VANILLA ORC

What is this?

Vanilla ORC is the basic ruleset which all Vajra RPGs are based on. It is made up of two parts:

Chapter One is the basic character creation system. Each RPG that uses ORC will have its own character classes, skills, equipment, advantages and disadvantages.

Chapter Two is the Organic Rule Components rules of play. ORC was designed specifically:
-To have every rule work from the same basic mechanic.
-For dramatic, character-centered, ultra-realistic play.
-To allow character classes that are realistically flexible.
-To allow scaled complexity (so if a PC wants to cook something it takes a simple roll, but if a PC is hacking a computer he or she has several strategies and possible modifiers).
-To have combat be realistically lethal and give players many real-life strategies.

For a more playable version of the ORC rules, see Modern-ORC, the ORC rules plus modern world careers, skills, equipment and bonus characteristics.

Table of Contents

Modern-ORC is published by Vajra Enterprises, Eureka California

Written and Designed by Brian St.Claire-King

Art by Pablo Palameque

Editorial Assistance by Tiffany St.Claire-King

Chapter One - Character Creation

Step One - Character Concept

Character Creation in Brief

Step 1 – Character Concept: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, drives, etc.

Step 2 – Attributes: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 Bonus Point).

Step 3 – Character Class: Choose character class. This sets income and cost for mundane skills. Some character classes cost or give Bonus Points.

Step 4 – Skills: Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by Character Class. Can buy 1 to 5 levels of any skill.

Step 5 – Equipment: Buy stuff with money from Character Class.

Step 6 – Bonus Characteristics: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages. Max. 30 BP of disads.

Step 7 – Character Advancement: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

Advanced Character Creation

The order of character creation steps listed here is recommended for people not yet completely familiar with the character creation system. Advanced players may want to take it in a different order, e.g. start with bonus characteristics, then day job, then skills and equipment, then attributes. Although not as simple, taking character creation out of order can be more flexible.

Using Bonus Points

PCs start with 0 Bonus Points (BPs). In order to buy something that **costs** BP the PC must choose some other character creation option that **gives** BPs.

Things that can give or cost BPs include: optional Advantages and Disadvantages particular to some Day Jobs and all the Advantages and Disadvantages in the Bonus Characteristics section.

For more on using Bonus Points, see Bonus Characteristics, p.6.

In Brief: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, drives, etc.

First, create a character concept. Character concept includes name, gender, appearance, history, personality and motivation. The GM may ask you the following questions to get a better sense of who your character is. Even if he or she doesn't ask these questions, it is a good idea that you know the answer to them.

Family- Where is the PC's family? Who are they and what do they do? What is the PC's relationship with them?

Gender/Sex- What is the PC's gender and sexual preference? Is the PC looking for any kind of long-term relationship, and if so then what kind? What does the PC find attractive in a man/woman? Does the PC have any kinks? Does the PC ever wish to have children?

Ethnicity- What is the PC's ethnic background? What kind of connection does the PC have to this background?

Personal History- Where did the PC grow up? What kinds of things did the PC do? What kind of people did the PC associate with? What fortunes and misfortunes befell the PC?

Appearance- What does the PC look like and how does the PC tend to dress? What message, if any, does the PC try to send with his or her personal style?

Step Two - Attributes

In Brief: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 Bonus Point).

Characters have 10 points per attribute (80 points, total) to distribute between the eight attributes listed below.

1 represents as low as the attribute can get without the person being actually disabled.

10 represents the average for a healthy young adult.

20 represents the highest a person can achieve without special training.

You must spend at least 1 point on each attribute and can spend a maximum of 20 attribute points on any attribute. Later character creation options can subsequently increase an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. If a character buys 20 Strength with attribute points and then takes an advantage which gives her +5 Strength, she will have 25 Strength. GMs must define the effects of negative attributes (for instance, -5 Strength may mean that the character can not move or even breathe unaided).

Agility (AGY)- This represents limberness, coordination, balance and speed of physical reactions. Agility is used when a character needs to move silently, keep his or her balance, scale a wall or get through a small space.

Awareness (AWR)- This represents the ability to notice things. This is not the acuity of one's senses, but the ability to be aware of important details. Awareness is used whenever characters need to notice a clue, avoid an ambush or sense attempts at mental manipulation.

Charm (CHM)- This represents likeability, social presence, persuasiveness and ability to read people. Charm is used when a character needs to put on an act, convince an audience or seduce someone. Just as Intelligence doesn't represent cleverness, charm doesn't prevent a character from saying something that gets the group in trouble or saying something that saves the day.

Endurance (END)- This represents stamina for intense physical exertion as well as the body's ability to fight disease and resist toxins. Endurance is used when a character needs to hold his or her breath, go on a long hike or survive a serious illness.

Sub-Attributes

This is an optional way to give even more depth to your character. You can choose to have the PC be very good or very bad at one specific aspect of an attribute. Say, for instance, a PC is not very strong (5 Strength) but his profession causes him to use his hands a lot so the player wants the character to have strong hands. For one extra attribute point the PC will have +3 to any Strength roll using hands alone. For an opposed strength roll to keep a hold of something, for instance, the PC would have 8 Strength. The PC might also want a bad back (-3 Strength) which would give one attribute point but the PC would have only 2 Strength for lifting and carrying objects. Available sub-attributes are listed below each attribute.

Sub-Attributes can not be used to raise an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Sub-Attributes move with the attributes, so if the character in the preceding example works out and increases his Strength by 7 (to 12 STH) he would now have 15 STH with his hands and 9 STH with his back.

AGY:

Good/Poor Balance: ±3 to any save vs. loss of balance.

Good/Poor Precision: ±3 to any roll which involves manipulation of small objects.

Good/Poor Climbing: ±3 to any climbing roll.

Good/Poor Prowling: ±3 to any prowling roll.

AWR:

Good/Poor Introspection: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice anything going on in the character's own head.

Good/Poor People Sense: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice what people are doing, not doing or saying (this does not include sensing people prowling).

Good/Poor Back Watching: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice anything happening behind the character.

Good/Poor Detail Sense: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice small details on/in something the character is observing.

CHM:

Good/Poor Self-Confidence: ±3 to first impression rolls to present himself or herself as self-confident.

Friendly/Unfriendly: The character is ±3 to all first impression rolls to present himself or herself as a friendly or likeable person.

Good/Poor Seduction: ±3 to any seduction roll.

Good/Poor Actor: ±3 to any acting roll.

Good/Poor With Children: ±3 to any CHM roll involving children.

Good/Poor With Animals: ±3 to any CHM roll involving animals.

Good/Poor With Authorities: ±3 to any CHM roll involving people in positions of power.

Good/Poor With Plain Folk: ±3 to any CHM roll involving people who consider themselves simple or average.

Good/Poor With Outcasts: ±3 to any CHM roll involving people who consider themselves to be at the bottom of the social ladder.

END:

Good/Poor With Heat: ±3 to any save vs. heat exhaustion.

Good/Poor With Cold: ±3 to any save vs. hypothermia.

Good/Poor At Disease Contraction: ±3 to any save vs. disease contraction.

Good/Poor At Fighting Off Diseases: ±3 to any save vs. disease progression.

Good/Poor Lung Capacity: ±3 pooled END when the character is holding his/her breath.

Intelligence (INL)- This represents the speed at which the mind reacts, ability with abstract thought, learning, creativity and memory. Intelligence is used when a character wants to perform a knowledge based skill, understand a complicated philosophical text or win at a strategy game. Intelligence is not cleverness or wisdom: any PC can come up with a clever plan or completely miss the obvious no matter what their intelligence.

Speed (SPD)- This represents the ability to run and leap as well as the damage a character can do with a kick. The character's kick can do the following blunt damage:

SPD	1-5	6-15	16-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51+
DMG	½ blunt	1	1½	2	3	4	5

Strength (STH)- This represents upper body strength as well as the character's strength of grip and back muscles. A character would use strength to yank away someone's weapon, lift a heavy object or do damage with hand-to-hand weapons. Characters with high or low strength get plusses or minuses with blunt weapons as follows:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	41+
+ to DMG	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

The character's punches do the following blunt damage:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	41+
DMG	0	½	1	2	3	4	5

Willpower (WIL)- This represents the ability to resist emotions, discomfort and psychological manipulation. Will would be used to control emotions, resist pain, stay conscious or battle against mind control.

Health Attributes

Characters also have 12 points to divide up between three additional attributes: Body, Blood and Incapacity (minimum 1, maximum 6).

Body Points (BDY) represents the amount of blunt damage a character can take before they start losing Blood Points (when all BDY is gone, blunt weapons do double their normal damage to BLD).

Blood Points (BLD) represents the amount of damage characters can take to their vital systems (heart, blood supply, etc.) before they are mortally wounded. When all BLD is gone, damage is done to INCY.

Incapacity (INCY) represents the character's ability to act even after taking fatal injuries. After a mortal injury, damage is done to INCY (END is also lost). When a character's INCY reaches 0, he or she becomes incapacitated, unable to fight or perform any other useful action. See the section on Health Attributes (p.13) for more information.

Sub-Atttributes (continued)

INL:

Quick/Slow Thinker: ±3 to any roll based on the speed of mental reaction (not including combat).

Good/Poor Memory: ±3 to any roll to remember or memorize something.

Good/Poor Skepticism: ±3 to any roll to figure out illusion, hallucination, forgery, etc.

SPD:

Good/Poor Jumping: ±3 to any jumping roll.

Good/Poor Kicking: The character does kick damage as if they had ±3 SPD.

Good/Poor Long-Distance Running: ±3 to SPD when the PC is running long distances.

Good/Poor Sprinting: ±3 to SPD when the PC is sprinting.

STH:

Good/Poor Back: ±3 to any STH rolls to lift heavy objects.

Good/Poor Hands: ±3 to any STH rolls using only the character's grip.

Good/Poor Bulk: ±3 to any STH roll using the whole weight of the character's body (e.g. a football tackle, knocking down a door, etc.)

Good/Poor Punching: The character does punch damage as if he or she had ±3 STH.

WIL:

Good/Poor With Addiction: ±3 to any WIL roll to resist psychological addiction or drug cravings.

Good/Poor With Drug Effects: ±3 to any WIL roll to save vs. drug effects.

Weak/Strong Stomach: ±3 to any save vs. nausea.

Good/Poor With Distracting Pain: ±3 to save vs. distracting pain (see p.12).

Good/Poor With Shocking Pain: ±3 to any save vs. shocking pain (see p.12).

Good/Poor Temper: ±3 to any save vs. anger.

Good/Poor Sense of Self: ±3 to any opposed WIL vs. WIL roll.

Step Three - Character Class

In Brief: Choose character class. This sets income and cost for mundane skills. Some character classes cost or give Bonus Points.

Choose the character class your character will begin the game as. This will decide the character's standing in society, his or her money, educational resources and access to special training and abilities. Character classes can change in the course of the game (see Disciplines, p.8).

Every Character class will have the following:
-A description of the character class: how people get to be in that character class, what people in that character class do to survive, how others in the game world view members of that character class.
-The costs to buy levels in each skill category for members of that character class.
-The starting funds and weekly income for members of that character class.
-Suggested reading, equipment and/or skills.

A charscter class might also have:
-Speciaal equipment the PC gets free, can get for cheaper than other PCs, or that the PC can buy but that other PCs can't.
-Special advantages and disadvantages unique to members of that character class. Some are mandatory (every member of that character class has them, and PCs neither spend or recieve points on them). Others are optional (PCs can buy them or get points by taking them, just like a regular advanntage or disadvantage).
-Skills the PC gets free or can buy at a discounted rate, or skills only available to members of that character class.

Step Four - Skills

In Brief: Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by Character Class. Can buy 1 to 5 levels of any skill.

Every character begins with 100 skill points to buy skills with. Each Character Class has a list of skill costs for skills. Each category of skills has a cost. That number represents the number of skill points it costs to buy one level in any skill from that category. These costs are based on how easily characters of that class have access to teachers of those skills or can teach themselves.

Skills are bought in levels from 1 to 6 with 1 representing a hobby level and 6 representing mastership at the skill. PCs can not buy level 6 for a starting character without special permission from the GM. Each skill level above the first gives +4 to skill rolls using that skill.

Some skills have prerequisites. One or more levels of another skill must be taken before any levels of this skill can be taken. Prerequisites are listed at the beginning of each skill.

Each skill lists the attribute which is typically used with that skill. Combat skills list only "combat" since the attributes used depend on the fighting maneuver the PC attempts.

For example: *A Career Criminal, who can buy Criminal skills for 7 points each, buys 3 levels of Escape Artistry. Escape Artistry has a prerequisite of Lock Picking (2). Since the PC already has 2 levels of Lock Picking it's not a problem. Buying 3 levels of Escape Artistry will cost 21 skill points (3x7) and gives the PC a skill level of 3, meaning he will have +8 on all rolls using this skill (+4 for each level after level 1). Since Escape Artistry typically uses AGY, the PC will typically roll his AGY +8 +1d20 vs. the difficulty. If his AGY is 10, his "AV" (action value) could be recorded on the character sheet as 18, meaning he will roll 18 +1d20 for almost all Escape Artistry rolls.*

See the section on using skills (p.18) for more information.

Skill Description Features

The attribute this skill generally uses (roll Attribute + 1d20 +4/skill level above 1 and try to match the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do with the skill)

Cryptography (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (2). This is knowledge of mathematical theories behind modern cryptography and code-breaking techniques. Includes the ability to analyze, modify and create codes and attempt to break codes.
Easy (10): Do simple cipher by hand.
Moderate (20): Break a simple cipher.
Hard (30): Analyze the encryption on a Hard Drive.

A skill PCs must have before they can buy this skill (and the number of levels of the prerequisite skill the PC must have).

A series of examples showing things PCs might do with a skill at different difficulties.

Step five - Equipment

In Brief: Buy stuff with money from Character Class.

Using the starting funds set by character class, buy equipment form the catalog of equipment that comes with each ORC RPG setting. In most ORC RPGs there will be a list o equipment each PC gets free based on therir income level (weekly income). For instance, in a modern day game a certain income level might provide a PC with an apartment, a used car, a fridge full of food, some clothes, etc.

In some settings, some equipment might not be available to all characters. For isntance, a Black Market skill might be required to purchase certain illegal items.

Step Six - Bonus Characteristics

In Brief: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages. Max. 30 BP of disads.

In addition to the advantages and disadvantages that come with the game setting, you can gain or spend Bonus Points in the following ways:

Extra or Fewer Attribute Points:
1 Bonus Point = 1 Attribute Point

Extra of Fewer Health Attribute Points:
3 Bonus Points = 1 Health Attribute Point

Extra or Fewer Skill Points:
1 Bonus Point = 3 Skill Points

Extra or Less Money:
1 Bonus Point = Some amount of money (e.g. $500)

PCs cannot take more than 30 BP worth of disads without special permissions from the GM.

Example: *A PC starts with only 70 Skill Points (-30 Skill Points = +10 Bonus Points), $1,500 less than normal (-$1,500 = +3 BP) but starts with 7 Health Attribute Points (+1 Health Attribute Point = -3 BP) and 90 Attribute Points (+10 Attribute Points = -10 BP).*

Some Sample Advantages:

Pain Experienced (Costs 2 BP)- At some point in his or her past, the PC experienced quite a lot of pain for quite a while. The PC has learned how to handle pain and act normally while in pain. Gives +5 to save vs. pain.

Physically Attractive: Minor (Costs 2 BP)- The PC has physical features which make him or her more attractive to people who are interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives +4 to seduction rolls.

Sense of Direction (Costs 1 BP)- The PC has an inherent ability to sense what direction he or she is facing. Roll this as an AWR feat with a difficulty based on the number of cues available (things like being indoors, being hit in the head or being in another part of the world would increase the difficulty).

Gaining or Losing Bonus Characteristics in Game Play

The simple rule to remember here: character creation is meant to be fair, game play is not.

Advantages and disadvantages can be rewarded or taken away during game-play as part of the adventure with no points being exchanged at all. For instance, a player may buy the Contact: Wealthy advantage, only to have that wealthy contact killed during the first five minutes of game play, meaning that advantage is permanently lost and the points spent are wasted. On the other hand, the PC may save someone's life and gain the equivalent of Contact: Law Enforcement within five minutes of game-play. A PC might start with Addiction: Heroin, and declare in the first minutes of game play that she is quitting. Assuming the PC can resist the cravings rolls, she will be rid of that disadvantage.

To reiterate: Anything that the PC does or anything that happens to the PC in-game can remove advantages and disadvantages, or can give special advantages and disadvantages to the PC regardless of the points spent during character creation.

Some Sample Disadvantages:

Allergy: Deadly (Gives 4 BP)- The PC has a serious sensitivity to some common food item (e.g. peanuts, wheat, eggs, milk, soy, shellfish, tomatoes, fish). If the PC ingests even a little he or she will be incapacitated within 10 minutes and will die within 1 hour without medical attention. An intramuscular epinephrine injection ($40) can help stave off death.

Bad Temper (Gives 1 BP)- The PC has always had trouble dealing constructively with anger. Any time the PC is angered, annoyed or frustrated the PC must make a save vs. anger to avoid lashing out (either verbally or physically). The PC is -10 to all saves vs. anger.

Crush (Gives 1 BP)- The PC is in love with someone who doesn't return those feelings. The PC may eventually get over these feelings or may be able to finally woo the subject of his or her affections.

Step Seven - Character Advancement

In Brief: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

Gaining XP

Experience allows the PC to grow as a person and improve himself or herself. Experience is measured by Experience Points (XP). XP is awarded at the end of a gaming session, based on the PC's performance in the adventure. Some things player characters can do during a game to gain experience points:

Completing Adventure Goals- Whatever the goals of the given adventure are, the PCs should be awarded points to the degree that they completed the goals successfully. (5 to 25 XP)

Staying Alive- In many adventures, the PCs are thrown into dangerous situations and the PCs get XP by surviving. (1 to 5 XP) The PC may also get points if every PC involved in the adventure survives. (2 XP)

Making Friends- With PCs of such differing backgrounds it is a commendable achievement when two PCs become good friends. (5 XP)

Discovering Secrets- Whenever a PC finds out a major secret about the game world, he or she will earn XP. (5 XP)

Personal Growth- This is awarded when something happens that makes the PC wiser or more mature or when the PC realizes something important about his or her life. Usually this means that the character has overcome (or has decided to overcome) some personal flaw. It could also mean a wider outlook. XP should only be awarded if this is a permanent change, not just a temporary deviation. This is used to award depth and change in PCs. (5 XP)

Good Roleplaying- GMs can award experience points to players who show empathy for or commitment to the psychology and worldview of their PCs by doing something that fits very well with that character. This is a good way for GMs to compensate players that hurt their characters for the sake of realism (e.g. not using knowledge that the player has but the character wouldn't). (2 XP)

Making The World A Better Place- The PC will earn XP any time he or she helps some person or people. This could mean saving a life, providing food to hungry people, teaching someone to read, etc. This can also mean helping people by less direct means, e.g. eliminating a killer and therefor saving the lives of anyone that monster would have otherwise preyed upon. (1 to 10 XP)

Clever Plan- Whenever a PC comes up with an idea which is clever and also works (has good effects) the GM will award XP. (4 XP)

Worked Well as Group- The GM will award XP whenever the PCs show that they can work together well and do things they would be unable to do alone. (4 XP)

Losing XP

Just as various types of successes will add to the XP earned in an adventure, some failures can cause the PCs to get less XP than they would have otherwise. XP for an adventure can not drop below zero.

Failing at Adventure Goals- The GM may deduct XP if the PC fails at the goals of the adventure (especially if the goals were very easy or very important). (1 to 5 XP)

Splitting Up Group- If the PC chose to split up the party and it hurt the party to do so, the PC will lose XP. (5 XP)

Making the World a Worse Place- Anything that hurts people or otherwise makes the world worse will cost XP. (1 to 5 XP)

Player Character Death- If one of the PCs in the party dies, each surviving PC will lose XP. (5 XP)

Spending XP

Generally, XP can be spent as soon as it is received. The only exception is when so little time has passed in the game universe between one game session and another that it is ridiculous to think that the PC might have improved in that way. Example: *The PCs are in the countryside, on the run from FBI agents and sleeping in barns and cornfields. When a game session ends, the GM awards 16 XP. One player decides that her character will gain one level in the skill Science: Chemistry. The GM rules that since the PC has no access to Chemistry study materials or teachers she must wait until she gets back to civilization to improve the skill.*

XP can be spent as follows:

Skill Points: 2 XP = 1 Skill Point

Attribute Points: 10 XP = 1 Attribute Point.

Health Attribute Points: 30 XP = 1 Health Attribute Point.

Attributes cannot be raised above their max. cap of 20. Negative sub-attributes can be removed (at a cost of 1 attribute point each) but new positive sub-attributes cannot be purchased. Health Attributes cannot be raised above their max. cap of 6.

XP cannot be used to change Psychodynamics. If a PC's personality changes, the PC can shift around points between psychodynamics but cannot reduce or increase the overall number of points.

Experience Levels

In addition to spending XP, players should keep track of the total XP a PC has earned, spent or unspent. This will allow players to more easily compare the relative power level of different characters. An "experience level" is 100 XP, so we could say that a PC with 252 XP is "Level 3."

Level advancement can also be used as a rough estimate of time. Each experience level represents six months to two years in the PC's life.

Disciplines

A PC's character class is what the PC does every day. For some, a character class is solely a means of making a living. For others, the character class is a cause or path that just happens to include a means of making a living.

With each character class comes a discipline. While the PC is spending his or her days being the character class, the PC is also gaining experience as a member of that character class. For example: *Dolma is a first-level sorcerer. She spends her days traveling throughout Tibet, making a living by hiring herself out. While she travels, she also seeks out books and teachers that would help her improve her skills. Because she is a sorcerer, she has contacts in the world of sorcery and has an easier time finding books and teachers. She can gain new sorcery skills with less work than a non-sorcerer could. Being a sorcerer is her character class (what she does for a living) and her discipline (what she is getting better at). When she gains 100 XP she will become a level 2 sorcerer.*

However, a PC can choose to have a different discipline from his or her character class. In order to do this, the PC must work out certain problems during game-play:

Finding a teacher or study materials.

Finding any equipment which is necessary for the discipline. E.g. one needs sorcerous components if one is studying to be a sorcerer.

Dealing with the social consequences of having another discipline. E.g. if the PC is an aristocrat but is studying to be a sorcerer, the PC must keep this fact hidden or may face being disowned by the family.

As soon as the GM rules that the PC has adopted another discipline, the PC can spend XP on skills with the skill costs specific to that discipline. When the PC gains 100 XP, the PC will gain a level as that discipline.

Once a PC has gained one level in a discipline, the PC has all the knowledge and skills to switch to that as his or her character class. Again, the PC may have to deal with a number of social problems. Once the PC has adopted a new character class he or she gets the income, lifestyle and duties associated with that character class.

If a PC looses his or her ability to be one discipline before gaining 1 level in another discipline, the PC will have to deal with being jobless. The PC will have to deal, in game, with finding food and shelter.

Discipline Requirements- There are some character classes (and by extension, some disciplines) that require the PC have been born with a special ability. PCs can not just choose to study to become one of those. Other character classes have easier discipline requirements: PCs only need to find a skilled member of that character class willing to train them, and pay for all the necessary equipment.

Special Disciplines- There are also a few special disciplines that do not have a character class associated with them. Think of these as an optional specialty. They are something a person may do as a hobby or to gain a little extra money, but cannot make a living from.

A sample discipline:

Nomadic Orator- This is a person trained to help nomadic people form oral contracts and settle disputes. Often, mediation is the only way to stop a blood feud between nomadic tribes. Nomadic orators are typically either Nomads who are gifted at speaking, or monks from red hat monasteries who are trained in settling disputes.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a master (level 4 or better) orator to train with.

Skill Costs: Combat 8, Crafts 8, Divination 10, Exorcism 10, Folk Knowledge 6, Medicine 11, Sorcery 18, Scholarship 16, Tantra 20, Travel 8, Weathermaking 18, Western Knowledge 24. The skills Etiquette, Logic, Oath Binding, Oratory, Philosophy, Storytelling, Teaching, Tibetan Law, and Trading cost 4 points per level.

Level Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have 12 CHM and Oratory (2). For level 2, the PC must have 15 CHM and Oratory (4).

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC can gain +10 Srang per month doing jobs as a nomadic orator. At level 2, the PC can gain +20 Srang per month.

Chapter Two - Organic Rule Components

Basic Mechanics

In Brief- Roll attribute + 1d20 vs. diffituly to see if the PC can do something.

Rolls are made during game play for only one reason: to see if a character can do something he or she is trying to do. Rolls should only be made if a doubt exists as to whether the character can or can't do it. When a roll does need to be made, the basic form is this:

Applicable attribute + 1d20 (one twenty sided die) Vs. Action Difficulty

For instance: *Sam wishes to climb the side of a building to get to the roof. AGY is the attribute and the GM decides that the difficulty will be 20. Sam has an AGY of 9 and so needs to roll 11 or higher on his d20 in order to succeed. Say, however, that Sam has special gloves that gives him +8 to climbing – now he would roll AGY (9) +8 (gloves) + 1d20 vs. 20 (Sam only needs to roll a 3 or better).*

Sometimes the number of points by which the character succeeded (called "success") or failed (called "failure") effects what happens. For instance, the amount by which a climbing character succeeds may determine how quickly the PC climbs.

Dual Attribute Rolls- Some rolls use two attributes. For instance, to save vs. unconsciousness a PC uses Endurance (for physical energy) and WIL (for mental energy). When using two attributes, add the attributes together and divide by half (rounding up). So, if a PC with 3 END and 12 WIL wants to save vs. unconsciousness with moderate difficulty, END+WIL/2 is 7.5, rounded up it's 8, so the PC would roll 8 + 1d20 vs. 20.

Opposed Rolls- When characters are competing, two rolls are made and whoever has the best success (amount over the difficulty) wins. This represents that people competing may have different levels of ability but may also be trying things of different difficulty. A character trying to do a complicated martial arts maneuver must get a much higher roll to get the same amount of success as someone trying to do something as simple as a punch. Opposed rolls take the following form:

Character 1's Attribute + 1d20 vs. Difficulty 1

opposing

Character 2's Attribute + 1d20 vs. Difficulty 2

The difference between successes is called the "opposed success" (for the winner) or "opposed failure" (for the loser).

Example: *Amanda and Jovonne are playing blackjack. Amanda only wants to win (moderate difficulty: 20). Jovonne wants to win in a way that makes it appear that she won via dumb luck (hard difficulty: 30). Amanda rolls INL + 1d20 vs. 20 and beats 20 by 3 points. Jovonne rolls INL + 1d20 vs. 30 and beats 30 by 7 points. Jovonne wins with an opposed success of 4 (7-3) and Amanda loses with an opposed failure of 4.*

Sample Difficulties

0- Automatic Success
5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)
10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)
15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)
20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)
25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)
30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)
40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

Deliberate vs. Chance- GMs decide whether a roll is a "deliberate" or "chance" roll. This depends upon how much chance influences the outcome of the event (as opposed to skill and talent). On a chance roll, a roll of 1 on the 1d20 means automatic failure, a roll of 20 means automatic success. If a roll could not have succeeded except for rolling a 20, the roll should be considered to have succeeded by 1. In almost all cases, fighting rolls are chance.

Chance Actions: An action a PC needs to get done immediately, or when an action must either succeed or fail the first time the PC does it. Example: a climbing roll involving leaping from one building and grabbing on to the windowsill of another. No matter the AGY and climbing skills of the PC, the PC might succeed or might fail on a 1 or 20.

Deliberate Actions: The PC is trying to do something, but can stop if he or she is about to fail. These are typically slower actions. Example: PC is at the bottom of a wall and makes a climbing roll to see if he can climb up it. A failure here does not necessarily mean that the PC falls, it might just mean that the PC couldn't find a safe way to get up the wall. There are no automatic successes or failures here.

Savings Rolls- Save vs. X rolls are difficulty rolls to keep something from happening that will happen unless the roll succeeds. If a PC is making a save vs. unconsciousness then the PC will become unconscious unless he or she can meet the difficulty. A basic table of savings throws follows. See the section on using attributes for more information.

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	WIL
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Physiological Shock	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL

Opposed Savings Rolls- Occasionally, characters will be required to make opposed savings rolls. This means that even if they succeed (meet their difficulty) they will fail if they do not succeed at a level greater to or equal to the level that their opponent succeeds their difficulty. Example: *Sam hits Carl with a knockout strike. Carl beat his difficulty by 5. Now Sam not only has to beat a the normal difficulty for a save vs. unconsciousness, he has to beat it by 5 or more to avoid going unconscious.*

Using Attributes

Agility (AGY)

Use AGY for athletic type rolls: catching things, throwing things, blocking things (other than strikes), skipping rope, etc.

Balance- Use AGY for rolls to keep one's balance: walking a tightrope, moving on ice covered streets, racing down stairs, etc.

Climbing- Use AGY for climbing. See table for sample difficulties.

Climbing Difficulties (with no equipment)

10 (Easy) Tree with low branches.

20 (Moderate) Rocky cliff face.

30 (Hard) Sheer cliff face.

40 (Legendary) Glacial ice.

Landing- Characters can use AGY to save vs. falling or skidding damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.15). The first point of damage can be saved against at 10 difficulty, the second point at 20 difficulty, the third at 30, etc.

Prowling- AGY is also used for prowling (attempting to move through an area while not being noticed). The difficulty is based on several factors: the number of people and their proximity, how distracted or attentive they are, the amount of cover and whether there is darkness or a weather condition obscuring the PC, etc. The person being prowled against should get an opposed awareness roll.

Prowling difficulties

10 (Easy) Crawling through a field of tall grass with a wind to cover noises and an unsuspecting person nearby.

20 (Moderate) Sneaking up behind someone who isn't expecting anything.

30 (Difficult) Crawling in a gutter at night with several people searching for you.

40 (Legendary) Avoiding someone who is searching for you by staying directly behind them (may also require SPD based rolls).

Awareness (AWR)

Noticing- Use AWR when characters need to notice a detail too small to be included in the GM's description of the surroundings (e.g. the man standing next to you has a small needle mark on his neck) or a subtle sensation (e.g. a tiny scratching noise coming from inside the walls). AWR should not be used for a substitute for directed attention: if a player says "I'm looking carefully at the man next to me," he or she should be given every detail about that person with no AWR roll needed. AWR is also used to save vs. prowling (see above).

Manipulation- An AWR roll is also made to sense when something is trying to manipulate the PC's mind. The normal difficulty is 20. If the PC success is better than the manipulator's success, the PC realizes that he or she is being manipulated, and can try to resist the manipulation (usually with a WIL roll).

Charm (CHM)

Acting- Use CHM whenever a PC needs to put on some sort of act to fool other people.

Acting difficulties

10 (Easy) Making people think you're bored.
20 (Moderate) Making people think you're in pain.
30 (Difficult) Making people think you're not scared.
40 (Legendary) Making people think you're a genius.

First Impressions- CHM rolls can also be made to "modify" an NPC's reaction to the PC. The most common usage is to try to make people like the PC. A PC meeting a stranger who beats 20 on a CHM roll could choose to come off as slightly more confident, friendly, intelligent and likeable than he or she would have otherwise or more tough/mean/scary or as lowly/loser/wimp/nothing-to-be-worried-about. Note that this is "first impressions" only. After the PC has had more interaction with an NPC, the PC's actions and words become what the PC is judged by.

Persuasion- CHM is used to persuade NPCs to agree with an argument. First, PCs must roleplay arguing their case. Next, the GM decides the difficulty of the persuasion based on the logical strength of the argument. A very reasonable argument which makes a lot of sense might have a difficulty of 10. A very improbable argument that asks the listener to make a lot of assumptions might have a difficulty of 30. Don't even bother rolling if an argument is so strong or so weak that it is ridiculous to believe that someone would or wouldn't agree with it.

Seduction- Use CHM for seduction rolls. A successful roll means that the target wants to have sex with the PC. How and if the victim will act on those desires is up to the GM or player. The normal difficulty for a sexually healthy adult who has a preference for the PC's gender is 20 (moderate). GMs can also force players to make "passive seduction" rolls to see if a person is attracted to the PC even without the PC trying to seduce the person. Passive seduction rolls typically have +10 difficulty.

Endurance (END)

Pooled Endurance- Endurance is also used a measurement of the amount of energy a PC has to expend. The PC starts with a "pool" of points equal to his or her END. Any of the following removes 1 point from this pool:

Exertion: Any round in which the PC is doing some strenuous physical action, including combat or anything that uses at least half the PC's STH or SPD.

Oxygen Deprivation: Any round in which the PC can't or won't take in oxygen.

Mortal Injuries: Any round in which the PC is mortally wounded (is at 0 BLD, see p.13).

Other miscellaneous things (e.g. toxins) can also remove pooled END.

When Pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated. The PC can not stand, can not make fighting actions or reactions and can not initiate any kind of communication. The PC will fail at any roll involving AGY, END, SPD or STH.

Example: *Tim has 9 END. He was just shot (bringing his BLD to 0) and he is in a room filled with poison gas. He is holding his breath and running as fast as he can (he hopes to jump out of the window). Each round he loses 3 pooled END, which means he has 3 actions before he becomes incapacitated. After two rounds he gets hit in the head with a rock and must make a save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls 1d20 plus an average of his WIL and END (which is currently 3).*

Fatigue- END can also be used more slowly by activities which do not use half the PC's STH or SPD but are tiring nonetheless (e.g. jogging, manual labor, even standing for long period of time). Example: *Juan has a SPD of 10. If he runs at 5 or faster he will lose 1 END per round, so he decides to run at SPD 4. The GM decides that he will lose 1 pooled END for every 5 minutes running at this speed.*

Rest- When Pooled END is lost to strenuous activity, it returns at 1 point per round when the PC is resting. Pooled END lost to oxygen deprivation returns at 1 point per round when the PC begins receiving oxygen again. Pooled END lost to fatigue returns at the same rate it was lost (e.g. if Juan loses 4 END by jogging for 20 minutes, he will regain it with 30 minutes of rest). If a PC ever reaches 0 END (incapacity) that PC is -1 END for the next 24 hours. If a PC reaches 0 END five times, the PC will be at -5 END the next day.

Health- END is used to represent the body's general health. It is used to save vs. things like hypothermia, heat exhaustion, cardiac arrest (heart attack), shock and (along with WIL) unconsciousness. See Other Types of Damage (p.15) and Symptoms/Effects (p.15) for more.

Disease- END is also used to save vs. disease contraction and progression. See Disease (p.17) for more.

Intelligence (INL)

Speed of Thought- Among other things, INL represents how quickly a PC thinks (as opposed to AWR, which can measure how quickly a PC notices things, or AGY which represents how fast the PC's body reacts). A GM might sometimes ask PCs and NPCs to make opposed INL rolls to find out who figures out something first. INL (along with AWR) is used to determine initiative in combat (see p.12).

Skills- Intelligence is used to perform intellectual or creative skills. See Skills (p.18) for more. In Brief: roll INL +1d20 +4 for each skill level above the first vs. the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do.

Speed (SPD)

Leaping- SPD is used for leaping rolls. The difficulty for making a leap is the distance (in ft.) times two (or, 6 difficulty per meter), so a ten foot leap would have a 20 difficulty. Height differences, inclines, etc. can increase the difficulty.

Running- SPD also sets the maximum speed the character can run. SPD is approximately equal to MPH. 1 MPH = ~1.5 ft./second. Since one combat round is approximately half a second, that means that a PC running at max SPD can run approximately .75 ft. per combat round per SPD. So a PC with 10 SPD can run 7.5 ft. in one combat round.

In metric, a PC can run 1.5 kmph per SPD, or ¼ meters per combat round per SPD. So a PC with 10 SPD can run 15 kmph or 2.5 meters in a combat round.

Sprinting- A SPD + 1d20 roll can be made for a momentary (1 combat round) burst of extra SPD. Doing so uses 2 points of pooled END.

Strength (STH)

STH is used in opposed strength rolls, for instance, if two people are grabbing for an object.

Strength Feats - Strength is also used for lifting heavy objects or any other "feat" of strength. Assuming a character can get a good grip on an object, the difficulty to lift the object should be the weight in lbs. divided by 10, so a 200 lb. object would be 20 difficulty to lift (a poorly grippable object or an object with poor balance would have a higher difficulty). Or, the difficulty to lift an object is equal to the weight in kg divided by 5. Some example STH feats:

STH Feat Difficulties

10 (Easy) Prying open a nut.

20 (Moderate) Breaking a wooden door

30 (Difficult) Pushing a horse around.

40 (Legendary) Pulling apart a cheap padlock

Encumbrance- STH also determines the amount that the PC can carry on his or her person without suffering a detriment to attributes. A PC's "Base Encumbrance" is equal to his or her STH times 5 lbs. (or STH times 2 kg). If the PC is carrying his or her base encumbrance, well distributed over the body, the PC is at -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 Pooled END per hour. For every 10 lbs. (5 kg) over Base Encumbrance, the PC is at an additional -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 additional Pooled END per hour. Example: *Nyorbu has a STH of 7. His base encumbrance is 7 x 5 lbs. or 35 lbs. If Nyorbu is carrying 25 lbs., so long as it is packed well, he suffers from no minuses. At 35 lbs. he is at -1 to AGY and SPD and loses 1 Pooled END every hour. If Nyorbu is carrying 85 lbs. (35 lbs. plus 50 lbs, or 5x10 lbs. over his Base Encumbrance) he is at -6 to SPD and AGY and loses 6 Pooled END per hour.*

Willpower (WIL)

Mind Control- Will is used for opposed rolls involving attempts mental domination or manipulation by a supernatural force (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the attack roll of the entity) or brainwashing (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the skill roll of the brainwasher). Note that in order to resist mental manipulation, the PC must first realize that someone or something is trying to manipulate him or her (see AWR, p.11).

Resistance- Will is used to resist anything that would cause the PC to act (or not act) against his or her will. PCs can make WIL based saves to resist, among other things, pain, nausea, fear, amnesia, hallucinations, delusions, euphoria, etc. See p.15 for a list of drug/disease/poison symptoms and effects and the consequences for failing saves against them.

Pain- One of the most common things PCs will have to resist is pain. Pain comes in two types:

Shocking Pain: This is pain that comes on suddenly (sometimes unexpectedly). It only lasts a second but it is so strong that it can cause the PC to be unable to act. A PC who fails to save by 1-9 loses his or her next action. A PC who fails by 10 or more loses his or her next action and reaction (see A Combat Round, p.21), meaning that the PC not only cannot act, but cannot defend himself or herself for one round.

Distracting Pain: This is pain that comes on more slowly and stays around longer, causing the PC to be distracted from anything he or she tries to do. When a PC fails a save vs. distracting pain, the PC suffers from a penalty equal to the amount he or she failed by. This penalty applies to any roll the PC has conscious control over (e.g. it would apply to an attempt to catch a ball, but would not apply to a save vs. disease contraction). Example: *Logos fails a save vs. distracting pain by 3. Logos now suffers from -3 to skill rolls, actions, reactions and anything else he has conscious control over.*

Drug Cravings- WIL is also used to save vs. drug cravings (the difficulty based on the drug) after becoming addicted. See Drugs (p.17) for more.

Health Attributes

In Brief- Blades and bullets remove BLD. Crushing removes BDY (then double BLD). 0 BLD = mortally wounded, but PC can keep going until INCY or Pooled END = 0.

The three health attributes, BLD, BDY and INCY are used whenever a character takes any kind of damage which moves the PC progressively closer to death. There are many types of damage which may cause pain, cripple or disfigure the PC, but don't move the PC significantly closer to being dead and so they do not remove BLD, BDY and INCY. The two main types of potentially lethal damage are blunt and bladed.

Blunt Damage- Blunt damage comes from that does crushing damage to the PC's tissues, like a club or a punch. Things like falling, being crushed, being rammed by a vehicle also do blunt damage. Blunt damage is subtracted from BDY. Once all BDY is gone, blunt damage is removed from BLD but the effect is doubled. So, if a person with 2 BDY is hit with something that does 5 blunt damage, all 2 BDY are taken away and the character suffers 6 damage to BLD (the remaining 3, times 2).

Bladed Damage- Bladed damage comes from anything which cuts, pierces or spills blood, including knives, guns, barbed wire, skidding, etc. Bladed damage goes straight to BLD. Any other type of damage which causes the PC to lose blood, be unable to take in oxygen, or does damage to the heart and lungs also does damage to BLD.

0 BLD- When a PC reaches 0 BLD it means he or she has been mortally wounded and without medical intervention he or she will eventually die. Even at 0 BLD or below, a PC can still do things, even fight, for a limited period of time. END effects how long the PC can continue to act, and INCY (Incapacity) effects how much more damage a PC can take before being immediately incapacitated.

Incapacity- When damage reduces a PC's BLD to 0, any further damage is done to INCY. INCY represents the character's last reserves of energy to act even after being mortally wounded. All further damage that would have done damage to BLD instead does damage to INCY. All further blunt damage does double damage to INCY. When a PC reaches 0 INCY it means he or she is incapacitated. An incapacitated person can not stand, make fighting actions or reactions, or initiate any kind of communication. An incapacitated PC may make moderate (20 difficulty) WIL rolls to be able to do very simple things (e.g. answer a question, crawl away from a fire) but cannot do anything that would require a roll (e.g. perform a skill).

As long as a PC still has Incapacity and pooled END, he or she can still act normally. As soon as a PC reaches 0 BLD, he or she loses 1 point of pooled END every round (in addition to END lost from other activities/circumstances). When pooled END reached 0, the PC is incapacitated.

After being incapacitated, the PC has his or her INCY + base END number of rounds before brain death occurs and no known means can revive the PC.

Armor

In Brief- AR is how much success a strike needs to bypass armor, PR is subtracted from any strike that hits the armor.

A piece of armor has two factors:

Armor Rating (AR) represents how much of the body the armor covers (or how difficult it is to hit an unprotected spot on the PC).

Protection Rating (PR) represents how much damage each type the armor can absorb.

Example: *Lake has a leather suit with an AR of 7 and a PR of 2 bladed. A strike (a combat action, see p.24) with a success of 7 or below will hit the armor and 2 bladed damage will be subtracted from the damage the strike would normally do. If the strike was with a weapon that does 4 bladed and 2 blunt damage, it would only do 2 bladed and 2 blunt damage. A strike with a success of 8 and above would hit an unprotected spot and do full damage.*

AR of 20 represents total coverage and no amount of success can bypass the armor.

Multiple Layers- When a PC is wearing multiple layers of armor, each layer acts upon the damage independently. One strike may hit one piece of armor and lose some of its damage, hit another piece of armor and lose more, then bypass a third piece of armor and not lose any more. In order for damage to reach a PC, it must either bypass or cut through every piece of armor the PC is wearing.

Armor Piercing- Some weapons and types of damage cut through armor better than they cut through other things (like people). An armor piercing bullet may be listed as doing: "5 bladed damage (pierces as 10)". When subtracting damage absorbed by the armor, treat the damage as if it is 10. When the damage gets to the PC, however, it can't do any more than 5. Note that poisons on a bladed object do full damage if any bladed damage gets through to the victim.

Non-Damaging Attacks- There are attacks which do not do damage, but do things like cause pain, cripple joints, knock people out, etc. Armor can protect from these attacks too. To determine whether armor protects from such an attack, figure out how much damage the attack would have done if it were a normal strike, then figure out if any of that damage would have gotten through. If none would have gotten through, then the non-damaging attack has no effect. Also, some attacks have a minimum damage (e.g. a knockout strike requires an attack that would do at least 2 blunt damage if it was a normal strike) and if armor reduces the "would be" damage to less than this then the strike doesn't work.

Example: *Inferno is trying to stab Hoshi in the nuts with an ice-pick (a pain/stun strike). Hoshi is wearing a leather motorcycle outfit that has AR 10, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt. Inferno's difficulty for the strike is 25, and he gets a 32, meaning he succeeds by 7. This success is less than the AR of the armor, so the armor's PR is subtracted. Had this been a normal strike, the ice-pick would have done 1 bladed (pierces armor as 3). So, 3 bladed PR is subtracted from 3 bladed (pierces as) damage, and the result is 0. No damage gets through, and the strike has no significant effect on Hoshi.*

Damage and Medical Effects

These are some sample medical effects one might observe in a PC who has taken bladed or blunt damage during combat:

1 blunt
A few ribs broken, a few internal organs bruised.

1 bladed
A large or deep cut which did not pierce internal organs but caused significant blood loss.

3 blunt
Several bones broken, internal organs badly damaged and bleeding heavily.

3 bladed
Internal organs lacerated, heavy blood loss.

6 blunt
Crushed skull or broken spine, massive internal bleeding.

6 bladed
Major arteries severed, internal organs pierced, massive blood loss.

9 blunt
Most bones broken, most internal organs destroyed, tissues pierced by jagged bone fragments.

9 bladed
Vital organs cut in half, blood spurting.

Healing

For every 7 day period, the average person regains the following:

1 point of BLD
½ point of BDY

Each of the following will slow the healing rate by one day:

Bad Damage Type- The PC was damaged by ragged, burn or radiation damage.

Botched 1st Aid- The PC never had any 1st aid performed on the injury, or an Emergency Medicine skill roll failed.

Infection- The PC contracts any disease, whether or not it is related to the injury.

Low END- The PC's base END is 5 or less.

Malnutrition- The PC cannot get food which satisfies basic nutritional requirements.

Mental Stress- The PC is put in constant fear of death or of not having the basic necessities of life met.

Physical Stress- The PC must do heavy labor or suffers from any amount of sleep deprivation.

Poor Hygiene- The PC is unable to keep wounds clean.

Reinjury- The PC take another injury while healing.

Other Types of Damage

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:

-BLD damage (1 pt. per pt. of burn damage).

-Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/pt. of damage).

-Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/pt. of damage).

-Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/pt. of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Dropped Objects: Does blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs or 5 kg) times number of stories. E.g. 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage.

Electricity: When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

-Paralysis (WIL+1d20 vs. 20/pt. of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.

-Unconsciousness (WIL/END+1d20 vs. 10 per pt. of damage)

-Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/pt. of damage), see Symptoms/Effects, thi page).

-Burn Damage: 1 pt. of burn damage for every 4 pt.s of electrical damage.

Explosion: Explosions can do one, two or all three of the following:

-Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)

-Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)

-Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

END Damage: Some toxins do END damage. Every pt. of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor typically cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Hunger: For every day without food: -1/4 BLD, -2 END.

Radiation: For every pt. of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per pt. of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.27). For each pt. of ragged damage taken the PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Sleep Deprivation: For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions at (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). Resting will not bring back any lost END. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Each of the following will speed up the healing rate by one day:

Alternative Therapy- Treatment by someone with 3 or more levels in Herbal Medicine or Acupuncture.

Excellent 1st Aid- Immediately after the injury, the PC was given 1st Aid that beat the skill roll difficulty by 10+.

Good Damage Type- The PC was damaged by electricity, cold, heat, hunger or thirst.

Healthy Diet- The PC eats meals prepared by a nutritionist (or someone with the Physical Therapy skill) to provide all the right nutrients a healing body needs.

High END- The PC's END is 15 or more.

Physical Therapy- The PC sees someone with the physical therapy skill for at least an hour a day (costs $150/wk.).

Unlimited Rest- The PC spends as much time as he or she feels like in bed.

Example: *Tim took 3 bladed and 2 blunt damage. The 1st aid was botched and Tim has to work a job doing heavy labor. On the other hand, he has a high END, has a physical therapist giving him therapy and cooking him nutritious meals. Altogether, he has 2 things that would slow his healing rate (physical stress, botched 1st aid) and 3 things which would speed the healing rate (physical therapy, healthy diet, high END). So, his net total is +1, meaning he gains back 1 BLD and ½ BDY every 6 days rather than 7.*

Drugs, Disease & Poisons

Symptoms/ Effects

Some drugs, diseases and poisons do simple damage to BLD, just like being stabbed. The majority, however, have effects or symptoms that hit people with different intensities (depending on how much of the drug or poison they've taken or how bad they have the disease). Some symptoms are simply annoying and can not be saved against (e.g. red puffy skin). Some symptoms reduce attributes and can not be saved (e.g. a disease might cause "weakness" and reduce STH and SPD by 5). Some symptoms can be saved against (e.g. a poison might cause Vomiting, which can be saved against with a WIL +1d20 save). Failing a save might mean the PC is incapacitated, or it may even kill the PC.

The following lists some common symptoms/effects, what attribute is used to save against them, and what happens to a PC who fails such a save:

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot recall anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets). 10+ failure means the PC cannot think of anything else (is oblivious to the world).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations. 10+ failure means the PC is unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Headache (WIL): -1 to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage (see p.15) as 1 night without sleep.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Physiological Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 1, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Lasts 1 round per point of failure unless specified otherwise.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Drugs

A drug can have different effects based upon when and how it is used. A drug can have:

-Normal dosage effects (a normal person taking one dose of the drug).

-Overdose effects (the effects of taking 2 times, 4 times and/or 8 times the normal dose).

-Withdrawal effects (the effects when the drug exits the user's system).

-Long term effects (the general effects of the drug for a habitual user).

-Long term withdrawal effects (the effects of withdrawal after habitual use).

-Tolerance (the extra amount an experienced user of the drug must take in order to have the same effect. When a person starts using a drug regularly, tolerance typically increases 10% per week until it reaches the maximum).

Most of these effects will have the duration of the effects listed. If a duration for overdose effects, long term effects, etc. is not listed, assume it is the same duration as the normal effects.

When a drug/poison effect requires a roll, e.g. "Effects: Vomiting (20)," the PC should roll once per hour, minute or day depending upon the unit of measurement used to describe the effects duration. E.g. "Effects: Vomiting (20) for 24 hours" means the PC should save vs. vomiting once every hour for 24 hours.

Addiction- Drugs can be addictive in one or both of the following ways:

Physiologically Addictive: Using the drug enough times changes the chemical balance of the brain and body such that the drug is needed for normal functioning. Without the drug the brain does not work right and addicts are driven to take more of the drug in order to "fix" things.

Psychologically Addictive: The addict's personality adjusts to the effects of the drug such that he or she can no longer handle reality (day-to-day life) without the drug.

Saving vs. Addiction- Each addictive drug lists the addiction difficulty for physiological and/or psychological addiction. To this difficulty is added the number of doses the person has taken without a significant break (of at least 24 hours). Saves are thus made as follows:

WIL + 1d20 vs. Psychological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

END + 1d20 vs. Physiological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

Cravings- Cravings first appear within 24 hours after an addicted character tries to stop using. PCs who are both psychologically and physiologically addicted must deal with 2 separate cravings. Cravings are saved against on WIL+1d20 vs. the Craving Difficulty of the drug. On the first successful save, the PC will not have another craving for 1 day. For each subsequent success, the time between cravings doubles. Most drugs do have special "triggers" which can cause a craving at any time, no matter how long it's been since the last craving.

Physiological cravings go away after a number of days equal to the Craving Difficulty. Psychological cravings never go away, they just get farther and farther apart.

If a PC fails a craving, he or she must do anything within his or her power to seek out the drug. If the PC gets a hold of the drug, he or she will use it immediately and will be back to a one day period between cravings. If a PC is searching for his or her drug of choice but cannot find it, the PC can make a new save vs. cravings every hour to give up searching.

Example: *After seeing the thing in the closet and passing out, Max has felt something crawling around under her skin. To help deal with these sensations she starts drinking heavily. Alcohol has a Physiological Addiction Difficulty of 15, a Psychological Addiction Difficulty of 15 and a Craving Difficulty of 20. Cravings for Alcohol can also be triggered by anxiety. Max ends up taking 10 doses in the course of several days. At the end of that period the GM makes her save vs. Physiological Addition (at END + 1d20 vs. 15 +10 (the 10 doses). Max fails and is not physiologically addicted to alcohol. She must also make a save vs. Psychological Addiction (at WIL + 1d20 vs. 15 +10). She fails at this roll.*

Now she is physiologically and psychologically addicted. When she tries to stop using not only does she experience the withdrawal effects listed for the drug, but within 1 day she must two saves vs. cravings at WIL + 1d20. She succeeds at both, and so her next craving will not be for two days. Two days later, she saves again and succeeds, it will now be four days until her next craving. Four days later, she saves again and succeeds. Eight days later, she saves again and succeeds. Before the next craving period, 20 days will have passed, which means she must no longer save vs. physiological cravings. Sixteen days later she saves only once, and succeeds. It will now be 32 days until her next craving.

Unfortunately, though, before that time she catches her boss eating a live mouse, he says nothing but stares at her until she leaves the room. She doesn't know what he is or what he's going to do, thus creating a great deal of anxiety. This triggers an immediate craving. This time, Max fails, and she is now forced to drop whatever she is doing and seek out some alcohol. She succeeds, getting the alcohol. She must make another save vs. physiological addiction (this time at END + 1d20 vs. 15 +1 (one dose)), but this time she succeeds. After the one dose she took wears off, the decides to quit again. She succeeds, and only has to deal with a psychological difficulty. However, her craving periods are now reset and she will experience another craving within 24 hours.

Disease

Contraction- When a PC is exposed to a disease, the PC must make a save vs. Disease Contraction (END + 1d20 vs. the Disease Contraction Rating of the disease). Diseases will have different contraction ratings depending upon how the PC is exposed. Breathing the same air as an infected person may have a Contraction Rating of 10 while sharing bodily fluids with a person may have a Contraction Rating of 40. If the PC makes the save, he or she does not catch the disease. If the PC fails then the PC has the disease at 1x symptoms.

Progression- Once a PC has a disease, the PC must fight to keep the disease from getting worse. Each disease has a Disease Progression Speed, which represents how quickly the disease will get worse. If the disease progression speed is 8 hours, then every 8 hours the PC must save vs. Disease Progression. Each disease has its own Disease Progression Rating (the difficulty to save vs. disease progression). For every consecutive failure to save vs. disease progression, the symptoms increase by 1 level (1x to 2x, 2x to 3x, etc.). However, if the PC succeeds at a save, the disease is "halted": it can no longer progress. From this point onward, a failed save vs. progression has no effect, but a successful save means the symptoms level is reduced (3x to 2x, 2x to 1x). When the symptoms level reaches 0, the PC is cured.

Treatments- Treatments can do two things. Some treatments help the PC fight the disease (give the PC plusses to save vs. disease progression). Other treatments only help reduce the severity of symptoms (most over-the-counter medications work in this way).

Immunity- Once a PC has defeated a disease, the PC has immunity to it, and gets +10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from the same disease. The PC also gets +6 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from closely related diseases.

Example: *Marcos was exploring an abandoned building and examining a desiccated corpse when it suddenly surged forward and stabbed him. The wound was exposed to an infection with Disease Contraction Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Speed of 12 hours, can be treated by antibiotics, and has the following symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage for each progression.*

12 hours after being stabbed, Marcos makes a save vs. disease contraction at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20. He fails, he now has 1x symptoms. He is -10 to save vs. heat exhaustion, has -5 STH, -5 SPD, takes 1 BLD damage and must save vs. vomiting (at difficulty 10). 12 hours later must make a save vs. disease progression (at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20). He fails, and now he has 2x symptoms: -20 to save vs. heat exhaustion, -10 STH, -10 SPD, an additional 1 BLD damage and he must save vs. vomiting at 20 difficulty. Since Marcos only has 8 SPD, he now cannot even stand. Marcos' friends finally get him some antibiotics, which give +8 to save vs. disease progression.

After another 12 hours he saves again at END (7) +8 (antibiotics) +1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds: the disease is not halted, but he is still at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and fails, but since the disease is halted nothing happens, he remains at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds, now his symptoms are reduced by 1x. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds again, now the disease is gone.

Skills

Basic Skill Use

There are certain activities that anyone can try to do without being trained: prowling, climbing, jumping, seducing, etc. Skills are generally things that someone can not even try to do without some sort of special training. A person doesn't have to be a trained long-jumper to try jumping over a hole (though it helps), but someone does have to have some physics training to try to calculate the speed and acceleration of an object sliding down a smooth incline.

The majority of skills are "intellectual" and are rolled using INL. Other skills use the other attributes. Skills are purchased in levels, and are purchased with skill points at a cost per level set by the Day Job. For every level above the first, the PC gets +4 to any skill roll. Each skill has six possible levels which can be achieved:

(1) Interest: Characters have studied only the basic levels of the skill. They know enough to try anything, but their chances of succeeding at difficult tasks are very low. (+**0** to skill rolls)

(2) Hobby: Characters keep up on the skill but are far from masters in it. (**+4** to skill rolls)

(3) Pursuit: Characters have spent a large portion of their time practicing the skill or keeping up with the subject. They have a respectable knowledge of the skill. (**+8** to skill rolls)

(4) Study: Characters have spent a significant portion of their lives studying the skill. They know almost everything an average person studying the skill could be expected to learn. Characters have a professional level of knowledge about the skill. (**+12** to skill rolls)

(5) Expertise: This is the equivalent of a Ph.D. in the skill. Characters know subtleties about the skill that few people know exist. (**+16** to skill rolls)

(6) Mastery: This is everything a person could possibly know about the skill. There are only a handful of people on the planet as skilled as the PC. Starting PCs may not have level 6 in any skill without special permission from the GM. (**+20** to skill rolls)

Example: *Tim has Physics (3). Tim wants to calculate the radioactive decay of a batch of toxic waste. The GM says that this will be a moderate (20) difficulty use of the skill. Tim rolls INL +8 (because he has level 3) + 1d20 vs. 20.*

Rerolling Skills

Once a PC has failed a skill roll, he or she cannot reroll until the situation has significantly changed, e.g. the target of the skill is different, the PC is in different working conditions, the PC has been provided new information to jog his or her memory.

Distractions

Anything that distracts the PC (including most failed saves) will give a penalty to skill rolls. If the PC is trying to do two things at once (e.g. answer a question about US history while running) the PC is at -10 to the skill roll.

Skills & Time

When a PC uses a skill, it is assumed that a PC is taking as long as he or she needs to. This might mean one round (e.g. using Science: Archeology/Paleontology o realize that a certain plant is supposed to be extinct) or weeks (e.g. using Carpentry to build a house). PCs gain no plusses from taking extra time to complete a skill, but they do take a penalty if they are trying to rush.

Working Together

Two PC with equal levels in a skill can often work together, giving +4 to the skill roll (one PC makes the roll). PCs with unequal levels in the skill cannot work together (one knows so much more than the other that the other can't do anything to help).

Books

Books are manuals for using a certain skill. Using a skill with a book generally takes significantly longer than using the skill unaided (twice as long if the text is in a mental program, three times as long if it is in a searchable computerized format, four times as long if it is in printed form). There are three types of books:

Introductory Texts: Useless to PCs who already have the skill, but can temporarily give the equivalent of level one (hobby) in the skill to people who do not have the skill.

Reference Texts Unusable by people who do not have the skill, but for those who do have the skill they increase the skill level by one (max. 6).

Introductory/Reference Texts: Can be used either way.

Not every skill has a book available (for many skills a book would be useless).

Combat Skills

Each combat skill lists fighting actions and/or reactions which are learned as part of the skill. In addition to any plusses listed in the skill, the PC gets +4 for every skill level above the first to each of these actions and reactions. Most combat skills only allow the plusses to work on certain weapons.

Some skills start with a negative on one of the actions/reactions. This does not mean that a PC with one level in the skill has a penalty. It only means that this is something that the PC doesn't benefit from until he or she gets multiple levels of the skill. For instance, if a skill gives -4 to Blinding Strike, then at level 1 the PC gets no benefit, at level 2 (-4 +4) the PC still gets no benefit. At level 3, however, (-4 +8) the PC does get +4 to blinding strikes.

Example: *Fenn has Knife Throwing (4). The skill lists the following plusses when throwing knives or similar weapons:*

+2 per level to initiative

+4 to Strike

+0 to Vital Strike

-4 to Blinding Strike

No penalty for targeted strikes.

Because Fenn has 4 levels in the skill, he gets +12 to all of the listed combat actions and reactions, so Fenn's actual plusses are:

+8 (+2 x 4) to initiative

+16 (+4 +12) to Strike

+12 (+0 +12) to Vital Strike

+8 (-4 +12) to Blinding Strike

No penalty for targeted strikes.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).

Vehicle Skills

Normal skills list example things that a person with that skill could do at each level of difficulty (an easy thing, a moderate thing, a hard thing, etc.). Vehicle skills list a number of "maneuvers" that a person with that skill can do, each with a corresponding difficulty. For example, one of the maneuvers that people with the motorcycle skill get is "Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments." Maneuvers are rolled as normal skill rolls, but they have two special modifiers: maneuverability and speed.

Maneuverability: A rating of a particular vehicle that tells how good or bad it is at complex maneuvers. Maneuverability is expressed as a plus or minus to all maneuvers done with the vehicle.

Speed: For some maneuvers (jumping, stairs), going fast is good, but for the majority of maneuvers going too fast makes the maneuver harder. Unless the GM decides that this is a fast maneuver, the difficulty for the maneuver is whichever is higher: the difficulty listed in the skill description or the current SPD of the rider.

Example: *Rakesh, who has Motorcycle (3), is chasing after someone on his motorcycle and is confronted with a flight of stairs. At the bottom of the stairs he will have to make a sharp turn or hit a wall. Rakesh is going at 30 SPD when he hits the stairs. The GM decides that Rakesh will not take a SPD penalty while going down the stairs. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (the maneuverability of the motorcycle) + 1d20 vs. 20 (the difficulty listed for Stairs in the Motorcycle skill description). Rakesh makes it easily. At the bottom of the stairs is the sharp turn, and the GM says that he will make Rakesh take the SPD penalty. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (maneuverability) + 1d20 vs. 30 (his current SPD).*

Maneuvers as Combat- The maneuvers Ram, Trample and Swerve can be used as combat actions and reactions. They can be opposed by other combat actions and reactions by people on foot.

Example: *Rakesh wants to use the Trample maneuver to hit Lew (who is on foot). On Rakesh's action, he makes a Trample maneuver roll. As a reaction, Lew dodges. Rakesh succeeds by 5, Lew succeeds by 7, thus the dodge is successful.*

Non-Skills

A PC can try anything without using a skill. The PC simply narrates what he or she does.

Example: *Flagg has no demolitions or electronics skills of any kind and he's trying to disarm a bomb. The GM doesn't make him roll a skill roll, doesn't even make him roll INL. The GM simply describes the bomb and asks Flagg what he does. Flagg decides the best thing to do is grab a handful of wires and yank them out all at once. The GM narrates the result…*

Unless they have some special disadvantage, PCs are expected to be able to do normal things that anyone can do, including: read, eat, dress, keep clean, stay afloat in water, use a pistol, read a map, cook a meal, tie a knot, tell a lie, recognize symptoms of serious illness, etc.

Fighting

In Brief

Combat begins by determining initiative (who acts first), then proceeds though a number of rounds until combat is finished. Each round, each participant gets one action (used in order of initiative) to use against an opponent and one reaction to react defensively to something done to him or her. There are many types of combat actions and reactions, each with a different intended result, different difficulty and using different attributes. There are also many factors that can modify the difficulty for an action or reaction, including skills, properties of the weapon and environmental variables.

Attributes in Combat

The following gives a basic idea of how attributes figure into various combat maneuvers:

AGY- Adds to the speed and accuracy of an action/ reaction.

AWR- Adds to actions that require noticing and reacting to a flaw in the enemy's defenses, an attack, etc.

INL- Adds to actions that require the use of knowledge (e.g. knowing where to strike to hit a vital organ).

SPD- Adds to actions that involve quick and powerful footwork.

STH- Adds to the damage and pure force of an attack.

Initiative

At the beginning of combat, each participant makes an AWR + INL + 1d20 roll. The fighter with the highest roll will get the first action in the round, the second highest will go next, etc. The next round, initiative is the same. Initiative must be re-rolled every time there is a break in the action (e.g. fighters stop to taunt each other).

Surprise- The fighter who initiates combat should get a bonus to initiative, from +5 to +15, depending upon how much of a surprise the combat was to the other fighters. Also, characters who are completely unaware that they are the victims of an action (e.g. are hit unaware by a sniper) do not get a reaction.

A Combat Round

A combat round is a period of time, approximately equal to half a second, during which each participant gets one action and one reaction. The character's reaction is made in response to any attack against him or her at any time during the round.

Converting Actions & Reactions- Characters do not have to use their actions and reactions at the designated time; they can do any of the following:

-Wait and use their one action at the end of the round.

-Give up their action for that round in order to gain an extra reaction (no penalty).

-Turn a reaction into an action (at extra difficulty, see Simultaneous Action, below).

Range

Each weapon has a range. This is how close to or how far away from an opponent a character must be to use that weapon against that opponent. A sword might have a range of 1-2, this means that at range 0 you are too close to use it and at range 3 you are too far away. Jumps (see Noncombat Actions and Reactions) can be used to get into the proper range.

Range 0: Short knives, biting and clawing, minimum range for small pistols.

Range 1: Punches, kicks, knives, short swords, disarm and crippling strikes.

Range 2: Long swords, chain weapons, minimum range for shotguns & rifles.

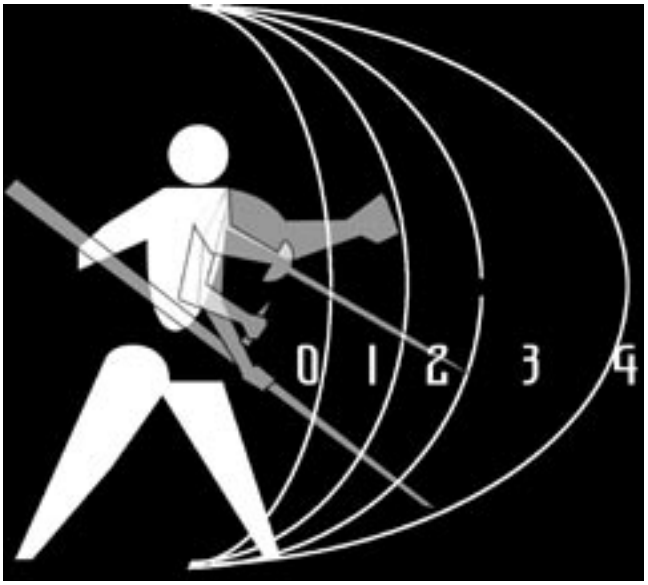
Range 3: Pole arms, broadswords, whips.

Range 4: Projectile weapons.

Why keep track of range? First, because range gives a benefit to opponents with longer weapons. Second, range gives a benefit to opponents who are defending (since the attacker must use an action to step forward).

Resolving Combat

A combat action is an attempt to do something to someone else during combat. Like any other attempt to do anything (that the GM decides requires a dice roll) the character's action fails if the player cannot match the difficulty. If the player matches or exceeds the difficulty, the action will succeed unless it is opposed. Like all opposed rolls, the defender must make an opposing action (a reaction) and succeed (beat the difficulty) by more than the attacker succeeded. In other words, whoever does a better job, the attacker or defender, wins.



Action/Reaction Example

Attacker's Action:	Defender's Reaction:
Strike (Handheld)	Dodge

The attacker declares the action first: an attack with some handheld weapon. The defender then chooses to use his or her reaction to dodge the blow.

Attacker's attributes:	Defender's Attributes:
STH+AGY = 23	AWR+AGY = 30

Each action or reaction uses specific attributes, a handheld strike uses STH and AGY, a dodge uses AWR and AGY. The combatants add those attributes.

Attacker's 1d20 roll:	Defender's 1d20 roll:
14	5

Attackers add their attributes to the result of their roll on a 20 sided die. If attackers had applicable skills or situational modifiers, those would be added in as well.

Attacker's Roll vs. Difficulty:	Defender's Roll vs. Difficulty:
Total of 37 vs. difficulty 25	Total 35 vs. difficulty 25

Each combatant's combined attributes plus 1d20 rolls are compared to the difficulty of the given action. Both the attack and dodge have a difficulty of 25. Here, both combatants beat the difficulty for their respective actions.

Attacker's Success:	Defender's Success:
37 – 25 = 12	35 – 25 = 10

Success is the amount by which a player beats the difficulty for the action. Since the strike and dodge are opposed, the person with the most success wins. Here, the attacker's success is more than the defenders (by 2 points, making it an opposed success of 2). The attacker wins and inflicts damage upon the defender (the goal of that particular action).

Noncombat Actions

These are actions which are useful during combat but they do not directly effect opponents and so the opponents can not react to them. The GM usually won't require a player to make difficulty rolls for these actions.

Draw- Ready a weapon for attack (may take more than one round if the weapon is not readily available).

Aim- Aim a projectile weapon at an enemy and follow any movement the enemy makes. If the character later makes an attack against the enemy with that weapon (without their aim having been interrupted) the character gets +4 to the roll.

Rise- Rise to standing from a prone state.

Jump- Move up to 4 range units closer to or farther away from the opponent. See Range (p.21).

Modifiers

Any factor can realistically modify the difficulties for actions and reactions in a combat. GMs will determine bonuses and penalties for each situation. Some common modifiers follow:

Aim	+4 to roll	The attacker has just aimed at the target (see Noncombat Actions)
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is completely obscured.
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is partially obscured or blurred.
Burst	-4 to roll	The character is firing more than one shot at once (up to the max. Rate Of Fire listed for that weapon). If the action is successful, each shot does damage.
Extended Action	+5 to roll	The character puts his or her whole body into an action (+5) but in doing so sacrifices his or her balance (-10 to next action or reaction). Not possible with projectile weapons.
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls	See Improvised Weapons (p.26) for more.
Leaning	-10 to roll	While leaning over to attack something below the character's knees, he or she is at -10 to the roll for any action or reaction.
Mounted	-4 to roll	This is the penalty to make a combat action from atop a moving vehicle or animal. Note that in order to hit opponents, mounted PCs must typically lean (see above). When the PC is moving he or she is at +4 difficulty to hit.
Paired	-4 to roll	The character is attacking with two weapons simultaneously. If the action succeeds, both weapons do damage.
Prone	-8 to roll	Penalty does not apply to kicks or projectile weapons. Because of their reduced profile, prone characters are –8 to hit with a projectile. See also Stomp (p.24).
Simultaneous Action	-20 +WIL to roll	The character makes an action as a reaction: he or she reacts to an action directed towards him or her with another action. Both actions happen simultaneously and neither are opposed. –20 to the roll, but WIL is added in as a third attribute. A will higher than 20 will not give a bonus to the action.
Split	-10 to rolls	The character splits one action into two actions or one reaction into two reactions but gets -10 to each. Actions created in this way must be used at the same time; reactions can be saved for later in the round.
Targeted	-4 to roll	The damage done by a successful attack is done to a specific part of the enemy predefined by the attacker (depending upon the part, the attack might do less damage than normal, but never more).
Underwater	-8 to roll	Because water reduces momentum, all attacks do ½ damage underwater. Characters without any swimming skills can typically move at ¼ their SPD underwater.

Combat Actions

These are actions that every person can attempt, even people with no combat training whatsoever. Actions that only people with special training can do can be found in the combat skills section (p.18).

Actions	Vs.	Reactions
-Each character gets one per round.		-Each character gets only one per round.
-Characters get to use their actions in an order determined by initiative.		-A character can only use a reaction when he or she is the target of an action.
-Actions can be traded for reactions at no extra difficulty.		-A character can use a reaction as an action at extra difficulty (+20 +WIL).
-Characters can wait until the end of the round to use an action.		-If the character is not acted upon in a round, he or she gets no reaction.

Area Attack

Goal- Hit everything in a given area with bullets or other projectiles.

Roll- INL + Number of shots fired + 1d20 vs. 10 + size of area in feet (or +3 per m.).

Weapon- Any that can shoot more than once per action

-Each victim can react separately to the attack.

-This is the only action which doesn't suffer from blindness penalties: the character can fire at an area without seeing it. Distance penalties for projectile weapons do apply.

-When declaring, define an area to spray. Roll a separate success roll for each person in the area.

-Each victim hit takes damage from one projectile.

Blinding Strike

Goal- Damage victim's eyes to blind him or her.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that damages eyes or flesh around the eye or any substance that can obscure vision or makes eyes shut involuntarily.

-Most weapons only partially blind (a nail can only poke out one eye at a time, sand will only partially damage vision).

-Some weapons fully blind on a successful strike (e.g. a caustic chemical spray). See Improvised Weapons: Blinding Substances (p.26) for more.

Crippling Attack

Goal- Damage a limb so as to make it unusable.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that can cut tendons, break bones or dislocate joints (must be able to do at least ½ point of damage had this been a normal strike).

-A successful crippling attack cripples one limb.

-A person can continue to stand on one leg but is at SPD 1, -7 to all actions and reactions, and is -20 to save vs. loss of balance.

Disarm

Goal- Knock the opponent's weapon from his or her hand.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Fists, kicks or anything which can cause a wrist to lose tension.

-Usually a strike to the wrist, though it may be a strike to the weapon itself.

-The victim can resist with an opposed STH feat (STH+1d20 vs. 20) as a reaction.

Grab

Goal- Immobilize one limb or one weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, or anything which can grab (e.g. a snare).

-Once a limb or weapon is successfully grabbed, the grab remains until it is broken. The grabber can choose to let go, or the victim can use an action to make an opposed STH roll against the grabber. Any successful pain/stun attack against the grabber will also cause the hold to be broken.

Grab (Pain)

Goal- Immobilize a limb so that the victim can not move without pain.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Hands

-The victim's arm is simultaneously grabbed and twisted so that the victim must make a save vs. pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 20) to move in any way.

-The victim's free limb is still usable but usually on the opposite side of the body from the grabber.

Grab (Strangle)

Goal- Cut off blood and air flow through the neck.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, anything that can be wrapped around the victim's neck, or anything hard that can pin the neck against a stable surface.

-Grab can be broken by opposed STH roll or pain/stun attack.

-During the hold, the victim loses 1 pooled END per round then 1 BLD per round. If the hold is broken before the victim dies, the lost BLD and pooled END return one each per round.

-Both the victim's hands are free during the grab.

Grab (Wrestling)

Goal- Use multiple limbs to immobilize the victim's limbs.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Hands

-Goal is to get the victim in a hold that is easier to maintain than it is to break free from. To break hold victim must make hard (30) STH feat while holder makes easy (10) feat.

-Takes one limb to immobilize a limb (e.g. to immobilize both the victim's arms, attacker must use both his or her arms).

Knockaway

Goal- Do damage and knock the victim backwards.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of inflicting two or more points of blunt damage over a wide area, e.g. a punch by someone with 16+ STH.

-Victim takes 1 point of blunt damage and is knocked back one range unit per point of opposed success.

-Even if the damage is absorbed by armor, the victim is still pushed backwards.

-Victim must make a moderate save vs. loss of balance (AGY+1d20 vs. 20) to avoid falling down.

Knockdown

Goal- Knock the opponent to the floor.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of hooking legs or pushing the victim over through sheer force.

-If successful, the victim is knocked down with no save. See p.22 for more on prone fighters.

Knockout

Goal- Knock the victim unconscious.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of doing 1 or more points of blunt damage

-If successful, the victim can make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness (WIL/END+1d20 vs. 20). If they can not successfully oppose the knockout, the victim is knocked unconscious for one round per point of the attacker's opposed success.

-For every successful knockout, there is a chance of serious damage to the victim, whether the attacker desires it or not. Generally, if the attacker's opposed success is more than 10, the attack also does 1d6 damage to BLD.

Pain/Stun

Goal- Stun the victim by causing him or her pain.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Nearly anything capable of blunt, bladed or burn damage or otherwise capable of causing pain.

-If the attack is successful the victim must make an opposed save vs. shocking pain (difficulty 20). If the victim fails by a difference of less than 10, the victim loses his or her next action. If the victim fails by 10 or more, the victim wes his or her next action and reaction.

Slash

Goal- Cause damage, distracting pain and disfigurement by an attack on the face or any other sensitive area.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of cutting or tearing long gashes in flesh.

-Does ½ point BLD damage and the victim must make an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain. Victim suffers a -1 penalty for each point of opposed failure in this save.

Stomp

Goal- Do 2x damage to victims lower than the attacker.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Feet.

-The victim must be below the knees of the attacker.

-Because this attack uses the full weight of the attacker against the victim, it does double the damage of a normal kick.

Strike (Handheld)

Goal- Do damage to the victim.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Any handheld weapon capable of doing damage.

-If successful, it does the normal damage listed for the weapon.

Strike (Projectile)

Goal- Damage to the target.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 -1 per functional range unit vs. 25

Weapon- Any projectile weapon.

-For every one Function Range (FR) unit away the victim is, the character takes a -1 penalty to the roll (see Projectile Weapons, p.26).

Tackle

Goal- Knock both the attacker and the atackee to the ground.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Body

-If the tackle is successfully dodged, the attacker must make a save vs. loss of balance to avoid ending up on the ground.

-A tackle does no damage.

Vital Strike (Bladed)

Goal- Use a bladed weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Any weapon that does bladed damage.

-Bladed damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Blunt damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where bladed damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, heart).

Vital Strike (Blunt)

Goal- Use a blunt weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40

Weapon- Any weapon that does blunt damage

-Blunt damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Bladed damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where blunt damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, temples).

Wing

Goal- Damage easy to hit but non-vital parts.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Any weapon capable of doing damage.

-Aimed at exposed yet non-vital body parts (e.g. arms, thighs and ribs).

-Any damage not absorbed by armor is cut in half.

Reactions

Dodge

Goal- Sidestep or duck under the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-After a successful dodge, the defender is still in roughly the same place as he or she was before.

Entangle

Goal- Stop and trap the weapon.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30

-Requires something that can stop and trap the weapon (e.g. chain, meat hook, trident, jacket, folding chair).

-If successful, the action is blocked and the attacker must use another action to unentangle the weapon.

Flip

Goal- Dodge attack and knock over attacker.

Roll- AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35

-This requires that the attacker make a lunge (punch or attack with a handheld weapon) and that the defender must be close enough to use the momentum to flip the attacker over a pivot point (usually the defender's shoulder).

-If successful, the attacker is knocked down with no save.

Drop

Goal- Drop below the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

-Whether successful or unsuccessful, the defender ends up on the floor at the end of the reaction.

Jump

Goal- Jump out of weapon's range.

Roll- SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Unlike the Noncombat Action: Jump, this is in reaction to a specific attack.

-Determine how many range levels the character needs to move to be out of the range of the weapon.

-+10 difficulty for every range level beyond the first.

-If the defender beats the difficulty but doesn't beat the opposed action, the PC gets hit but ends up out of weapon's range at the end of the reaction.

-Can also be used to jump towards the opponent, e.g. jump towards an opponent to get too close to be hit by a shotgun.

Mental Block

Goal- Resist attempted mind control (especially psychic attacks).

Roll- WIL+1d20 vs. 20

-This is only useful against attacks that go directly to the character's mind.

Parry

Goal- Block the attacker's weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Be sure to declare what you are blocking and with what.

Advanced Combatants

Combatants with extremely high attributes or high levels in combat skills may find it useful to use split actions and reactions as well as simultaneous actions.

For instance, a very skilled attacker may split her action and do two actions at once, e.g. a stomp on the opponent's ankle (a pain/stun attack) and a punch in the ribs (strike). The attacker will be at -10 to each of these actions. The victim cannot defend against both unless he splits his reaction and takes a -10 penalty to each.

Or, a very skilled defender may split a reaction in order to defend and make a simultaneous attack. For instance, the defender may step to the side (a dodge) and simultaneously slash at the attacker's neck (a vital strike). The defender is -10 to the dodge and is -30 and +WIL to the Vital Strike (-10 from the split, -20 +WIL from the simultaneous strike).

Advanced fighters may also split reactions and save them for later in order to react to an unexpected attack (such as a simultaneous Strike).

Projectile Weapons

Range- When making any action with a projectile weapon, the PC takes a penalty equal to the number of range units away the target is. For example, if a weapon has a FR (Functional Range) of 5 ft. then for every 5 ft. away the opponent is (rounded down) there is a -1 penalty. A target 60 ft. away would be -12 to hit with that weapon. Weapons also have a Maximum Range (MR) beyond which the weapon can not do damage.

Cover- A character who lies flat, facing the enemy (reducing his or her profile) is very hard to hit with projectile weapons (-8 to hit). Any type of cover can give the enemy a minus to hit depending upon how much of the character's body is protected. Treat this as armor: standing partially behind a tree might have an AR of 5 and a PR of 15 bladed/blunt (from that one direction only).

Fighting Non-Humans

Machines- Non-Biological opponents do not have BDY, BLD or INCY. Instead, each device has an amount of blunt or bladed damage that, if it takes, will cause it to cease functioning. One machine, for example, may be able to take 4 blunt or 9 bladed damage before it stops working.

Size- Animals and machines which are bigger or smaller than humans are easier or harder to hit (see table). Also, small opponents can only take limited blunt damage because, instead of absorbing the damage, the opponent goes flying (unless the opponent is crushed against something).

Size	to hit
bee	-20
rat	-10
cat	-5
human	0
horse	+5
elephant	+10
house	+20

Special Attacks- Sense should be used in fighting non-humans. For instance, a blinding strike would be silly against a monster that does not depend upon its eyes, a rhinoceros would not be very susceptible to a knockdown attack by a human, etc. Without some knowledge of mechanics, a vital strike against a machine would be impossible. Vital and pain stun strikes on alien creatures depends upon the attacker successfully guessing what areas to hit to cause pain or do vital damage.

Swarms- A swarm is a group of small animals attacking the character that are so numerous we treat them as one entity. A swarm can not be parried or dodged, only run from.

Armor can help the character: any portion of the character's body which is covered by armor can not be attacked. The amount of the character's body which is protected is the ratio of the AR to 20. So, a character with AR 10 could only be attacked by half the swarm at once. A character with an AR of 5 could only be attacked by three-fourths of the swarm.

Most swarms do not dodge and instead make simultaneous strikes at no minuses (for convenience's sake, assume that all swarm animals which can attack make a successful strike). Characters, on the other hand, usually can't kill more than a few swarm animals with each strike, except with certain weapons like poison sprays or flame throwers.

Weapon Specific Difficulties

The difficulties listed for the various actions and reactions represent the difficulty with the "typical" weapon someone might use to do that action or reaction with. Some weapons are designed so that some actions/reactions are easier, while others are much harder. For instance, a sledgehammer is so heavy and awkward that it is hard to make a strike with it. On the other hand, a whip is designed for pain/stun attacks and so such an attack would be easier. In weapon profiles, special actions and reactions are listed as:

Very Easy (-8 difficulty)

Easy (-4 difficulty)

Hard (+4 difficulty)

Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

Improvised Weapons

Normal objects can be used as weapons but since they are not designed as weapons they have higher difficulties to use. Many will also break after the first attack.

Slashing Weapons: Any object with a cutting edge strong enough to cut flesh does 1 bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

Poking Weapons: Objects with a point on them strong enough to be driven into flesh do ½ point of bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

Blunt Weapons: Blunt objects with a good handle can do between 1 and 3 blunt damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.

Thrown Objects: Any heavy object without a handle can be thrown at an enemy. If a character attacks someone with a huge rock at point blank range, we can simply say that is was a throw at 0 ft. They have normal difficulties but the following ranges:

Weight	Functional Range	Dmg
1-2 lbs. or ½-1kg.	3 ft. or 1 m.	½
3-5 lbs. or 1-2½ kg.	3 ft. or 1 m.	1
6-10 lbs. or 2½-4½kg.	2 ft. or ½ m.	2
11-20 lbs. or 4½-9kg.	1 ft. or 1/3 m.	3
21-99 lbs. or 9-45kg.	½ ft. or 1/8 m.	4
100+ lbs. or 45+ kg.	½ ft. or 1/8 m.	1 dmg/ 20lbs. or 10 kg.

Blinding Substances: Any substance which can be thrown in the eyes. PCs can make a blinding attack with these substances at no minuses. They can be thrown only within a range of 5 ft. (1.5 m.). Most of these substances can be avoided by closing one's eyes (a very easy dodge). A successful attack, though, will partially blind (-7 to all actions or reactions) or fully blind (-15 to all actions/ reactions) the opponent for a length of time, depending upon the causticity of the substance. Extremely caustic substances (like bleach) will not only blind but act as a pain/ stun strike on a successful blinding attack.

After Combat

After combat is finished, PCs who have taken injuries should seek out medical attention. The best case scenario is that someone with the Emergency Medicine skill and proper medical equipment can immediately treat wounded PCs. Immediate and proper medical care will eliminate the following post-combat complications:

Bleeding- For each point of bladed damage a PC has taken, that PC will lose another ½ point of BLD over the next 15 minutes unless the wound is cared for (tourniqueted, cauterized, stitched up).

Pain- When the endorphins the body produces in an emergency wear off, the PC will feel every bit of damage done. The PC must save vs. distracting pain with a difficulty of 5 for each point of damage done.

Infection- Unless a wound is disinfected, the victim risks a serious infection. For every point of bladed damage a PC has taken, the PC must make a save vs. disease contraction with a difficulty of 10 per point of damage (max. 30). Note that burns and ragged damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.15) increase the chances of infection and are very difficult to treat using medical skills. If the PC fails the save vs. contraction, he or she suffers from a disease with the following profile (see p.17 for more on fighting diseases): Disease Progression Rating: 20. Disease Progression Speed: 12 hours. Treatments: Antibiotics. Symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage.

Simple Combat Example

Rusty and Juanita are in a fight:

Rusty: 12 AWR, 8 AGY, 10 INL, 6 SPD, 14 STH, 7 WIL, 3 BLD, 5 BDY, 4 INCY. No combat skills. Has a hunting knife (range 0-1, damage: 2½ bladed). No armor.

Juanita: 8 AWR, 10 AGY, 13 INL, 16 SPD, 4 STH, 8 WIL, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, 4 INCY. Kickboxing (2) (gives +8 to wing, +8 parry, +8 to knockaway, +4 to strike with her feet). No weapons. Her kicks do 1½ blunt damage. No armor.

GM- Roll initiative.

Rusty- (rolls INL (10) + AWR (12) +1d20) 28

Juanita- (rolls INL (13) + AWR (8) +1d20) 23

GM- Rusty, you get the first action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm doing a split action, I'm moving into range 1 and doing a strike at Juanita with my knife.

GM- Juanita, are you reacting?

Juanita- I'm going to dodge.

GM- Okay, roll. Remember, Rusty, since you split your action you're -10 to each action. The jump into range will succeed automatically, but you're -10 to hit.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) -10 (split action) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 27, that's 2 success.

Juanita- (rolls AWR (8) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 26. Only one success.

GM- Okay, the knife hits you Juanita, and does 2½ damage to your BLD. Okay, Juanita, now it's your action.

Juanita- I'm going to make a strike with my feet.

Rusty- I'll block with my arm.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeeded by 8.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeed by 12.

GM- Okay, Rusty parries the kick. Next round. Rusty, your action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm going to make a strike against Juanita with my knife.

GM- Okay, Juanita, your reaction?

Juanita- Um… I'll parry with my leg.

GM- Are you parrying the knife blade?

Juanita- Hell no. I'm going to parry his arm. I'm close enough to do that, right?

GM- Yeah.

Juanita- Well that's what I'm doing.

GM- Okay, roll.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 3 success.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) + 8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 30. Five success.

GM- Okay, you kick the blade out of the way. Juanita, it's your action.

Juanita- I'll do a knockdown, with my feet.

Rusty- I'll let her kick me and do a simultaneous strike.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 30). Two success.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) +WIL (7) +1d20 vs. 45). Five success.

GM- Okay. Juanita, you take another 2½ damage to your BLD. Rusty, your knocked on the ground.

Juanita- My BLD is zero now, and I'm down to 3 INCY.

GM- Well, you've just been mortally wounded. From now on you'll be losing a point of pooled END every round. Rusty, it's your action.

Rusty- I'll get up.

Juanita- While he's doing that, I'm going to run away.

Tips for GMs: Keeping Combat Quick

1. Never let the PCs get into a fair fight. Either the PCs should be ambushed, or the PCs should be doing the ambushing, or the PCs should be vastly superior to the people or things they are fighting, or the PCs should be vastly inferior to their opponents.

2. Enemies run away, surrender or play dead when they realize they are getting their asses kicked.

3. Figure out the NPC fighter's typical reaction and typical reaction ahead of time and calculate it (e.g. this opponent strikes at 1d20 vs. 3).

4. NPC fighters only make simple actions (e.g. strike and dodge, no extended simultaneous split actions).

5. Don't bother keeping track of END if the battle is only going to last a few rounds.

6. Give opponents weapons with the same range as that of the PCs – this makes for a lot less jumping around during battle.

7. Start PCs and opponents in weapons range of each other.

8. Instead of calculating and rolling for every effect of a poison on an NPC opponent, just give the opponent a flat penalty to all actions and reactions. E.G. instead of the large list of symptoms of Monkshood, just say that a person hit by it takes 1 BLD and a progressive -10 to all rolls per round until dead.

9. Give each player only a limited amount of time to declare an action or reaction.

LOVECRAFT WAS AN OPTIMIST

Everything we think we know is a lie. This world is a prison. From our births to our deaths and beyond, our fates have been planned. Our captors are everywhere, watching us, manipulating us, laughing at us. Those who tell the truth are ridiculed, locked up in asylums. Great power and great danger await anyone who seeks the truth. But out worst enemies aren't the things that watch us from the shadows, or the men who secretly rule the world, or the invisible parasites that crawl all over us. Our worst enemies, our cruelest captors, our most devious saboteurs, are ourselves.

In DaRk AlleYs

the Role Playing Game of Psychological and Metaphysical Horror

From Vajra Enterprises

2005, ThE ABySS StARes BacK

www.InDarkAlleys.com