The Wheel and The Balance

RPG STARTER KIT — FREE QUICKSTART EDITION

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A Trace by Phionyx release

Version 0.1

Age Guidance: 13+

Players: 2–5 (1 Game Master + 1–4 players)

Session Length: 90–120 minutes

Required Materials: 5–7 six-sided dice (d6), pencil, this document

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The Wheel and The Balance: RPG Starter Kit

Start Here: Play in 10 Minutes

You do not need to read this entire document before playing. Here is everything you need to start:

- 1. Choose one player to be the GM.** The GM plays the school, not a character.
- 2. Everyone else picks a character:** Noah, Mara, Elliot, or Priya (Section 3).
- 3. Write down:** Endurance 6, Echo Trace 0.
- 4. Learn the one rule:** Roll your Stat + bonuses in d6. Each die showing 4, 5, or 6 = 1 success. Compare total successes to the difficulty (1–4).
- 5. GM reads Scene 1** (Section 6) aloud. Players say what they do. GM sets a difficulty and they roll.
- 6. Every scene must include:** a decision, a consequence, a physical effect, and a cost felt by someone.

That is it. Everything else — resonance states, echo traces, the full map — you can learn as you play. Start with Scene 1: The Rhythm of the Corridors.

1. Welcome: What Is This Game?

You are a student at the Grey School.

The corridors are clean. The timetable runs on time. The Coordinators watch from corners, clipboards in hand, and nothing they do looks wrong. Assembly begins at 8:45 sharp. Everyone sits where they are supposed to sit.

Everything is fine. Except it is not.

The Wheel and The Balance is a tabletop role-playing game set in a contemporary UK secondary school where an invisible system of social control operates beneath ordinary school life. There are no monsters, no dungeons, no combat, no hit points. The conflicts here are the ones that matter at age fourteen: peer pressure, institutional authority, the decision to speak up or stay quiet, the weight of watching something wrong happen and choosing whether to act.

The core promise:

Every decision matters. Every decision has a cost. And the cost does not always fall on the person who made the decision.

What makes this game different:

- The system is the antagonist.** There is no villain to confront. The Quieters believe individuality is noise, and noise destabilises society. They are partly correct about the danger. They are entirely wrong about the solution.
- Decisions have consequences.** Your choice to approach a struggling student might draw the Coordinator's attention. Your choice to look away leaves a mark that does not fade. Even indecision is a decision.

- **No-harm policy.** Pain is expressed through heaviness, pressure, distortion, and disconnection — never through gore or physical violence. The 13+ rating is absolute.
- **Resonance, not classes.** Characters enter and exit temporary psycho-physical states — Velos, Pondera, Reson, or Nul — triggered by emotion. You are not defined by what you are. You are defined by what you choose.

"Staying silent is also a decision. And every decision makes someone heavier."

Table Safety

Content note: This game includes themes of social pressure, conformity, institutional control, isolation, and emotional distress. It does not include gore, sexual content, physical violence, or self-harm.

This game explores social pressure, silence, conformity, and institutional control.

Before play, agree on these three rules:

1. Any player may pause, fade out, or redirect a scene at any time, without explanation.
2. The GM should never use a player's real personal experience as in-game pressure unless the player offers it.
3. When a character reaches Endurance 0, the player remains at the table and may speak out of character. They are not excluded — their character is temporarily silent.

The horror in this game is social and existential. If a scene makes someone uncomfortable, adjust it. The game is about choice, not about forcing anyone to endure something they did not choose.

2. Quick-Start Rules

2.1 The Core Mechanic: d6 Dice Pool

Everything is resolved with ordinary six-sided dice. When your character attempts something uncertain, you roll a pool of dice and count successes.

The Formula:

Dice Pool = Relevant Stat (1-5) + Skill bonus (+1) + Resonance Bonus (+2 if active)

Roll that many d6:

- **4, 5, or 6** = 1 success
- **1, 2, or 3** = no success

Compare total successes against the difficulty.

Example: Noah has Intuition 5 and is in Reson state. He tries to read the Coordinator's behaviour. Pool: 5 (Intuition) + 1 (Observation skill) + 2 (Reson) = 8 dice. He rolls: 2, 4, 5, 1, 6, 3, 4, 2. Four successes.

2.2 Difficulty Thresholds

Difficulty	Successes Needed	Example Situation
Easy	1	Walking through an empty corridor, persuading a friend
Medium	2	Holding steady under a Coordinator's gaze, noticing an Echo
Hard	3	Resisting the Quieting, rallying a group to act
Extraordinary	4	Disrupting a Coordinator's Correction

2.3 Critical Results

Double Six (Two or more 6s): Extraordinary success plus a bonus narrative effect. However, even a Double Six carries cost — the GM adds a small side effect. Great successes leave great Echoes.

Total Failure (Every die shows 1 or 2): Catastrophe. Echo Traces +2. The GM describes a dramatic consequence — but never physical injury. The disaster is social and psychological.

Zero Successes (but some 3s): Failure, but not catastrophe. The character learns something even though they could not change it.

2.4 The Golden Rule: Every Roll Has a Consequence

"Nothing happens" does not exist:

- **Success** = The decision takes effect, but it carries a cost.
- **Failure** = The decision fails, but information or awareness emerges.
- **No roll is without consequence** — even a successful test can produce an Echo Trace.

2.5 Skills

Each character has three skills. When relevant, a skill grants **+1 bonus die**. Skills stack with resonance bonuses.

2.6 Decision Scenes

This game has no combat rounds, no initiative order. Conflict is resolved through **Decision Scenes** — structured moments where characters face pressure and must choose.

Every Decision Scene follows three phases:

Phase 1: SITUATION

The GM describes:

- **Where** you are (corridor, canteen, assembly hall)
- **What** the pressure is (a Coordinator watching, a friend in trouble)
- **What** the threat is (social exclusion, being marked, Correction)
- **How urgent** it is

Phase 2: DECISION

Each player states:

- **What** are you doing?
- **Why** are you doing it? (this may trigger a resonance state)
- **What** are you willing to risk?

The GM sets the stat and difficulty. The player rolls.

Phase 3: ECHO

The GM describes:

- **Physical effect** (the air shifts, a surface cracks, a sound distorts)
- **Social consequence** (who saw? who pulled away?)
- **Cost** (to whom, what kind, when does it arrive?)
- **Echo Trace update** (if applicable)

2.7 Tracking: Echo Traces

Echo Traces track the cumulative weight of your decisions. Starts at 0.

Echo Trace	What It Means
0	Clean — no significant decisions yet
1-2	Light — occasional ringing in the ears, mild dizziness
3-4	Visible — the environment reacts: people uneasy, objects tremble, sounds distort
5	Intense — constant effects, heavy air, Coordinators take notice
6	Cascade — all echoes manifest at once. Cannot act for one round. Resets to 3.

Gaining Echo Traces:

- After a successful test (GM discretion): +1
- After a Total Failure: +2
- Walking past someone in trouble without acting: +1
- Experiencing a Weight Transfer: +1

Reducing: End of session, Balance test (difficulty = current Echo Trace level). Success: -1.

2.8 Endurance

Endurance measures how much more the system can take from you before you break. It is NOT health. There is no physical harm. Endurance is your capacity to keep making decisions under pressure.

- **Starting:** 6
- **At 2-3:** All tests -1 die

- **At 1:** All tests -2 dice, speech difficult
- **At 0:** Character cannot act in the fiction. Player remains at the table. After one full session of rest, returns to 2.

Losing Endurance: Quieting threat (-2), resonance cost not paid (-1), Echo Cascade (-1)

Recovering: Start of session (+1), support from a bonded character (+1), resting one full scene in a safe location (+1)

3. Four Pre-Built Characters

These four characters are ready to play. Each includes full stats, skills, resonance tendency, and a play tip. Stats are rated 1-5; every character distributes 18 total points across six stats.

NOAH — The Observer

Resonance Tendency: *Reson* (Simulation / Foresight)

Stat	Value
Resolve	2
Balance	3
Impact	2
Inner Voice	4
Communication	2
Intuition	5

Skills: Observation (+1), Analysis (+1), Connection (+1)

Resonance: Reson — Activates with uncertainty, contradictory information, or repeating patterns. +2 dice on observation, analysis, pattern recognition, prediction.

Play Tip: You are the eyes of the group. Roll Intuition often. Feed information to the others. But every time you look, you risk being looked at in return. Play Noah as someone torn between the compulsion to see and the fear of what seeing costs.

MARA — The Disruptor

Resonance Tendency: *Velos* (Speed / Dispersal)

Stat	Value
Resolve	3
Balance	2
Impact	3
Inner Voice	1
Communication	4
Intuition	5

Skills: Evasion (+1), Provocation (+1), Persuasion (+1)

Resonance: Velos — Activates with injustice, confinement, urgency, or the impulse to protect someone. +2 dice on speed, evasion, quick reaction, provocation.

Play Tip: You are the spark. You say things before thinking. When the group hesitates, you act. Ask the GM: "What does my body want to do?" After three Velos uses, your pool halves for one scene. Play Mara as someone whose courage and recklessness are the same thing.

ELLIOT — The Carrier

Resonance Tendency: *Pondera* (Weight / Carrying)

Stat	Value
Resolve	4
Balance	5
Impact	3
Inner Voice	3
Communication	1
Intuition	2

Skills: Endurance (+1), Protection (+1), Concealment (+1)

Resonance: Pondera — Activates with guilt, the instinct to protect, or the moment before someone is harmed. +2 dice on endurance, protection, taking-another's-cost.

Play Tip: You are the anchor. When things go wrong, you step forward and take the weight. Your Protection skill lets you absorb costs meant for others — but each cost drains your Endurance. When you finally speak a full sentence, make it count. The table will go quiet.

PRIYA — The Analyst

Resonance Tendency: *Reson*-leaning

Stat	Value
Resolve	3
Balance	4
Impact	2
Inner Voice	3
Communication	3
Intuition	3

Skills: Analysis (+1), Persuasion (+1), Observation (+1)

Resonance: Reson — Activates less frequently than Noah's; triggers when rules she trusts fail to explain what she sees. +2 dice on observation, analysis, pattern recognition, prediction.

Play Tip: You are the group's logic. You challenge assumptions — including the group's. Use Analysis to request information from the GM. There will come a moment when the evidence says one thing and the rules say another. What you choose in that moment defines Priya.

4. Resonance States

Resonance states are **temporary psycho-physical conditions** — not permanent identities or classes. A character enters a state when triggered by circumstances, gains a mechanical benefit, pays a cost after repeated use, and eventually exits.

Critical rule: Characters *enter*, *slip into*, or *fall into* states. They do not "activate" anything.

Velos (Speed / Dispersal)

AT THE TABLE: Trigger: injustice, urgency, confinement. Bonus: +2 dice to speed / evasion / reaction / provocation. After 3 uses: Burnout — pool halved for one scene. GM sign: blurred corridor edges, slippery air.

What it feels like: The background blurs at the edges like a camera pulling focus. A fine glass-line shimmer appears along object edges. The air thins and becomes slippery. Steps feel like gliding.

Physical signs for the GM:

- Corridor seems to stretch and compress at the edges

- Fine crystalline shimmer along object boundaries
- Footsteps sound doubled for a moment
- After burnout: stillness, heavy breathing, hands shaking

Pondera (Weight / Carrying)

AT THE TABLE: Trigger: guilt, instinct to protect, crowd chaos. Bonus: +2 dice to endurance / protection / taking another's cost. After 3 uses: Collapse — no physical action for one round. GM sign: thick air, heavy steps.

What it feels like: The air thickens — not humidity, but *weight*. Steps slow. Door handles feel heavier. A "gravity island" forms around the character; people unconsciously step aside.

Physical signs for the GM:

- Others feel resistance when approaching
- Steps become deliberate, heavy, audible
- Small objects on nearby surfaces shift slowly
- After collapse: absolute stillness, eyes open but unfocused

Reson (Simulation / Foresight)

AT THE TABLE: Trigger: uncertainty, contradictory information, structured silence. Bonus: +2 dice to observation / analysis / pattern recognition / prediction. After 3 uses: Analysis Paralysis — cannot decide in next Decision Scene. GM sign: grid-like lines, pre-echo sounds.

What it feels like: Vision briefly loses focus; faint lines web across space like a grid of possibility. Sounds arrive too early — an echo that precedes the sound. A thin crystalline ringing fills the immediate area.

Physical signs for the GM:

- Vision softens at edges; faint grid-lines appear and fade
- Sounds arrive slightly before they should
- A thin, high-pitched ringing, barely perceptible
- After analysis paralysis: staring at nothing, eyes wide, breathing fast

Nul (Filter / Withdrawal)

AT THE TABLE: Trigger: overstimulation, crowd pressure, shame. Bonus: +2 dice to concealment / evasion / avoiding attention / social invisibility. After 3 uses: Disconnection — one bond drops one level. GM sign: muted colours, sliding gazes.

What it feels like: Colours desaturate. Sounds muffle. People unconsciously slide their gaze past the character. Objects lose sharpness. A filter descends over the world.

Physical signs for the GM:

- The world seems slightly grey, slightly muted
- Others' eyes pass over the character without registering
- The character's voice sounds as though it comes from further away
- After disconnection: a cold sensation, something missing that cannot be named

Warning: Nul's danger is that it feels safe. Invisibility feels like protection. But every time you disappear, the people who cared about you care a little less.

5. The Grey School Map

The Grey School is a UK secondary school with no proper name. Concrete and glass: long corridors, a central assembly hall, form rooms, a canteen, and a courtyard. Every space is a "tuning zone" — rhythm, order, and sound define each area's character.

The school is not a backdrop. It is the antagonist's primary instrument.

Assembly Hall

Echo Density: 5/5 | **Coordinator Presence:** Constant | **Threat Level:** High

The heart of the school. All students gather here for morning assembly. Coordinators stand at the edges, eyes scanning. When assembly begins, everyone starts breathing at the same rhythm. No one refuses because no one notices.

The walls are smooth concrete, but if you look carefully (Intuition test), you might notice hairline cracks that were not there last week.

Adventure Seeds:

- During assembly, a student breathes at a different rhythm. A Coordinator's gaze locks onto them.
 - A new crack appears on the wall behind the stage during a routine announcement.
 - A Correction is announced but the name is not clear, and everyone pretends they heard it.
-

Corridors

Echo Density: 3/5 | **Coordinator Presence:** Periodic | **Threat Level:** Medium

The school's circulatory system. Narrow, long, concrete-walled. Footsteps fall in a near-synchronised rhythm. Anyone who breaks the rhythm draws attention. The light is institutional fluorescent, but it flickers occasionally — not electrically, but structurally.

Adventure Seeds:

- Two friends are talking when a Coordinator appears. The Coordinator says nothing. The friends stop talking and separate. Why?
 - A thin crack runs along the base of the wall. Following it leads somewhere unexpected.
 - There is a spot where footsteps go silent. Standing in it feels like holding your breath.
-

Canteen

Echo Density: 2/5 | **Coordinator Presence:** Low (cameras present) | **Threat Level:** Low

The most human space. Noise, laughter, food. Students sit in groups that appear natural but are governed by invisible rules. The canteen feels safe. This safety is deceptive.

Adventure Seeds:

- A table that was occupied yesterday is empty today. No one mentions the students who sat there.
 - A student sits alone, hands shaking. Do you approach? Do you look away?
 - Someone says "You're overreacting" to a friend who has been asking questions. The friend goes quiet.
-

GM Quick Prep: 10 Minutes to Game Time

If you are running this adventure for the first time, here is everything you need to do before your players arrive:

Minutes 1-3: Read the structure

- There are 3 scenes: Corridor → Canteen → Corridor Incident.
- Each scene follows Situation → Decision → Echo.
- Your job is to describe the situation, ask "What do you do?", set a difficulty, and describe consequences.

Minutes 4-6: Know your NPC

- **Ben** — a student who sits alone in the canteen. Nervous, curious. He noticed the cracks in the walls. He is being noticed in return. Ben is not someone to rescue. He is someone whose presence forces a decision.

Minutes 7-8: Know your tone

- Everything should feel *almost* normal. The wrongness is in the details — a gaze that lasts one second too long, a crack that was not there yesterday, a student who was talking last week and is not talking now.
- Do not explain. Do not reveal. Let the players feel it.

Minutes 9-10: Set up the table

- Each player needs: a character (Section 3), pencil, paper for Endurance/Echo tracking.
- You need: 5-7 d6, this document open to Scene 1.
- Write on a visible surface: **4-5-6 = success. Every scene needs: decision, consequence, physical effect, cost.**

Cheat sheet for difficulty:

What they're doing	Difficulty
Looking around, asking a friend	1 (Easy)
Resisting a Coordinator's gaze, reading a situation	2 (Medium)
Approaching a frozen student, reading a Coordinator	3 (Hard)
Disrupting a Correction	4 (Extraordinary)

You are ready. Start with Scene 1.

6. One-Session Intro Adventure: "First Day"

Starting Echo Traces: 0 **Starting Endurance:** 6 **Theme:** "Something is wrong — but what?" **Escalation:** Awareness → discomfort → a decision → a cost

Scene 1: The Rhythm of the Corridors

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"It is your first day at the Grey School. You step into the corridor. It is clean, wide, and grey. Students move in loose but strangely uniform groups. No one is running. No one has stopped. The footsteps have a rhythm, and without thinking about it, your own steps begin to match.

The walls are smooth concrete. The fluorescent lights hum faintly. A bell sounds — not harsh, but precise. Exactly on time.

Where do you go?"

GM Notes:

This scene is an introduction. No formal test yet. Let players describe what their characters do, how they walk, whether they match the rhythm.

If a player says they resist the rhythm or look around carefully, offer a **free Intuition test (Easy, difficulty 1)**:

- **Success:** "The seating chart outside Form Room 3B has names crossed out and rewritten. The handwriting is different — more precise — than a student's."
- **Failure:** "Everything looks normal. You find your form room and sit where the chart tells you."

The Decision: Do you match the corridor's rhythm, or move at your own pace?

The Consequence: No immediate mechanical effect — but privately note which characters matched and which did not. The school notices.

The Physical Effect: The fluorescent light above the entrance flickers once as the last player enters.

Scene 2: The Canteen

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Lunchtime. The canteen is loud — or at least louder than anywhere else. Students sit in groups. Trays clatter. Someone laughs. It almost feels normal.

Almost.

At a table near the window, a student sits alone. No tray. Hands flat on the table. Not reading, not on a phone, not waiting for anyone. Just sitting. Shoulders hunched. Fingers twitching occasionally.

No one else seems to have noticed. Or if they have, they are very good at pretending.

What do you do?"

GM Notes:

The first real Decision Scene. The lone student is Ben.

Option A: Approach Ben

Test: Communication, difficulty 2.

- **Success:** Ben looks up. "You're new, yeah?" A pause. "Have you noticed the cracks? In the walls. They weren't there at the start of term." He glances toward the entrance. "Just... keep your eyes open." Player gains a bond with Ben: Acquaintance (level 1).

Physical effect: The glass of water on Ben's table shifts — a centimetre to the left, as though the table tilted. It did not tilt.

Cost: In the next scene, 50% chance (d6: 4+ = yes) a Coordinator is present.

- **Failure:** Ben glances up, then away. "It's fine. Everything's fine." The conversation is over. +1 Echo Trace.

Physical effect: The canteen lights dim for half a second.

Option B: Observe from a distance

Test: Intuition, difficulty 2.

- **Success:** Ben's hands are trembling. His lips move but no sound comes out. The students at nearby tables are angled away, as though his table repels proximity. Faint ringing from his direction. +1 Echo Trace.
- **Failure:** He looks like any student having a bad day. You turn back to lunch. No Echo Trace, but the GM notes the failure.

Option C: Ignore and eat lunch

No test. +1 Echo Trace. Looking away is a decision.

Physical effect: Your tray feels slightly heavier when you stand up. Your bag strap digs in more than it should.

Scene 3: The Corridor Incident

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Break time. The corridors are full. Students move in their usual rhythm. You are walking toward your next class when the flow breaks.

A student has stopped. Completely stopped. In the middle of the corridor. Everyone else parts around them like water around a stone. No one acknowledges them.

The student is standing very still. Eyes open but unfocused. Hands at their sides. Chest rising and falling slowly — too slowly.

Twenty metres ahead, at the T-junction, a Coordinator stands. Arms folded. Watching. Doing nothing.

The Coordinator sees the student. The Coordinator sees you seeing the student.

What do you do?"

GM Notes:

The central Decision Scene. The frozen student may be Ben or another student. Key elements:

1. A student has frozen — something the system has done to them.
2. A Coordinator is watching — their inaction IS the action.
3. The players are witnessed. Whatever they do, they are seen.

Step 1: Read the situation

Any player: Intuition test, difficulty 2.

- **Success:** "The air around the frozen student has thickened. You can feel it — like being underwater. The students flowing past are not choosing to avoid; they are being pushed away. Something is happening. And the Coordinator is watching it happen."
- **Failure:** "A student stopped walking. People go around. It happens."

Step 2: The Decision

Each player decides independently:

Option A: Approach the frozen student

Test: Communication, difficulty 3.

- **Success:** You reach them. The air is thick. The student's eyes focus on you. They whisper one word: "Corrected." Then they begin walking again, joining the flow. They do not look back. +1 Echo Trace. For the remainder of this session, all your social tests are at +1 difficulty. You have been noticed.

Physical effect: The fluorescent light above flickers in a pattern — three pulses, then darkness, then steady.

- **Failure:** You try to reach them but the pressure is too much. Your hand reaches out but your arm feels heavy. The student begins walking again on their own. +1 Echo Trace.

Physical effect: A hairline crack appears in the corridor wall where the student was standing.

Cost: The Coordinator looks at you for three full seconds.

Option B: Walk past

No test. +1 Echo Trace. You chose the corridor's rhythm over the frozen student. The cost is not in what happens now — it is in what you will feel tonight, replaying the moment.

Physical effect: Your footsteps, for a moment, sound louder than everyone else's. Then they fall back into the rhythm.

Option C: Watch the Coordinator

Test: Intuition, difficulty 3.

- **Success:** The Coordinator's expression is blank. Then you see it: a micro-movement of the pen on the clipboard. They are writing while watching the student. The student freezing was expected. *This was planned.* +1 Echo Trace.

Physical effect: The crystalline ringing returns. Louder. Closer.

Cost: The Coordinator notices you watching. Something has been noted.

- **Failure:** The Coordinator is just standing there. You cannot read anything from a face that shows nothing.
-

Session Wrap-Up

After Scene 3, the GM closes the session.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"The rest of the day passes. Lessons, corridors, the bell sounding exactly on time. Everything is normal. Except you know it is not. You have seen the cracks. You have felt the heaviness. You have watched a Coordinator watch a student freeze and do nothing.

Tonight, the day replays behind your eyelids. The rhythm. The student at the table. The word 'Corrected.' The crack in the wall.

Something is wrong with the Grey School.

But what are you going to do about it?"

End-of-Session Echo Accounting:

1. Each player states their Echo Trace total.
2. Each player may attempt one Balance test (difficulty = current Echo Trace level). Success: -1 Echo Trace.
3. Restore +1 Endurance (rest overnight).
4. Note any bonds formed.

GM Debrief Notes:

Record for future sessions:

- Which characters approached Ben? Which walked past?
- Which characters approached the frozen student? Which kept walking?
- Which characters were noticed by the Coordinator?
- Current Echo Trace totals?
- Did anyone experience a resonance state?

These choices will shape the next session. The school remembers.

7. Reference Cards

Cut out or copy these for quick access during play.

Player Quick Reference

Dice Pool: Stat (1-5) + Skill (+1 if applicable) + Resonance (+2 if active)

Success: 4, 5, or 6 on each die = 1 success

Difficulty	Successes
Easy	1
Medium	2
Hard	3
Extraordinary	4

Special results: Two+ 6s = bonus effect + small cost. All 1s/2s = +2 Echo Traces + dramatic consequence.

Resonance Quick Reference:

State	Bonus Applies To	Cost After 3 Uses
Velos	Speed, evasion, reaction, provocation	Burnout: pool halved, one scene
Pondera	Endurance, protection, taking another's cost	Collapse: no physical action, one round
Reson	Observation, analysis, pattern recognition, prediction	Paralysis: cannot decide in next scene
Nul	Concealment, evasion, avoiding attention	Disconnection: one bond drops one level

GM Quick Reference

The Six Stats:

Stat	What It Measures
Resolve	Standing firm under pressure, refusing to bend
Balance	Carrying moral/emotional weight, accepting cost
Impact	How far decisions ripple, leadership, influence

Stat	What It Measures
Inner Voice	Internal clarity, preserving identity under suppression
Communication	Social bonds, persuasion, empathy, reading people
Intuition	Pattern recognition, foresight, noticing what others miss

Scene Checklist: Every scene must contain:

- [] One decision (even if the decision is to do nothing)
- [] One consequence
- [] One physical effect (crack, air shift, sound distortion)
- [] One cost felt by someone (not necessarily the decision-maker)

Endurance Track

6 [Full] – All tests normal
 5 [Steady] – All tests normal
 4 [Strained] – Stress symptoms
 3 [Worn] – All tests: -1 die
 2 [Fraying] – All tests: -1 die
 1 [Critical] – All tests: -2 dice, speech difficult
 0 [Silent] – Character cannot act in the fiction. Player stays at the table. Rest one session → return at 2.

Echo Trace Track

0 [Clean] – No significant decisions yet
 1 [Faint] – Occasional ear ringing, mild dizziness
 2 [Light] – Sounds doubled; faint cracks nearby
 3 [Marked] – Environment reacts: people uneasy, objects tremble
 4 [Heavy] – Constant effects; Coordinators notice
 5 [Intense] – Heavy air; the system is watching
 6 [CASCADE] – All echoes manifest. Cannot act 1 round. Resets to 3.

8. Glossary

Echo — The permanent, irreversible trace that a decision leaves in the world. Manifests physically: cracking surfaces, heavy air, distorted sound, flickering light.

Coordinator — A faceless system agent. They watch, note, and do not explain. When a Coordinator watches something and does nothing, the system has already decided.

Correction — The system's "adjustment" of an individual. A seating change, a timetable alteration, a separation from friends. Never explained. Never questioned.

Alignment — The system's goal. Harmony through conformity. Presented as protection, as order, as what is best for everyone.

The Quieting — The ultimate system response. The Quieted person can still speak, but no one hears meaning. People begin to forget their presence. Profoundly disturbing without physical harm.

The Quieters — The forces that enforce Alignment. Not individuals — a system. They believe they are right. This moral ambiguity is the point.

Resonance states — Velos (speed), Pondera (weight), Reson (simulation), Nul (filter). Temporary psycho-physical responses to extreme situations.

The Grey School — A UK secondary school. The primary setting. Every space is a tuning zone.

Coming in the Full Product Line

These concepts appear in the Player Book, GM Book, and Adventure Modules:

- **Weight Transfer** — Burdens pass between people, always creating new cost for both parties.
 - **The City of Arz** — The school's system expanded to city scale.
 - **The Silent Child** — A figure who speaks so rarely that a single sentence is seismic.
 - **Echoism** — The philosophical framework underlying the universe: existence defined by the echoes it produces.
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What Comes Next

This Starter Kit is a first taste. The full Wheel and Balance RPG line expands every system you have just played:

Player Book — Full character creation from scratch. Expanded resonance rules with advanced triggers and cascading states. Bond mechanics. Character advancement through decisions, not experience points.

Game Master Book — School system tools. Coordinator procedures and escalation clocks. How to build your own Grey School locations. NPC creation. Campaign structure for 6-12 sessions.

Adventure 1: The Seating Chart — A full-length adventure that picks up where "First Day" ends. The cracks are spreading. Ben has stopped coming to school. And there is a new name on the Coordinator's clipboard.

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- Adventure 1: The Seating Chart
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 - Game Master Book
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The Wheel turns. The Balance weighs. The Echo remains.

What will you choose?