

Welcome to The Hunt, set on the colony world of Snowflake. Snowflake is the second planet of Alpha Centauri B, and the first permanent extrasolar human colony. Four hundred and fifty years and a few months have passed since the events chronicled in "H-1". It is now 2490, Earth has been ruled by magical girls - the Queen of the Earth and her Hierarchy of Ladies - for most of the last four centuries. The Earth Confederation is a loose organization with local governments holding considerable power, but even the most democratic regions tend to elect Ladies and Princesses to the highest positions. It's nearly a permanent aristocracy, mitigated by the Earth Magic's preference for seemingly choosing its avatars at random. Snowflake is much the same way - Duchess Football rules by the Queen's decree, and until now there have been no local magical girls.

Snowflake has been extraordinarily successful. In sixty-five years the settlement has grown by birth and immigration from just twenty thousand to 1.4 million, its quality of life and technological development has advanced well ahead of all projections, and no obstacles to the world someday growing to become Earth's peer at the core of an interstellar empire.

The colony is no perfect paradise, however. Repeated waves of disease, immigration pressures, uneven distribution of imports, generational divides, and uncertainties about future leadership have given local politics a sour edge over the last few decades. Something has been spooking the wildlife, and the farmsteaders and prospectors on the fringes of the colony swear they've started to see impossible blobs of light darting to and fro, always disappearing when a Lady comes to investigate.

The emergence of Snowflake's first magical girls has put the colony in a good mood - everyone sees in these teenagers a promise of a hopeful future: The aging Snowflake Hierarchy has found its heirs, someone to carry on their legacy and their burdens. The youth of Snowflake, perpetually shut out of the colony's highest leadership, finds its foot in that door. Likewise, politicians of all stripes see their chance to influence the next two centuries' worth of policy. The long-repressed local democracy movement sees potential saviors - or perhaps just a new face of oppression. And everyone sees them as the colony's ultimate protectors - whatever is making those peepmice go crazy surely can't stand up to good old-fashioned Earth Magic.

Can they live up to all those expectations, or even any of them? Will the lure of power corrupt or purify? What untold forces has the colony provoked? And will they be able to find dates for the spring prom?

At the start of the game your character has just discovered her or his powers and is joining the colony's hastily-created boarding school for magical girls. Takeuchi Third Memorial High School is located on the inland edge of Malletfall, the former capital and still the largest city on Snowflake. Only the player characters are actual MG's - the school is filled out with other students to try to give you and your successors a "chance to feel normal". We'll see how well that works out.

Character creation:

(yes this is somewhat cadged from my former games - the good old chargen document that keeps on genning)

Your player character is a high school student - I would suggest 11th-year, though there is some flexibility on the exact age and grade - who has become an MG. In previous games in this setting the male-female balance of PC's has been tightly regulated to keep the girls in the majority, while the precise title/focus of characters (Lady Mallet, Lady Chopsticks, Lord Cape) has been entirely unregulated. In The Hunt, there are no restrictions on gender, but the MG's theme needs to be nature-based (both Snowflake and Earth-descended plants and animals are fair game, as long as they exist on Snowflake), agriculture-based, or geology-based. Check with me early about your theme so you don't waste effort.

Before you firm up any design, you need to be familiar with the source material. Read the setting documents. Reading the old Hunters and H-1 logs is probably not necessary, though it will give you a feel for how the world works in this game, and a little of how we've gotten to this point. Also wise would be seeking out a Hunters or H-1 player (if you are not one) and getting at least the general details of how the Ningyo War and postwar-era Hierachy behaved.

Hunters was run on dX because of the advantages it afforded above BESM 2e, notably the more-flexible attributes and the lowered statistical granularity that larger dice offered. Since then we've seen the release of BESM 3e. I don't like everything about 3e, and it's going to take some adjustment (again) to work through the new CP scaling and all the consequences of roll-to-target and direct opposed combat rolls... but we're going to use it almost entirely as printed. If you're used to 2e or dX, don't panic - the way the system plays is mostly the same, and you'll recognize the chargen process instantly. If you need the rulebook, talk to me and I can make arrangements.

I'm still feeling out the way characters scale in 3e, but from my back-of-the-envelope number crunching and some quick-and-dirty conversions of existing characters, I believe that we're looking for character designs around 290 CP. That is an extremely rough figure and may go up or down. Characters in this game are intended to be Junior Ladies - fresh on the scene, and not yet up to their full adult powers.

Stat average is vital when building a BESM character for that all-important CV number... but the roll-opposed combat system means that what is important is the relative difference between your CV and the opposition's. This makes CV inflation and autohit concerns mostly moot, so in principle you could make your stats as high as you like. (Well, almost.) The minimum base CV I would recommend for this campaign (in your transformed state) is 6. A build using lower stats and boosting CV with attributes is possible. Of special note is your Soul stat - shock rolls are used in this setting, and under 3e rules there is a significant functional breakpoint at 5 - Soul of 4 or less is a potentially severe disadvantage.

Effective ACV (the number added to your attack roll after figuring in all modifiers) values should generally fall into the 7-10 range. Please consider carefully before designing a character with no attacks with typical effective ACV of 8 or better. Plan your DCV's accordingly.

Use the Futuristic Soft SF column on the skills attribute cost table. There is no constraint on how much you spend on "skills", though one would expect most characters in The Hunt to not have extremely deep or wide knowledgesets due to their age and the somewhat limited environment on the young colony world.

3e has no combat skills in the same way that dX and 2e did. In their place are Ranged and Melee Attack and Defense attributes, and they are just as important as the combat skills were. Unfortunately, your character is young and relatively untrained, so they really shouldn't have a lot of total levels in these.

You must take (at least) two levels of 9 CP Alternate Form (and most MG designs in this setting take far more than that) to represent your character's transformed state. The alternate form must include (at least) one level of the 10 CP Regeneration. It is possible to put exotic (magical/superhuman/whatever) attributes on the untransformed form, though these should not be major powers.

You also must take a level of Companion to represent your EI - the simulated personality of your handheld computer system. This must be in your basic, human form, not in your Alternate Form. EI's will be played partly by the player, and occasionally by the GM. They may manifest with holographic avatars, or simply pipe up from the handhelds' little speakers. In combat, an EI may not do damage. An EI may not be built to more than 180 CP. To build the EI, begin with the following template:

EI template: 62 CP

+1 Body (Low Body is appropriate, but maybe your handheld is armored.)
+3 Mind (Very likely you'll want to buy more Mind)
1 Soul (It's a computer. Be glad it gets even 1 Soul. Don't try to give it more)
Projection 2 (LQ holoprojector)

(Skills - any skills - are appropriate in an EI build. Attributes can be added, but need to be justified in terms of computer functionality. No Restrictions are allowed.)

The game will be played with energy points - thus, you are encouraged to design at least some powers for your character with the linked "Deplete" restriction. In 3e they've finally got this balanced correctly for attacks. Unfortunately the ongoing-effects table is still utterly bogus. Here is my replacement table (which is generated by shifting the duration side down three notches against the cost side):

1 EP per two rounds:	-1 CP
1 EP per round:	-2 CP
2 EP per round:	-3 CP
5 EP per round:	-4 CP
10 EP per round:	-5 CP
20 EP per round:	-6 CP
50 EP per round:	-7 CP

This does not make adequate provision for attributes used continuously out of combat, so we will use a second table (and this one is experimental and may change if someone makes a good enough argument):

1 EP per minute:	-1 CP
2 EP per minute:	-2 CP
5 EP per minute:	-3 CP
10 EP per minute:	-4 CP
20 EP per minute:	-5 CP
50 EP per minute:	-6 CP

Item is a powerful attribute which can effectively multiply the points available. As such it can be badly abused. I will not set a hard rule on how "large" items can be, but it will be watched carefully. Magical items and weapons are an interesting and essential part of the genre and setting, and I absolutely do not mean to discourage their inclusion. Misplacing, losing, or having items stolen are also integral genre components... and putting the item in your Alternate Form will not preclude those scenarios.

When I originally wrote these rules for Hunters in plain BESM 2e, I had intended to force characters to take a level of Magic. dX and 3e lack this attribute, and I don't want to force you to take "spell lists", but remember that the canonical magical girl has a limited number of attacks or powers that are typically specific and announced.

Weapon attributes are appropriate, of course. Especially with fancy names. I don't want the damage cap to be quite as firm as it was in Hunters and the first incarnation of H-1. Still, if an attack is likely to do more than 55 points of damage on demand, there need to be inherent limitations to its utility. The general purpose of this is to keep the damage scaling in hand and to keep the PC's better balanced. I will be reasonable, but not easily persuaded on this matter in chargen negotiations: you have been warned.

There will be advancement of player characters during this game. This will come in several forms, and will be discussed when it happens. If your initial build has some flaws or is underpowered, there will be adjustment and compensation - though it may not happen the way you planned it.

A character description and history are required. This need not be exhaustive (my character sheets often run to five hundred-ish words or more) but the more there is to work with on the GM end the more there is to play with on the player end. A particularly good charsheet will get you up to five bonus CP.

There is no time slot yet planned for The Hunt. I've had several people indicate that Saturday afternoon, the slot where Hunters and H-1 ran, is not possible. I have my own reasons for disliking that slot, but we'll see what the consensus looks like in a few weeks.