Cartomancy

EMMANUEL & GAËL DELVA

This book is dedicated to my elder son GAËL,
The one person I wrote this game for.

Life gave me a lot of *satisfactions.*
Your birth and your brothers' were true *delights*.

To write this game for you,
To play it with you,
And now to work on it alongside you,
These are *privileges*.

CARTOMANCY RPG

THE 54-CARD RPG

A CARD DRIVEN ROLE PLAYING

ENTER ANY SETTING IN 10 MINUTES

42 PAGES

FULL RULES

v.01.02.18

For UNPREPARED REFEREES:
A complete role-playing game,
easy to learn and quick to play,
needing only a deck of 54 cards.

For HURRIED VETERANS:
A universal system
playable in less than 10
real human minutes.

ONE RULE ONLY
Not a single + or - factors, no
computations, no adjustments or
bonuses. No math, but a bit of
resources management and chip play.

By Emmanuel
& Gail DELVA

FIRST, WELCOME TO YOU DEAR STRANGER.

So, we wrote a game, our RPG.
It uses a simple 54 cards deck,
To allow you to start playing
In a ten minutes delay
In all possible worlds
You will create.

THEN, ALL MY GRATITUDE TO THE ILLUSTRATORS:

Your Art sent this book light years *above* my wildest expectations. Thanks A LOT to:

Special thanks
for our incredibly gorgeous cover to

REX VAN ASSELT

AND NOW, BIG AND SINCERE THANKS TO

Thanks for your visit, please feel at home in our humble Fortune-teller's tent.

FELLOW ADVENTURER

ROLE PLAYING GAMES are born from the stuff dreams are made of.
They are a dream that you share with other people, with opened eyes
and a firm hand on your character's future.
THIS BOOK IS YOUR ROLE-PLAYING GAME

I am THE ALTER EGO you can count on to go adventuring.
I am the daring explorer of an unknown labyrinth in a dark castle,
I am the space mercenary lost on a half destroyed planet,
I am the lone secret agent saving the world in an untold mission,
I am this bounty hunter stalking that wicked desperado,
I am the vengeful occultist beholding an evil gate opening up,
I am this other YOU, the one you'd like to be, this creature you dream to
become one day and know you can't ever be in this world.
I AM YOUR CHARACTER

I am THE REFEREE you can trust to go where no one has before.
There are tales I dearly need to tell. Stories that deserve to be told.
Quests that need a new generation of heroes to be fulfilled. To make
them come true, I need Players daring enough to drop their TV series,
Heroes dashing enough to make them forget their consoles and phones.
Be it that I've just finished reading a comic or watching a movie, or
that I've invented a whole world from the ground up, I want my
friends, my family, my kin, to live inside it for real. To be a part of it.
I want to share my dreams, not just be fed by the ones the Medias sell.
I AM YOUR GAME MASTER

YOU ARE THE ONE we want to make these dreams come true with.

HOW TO ROLEPLAY?

So you've been living in a cave since the Cold War and you have never heard about how people do role-playing game? And you don't have internet either? Ok, just a reminder:

1 – The game takes place in an imaginary world, even if maps and counters may be on the table

2 – The **GAME MASTER** (**GM** from now on) describes scenes to the players.

3 – The **PLAYERS** tell what their **CHARACTERS** do in the game world.
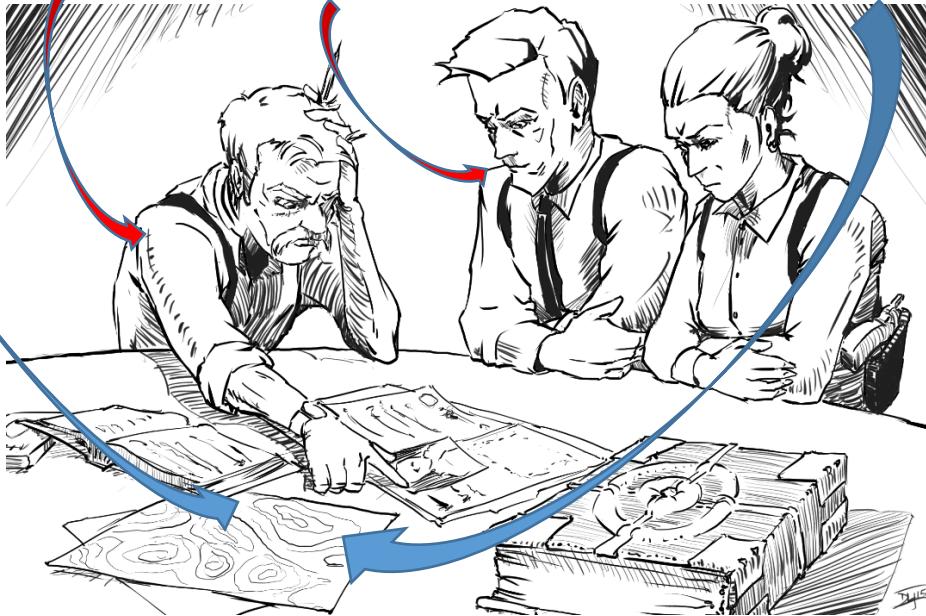
David Lewis Johnson

The goal of a role-playing game is to share an **ADVENTURE** with your fellow **PLAYERS**. An adventure where your **CHARACTERS** are the heroes. In a role-playing game you keep talking and exchanging information: the GM tells you what your characters see or feel, you tell the GM what your characters do and he tells you if there are consequences to what was done. If you need an info, you ask the GM, if you want your character to do a special action you tell it. Easy right?

But it is not only a dialogue, because you need to organize things: So besides the **PLAYERS**, there is a referee called the **GM**, and he needs **RULES** to do the job:

> *For example:*
> *If enemies are beating you, you can choose to flee, to fight back, to talk, to bribe etc. But it's easier to flee from a zombie than from a ninja. If you meet a wounded woman you can help her or not. But it's easier if you are a medic. And if you are a scientist you may notice that she is indeed contaminated, or ill, or a mutant. Got it?*

"A role-playing game is like a movie that tells the tales you most dearly need to hear about. But it is your choices, and your character's skills that will write the end of the story"

If there is no obvious, certain answer to an important question, the GM will use the rules to give you the answer and the scene's end.

PLAYERS VS GAME MASTER

The player's roles

1 – To **be the star** of the show and to **play the character well**. But not at the cost of everyone else's enjoyment.

2 – To **create a character** that can live along the others. No sociopathic loner, except for solo play style with a GM and a single player.

3 – To **know at least a little about the rules**. Mainly that the GM will draw cards first, and players later. And also that characters have a "behavior mode" that you can change freely according to the kind of dangers you expect to come across.

4 – To **keep focused** and do not waste time arguing, or talking about off subjects like friends or movie you've seen. Making a phone call, or talking about *Facebook* or *Twitter* is tantamount to immediate death in most circles.

5 – Then, and this is not the least important, the character is supposed to **save the world**, free the princess, or kick the ass of the villain according to the scenario.

BEWARE, the GM must NOT be

1 – The players' enemy: his job is not to kill their characters. It would be both easy and pointless. His goal is to tell their successes and falls.

2 – The players' accomplice: his job is no more to cheat in their favor or to ease things up before them. If the cards say they are doomed, he must say how they awaken, chained and tied, next to be sold as slaves to a gladiator school or to a salt mine in a desert. He is a referee, not an ally.

To players, the GM must give every reason to live a memorable moment, and a chance to experience, with their characters, the tales they most deeply want to know about.

The Game Master's duties

1 – To **be a storyteller**: he is the characters' eyes and ears, so he must tell them what they feel and sense. It's only by his words that the players can discover the game world and make wise choices.

2 – To **be a demiurge**: he animates the game world all alone. If players feel the rain on their faces, if they feel threatened in a combat or are treated like heroes after a scenario, it's because he gave life to this game world.

3 – To **be a judge**. He has 54 cards and a few rules to settle things up. He must try to be impartial to reward their successes and punish their failures. He is neither a candy dealer, nor a blind angel of Death.

4 – To **be a stage director**: he owns more power than most Hollywood directors could possibly have. He can summon the greatest actors, the most divine actresses or use the most beautiful landscapes of the universe to stage his show.

5 – To **be a master of time**: he can move the group to its destination which is weeks of travel away, or make days pass by in a single sentence. Or he can detail events split second by split second as he wishes.

6 – To **be a fan of the characters**: it's not about cheating, it's about giving them what they need. Maybe they won't all make the day, but each of them should be given a moment to shine. Combats, mysteries, romances, intrigues, pursuits, all must be given enough to chew.

To characters, the GM must never give undeserved rewards, nor ask them to do what is impossible. He should be fair, but if the cards say they are dead so be they.

CARTOMANCY-LIKE ROLEPLAYING

Welcome into CARTOMANCY RPG

Thanks for having bought the **STARTER BOOK** for our role-playing game.

> There are thousands of RPG around.
> Each pretends to be different.
> This one is no exception.
>
> Except maybe that *IT IS INDEED* different!
> It's based on fortune-telling, not "reality".

What you won't find here

Today is 2017 and most people have a least a vague idea of what a roleplaying game is. We give hints on how to handle players or how to create scenarios, but it's true that, as it is now, this book is more destined to experienced players and Game Masters alike. However if you are a curious newbie, there is nothing that hard to understand in the following pages. A single hour or two of internet searches will give you really detailed explanations and advices on how to run a game. Otherwise, dozens of people can explain to you how to do it. If you find absolutely none around, then you live in a "Terra Incognita" and in these case, please simply drop us a simple mail at: cartomancy.rpg@gmail.com so we can send a delivery of fresh veteran players, right to you.

Why did we do it this way?

I've always wondered why it takes a 256 or 512-page book to explain the rules of RPG. Especially since in the middle of the advices chapter, you'll find a sentence reading "Rules are made to be forgotten and dice to make noise behind a screen". Pretty goofy. For my part, I'm fed up with needing 1D20 or 3D6 or D+ and D- or whatever, because **each time I want to play "right now"**,

I never have any of them around. But there is another random generator that IS everywhere around: **CARDS.** In almost every shop, every house, boat or mall, in even the most desolated places on Earth you'll find some. Even an incomplete pack will be good enough. So instead of waiting for a game that I will never read, I decided to write it myself with the help of my beloved elder kid. After many attempts, we found that **the lore of "Cartomancy"** was a stepping stone to fulfill our three major objectives:

> *Create a game where every player can create a character in less than ten real minutes.*
>
> *Create a game where the Game Master (GM) can start playing, in any thinkable setting, and within only ten minutes too.*
>
> *Have a system that can be instantly played everywhere with no fancy dice.*

The CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE

We grant you the rights to use these rules to publish your own work on conditions that:

LEAVE YOUR DICE BEHIND

A radical design decided because we decided to make radical choices

We designed CARTOMANCY RPG like it was a **fortune telling device** because, according to us, nobody has been able to solve recurrent boring questions about RPG.

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1 – How to start playing at a moment's notice.
2 – How to create a character the same way.
3 – How to be able to play just everywhere.
4 – How to get rid of that "math contest" feeling.
5 – How to solve the feedback delay paradigm.

To these questions we gave radical answers:

1 – **NO COMPUTATIONS**, no adjustments. Yes for real, we manage things another way.

2 – **CHARACTERS** created with no class, purchase points, or intermediary computations.

3 – **NO DICE**, but only a 52 or 54 cards deck, so as to be able to play everywhere, in a camping, on a boat, or even in an inmate cell.

4 – **ONE SINGLE RULE** called **THE ORACLE**:

"When the GM thinks the time has come to know what will happen, he will draw a few cards according to some kinda gypsy ritual.

According to the suits drawn, the group's Fate will be determined for each and every characters involved in the scene.

Then, according to the characters Qualities, Behaviors & Risks taken, their individual actions' Outcomes will be determined."

The problem about the feedback

In a role-playing game you keep waiting for things. When you want to do something, you have to tell it to a guy (the GM) that will translate it into a game system compatible formula that you will solve with dice. Then you will tell him the result of your dice and then he will tell you the outcome of what you planned. That works fine, but when you measure the amount of time spent waiting, it's staggering. In this game it is somewhat different:

For example:
Usually a GM says "You enter the inn, people look right at you, make a Charisma roll to know if people are threatening to you", then everybody will make their little computations and announce a number that will need then to be digested by the game system. Then, eventually, the GM may say "Guys, they ARE upset now". Then according to each player's whims, other such tests will be made to know what occur to each individual character. Each with its dice…

In CARTOMANCY RPG the GM will say this "You enter the inn, people look right at you", then he will immediately draw one or two cards in front of the players, like a gypsy fortune-teller. And according to their suits he may add "Guys, they ARE upset now". Then according to each player's whims, each of them is going to draw one or more cards, those colors will directly indicate what occurs to each individual character.

Don't get us wrong, we do not pretend to have invented a finer simulation than other games.

What we have done is taking a century-old way to tell things with cards, and turning this into a workable role-playing game system.

THE INITIATION BOOK

Jus est ars aequi

Rules are the art of equity

KEYWORDS FOR THIS GAME

YOUR CHARACTER

1 - The character is described by **QUALITIES**: is he (or she or it*) *Strong* or *Clever*? *Quick* or a *Good speaker*? *Erudite*, *Wise* or *Sexy*? Each character starts with SIX qualities to choose.

2 - Each quality is written on your character sheet in one of two boxes. Each will give you a different colored **CHIP**: Chips are kinda like "hero points".

Physical or technical qualities give you a **red** chip called an **EFFORT**. Think about "*Blood*". Mental or social qualities give you a **black** chip called a **CONFIDENCE**. Think of "*Gray matter*".

3 - Another thing describes your character: his actual mood. Because it's very different to be looking for a fight or smiling at an outsider. There are four **BEHAVIOR MODES** and each one corresponds to a distinct card suit. Your current one is shown on your character sheet by a mobile counter called your **MODE MARKER**. As long as the GM does NOT have cards in his hands, you can move it freely to change your behavior.

On ♥ it's all **PHYSICAL** mode, all muscles ready
♦ is **CAREFUL** mode, being agile and cautious
♠ is **MENTAL** mode, analyzing and thinking
♣ is **SOCIAL** mode, socializing or threatening

You can call your current mode "my attitude" or "my behavior" or "my mode", all are equivalent. Choose the one you prefer and stick to it.
*Note that we'll use HE all booklet long, Take no offense but (s)he is (d)ull and s-he s-ucks. And both are **offensive to IT people** anyway.*

THE RULES

1 - When a situation arises that can turn a nice or a bad way and the GM does not want to choose, he will make an **ORACLE**. It's a "test".

2 - According to the stress of the **SITUATION**, he will draw one to three cards and put them face up on the table. Yes, like a fortune teller, you got the concept. The more cards, the better.

3 - Each situation has a specific **TRUMP** which is the behavior it most relates to. It's the same meanings as we have just seen:

♥ is for *physical* situations that need muscles
♦ is for *technical* situations where you take care
♠ is for *mental* situations where you think
♣ is for *social* situations from love to threats

4 - The **FATE** of the situation for the whole group involved now depends on the cards drawn:

A single trump card and it's a **TRIUMPH**. Wow! If all cards are of the wrong color (be it red or black) it's a **FAILURE**, and things worsen. Otherwise it's a simple **SUCCESS**. Nice.

5 - Once the Fate is determined, each and every player may have personal cards to play to improve their own final Outcome, to do an action **or to score a special effect:**

Any **useful quality** gives a card.
Having your **current behavior** on the same suit as the trump gives one card too.
Daring to **risk a fumble** brings one more too.

□ I AM...

□ WE ARE...

CARTOMANCY RPG

□ CAMPAIGN GAME WORLD IS...

□ I COME FROM...

□ OUR GROUP IS MADE OF...

□
□
□
□
□
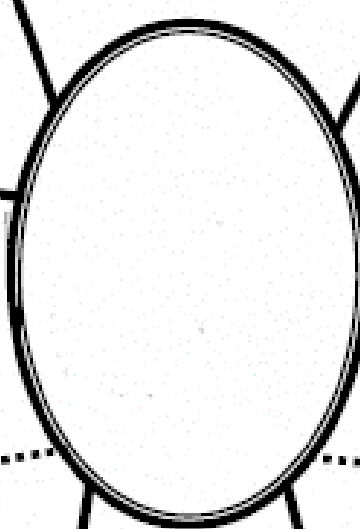
♥	♦
BODY	ACCURACY
□	□

♣	♠	🂠
INFLUENCE	MIND	SPECIAL
□	□	□

RED

PHYSICAL QUALITIES

BLACK

MENTAL QUALITIES

□ ON ME, AT
ALL TIMES, I BEAR
THESE OBJECTS:

1 :

2 :

3 :

4 :

5 :

6 :

7 :

8 :

9 :

10 :

EFFORT

CONFIDENCE

ON BEING A HERO

Sic itur ad astra
This is the way you reach for the stars

Joyce Maureira

Creating a character only takes 5 minutes.

1 - GIVE BIRTH TO THE CHARACTER:

Define the character concept by writing down his/her/its** general origins and basic job.

Write a secret reason to go adventuring.

Write a basic reason to stick together with the other characters.

2 - TRAIN THE CHARACTER:

Choose if it is wise or not to forfeit one, or several, of the four **BEHAVIORS** (♥♦♠♣) in order to get one more quality for each.

Consider buying the **5ᵗʰ SUIT** or not.

Give the character **SIX QUALITIES** and assign them to RED (physical) or BLACK (mental) box on the character sheet.

3 - EQUIP THE CHARACTER:

Take the chips you deserve: **EFFORTS** (red) and **CONFIDENCE** (black) according to which box you put each of your qualities into.

Choose **TEN OBJECTS** including weapons and different armors parts.

Yes, it's THAT simple.

** BTW, do you see now why we prefer to use simply "he" all text long? It's not sexist, it's just visual.

1 – GIVE BIRTH TO YOUR CHARACTER
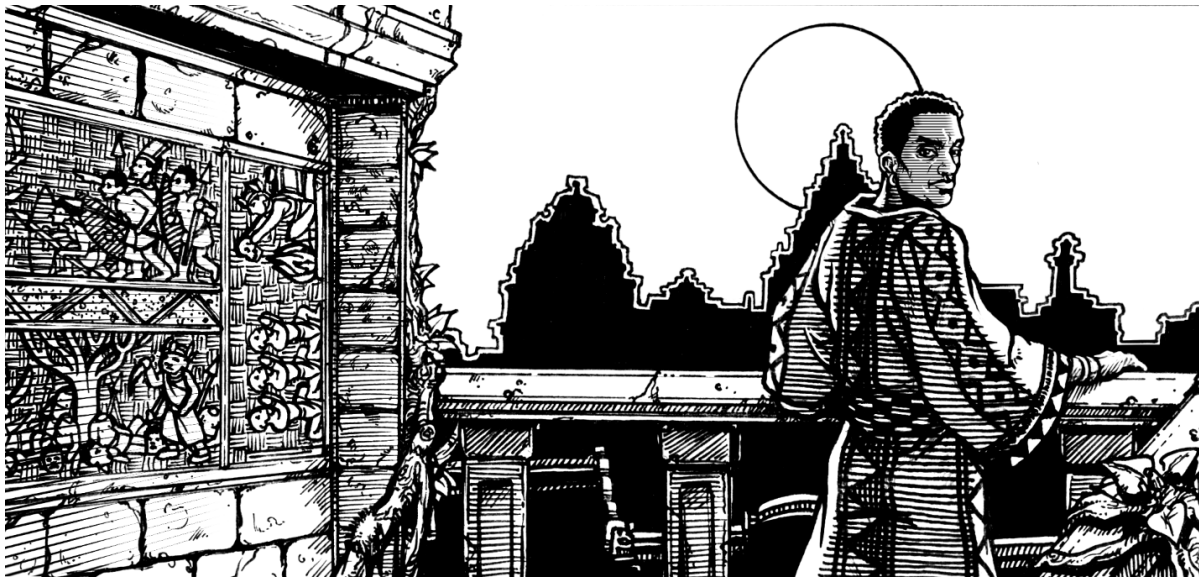
Ian Mac Lean

1 - Who am I?

The character is the player's alter ego. He or she (or it) is the one really living the adventure… or dying in it. First you must write a single sentence to give the character a basic **JOB** or **CONCEPT**:

For example:
I am a member of the Golden Hind crew.
I am a mafia guy from the De Bello family.
I am a clansman coming from the Northern tribe.
I am a Miskatonic University student.

In case you have no idea, draw a card:

For example:
♥ = soldier, mercenary, escapee slave or serf, thug, legionary, gladiator, trucker, boxer etc.
♦ = yeoman, cop, technician, mechanic, nurse, clockmaker, barmaid, decurion, bowman etc.
♠ = scientist, magician, officer, explorer, agent, teacher, doctor, archeologist, exorcist, priest etc.
♣ = bard, writer, artist, cleric, monk, journalist, private investigator, undercover cop, spy etc.

2 - Where do I come from?

Now add one or two sentences to embellish the picture and give the character a little more **BACKGROUND**:

For example:
I am a commoner press-ganged aboard after a binge on the night before my wedding.
I am a NYPD officer currently undercover.
I am from a tribe that has been decimated by a curse from the Crimson Witch.
I come from the Bayou in Louisiana.

In case you have no idea, then draw a card:

For example:
♥ = working poor background, serf from a remote place, foreigner, outcast, misfit etc.
♦ = city background, urban life, employee, shop worker, guild member family, state pupil etc.
♠ = scholar background, well educated, orphan brought to a monastery, teachers family etc.
♣ = born in an influential family or clan, rich, famous, maybe nobility etc.

2 – CHOOSE TWO REASONS WHY

1 - Why do you go adventuring?

Nobody goes into a dragon's lair or a missing spaceship without a good reason. This is the character's **MOTIVATION**. Please, be smart, note it on your sheet's back. You never know…

For example:
I am looking for a way to get rich and escape, and then go back to London a richer guy.
I want to get rid of the drug gang that took the life of my beloved little sis ten years ago.
I must avenge the erasure of my clan name.
I want to learn more about the swamps' cults.

In case you have no idea, well, draw a card:

For example:
♥ = want to exert vengeance on W, the story's villain, or someone working for him etc.
♦ = want to find X, an old friend or ex-lover, to settle a case, get or bring something etc.
♠ = want to protect Y, a friend or a lover, threatened by W or one of his henchmen etc.
♣ = want to find Z, a peaceful shelter to live with Y or a place free from W or X etc.

NB: If this is difficult, check at the end of the book for a random table designed for NPC.

2 - Why am I with these guys anyway?

In the "We are" part, write a reason why the group stays together. This is the **GROUP LINK**.

For example:
We are all thirsty crewmember, going on a trip we did not want to take in the first place.
We are all agents from different agencies.
We are all working as mercenary for the Dusk & Dawn Company.
We are all students on the campus.

OR, each pair of characters should have a little **TIE** that binds them. Draw a card if you have no idea. Remember that with 4 ABCD characters, it will be 6 cards: AB, AC, AD, BC, BD & CD. Keep cool, the goal is not to write a novel but to make each pair of characters a little believable.

For example:
♥ = come from the same place, army, clan, unit, orphanage, district, jail etc.
♦ = have done the same job, were in the same battle, have the same enemies or rivals etc.
♠ = have the same hobby, have the same addiction, share the same faith or hatred etc.
♣ = have a common memory, love the same girl, are parents, have common friends etc.
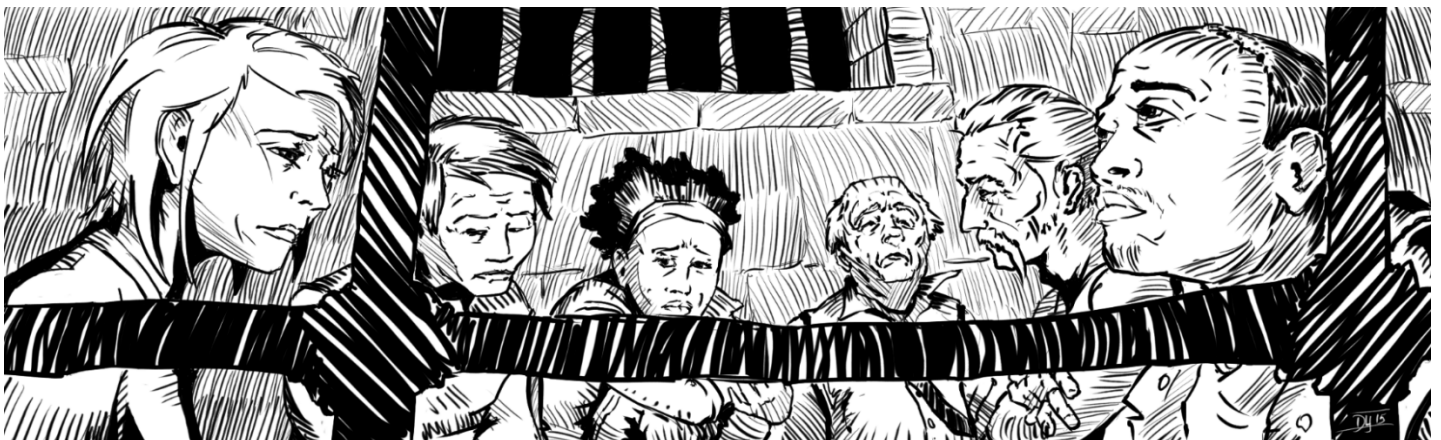
David Lewis Johnsson

3 – TRAIN YOUR CHARACTER

1 - What are my possible Behaviors?

In the game each **SUIT** has a single, specific, permanent meaning. Reds have a "physical" meaning, while Black have an "intellectual" one.

- ♥ = **BODY** = raw *physical* power and stamina
- ♦ = **ACCURACY** = *technical* ability and aim
- ♠ = **MIND** = knowledge and *mental* capacities
- ♣ = **INFLUENCE** = interactions and *social* skill

Each suit corresponds to one **BEHAVIOR MODE**. Every player will show his *current one* with a clearly recognizable mobile **MODE MARKER** (counter, figure etc) on the sheet. Call this your Attitude, Behavior, Mode or Marker as you wish.

With your behavior mode set on ♥ you indicate a strong physical attitude and a real will to fight.

On ♦ the character is cautious and careful, looks for traps and dangers, and steps carefully.

On ♠ the character is cleverly analyzing the surroundings, assessing & checking things.

Last, on ♣ the character is being social, talking to people, just smiling, or behaving tough.

At creation, each character is supposed to be efficient in *all four behaviors*. However, you can choose to **FORFEIT** one or more from the start in order to get one more quality for each.

2 - Is there any special suit?

Sometimes, the GM may need a suit dedicated to perception, magic, psi, sex-appeal, survival or else. It will be the **SPECIAL SUIT**. Only **FACE CARDS** do count as being of that suit: Jacks, Queens & Kings. Beware that this suit will *never* be given as a basic behavior and that you need to buy it at the price of one quality.

3 - What are my Qualities?

All characters have **SIX QUALITIES** at level one. Take note: they are never "ranked" at start. You are either *Cautious* or not. Having a quality means you are really better than average.

For example:
*Some are **Stronger**, others are **Faster** or **More enduring**. Others may be **Charming**, **Dashing** or **Frightening**. Still others could be **Erudite**. **Fast-thinking**, **Witty** or **Good brawler**.*

If the GM thinks a quality is adequate, he will allow you to draw one more card for the scene. So being **Careful** might help you disarm the bomb while **Agile** will probably not.

4 - A few qualities examples

Below is a very short sample of various qualities, grouped according to probable relevant suits:

A few examples of:

PHYSICAL (♥) *qualities*:
Strong, Sturdy, Boxing, Blades, Aggressive etc.

TECHNICAL (♦) *qualities*:
Reflexes, Quick, Climber, Firearms, Pilot etc

MENTAL (♠) *qualities*:
Brave, Occultist, Sciences, Insightful, Calm etc.

SOCIAL (♣) *qualities*:
Authority, Sex-appeal, Sweet voice, Haggler etc.

OPTION: Train all characters together

If players all create characters together, please read your four sentences aloud, then take turns choosing one quality each. This way you end up with a much more efficient and diversified group.

4 – STUFF YOUR CHARACTER

1 - Effort & Confidence

Each player owns a small amount of CHIPS to use during play.

Each RED quality will give a red chip called an EFFORT that will be used for ♥ and ♦ scenes.
Each BLACK quality will give a black chip called a CONFIDENCE to use in ♠ and ♣ scenes.

Starting characters have 5 to 10 chips. 5 if they took the special suit, 10 if they dismissed all behaviors. A pretty stupid idea BTW…

2 - Spending chips

Chips are a kind of money that can be spent in many ways. But their prime purpose are to be spent when chips CALLS are made by the GM to make the game follow a smooth rhythm.

You may use chips to get quick success or to add special effects to an action.
You also use them to soak damage points.

BEWARE, damages are taken in chips too. And when you have no more chips to burn, hits on you will turn into WOUNDS. Each forfeits one suit. When you have no more suit to tick off, any chip loss will spell your doom… More on this later.

A single *hot meal* gives you ONE Effort back, and a rest of 3 to 5 hours of sleep brings back ONE Confidence. Each up to 3 times a day on holidays, maybe once on an adventure… Be wise…

OPTION: Putting qualities in a specific suit
This gives a more "realistic" game. It means that if that suit is cancelled for any reason, so are the qualities written there too. See sheet page 90.

3 - What equipment do you bear?

At all times you are able to take care, on yourself, of a maximum of TEN ITEMS. It takes into account *both* encumbrance and ease of access. Of course, you can have loads of other things written elsewhere, but *you won't be able* to reach for them on a moment's notice when an emergency will arise. Yes, it is *not a realistic* approach, it is a *playable* approach. Some objects do NOT count: basic clothes, worthless earring, simple belt, bus ticket, two nickels etc.

Each USEFUL and/or VALUABLE item does count on the ten objects limit.
Each HIDDEN item counts as two because it is such a mess to make sure nobody notices them.
Each HIDDEN and VALUABLE item counts as three because you cherish them so much.

4 - Getting stuffed & armored

Armor is counted as one item per part. A helmet, a cuirass, a pair of greaves or gloves each count as one. Yes, armor are cumbersome… Armor can be LIGHT (stops one impact point before needing to be repaired) or HEAVY (stops two but destroyed after a 2-hits impact). Otherwise, they are just as boring to bear.

Weapons count as one item except for those you need two hands to use which count as two.
You can have extra ammos at the cost of one item but getting out of ammo is a fumble result so you do not need to count each individual bullet (who does that anyway?). As a rule:

Standard weapons causes 1 Effort of damage, Good ones do 2 Efforts, Heavy ones 3.
Each Effort not absorbed means one wound…

TWO CHARACTERS EXAMPLES

David Lewis Johnsson

David Lewis Johnsson

Carmina de Rocca-Serra comes from Sicilia. She is very touchy on pasta sauces and honor matters. Because her little brother got indebted to the mafia, their house exploded with him and their parents inside. So she decided to solve the debt with a 200 lbs. charge of TNT…

She has a mean hot temper and no close ties. But she always check two times if innocents are around when she has anything to settle.

> **BEHAVIOURS**: ♥ ♦ ♣ ♠ + the 5th one = 5
> She is able to take all four basic suits. She also took the campaign 5th suit of *TRUE GRIT*.
> So, she'll have only **five qualities**.
>
> **RED QUALITIES (3)**:
> QUICK, AGILE & ARTIFICER
>
> **BLACK QUALITIES (2)**:
> CALM & CAUTIOUS
>
> **RESOURCES**:
> 3 red Effort chips & 2 black Confidence ones.

EQUIPMENT:
1-3: **Carbon handgun** (hidden & precious because no metal so undetectable, counts as 3)
4-5: **Sicilian dagger** (hidden, counts as 2)
6: **Pocket set of tools** (for artificer job)
7-8: **Secure phone** (costly, counts as 2)
9: **Single TNT charge** plus cables and detonator
10: **Flashlight** (usable as club)

Lars Van Kraken comes from Iceland. Land of frost and ice. As a kid, Lars was found of old Viking lore. He only realized their sinister side when Anka, his half-sister, was sacrificed to an old « god » in a ceremony he knew about, but didn't take seriously. Now he dedicated his life to eradicating the *Outermost Moon Society*.

Lars is a sad, tormented, blazing soul. He's looking for redemption but can never forgive himself. He has no friends to soften his heart.

> **BEHAVIOURS**: ♥ ♦ ♠ = 3
> Lars can be tough, determined or cautious. But he can't get along people and does not have ♣.
> So, he'll have **seven qualities**.
>
> **RED QUALITIES (4)**:
> ENDURING, VIOLENT, SHARP-SHOOTER & BIKER
>
> **BLACK QUALITIES (3)**:
> STRONG-WILLED, PATIENT & VENGEFUL
>
> **RESOURCES**:
> 4 red Effort chips & 3 black Confidence ones.

EQUIPMENT:
1-2: **Hidden .45** (counts as 2)
3-4: **Hidden Bowie knife** (counts as 2)
5-6: **Hidden Trench knife** (counts as 2)
7: **Smartphone**
8: A few meters of **nylon rope**
9: **Barbed-wire line cutter**
10: **Keys** of his beloved Aprilia 500CC

GAMEMASTER'S ORACLES

Actore non probante, reus absolvitur
If you cannot give the proof that the defender is wrong, then he must be right

In order to start roleplaying on a ten minutes notice, the rules need:

1 – TO BE QUICK TO PLAY

No situation should slow the game so there are **NO** adjustments. Yes Sir, none. Nada!

All depends of the suit of the cards drawn:
 - If you draw a card from the suit chosen by the GM, it's a **TRIUMPH**. Wonderful.
- If all cards are from the other color, be it red or black, then it's a **FAILURE**. Ooops.
- Otherwise it's a **SUCCESS**. Fair enough.

2 – TO BE INTENSE

Each single card drawn is a raw chance to triumph, to save your hide or to score a special effect. There is nothing to compute.

You can draw up to three cards because:
- You have a relevant **QUALITY**,
- You have the correct **BEHAVIOUR**
- Or you are ready to **RISK A FUMBLE**.

3 – TO BE PLAYABLE EVERYWHERE

Cards are everywhere: open all nights, dusty drawers, ships, mafia meetings, jails, etc.

Any pack size will fit but 54's are better.

Nate Furman

1 - The logic behind this game

C🂡RT☠M🂱NCY RPG is not a game that tries to detail and quantify each and every little factor of an action. Not at all. There are not even *feats*, *skills* or even *characteristics* lists and bonuses.

This is a game designed for newbies Game Masters and lazy, hurried veterans alike.
The basic principle is the **FORTUNE-TELLER** who in her dirty shop, will draw 2 or 3 cards only to tell you your future. It is **NOT** a simulation.

Each situation will be solved by giving it a *suit*, a *number of cards* and three *consequences*. This single rule of the game is called an **ORACLE**.

This simplicity allows a novice Game Master to start a roleplaying session five minutes after watching a movie, finishing a book, reading a comics or getting an idea.
With "ONE RULE" to know, there is no reasons to be afraid of "*forgetting a rule*".

2 - What is a situation?

A **SCENE** is a part of the game (the story being told) where all actions follow a single, logical, direct, uninterrupted thread.

SITUATIONS are these pivotal moments of a story where the adventure can go a satisfactory favorable way or a regrettably unfavorable one.

But please, only do oracles for situations that are worth it: i.e. both unpredictable and interesting. If this game is not a dice rolling contest it is not a poker game either.

Apart from that, it's all about points of views.

For example:
All things said, according to this definition, a war is a situation, right? As each of its battles are. Going one step further, each skirmish, each duel or each single sword blow is a situation too, OK? Now, why do you want a novice GM to be afraid of a single sword blow if all the war can be handled the same way? That's the plan.

3 - The face value of cards

We use a deck of **54 cards**. Their heights are in ascending order:

→ Ace 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Jack Queen King JOKER

The lowest cards is an **Ace**. For the GM, low cards are the funniest ones, because they allow him to trigger **DANGERS** like enemy attacks.
Then come the deuces to the tens. Then come the face cards: jacks, queens and kings.
If you draw a **Joker** it means the oracle does immediately stop on a simple *success* result.

4 - Suits and their meaning

Each single suit has a single meaning when it comes to a situation. Because each situation is given a single **BID SUIT** that best describes what it is like and what challenges it presents. We'll call it the **TRUMP**, like in any card game like Bridge.

♥ = situation implying violence and/or muscles
♦ = need quickness, accuracy and care
♠ = wit, knowledge or cunning above all else
♣ = social interactions, be it smiles or threats
🂠 = whatever was chosen by the GM, if any. Note that the GM can ask for a "red special" or "black special" to make things harder and implement a possibility for a triumph (see below).

1 - First you draw for the group

In this game you ZOOM IN. it means that the GM first draw a few cards that will tell the **AUGURY** for the involved group *as a whole*. It's lightning quick because it tells the group's **FATE**. And it's brutally efficient because it speaks to everyone.

For example:
There is a clue to find. What is important? Getting the clue or knowing who got it? Losing one minute so that everybody can roll dice and add all modifiers? If the GM draw a success or a triumph, the so-told clue is found and the story can unfold farther. Period. More story more fun.

Now, if a player wants to better things up, check if anybody watched them over, or look for a certain suspect's prints, he'll need to draw more cards to check this particular **OUTCOME**.

2 - When NOT to group-draw?

Of course, sometimes, it occurs that a group's augury is not possible because of different location, time sequence, freedom of move or else:

For example:
A hero is confronting the hysterical Emperor in a sealed room, while his friends are battling at the door in order to come inside. That's obviously two distinct oracles until they unite again.

3 - Group above individuals

Each personal action within a situation is paid with Outcome cards. If you only have a few, you won't do much. And if your group's Fate starts bad, you will first need to improve your personal Outcome rating to a point where you can do an action or score a special effect.

For example:
In a typical RPG, you hit an enemy first, then maybe its group morale will falter.
Here it's exactly the reverse: it is because the GM drew cards that indicated the enemy fighting ability was collapsing that you are able to hit them with relative ease and accumulate blows.
However, if the same GM drawn cards indicate that the enemies stay steady, you will have to use your wits (behavior cards), your skills (qualities cards) and plain bloodthirstiness (fumble cards) to step forward, improve your individual situation and score a telling blow with deadly effects.

4 - GM Cards before Players' cards

First, the GM will draw the **FATE CARDS** of the whole group involved. It is a statement of the way things are occurring as a whole. This way, if they are fine, the action and story can proceed.
Then, if the players want to improve their own position, do an action, or score an important special effect, they use their **OUTCOME CARDS**.

To say it another way, the **FATE** cards are a quick statement of what the situation is currently turning into for everyone involved. The **OUTCOME** cards are the means by which each player can do what he wants, boost the position of his character or escape that collective destiny drawn by the GM.

For example:
*A group is fighting zombies (it's a ♥ oracle) and fails. It means the group is outnumbered as a whole, and retreats under the assault. It is their FATE. However, the biker guy with his **Knife fighter** quality or the ninja girl with her behavior set on ♥ can both draw one individual card to get a better individual OUTCOME.*

1 - The way things are done

CARTOMANCY RPG is a somewhat different game system. It is not an *analytical* game where every little detail is factored. It is an *analogical* one **that aims at presenting an intense situation or a dramatic event globally**. To be clearer, here nobody cares about the details of initiative bonus, attack adjustments, dodge, parry, and armor or damage modifiers. Or almost.

Like a gypsy fortune-teller, a couple of cards will be drawn and that will tell what **FATE** the group *as a whole* is heading toward for the scene.
Then players will draw their own cards to improve *their own character's* **OUTCOME**.

---

2 - What is an oracle?

An **ORACLE** is that two-steps process of first drawing global Fate for a group, then individually drawing Outcomes for its members. To make an oracle 3 conditions need to be fulfilled:

---

1 - The situation is **interesting enough**, no need to waste time otherwise.
2 - There is **tension and stress**, because success or failure will make a real difference.
3 - The scene is **neither unmissable** nor **impossible**. No need to waste time again.

If these conditions do not apply, just make a chip call (see chapter 8) or agree with what the players want to do, and go on quickly with the story.

3 - The steps of an oracle

Solving a situation and determining its results is really quick. The steps will always be the same. Whether the situation is an individual fight, a sneaky commando mission that lasts several hours, an involved seduction attempt that goes on for days or even a raging war taking several months.

---

1 – Chose the **TRUMP**, the scene's bid suit.

2 – Chose the **NUMBER OF FATE CARDS**.

3 – Clearly define **THREE POSSIBLES FATES**.

4 – At that moment, the GM will tell the **BID**: for example announcing "2♥" is short for "Guys, I'm gonna pick two cards, hope you get a ♥ ,or at least a ♦, otherwise it's gonna look bleak"…

5 – Now the **GM PICKS** that number of cards and place them *face up in front of the players*. They must be able to see the suit of each card.

6 – The best card describes the corresponding group's **FATE** (great, nice or bad).

7 – Now it is the **PLAYERS'TURN**. If they have their mode marker on the trump, a useful quality or want to risk fumble they may draw up to 3 cards to improve their Outcome or score special results.

8 – The GM can now describes exactly the **OUTCOME** for everybody involved in the scene.

You say it's just a complicated way to see things? Now, it's just a *proactive one*:
- **You do not wait** for your GM to translate your declaration of intent in a math formula,
- **He will not wait** for you either to compute this math formula with dice and modifiers
- And **you will not wait** for the system's table to digest this into a "quality rating" result.

Suits give **DIRECT RESULTS**. A card an answer.

4 - Choosing the trump

The primary suit involved in the whole situation is the **TRUMP**. It does not really take into account *what* people want to do but rather *how* things are happening to them.

- ♥ = situations that are brutal, violent, aggressive
- ♦ = situations that call for dexterity and care
- ♠ = situations where thinking is crucial
- ♣ = social situations in all their variety
- 🎴 = whatever was chosen by the GM. The GM can even ask for a "red special" or "black one" to make things harder or categorize them better.

5 - How many cards to draw?

The number of **FATE CARDS** depends on the situation and its stress.

3 cards for a **FAVORABLE** situation.
= optimum conditions, planets are aligned.
Example: to sneak into an abandoned, unguarded, safe manor to check its content.

2 cards for a **STRESSFUL** situation.
= hope is here but reasons to be afraid too.
Example: to sneak into a city building at night.

1 card for a **COMPROMISED** situation.
= It's do or die, odd or even, 50/50.
Example: to sneak into an official building during the day, with maybe a couple of unarmed guards.

0 card for a **FRIGHTENING** situation.
= without good assets, failure is certain.
Example: to get into a guarded military building.

-1 card for a **TRULY HOPELESS** situation.
= things only the best of the best should try.
Example: to get into that same guarded military building in the middle of a nuclear alert when all alarms are ringing and guards are ready.

When everything is calm and cool there will be three cards. If stress rises, the number will decrease. *The more, the easier*. For desperate situations none will be drawn at all. It means that any attempt are condemned to fail if characters do not have qualities, adequate current behavior or will to face fumble.

6 - Choosing the three possible results

It is important that the GM clearly envision not two but really THREE results to the oracle.

A **TRIUMPH** means the situation goes a very important step forward its *completion*. It's not just successfully hitting a monster with a sword in a combat. It speaks about hurting it for good.

A **SUCCESS** means taking the **ADVANTAGE** (both terms are equivalent). The situation will not be solved but a definite *improvement* is made.

A **FAILURE** means that whatever efforts you made, the situation just *worsens*.

7 - Telling them the bid

Once the GM knows the suit, the three possible result and the number of cards, he needs to tell the players. It can be done in a dramatic way or not, but it needs to be clear. The Bridge's way is just perfect for that. It is the situation's **BID**:

For example:
Telling them it's a "1 ♣"says it all: an oracle with ONE Fate card, and Trump being at ♣.

One detail need to be crystal clear for everyone, as soon as the GM has a deck of cards in his hands, there is no way that the players can change their characters' behaviors. If they do, the GM should award them a **BACKFIRE**, a kinda "bad karma" chip that we will speak about later.

8 - How to draw an oracle?

The GM cards are always drawn and placed *face up in front of the players*. So they are able to see the suit of each card.

The first reason is that as soon as one single card of the announced trump suit is drawn, the oracle stops and the GM describes the best possible result.

For example:
Our group is still fighting the same zombies, it's again an oracle at ♥ oracle. As soon as a ♥ will be drawn, the situation (the current combat round) will end in a TRIUMPH.

The second reason is that there is a trick called **DANGER**. This represents the fact that you can be hurt deeply if you really blow things up. It can occur because of a monster fang or because the trap on the road is in fact a vicious booby-trap. As it implies serious consequences versus players, they need to be able to check that the game is fair. This is explained in the "A Story of Life & Death" chapter, but for info value:

If all cards concerning a character (i.e.: all the GM cards and all the relevant player's cards) are INFERIOR to the danger level, then something really nasty happens.

For example:
Four heroes are fighting against Drusilla, a she-vampire not unlike Carmilla in the novel of the same name. The GM announced that she is a DANGER of 8 (by the way, this number it's her level but that is another story). If all the cards drawn by the GM are inferior to 8, each player better draw at least one card over that value. Otherwise they will suffer from various very unsatisfactory biological effects.

If a danger is involved the GM must say its level. If all Fate cards are under it, he must make sure the players understand they are endangered.

9 - What is the result?

As soon as a single card of the wanted trump suit is drawn the **group's Fate** is a triumph.
If **all drawn** cards are from the other color it's a failure. Otherwise if any card with the same color as the trump (like a ♦ for a ♥, or a ♣ for a ♠) then it's a – simple – success.

A TRUMP CARD (exactly the suit asked for): The situation is *solved*. It's called a **TRIUMPH**.

A CARD OF THE GOOD COLOR (a ♦ for a ♥): Situation *improves*. It's a **SUCCESS**.

***ALL* OF THE BAD COLOR** (a ♣ or ♠ for a ♥): Situation *worsens,* it's a **FAILURE**.

10 - What can players do then?

Each player has three means to get a better **personal Outcome** for the character. Each of these assets gives one **PLAYER CARD** to draw.

A relevant **QUALITY** like your *Guts* or your *Endurance* to resist torture.

With the appropriate **BEHAVIOR** if your mode marker is on the same "trump suit" as the oracle.

By taking **RISKS**, what implies that it will be **MEDIOCRE** at best, and a **FUMBLE** if you miss.

If a player starts from a failure Fate, he can use his Outcome cards to *do simple actions*, like going to cover or helping a friend. However, if he wants to "seriously impact the game world", he should use them first to *improve his Fate* least to success level. As soon as a character is at a success or triumph level, each of his cards can also be used to *try to score a special effect*, like stunning or disarming an enemy.
Anyhow, no more than THREE cards per player. And only TWO if more than 3 or 4 players.

8 – MAKING CALLS & RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

1 - In case of emergency, call for help

Players were given chips right? So an efficient, if not painless, way to solve a problem is to make a **CALL** when you don't want to make an oracle. Just say "Confidence?" or "Effort?" aloud and give those who pay an appropriate reward, info or help. Be quick, give 'em 5 secs only to act.

For example:
A physical task, like breaking a door or moving a heavy obstacle out of the way? Say "Efforts?".
A riddle that aggravates players or a long, door-to-door patient inquiry? Say "Confidence?".
A barmaid to seduce and time is running out? Say "Confidence?". You get the picture.

This simple game gimmick can be played with several funny variations (from the GM's POV):

For example:
Consider offering a call only to the characters that currently have their behavior set at the proper place, like making a good impression on first sight only if at ♣. Or reacting quickly only if at ♦.

Consider offering a call only to the players that plan a certain move such as "You want to push this massive boulder blocking the way? Right, pay an Effort."

Consider making an oracle easier by one card for each chip paid before. Like making the lifting of the evil statue a minus 3 cards oracle plus one per Effort actually paid. So they all have to share some sweat together.

Consider giving special effects successes at a cost of one chip, and critical ones at a cost of two.

2 - Players' fan service

Players should not hesitate to propose uses for their chips to ease things up for them: Be it being successful in an attempt or scoring an effect:

For example:
One chip can be spent to add a "probable" special effect to a situation.
Maybe two will be enough for your GM to get you an "improbable one"?
Maybe with one, you can improve the quality rating of an action or turn a special effect in a crit.
BTW, if asking is not a crime, but arguing with the GM is, what about a treat bribe then?

3 - Resources management

EFFORTS are mainly used for physical or technical duties that need an able body:

For example:
Efforts can be spent to react quickly when surprised, to knock an enemy back at impact, to soak one damage, to move a heavy object etc.

CONFIDENCE is more about using your tongue or brains in a clever way:

For example:
Confidence can be spent to notice a detail, to get rid of a charm or a spell, to detect a lie or an illusion, to find a book, an info, or a witness etc.

OPTION: Outcome-less scenes

Chips get back very slowly, from 1 to 3 per day. Optionally, the GM can rule that in any scene where the player did not draw a single Outcome card, the character gets one chip back.

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW ☠RACLES WORK

The characters are members of an Antarctic team. They are trying to cross a frozen lake while behind, the howling sounds of a wolf pack have been following them for hours.

1: The number of cards

The ice is thick but the water is damn cold and there are these wolves. It's **STRESSFUL**.
The GM will draw **TWO CARDS**.

2: The trump suit

They outta be very careful and cautious so it could be ♦. But the GM also think it could be ♠. So he pick a random card, which is red, so he goes on with a ♦ trump. He could even have picked a random suit and described the scene accordingly.

3: The three possible Fates

This is the way the GM envisions things:

♦ = **TRIUMPH**: all is fine, no problems. When the players will have crossed the lake, the wolves will drop from their pursuit.

♥ = **SUCCESS**: the group hurries up and the ice cracks, half swallowing the heaviest character. He will lose one Effort because of the cold water except if someone else bring him back quicker. Anyway the wolves will surrender the track too.

♣ or ♠ = **FAILURE**: the ice breaks open and they all go under water and lose one Effort, except those who get a personal Outcome of success or triumph. However, those who take risk and fumble will lose one object from their list. Oh, by the way, when they are all out of danger, the wolves will attack… Yep. Bad day.

4: The GM announces the bid

Now, the GM says to the players:
"You start walking cautiously on the frozen lake surface. Too late for you to change behavior now. The bid is 2♦".
So bad, none is at ♦. Nobody will get a card.

5: The GM TURN

The GM draws a ♣, a black Fate card meaning a failure. Then a ♥, a red one meaning a success.

"The ice cracks heavily while you walk upon it. Suddenly the surface breaks under you (the tall big muscular guy of the team) and you are half-sucked under the ice. What ya gonna do y'all?"

6: The PLAYERS TURN

Characters are not slave to the Fate cards or the GM whims. They have their own cards to draw:
- Thanks to a **QUALITY** like *Swimming*, or *Arctic survival*. Maybe *Quickness* could be ok.
- The **BEHAVIOR** option is not possible here, because nobody is set on ♦.
- Otherwise they can risk a **FUMBLE**.
Now the GM needs to make sure, so he asks:

"Does anyone has Swimming? Another useful quality? Anybody wants to lend him an arm to help him? No? Okay then… you chickens."

7: The AFTERMATH

The GM describes the end result of the scene:

"Phil, you are frozen and soaked. You lose one Effort chip. You do not hear the wolves anymore but you hurry up and leave before the wolf pack gets closer anyway. You lucky cowards…"

Another scene can take place, but they'll need more group spirit to go anywhere further…

PLAYERS' INPUT

Actori incumbit probatio
The one to ask is the one that must prove
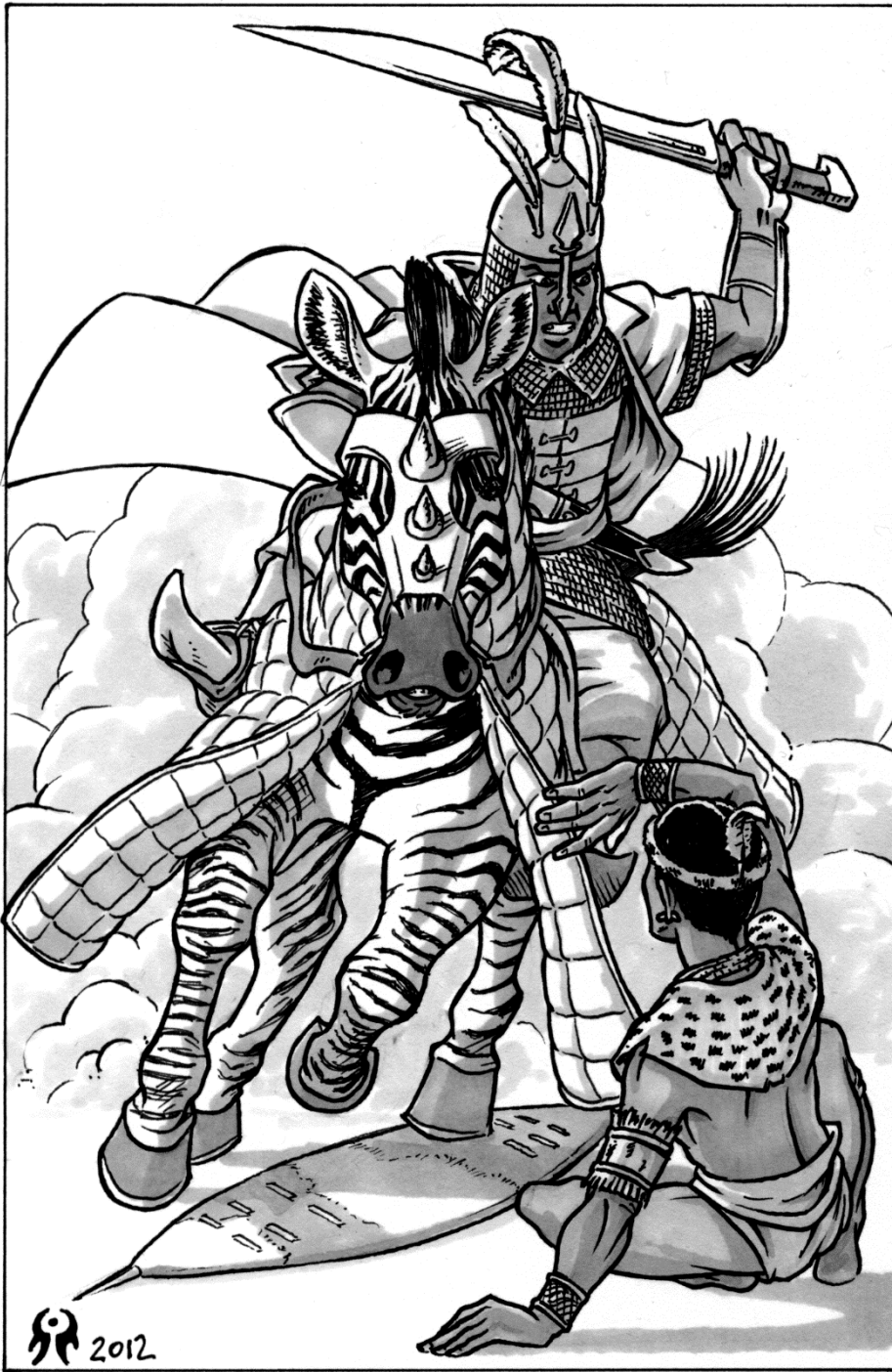
Luigi Castellani

Time to play the game

1 – GETTING CARDS

A player card can come from three legal sources:
- His character's qualities
- His character's behavior
- His fearlessness to use the Fumble Card.

2 – USING CARDS

You can use your cards for many things:
- First, to improve your own Fate rating, in order to be allowed to do something else.
- To score a special or critical effect action.
- To make a special move like using a certain capacity? Or a spell? Or a psionic power?
- To make an individual action that takes time during the situation (like going to a wounded friend or grabbing him to escape from enemy fire.)

3 – FACING DANGER

Dangers levels measure how a situation can backfire on you. If all cards are below this level, something bad occurs to you.

9 – WHERE DO PLAYERS CARDS COME FROM?

1 - GM drawn cards are collective

They indicate if the fight is *about to be won*, if the obstacle is *about to be crossed*, if the group *is about to die* etc. The "TRUMP" suit is here to give a quick aspect to the scene and the oracle.

FATE CARDS are drawn by the GM. They set the basic result **for all characters involved**.

2 - Players cards are purely individual

The group may be *about to lose* the fight BUT the character may escape or wound an enemy. The group may be dying of thirst in the desert BUT the character walks on a few miles to reach the oasis.

OUTCOME CARDS are drawn by the players for his character. As such, they can only give **individual results or possibilities**. Like improving situations, doing more actions or scoring special effects.

If you wonder "why this name?" you may wish to know we first opted for *Action Cards*, but many complained about the fact that in many games, **AC** means *Armor Class*. So we changed to *Players Cards*, but then everybody complained that **PC** means *Player Characters*…

3 - Having an appropriate quality

When a player calls to one of the character's quality it is up to the GM to validate it or not. The GM is the only referee on that and the final word.

An appropriate QUALITY gives one card. Note it is one for all the oracle, not one per quality.
An appropriate SPECIALIZATION gives another one. GM opinion is law on all details as usual.

For example:
*A group want to sneak into a witch coven. With **Stealth** it is fine. With **Hide self** or **Recon** it is not that good but it may work. With **Follow people** or **Camouflage** will probably not help.*

Now, *first advice*. There is almost **nothing as boring** as a player that just reads his list of qualities and expect the GM to pick the appropriate one and say "Yes dude, draw a card then". So, players can only propose ONE quality, maybe even TWO but one more means boring everyone around and should be penalized by a backfire chip as described later.

4 - Having the proper behavior

Only the *current* behavior mode position counts:

If your BEHAVIOR marker is on the scene trump suit or on the suit you need for a special effects, you get one card. Note it is one for all the oracle, not one per special effect for example…

5 - Taking risks

If you have nothing else, you can take risks. Beware that results are somewhat different:

If you draw a card of the suit asked for OR a card of the good color, then a SUSPENSE occurs. It means the result is a **YES BUT** one, such as you hit the target *but* are out of ammos, you win the race *but* exhaust the horse, you cross the gap *but* end up hanging on the cliff on the other side and need to pay an Effort or will fall…
A wrong color draw on this single Outcome card will turn all the attempt, or the oracle, into a FUMBLE: gun is jammed and target not hit, the horse breaks a leg, you fall down the cliff… Bad.

There can be up to four **WILD CARDS** available once each for the whole group per game. Yep, per group per game each, **not** once per player…

1 – Sacrificing an object definitely,
2 – Taking a lot of time to double check things,
3 – Taking a wound voluntarily.
4 – Forfeiting on a quality for the whole session

6 - Maximum number of drawn cards

The number of cards that any player may draw is limited to a **MAXIMUM OF THREE**, including all the possible reasons in the world.

Having everyone making claims for his own cards all at once is confusing for onlookers. As a <u>second advice</u> we found out that letting **those who have the correct behavior** speak **first** speeds things up. Once they have decided what they do, everybody is on equal terms and it's everybody for their qualities or their thrill for risks. In case of ties, start with the highest level character first.

You should make clear that apart from the group's augury given by the FATE cards, *a character without OUTCOME cards is just a sitting duck*.

OPTION: Limiting the draw

With more than 4 players I recommend that you allow only **TWO** cards per player at most.

7 - Using cards

Say you have a card. What can you do with it?

First, **OUTCOME CARDS** are mostly used to **improve your *own* Fate** to at least reach the simple success or triumph level. Maybe several cards will be needed to achieve this. In this sense Outcomes cards are *quality rating boosters*.

If you want to have any decisive effect on the current situation, your only choice is to reach, at least, the success level by drawing a card of the same, red or black, color as the trump suit.

For example:
The fight is raging on against Drusilla, the sexiest she-vampire ever. Flanagan O'Blannaggan wants to attack her with the Holy Water he brought. To even splash her with a single gout, he needs to reach success level, otherwise he doesn't play any active part.

Cards can be spent to **do any decisive action** that does not need to be tested for. Things like hiding from a blast, going to your fallen friend to attend to him, putting another shell in the *Panzer Faust*, or casting a spell etc. In this sense, Outcomes cards are *action points*.

For example:
Jean-Hector DuPont is no fighter, and doesn't even believe in the supernatural (definitely not an appropriate asset here). When Flanaggan gets hurt and passes out, he uses his card to run toward him and do first aid on him.

Otherwise, if you are already at a positive Fate level for this situation (i.e.: success or triumph), you can use a card to **try to score a special, or critical effect** (this last one only if starting from a triumph level). In this way, for cold-blooded guys, Outcomes cards are *special success generators*.

For example:
*Bella Lugozza is an Italian Vamp' Slayer. She will successively get cards from her behavior, for her **Agile fighting** quality and for her **Vampire extermination moves** specialization.*
Say she uses the first one to grab the Holy Water phial from her fallen Flanagan friend. With the second she improves her success level from simple to triumph, and then she uses the third one to score a killing critical move like "I catch Druzzy by her shoulders and I force the Holy Water down her throat". [NB: I love this move]

As a last resource, ask the GM to make a call 8')

10 – ADDING SPECIAL EFFECTS

1 - Often a player wants to add a very special something on a scene

In real-life lore, the *Art of Cartomancy* does divide the fortune telling process between "*auguries*" that are predicted and "*questions*" that are answered. Here, auguries are **Oracles** and answers are **Special & critical effects**.

To score a **SPECIAL EFFECT** is to accurately define this "special something" that you want to aim at. Something like "I wanna push him over the fence", or "I want to hit the dragon in its eyes" or "I want to disarm the possessed princess".

There are two basic ways to do that:

---

1 – The GM accepts the special affect as part of a triumph result. Quick, silent, deadly.
2 – The GM needs the player to pay one, or even two, chips. Like for a **CHIP CALL**. Simple.

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2 - But if the GM wants to complicate things, he can request one of the player's Outcome cards. If he has any.

If it is **PROBABLE**, or **SPECIAL** the GM will give a color (red or black) and the card needs to be such. It's a 50/50 draw.

If it is **IMPROBABLE,** or **CRITICAL** it will be twice harder and the GM will give an exact suit to draw. The suit given does not need to be the same as the scene's trump. A 25% chance.

If the special effects is **JUST IMPOSSIBLE** it is just that. Period. No arguing about, thanks.

3 - "OK but I don't know what special effects to do" »

The kind of freedom given by CART☠MANCY RPG can be unbalancing for experienced players accustomed to more… well… analytical systems. In all cases, the easiest way to do is to present them the opportunities in combat. Something as simple as "Disarm that bodyguard" or "Stun that thug" is a nice start. Then later a "Do that task in complete silence to make sure no alarm rings" brings players awareness a step farther.

4 - The problem of scales

Once the players got it that an unused card can be helpful they will set themselves free. It's like your gang has a Hollywood expert at disposal. The only difficulty is in evaluating whether something is "probable", "improbable" or "just impossible".

For example:
Imagine a player that wants to behead an orc. Say that orc has a helmet so it makes it "improbable". If it didn't had a helmet it would be merely "probable". However this way to rationalize will be evaluated differently by a group of role-players who are surgeons, butchers or lawyers in their real lives…

Just to make sure, a simple rule of thumbs: to kill something in a single blow, it needs to have fewer Efforts chips left than the weapon can deliver on impact. So, you'll need to chop it a little first *before* killing it for good.

We tried very hard to keep the gameplay as simple as possible. To get rid of uncountable rolls and tests, the following rules of thumbs present you with examples of **EFFECTS** to spend your Outcome cards on.

SOME EXAMPLES OF SPECIALS & CRITICALS

1 - Giving more aim

The character wants to hit a tiny spot of a foe. It's mostly a concern of size and mobility.

> *For example:*
> *Hitting one more target at once is special.*
> *A dragon's head is massive but quite mobile, a human head is tinier but moves less, so both would be just special. Hitting a panther's head would be critical.*

2 - Giving more control

The character wants to have more control on how he does things.

> *For example:*
> *Doing something without too much noise would be special.*
> *Doing it in an absolute silence, or being quite subtle on a very noisy surface would be critical.*

3 - Giving more power

The character wants to hit much harder.

> *For example:*
> *Adding one damage point (or two with an energy, magical or XXL weapon is special.*
> *Inflicting a direct wound to a character or making him pass out is critical.*
> *Breaking one more object is special.*
> *Stunning an enemy without armor is the same.*
> *Stunning an enemy with a helmet is critical.*

4 - Giving more speed

The character wants to go first or overt something quickly.

> *For example:*
> *Acting before someone moves is special.*
> *But interrupting an enemy's attack before he shoots, while he already aims on you is critical.*
> *Preventing a door from closing, passing an automatic door before it closes, scoring on the buzzer, kicking a grenade before it explodes or dodging a dragon breath or tail slap is special.*
> *Hurling a grenade back to its thrower is critical.*
> *Passing a trap before it gets you is critical.*
> *Shooting him while you are in his sights or you have to fast draw first is critical.*

5 - Being more subtle

We're talking about not breaking something while doing something else. Yep, we're talking about Jackie Chan's misadventures.

> *For example:*
> *Not falling when giving a sword blow while you are holding on the tip of a rope is special.*
> *Preventing from breaking a precious jar in the middle of a fight is special.*
> *Preventing a massive very fragile jar from breaking is critical.*
> *Adding a flashy description is special.*
> *Doing things in a complete silence like a ninja is critical.*

6 - Making a lasting impression

The character wants to impress people in the middle of a social oracle.

> *For example:*
> *Being noticed by the queen in a formal official meeting, or noticing someone there is special.*
> *Being noticed, or noticing someone while in a crowd is critical.*

1 - So, so, so dangerous ♫

Combat is not the only reason that can make characters lose Efforts and wounds: fire, cold, drowning are all good ways to get hurt. In all these cases, the notion of **DANGER** applies

If all cards (GM's Fate + player's Outcome) are **INFERIOR** to the danger level, then a serious effect, like a wound, strikes the relevant player.

For example:
A trap on the road that has a Danger rating of 6 will immobilize, wound or else if all drawn cards are inferior to that dreaded 6.
With a handful of drawing pins, the danger level would be a mere "2" and inflicts one Confidence.
With a futuristic laser mine it is a "9" and it inflicts two wounds on all those who are not prone.
A leaping mine would be "7" and gives everyone in a ten feet radius a wound, and all those in a fifty feet radius an Effort of damage.

2 - Goin' for broke

Sometimes, the players want to add details to the situation that do not clearly fit with the idea of adding a whole special or critical effect. Whether it is because they lack Outcome cards or because it is of a middle level does not really matter.

For example:
Two gunfighters are trying to fill up one another's bodies with lead on Tombstone Main Street. One of them is a character and his player wants to drop an eye round the corner to look for a sniper on the other side of the street. That's no "special effect to add", but that does clearly endangers him a little more. In another game system, the GM would ask for a roll of this or whatever. Here not.

Our solution is to voluntarily raise up the danger level of a situation by a number that's relevant to the situation and details awaited and fits the GM.

Same example:
A +1 danger seems fair. Maybe +2 if the player wants to cross the street. The bad consequence could be a wound or the damage delivered by the enemy who's on the other side of the street.

The actual danger level that the situation reached yet must always be known by everyone. So saying it aloud clearly is **mandatory**. Both the GM and the players can add details and change their respective danger levels so having a quick mind doesn't hurt either. But for game simplicity, do **not** have enemies sneak an eye, no minus, please.

OPTION: Making a deal

One detail after another, the danger level can climb up steeply. The GM role is to remind the players to chill out, or maybe to drop the danger level by 5 in exchange of one less Fate card as a bargain.

4 - Hit the bullseyes

Dueling is a situation in which a player is willing to make a big sacrifice in exchange for making more effects. In no situation is that more evident than the struggle for a killing blow in combat.

For example:
Two thieves knife fighting, two wizards casting triple-headed-lightning bolts to each other, two samurai bidding for the first katana blow etc.

You can add ONE effort of damage to your attack if you raise the danger level you face by ONE.

GO HIT IT THEN!

Hic est domus domine
Here is the house of the Lord

Joyce Maureira

The following few pages are detailed examples covering a wide array of oracles

1 – SITUATION

There are sixteen different categories, none are rules that are marbled in stone. They are just examples born from the play tests.
Feel free to consult these list when writing a scenario or in the hectic heat of a scene.

2 – TRUMPS

You can use this part in two different ways: either you know what you are looking for and you take the appropriate one, OR you draw a random card and it gives you an example of what the current situation can look like. Both ways work fine.

3 – FATES & SPECIAL EFFECTS

There is no way to detail the multiplicity of special effects that can be done in any situations. Once again, the quality ratings that are described are just indications. However, they can help you visualize if a wished for special effects needs a probable/special draw (color) or more an improbable/critical one (exact trump).

4 – SURPRISE & FEAR

Both are quite special cases all by themselves. They deserved to be treated separately.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF ☠RACLES

1 - Combats & conflicts

Situation:
3 cards for an anonymous basic monster
2 vs a typical efficient guardian
1 vs a real dangerous enemy
0 vs the boss special assassin
-1 vs the evil great boss himself

Trump suit:
♥ for a violent physical struggle
♦ for a careful, patient fencing duel
♠ for a tough psychic mind-control attempt
♣ for a heartless TV show argument

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: enemy is wounded
Success: character get the upper hand
Miss: characters are wounded
FUMBLE: broken weapon, capture, hit friend

2 - Pursuits & races

Situation:
3 cards vs a hungry dog
2 vs a dog pack or a single wolf
1 vs a wolf pack or a lone lion
0 vs a lion pride or a single werewolf
-1 vs the werewolves king himself

Trump suit:
♥ for a breathtaking race
♦ for a horse or motorbike race
♠ for a space or car race
♣ for a complicated love affair

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: escapes, wins the race
Success: in the leading edge of the race
Miss: close to the back of the race
FUMBLE: fall, mechanical mishap, wound self

3 - Contests & challenges

Situation:
3 cards to be the best in the project
2 vs a regional contest
1 for a national professional contest
0 for an Olympic level competition
-1 to beat the world record

Trump suit:
♥ for agility, muscles, vigor, feats of strength
♦ for marksmanship, calligraphy, dance
♠ for a riddle, chess, Sudoku
♣ to impress, to seduce, to manipulate

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: new record
Success: victory, or at least on the podium
Miss: mediocre, finish in the bottom ranks
FUMBLE: ridicule self, wound self

4 - Traps & ambushes

Situation:
3 cards for a cord in passageway or a prank
2 for a hole hidden with leaves
1 for a wolf trap or an involved jungle trap
0 for a mine or an involved dungeon trap
-1 against a model XII nano assassin

Trump suit:
♥ to leap away or roll with the blow
♦ to dodge or parry
♠ to solve the riddle or break the code
♣ for a tough interrogation

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: does surprise ambushers
Success: spot the trap or ambushers
Miss: do not spot anything
FUMBLE: take others in the trap with self

5 - Explorations & infiltration

Situation:
3 cards to follow a map for somewhere
2 for a map leading to a hostile zone
1 to explore a vast dangerous unknown place
0 to cross an unknown ocean
-1 to explore an unknown dimension

Trump suit:
♥ to fight against climate, hunger, exposure
♦ versus cliffs to cross, mountaineering feats
♠ vs a labyrinth, intricate jungle
♣ to dodge problems with natives

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: to get the shortest way
Success: no problems but slow
Miss: lost time, exhausted
FUMBLE: ambush, lost tracks, traps

7 - Survival

Situation:
3 cards to fast for a full 24 hours
2 vs no food for 2 days
1 to survive one day in the desert
0 to survive one day in the North Pole
-1 to stay alive one hour naked at -20°C

Trump suit:
♥ vs hunger, thirst, low oxygen
♦ to make a shelter, to make a fire
♠ to assess a totally unknown environment
♣ to organize a group of people efficiently

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: manage a world class shelter
Success: hold on with pain and loads of sweat
Miss: suffer, is harmed, exhaust food, fatigue
FUMBLE: succumbs, exhaust reserves

6 - Diseases

Situation:
3 cards versus a bad cold at midseason
2 vs an epidemic at its beginning
1 vs a peaking epidemic
0 vs the Black Death
-1 to survive Cassiopea IV's fevers

Trump suit:
♥ vs virus, microbes
♦ to care for people without falling ill
♠ to find a cure or handle a cure center
♣ to train people to help or cure

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: immunized
Success: a little fever and that's all
Miss: falls ill for good, can be messy
FUMBLE: agonize, will contaminate others

8 - Machines & vehicles

Situation:
3 cards for routine operations
2 for a familiar vehicle and maneuver
1 for trying something fancy or under stress
0 to do something better done by trained pros
-1 to do something no one has ever done safely

Trump suit:
♥ for a simple animal powered mechanism
♦ for a complicated machine
♠ for an advanced sophisticated system
♣ for handling a boat team or a race crew

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: perfect maneuver, camera please
Success: dirty self, complain a lot, do the job
Miss: dirty self, complain a lot, quit job in anger
FUMBLE: breaks something

OPTION: Drawing the situation suit randomly
The GM can also try to draw a card to change the suit and THEN describe the situation accordingly to it.

9 - Seduction

Situation:
3 cards for an easy lover
2 for your ex or someone you know well
1 for someone you work with
0 for the realm's princess
-1 to seduce Dracula and be left alive

Trump suit:
♥ for someone that wants muscles above all
♦ for agile fingers and little meals fans
♠ for a thinker, or a very cerebral minded person
♣ for a very romantic person

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: love at 1st sight
Success: complicated, slow but successful
Miss: broken pride, rejected, considers army
FUMBLE: public humiliation, dishonored

10 - Lying & persuading

Situation:
3 cards to trick Mum
2 vs your boss
1 to cheat on your boy/girlfriend
0 vs secret services
-1 vs KGB top operative

Trump suit:
♥ to control your breath and sweat
♦ to forge a document
♠ to resist a tight interview
♣ to survive a shitty family meeting

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: magical, inspired, lyric
Success: barely credible but works
Miss: updates in progress, consider bribe
FUMBLE: abyssal failure, jailed

11 - Leading & controlling

Situation:
3 cards to calm down noisy kids
2 to lead people that do not want to be here
1 to calm down a group of convicts
0 to rally a routed army
-1 to stop a riot in a penitentiary

Trump suit:
♥ with strength and authority
♦ by being calm and explaining patiently
♠ with a logical, no fault negotiation
♣ with eloquence and inspirational emotion call

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: leap into death
Success: The guard dies & will never surrender
Miss: morale falters, lose faith, crumbling
FUMBLE: immediate collapse

12 - Subterfuges & impersonation

Situation:
3 cards for playing Santa Claus at school
2 for taking Mum's voice on the phone
1 to pass through a quick inspection at customs
0 for a thorough, long, strict inspection
-1 to impersonate a very different person

Trump suit:
♥ to fool the house pet
♦ for an inspection at a check point
♠ to fool a computer database
♣ for fooling a close friend, parent or lover

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: spectacular results
Success: effective, no flaws
Miss: minimal effects, ridicule
FUMBLE: flawed spell, backfire, demon attacks

13 - Enigmas & riddles

Situation:
3 cards for a complicated TV show question
2 for a complicated spy book
1 to understand a legendary fact
0 to know who was Jack the Ripper
-1 to break the Bible's hidden code

Trump suit:
♥ for a survival TV show like enigma
♦ for a 1000 pieces puzzle
♠ for lore, occult, knowledge, researches
♣ for a very complicated family affair

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: Sherlock Holmes-like insight
Success: slow, patient, but effective guess
Miss: lose time, wrong guess, aggravate self
FUMBLE: get a 100% wrong answer, blew it

14 - Researches & investigations

Situation:
3 cards to find someone in a quiet town
2 to find out a criminal's name
1 to find where lives a retired criminal or cop
0 to identify a spy a cartel ring
-1 to identify the invaders master plot strategist

Trump suit:
♥ knocking to doors, walking, talking tough
♦ by a patient, unforgiving, study
♠ with library and computer help
♣ with the correct bill to the correct person

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: Go get him!
Success: lots of sweat but connection done
Miss: morale falter and lose sleep but nope…
FUMBLE: absolute wrong person pick

15 - Etiquette & ceremonies handling

Situation:
3 cards to handle family-in-law
2 to get a nice job
1 to organize a wedding
0 to manage a secret services' meeting
-1 to handle a galactic treaty despite a war

Trump suit:
♥ to keep your calm and keep smiling
♦ to sit persons at the correct place
♠ to commit no social faux-pas
♣ to handle people threatening one another

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: great job, acclaimed performance
Success: lots of troubles but all handled right
Miss: many things went wrong, anger
FUMBLE: complete disastrous failure, seppuku?

16 - Magic & occultism

Situation:
3 cards for an entertaining card tricks show
2 for a small spell versus a weak person
1 to cast an effective, powerful spell
0 for an involved, complicated, occult ritual
-1 for a gate opening ritual

Trump suit:
♥ with barbaric blood magick rituals
♦ for detailed alchemy
♠ for a ritual in a long gone language
♣ to negotiate with a demon

Possible results:
TRIUMPH: spectacular results
Success: effective, no flaws
Miss: minimal effects, ridicule
FUMBLE: flawed spell, backfire, demon attacks

FINAL TIP: do not hesitate to admit to yourself that you don't know what suit to give to an oracle. Just draw a card, take its suit as the oracle's AND then describe the situation in a relevant way. 8')

12 – SURPRISE & FEAR

1 - Surprise & initiative

To take players by surprise, instead of a complicated rule, the following approach is better:

The GM calmly says "**INITIATIVE!**" *aloud.* Then counts from 3 to zero, then says the suit for the oracle. So they have a few seconds to change behaviors or not.

If you really want to stress the players, strictly enforce the following rule:

As soon as the GM as cards in hands, nobody is allowed to change behavior. Those that try to cheat cannot benefit of any Outcome cards on the next oracle and/or get a backfire chip.

OPTION: First strike

When a combat starts *unexpectedly*, if your level is INFERIOR to the enemy's number of Confidence chips, you are NOT ready. So you can't hit on the first round. But, at least, you can score your special effects with a success, and critical ones with a triumph.

2 - Fear

To take players off balance, try this, simply:

The GM does not say anything suspicious then yells "**SUDDENLY!**" *aloud.* Then he names any single suit. Only players with the correct one will be able to do anything on the next oracle.
All players caught scrambling to their Behavior counter just lose one Confidence, whether "just going to check something", really "making sure the GM notices how perfectly the counter was already there" or "merely passing by".

3 - The oracle of panic

Lots of scenarios involve fear and dread. It is a common oracle with Confidence loss in the end. But, if you plan to use fear, it is best if it does not happen too much at any one time. Timing is crucial and you need to proceed subtly.

3 cards = Shutting doors, tough nightmare, cold sweat, weirds noises or smells, eerie feeling.

2 cards = Voice in an empty room, terror or pain screams, nightmare within a nightmare.

1 card = Unexpected body, or mass grave while not being a battle-hardened veterans.

0 card = Dead bodies that speak, hanged man that suddenly opens eyes, mutilated bodies.

-1 card = Mother-in-law, deceased since 15 years, that appears in front of you, half putrefied, covered by worms, chanting diabolic verses.

Damages can be one Confidence, maybe two in most awful circumstances. Perhaps even one Effort for the hair-whitening ones and painful puking in front of a mass grave. But beware that in some settings, fear rules do not fit.

For example:
In a Conan-like Sword & Sorcery, at worst, the GM will make a Confidence call and those who refuse to pay won't be able to play Outcome cards for one round or two. Conan-like guys have True Grit, they are not 20th century hipsters…

If you want to integrate danger such as a kinda **SPECTRAL RATING**, and if a dangerous result is drawn, take full control of the player for a number of minutes equals to the highest drawn dangerous card. When this time ends, the player resumes control but the player has no single Confidence chip left at all!

A STORY OF LIFE & DEATH

Memento mori

Remember you will die

Combat is a stepping-stone but must not be an end. It is just a mean to go quicker from point A to point B. Or a way to make sure players don't get too quickly from A to B either…

GAME PHILOSOPHY REMAINS UNCHANGED:

1 - The strength of enemies gives the number of cards. The more cards, the punier opponents.

2 - The type of combat yields the chosen suit.

3 - The result tells who gets hurt. Basically by lost armors, then by chips, then by wounds.

*4 - A **TRIUMPH** means the enemy is hurt.*

*5 - A **SUCCESS** means you get the upper hand and a free card next round. In both cases you can score additional special effects to disarm, cut things or escape unscathed.*

*6 - A **FAILURE** means you get damaged.*

*7 - Beware of exceptional adversaries that have a **DANGER LEVEL**. If all cards concerning your characters (GM and yours) are inferior to it, they score automatic wound or nasty special effects on you… This way the GM can concentrate on the **role** part, neither the **rule**, nor the **roll** parts we see too much…*

8 - In all cases, please remind players that a character without Outcome cards to play is a spectator, tied to the group's Fate result.

Miguel Santos

13 – STARTING A COMBAT

1 - It's all about the place

None of us is a Trap-Monster-Treasure fan here. I deeply think that combats should be very few and far between, but that each of them should bring something. Also the game's inherent lethality, because we don't cheat on cards, is one more reason to choose the battles you want to take a part in. So the first good ingredient to a nice combat recipe is a good location:

For example
Why a gunfight "in a street"? Why not at the opera? In a bar? At a rap festival? In a museum? In an asylum? In a mall? In a metro? In a bowling?

Why a fight "in a 20 feet by 20 feet room"? Why not in a monastery sewers? In a castle stables? At the God of Flowers mass? During carnival? On a galley? At the apex of a tower? On a ladder?

2 - It's all about the features

Most combat take place at featureless times. If this is the case then your combat is pointless.

For example
Why not a fight with a strong winds that smothers torches? Why not under a heavy rain that dampens noises and forbids arrow fire? Why not in a snow or a sand that slows you down? Why not around a band playing with loads of distractions? Why not in a railroad station with a Mum and a kid? Why not with hostages? Why not with an alarm ready to ring if too much noise is made? Why not with slow-burning fuse leading to a ton of explosives slowly burning on the ground? Why not with 3 vamps feeding? Why not with a dragon slowly awakening with noise? Why not with scattered useful objects around? Why not with metros passing by on both side?

Adding features adds dangers and details and brings life to descriptions. If you can't give three specific details to a combat then it is probably a useless one and you have better things to do. Like a race, a pursuit, an obstacle to pass by, a threat to handle, a problem with a trouble-NPC to handle, something to remark or someone to talk to etc. Combat is a tool, not an end in RPG.

3 - It's all about the way it starts

Few animals attack on sight, maybe except players from a game that talks about killing then looting monsters to gain experience. There must be a way the struggle starts:

♥: a sudden immediate assault full of rage, probably in numbers and by surprise.
♦: a subtle trap with a wicked plan, a duel offer with feints and snipers or a decoy overrun.
♠: a psychological trap like a treason, or a subterfuge, or a move undercover or in disguise.
♣: an intimidation of threats process that leads to combat.

4 - It's all about the way it ends

No creatures fight until death, except zombies and orcs in some RPG. When you start a fight you must exactly know when it *will end* (maybe that number of loss suffered) and when the enemy *will offer its surrender* or *ask for players surrender*…

To sum up all this page could be written in a single sentence:

Combats, I mean at least 90% of them, should **have a purpose**, even if it is just to exhaust the number of chips of the group before meeting *Doctor Double-Death* in his sanctuary.

1 - The number of cards depends of the VALOR of the enemy

The 3 cards enemies: *cheesecake*
An angry dog, 2 goblins, a wounded guard, a teenager, a newborn dragon or a drunk peasant
The 2 cards enemies: *crunchy nut*
A dog pack, a few guards, a ghoul, a hungry wolf, a single veteran, baby dragon or orc leader
The single card enemies: *take care*
A wolf pack, an assassin, a samurai, ten goblins, a champion, 3 orcs, 2 ghouls, a teenage dragon
The zero card enemies: *watch out*
A werewolf, a Special Forces' team, the close-combat teacher from the Foreign Legion, a master samurai, an adult dragon, an old vampire
The negative card enemies: *just get out*
A werewolf pack, Dracula himself, Darth Vader, a Balrog or an ancient dragon

IF there is a leader, you will make an average because even if it cannot be everywhere, it does motivate its followers by its sheer presence. But I it dies, vanishes or gets incapacitated, every monsters go back to their starting levels.

2 - The trump suit depends on the way the combat will be fought

♥: a violent, physical struggle with lots of aggressiveness and impacts.
♦: a subtle fencing duel with feints and counter feints, parries and dramatic leaps.
♠: a psychological struggle, filled up with wit and cunning, or a software fight in the matrix.
♣: a pirate or gunfighters duel with tons of witty remarks, intimidations and verbal abuses.

3 - The basic fight Fate

1 - **If the group does lose the round** (wrong color = failure), each engaged or fired at character will be hit once and will take damage. Outnumbered characters will also lose one Confidence. Each damage point means one Effort spent, one armor ticked off or one wound on a behavior.
When all armor has been destroyed, all Efforts chips spent and all behaviors possible ticked off, any more damage will kill the character… Oops.
2 - **If the group gains the upper hand** (good color = success), the heroes take the advantage. They'll have one more card next round, and can try to score "probable" special effects right now.
3 - **If the group triumphs** (exact suit needed) each character will inflict a hit to one enemy and they can try all kinds of special effects right now.

4 - Characters' weapons
Each triumphing character scores damage on **one** enemy, except for area weapons.

Weapons **IMPACT** tells damage in Efforts' chips:
1 = STANDARD: knife, small gun
2 = EFFICIENT: .44 gun, sword, and spear
3 = HEAVY: rifle, halberd, knight's lance
Laser, magical, legendary, XXL weapons are +1
Plasma, legendary or titan weapons are +2

5 - Characters' armor
Any object that protects a certain area (helmet, cuirass, grieves…) is an **ARMOR** and it absorbs one damage before needing repairs. **HEAVY** armor can absorb two hits but are perforated and definitely destroyed in the process. Be wise.

15 – A SUCCÈS MEANS GETTING AN ADVANTAGE

A SUCCESS means drawing a card of the good color. Like getting a ♦ when you look for a ♥.
In combat it means you are getting the upper hand. Enemies start stepping back and the players will benefit from it with a free card.

If a single player is successful he gets a bonus *Outcome card*. He can try a special with it, keep it, burn it immediately to escape unharmed, go help a wounded friend, or do an extra action like closing a gate, hurl a grenade or grab an item.
If all the group succeeds, then the GM is gonna draw one more F*ate card* next round. No need to give everyone involved a card: victory is close, no time to lose. Hurry up dudes, finish 'em!

For example
A group is fighting a mummy (a 0 card valor critter) protected by ghastly ghouls (2 cards).The GM draws one Fate card per round. Trump is ♥.

If a single player is successful, he has one card. Maybe he can separate the mummy from the ghouls, hit a ghoul or the mummy, try to pull off the medallion that the mummy wears and looks magical or knock the mummy into the nearby pit.

If the whole group succeeds (so the GM card is a ♦) then, next round, the GM will draw TWO cards, not a single one.

After a success, characters can try to score "probable" special effects ***only*** with any remaining Outcome cards in order to disarm or stun enemies etc.

An easy solution for a group success is to describe the arrival of help, or a positive event.

KESHA, HER WATER & THE PANTHER

Please Kesha, go get some water will you?
Kesha looks for fresh water at the river near her village. Unknown to her, she is followed by a prowler that is not interested by her blossoming beauty. For the young panther, it's the first hunt without Panther Mum's shadow around. So, while Kesha goes back to the village, with a water-filled jar on her head, the beast attacks!

Luckily for Kesha, it is not the full-grown predator that she is against. Just a cub. But the situation is nonetheless STRESSFUL so there will be TWO Fate cards. Because the panther is quick and agile, the GM says it's a Diamonds situation and simply announces "2♦".

Fate cards are Queen of ♣ and 4 of ♠. Ooops. *Failure*. The GM tells the player that if she doesn't draw a better card she will take a claw hit and lose 1 Effort. Not bad, had it been Panther Mum it would have been 2, 3 for Dad or even a direct wound for a Lion.

First, Kesha has *no fighting quality* and her *behavior* was set to ♠. No help from these.

However, she is **Fast-thinking** and the GM agrees on this one. She draws a jack of ♥. Jeez, she's successful and she *takes the advantage* this round. The player just wants to escape and uses the received extra card immediately. He doesn't give more details, but the GM describes how Kesha takes the jar she carries on her head and hurls it toward the little panther.

All soaked, the cub hesitates and forgets to push the fight farther, while Kesha escapes as quickly as she can. It is time to warn the men to track the predator before it's too late and someone gets caught. Don't you think?

16 – A TRIUMPH MEANS WOUNDING THE ENEMY

A **TRIUMPH** occurs when the GM, or the player afterward, draws a card from the suit he looks for (i.e.: the "**TRUMP**"). It means that each character scores one solid hit on any nearby enemy. The closest one, or the one he targeted.

The hit damages the enemy with a number of armor and Efforts lost equals to the IMPACT of the weapon.
1 = STANDARD: knife, small gun, hatchet etc,
2 = EFFICIENT: .44, sword, axe, spear etc,
3 = HEAVY: rifle, halberd, battleaxe etc.
Note that fists or feet score *only* one Confidence.

Same example with the mummy & ghouls:
As the ghouls comprise most of the enemies' side, each character will score damage on ONE ghoul. Every attempt to hit another one, hit the leader or score more damage is a special effect.

After a triumph, each character can try to score "probable" or "improbable" special effects with any remaining cards, bonus or Outcomes ones.

For example:
Try to hit a specific enemy like the leader,
Hit a second enemy, a certain body part,
Stun, Disarm, Immobilize, knockback,
Score more damage like a reverse strike, etc.

Beware: when you attempt a reverse strike to score more damage you only score ONE more point. TWO only with a XXL, magical or energy weapon. However, if you have enough Outcome cards you can really rip off an enemy this way. One or two more hits, after, one or two more hits. With proper quality, and right behavior, a skilled fighter can deliver up to +6 Efforts per round.

LILLU REUDLEUWAN'S LITTLE SISTER

Perilous encounter…
Lillu Reudleuwan is an inept thief wannabe who must seek his 8 years old sister. He helps her escape, but a combat starts with one of her kidnappers in a corridor full of junk.
Brownface is a fat, smelly drunkard but he's impressive. The GM gives him three Efforts chips and a valor of *stressful*, so two cards.

The situation is a good brawl so the GM announces "2♥". Possible results are:
♥: Lillu wounds Brownface with his knife.
♦: Lillu escapes with Little Sister,
♠ or ♣: Lillu gets mauled.

Combat
The GM draws two 10, one ♠ and one ♥: great, Lillu is *victorious this round* and stabs Brownface who loses one Effort chip (knife).

Now the GM says the brawl is very noisy. So Lillu wants to *use his quality* of **Lightning fast** to score one more strike. As Brownface does not wear any armor the GM says it is a *probable* attempt and he just needs any red card to be successful. Lucky boy! Lillu draws a 5 of ♥ and his blade thrusts into Brownface's fat belly who loses one more Effort. He has 1 left.

Now Lillu wants to finish him so he declares he's *taking risks* to thrust the blade deeper. But the GM says it's *improbable* because Lillu is no athlete and the blade is short, so he asks for a ♦. Bad luck buddy, Lillu draws an 8 of ♠! *Fumble*! The GM describes how Brownface now grabs the knife and yells for help, raising the alarm. All the while, Lillu's little sister stayed behind him. Suddenly she whispers that she can hear people coming from the other way of the corridor.
Gotta get out quick big bro's!

17 – A FAILURE MEANS BEING WOUNDED BY THE ENEMY

Complete reverse of the previous situation, a **FAILURE** occurs when all the cards you draw for a character (GM's + player's) are of the wrong color compared to the trump's one. It means that the character has been hit and will take damage.

The hit taken does damage the character with a number of armor and Efforts according only to the VALOR of the enemy. It is a <u>maximum</u>.
1 for an MOOK, or only a Confidence
1 for a typical THREAT, **2 or 3** for a meaner one
2 or more for a worse enemy

Please note that characters only take damage **once** even if surrounded. However, characters who are outnumbered 2 to 1 or worse also take one Confidence because of the moral effect of having to retreat against a much bigger group.

After a failure, characters usually can't attempt special effects. They gotta use their cards first to at least reach a success (advantage) result.

Same example with the mummy & ghouls:
*Each character that fails is hit by a ghoul, and loses 2 Efforts. **The one with the lowest card drawn will take the mummy attack and take 3.** As the players are 4 and the enemies 6, they won't lose Confidence. Good news at last.*

When you are hit, each damage point can be absorbed by one Effort. You can also use armors, but light one will need to be repaired afterwards. If a heavy one takes two or more damages at once it is destroyed. Any unabsorbed damage point, in a way or another, means you take one **WOUND**. And a wound means one less suit…

DOWN STREET BLUES

A group versus a group

Dox Fulder and **Josh Muldy** are two FBI agents. They surprised a group of bikers brawling outside of a bar where they need to meet an informer. A fight ensues while the agents enters the bar.

The bikers are four, each only have one Effort and will do a single Effort of damage with a variety of switchblades and butterflies knives.
Situation is a *physical* brawl, *stressful* because the agents didn't draw their weapons so it's 2 ♥. The GM wants this to only last for one round. Now, he draws 5 and 6 of ♣. Wrong color so it is a *group failure*. However each agent may try to improve the result for himself.

Dox Fulder behavior is on ♦ so no card, but he is a *Natural born brawler* so he has one card and draws a queen of ♥. *Personal triumph*! He kicks the ass of one biker while the other one flees.

Josh Muldy is on ♥ and a *Skilled karateka* so he draws two cards. But he comes out with two miserable ♣, the 4 and the 7. *Personal failure*! So he gets beaten up. He takes one Effort for a knife slash and also a Confidence because of the 2 versus 4 ratio. Bad evening for the FBI…

OPTION: Variable damage

Some GM use the *number of failure cards* to indicate exact damage. Others use *the value of the lowest drawn card* on the following table:

Joker = **1** Confidence or a negative special effect
Face cards (K, Q & J) = **1** Effort only
10 to 7 = **2** Efforts
6 to 2 = **3** Efforts
Ace = out of the fight, automatic wound except with heavy armor. Dying if not armored at all.

18 – DANGEROUS ENEMIES SCORE AUTOMATIC EFFECTS

1 - Automatic dangers
Some enemies such as a dragon or a favored henchman have a **DANGER LEVEL**. Note that:
1 – The GM must *always* announce the rating before the draw? Like « Danger 5 ».
2 – You can take an automatic wound even if you triumph, or in addition to a failure's damage.
3 – Be especially wary of 0 or -1 card monsters because less cards drawn means more risks.

If ALL the cards of a character (Outcome & Fate) are INFERIOR to the danger level, he will take an effect called an AUTOMATISM.

It is automatic, hence the name. This way, the GM never has to draw for the enemies.

2 - Dangers are their names
Really tough opponents. Don't mess with 'em.

A **DANGER** inflicts 2 Efforts or more and may also inflicts a **WOUND**. To cancel it, only sacrificing a piece of heavy armor counts.
Dangers have *their level in chips*. Be they Efforts, Armors or Confidence. These last being used to cancel one *character card* each.

Some examples of danger & their levels
Trained guard level 2
Seasoned soldier level 3
Veteran fighter level 4
Old "seen-it-all" soldier level 5
Vicious expert level 6
Killing machine level 7
Walking nightmare level 8
Worse nightmare level 9
Deadlier nightmare level 10

3 - Creeping terrors & the boss
We are talking about the princes of punition and mischief masters. Be kind, keep them rare.

A **TERROR**, is even more powerful, each have its own wicked **TERROR TABLE**. At the highest drawn card value on this table you will find the inflicted effect on the character.
Terrors have from **ONE to TWO TIMES** *their danger level* in **Armor** *or* **Effort or Confidence**. One of their Confidence just cancels *any card*. Yep, Fate cards too. Their attacks cause 2 or more Efforts.

NOW YOU'RE ALONE BELLA

A-hunting we won't go
Emilio Delavega and **Bella Luggoza** both are vampire hunters. Bella went to the other side of the castle while Emilio opted for the front door. A pretty unwise choice because he met Druzilla, an 8th level vampire as the one described on the critters examples below.

Druzilla is a *0 card enemy* and this is a ♠ oracle because she's as sexy as she is dangerous. **Emilio** didn't have the correct behavior. Nonetheless he's a *Good fencer* but he draws an ace of ♦! It's a *failure*. Emilio *takes risks* but gets a 2♥. Damn'it, a *fumble* and he loses his weapon. But worse, both cards are inferior to Druzilla's level. So she scores the effect corresponding to the highest drawn card which is the deuce. It reads "*bites and steals one quality for 24 hours*" so she grabs Emilio, bites him in a bewitchingly sexy way and steals his *Good fencer* quality. That will last only 24 hours. But, frankly speaking, as it was his best and only combat asset, Emilio will be a piece of dead meat on a moment's notice.

A dark laughter echoes on the castle's wall. And **Bella** understands she is alone now. Get ready.

19 – RESTING & HEALING

1 - Effort and Confidence

Getting them back won't occur frequently:

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3 or 4 hours of uninterrupted sleep brings back **ONE** Confidence. A nap, nothing.
One good hot meal lasting a good relaxing hour gives you back **ONE** Effort. A sandwich, nope.

Each up to three times a day maximum, rarely possible while adventuring.

2 - Holidays

One full week of holidays means fully recovering all chips. Two will heal all wounds.

For a single wound you need 48 hours of total rest. Yes, for each one. A single chip spent, a single drawing and OUTCH: it is that wrong move that hurts and make you lose all the benefits of hours of rest. Say only 24 hours with a dedicated nurse, healer or mediborg.

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3 - Repairing armors

You need all your spare time above your meal at the campsite to put a single light armor part back to condition. All this time you are NOT cooking, taking care of wounded, checking prisoners or over watching anything. And remember that heavy armors can't be repaired in the fields. If your light leather armor is penetrated you just have to cut here, or sew there to put it on again. However, if your heavy plate armor was penetrated, it means there are metal shards pointing inside for example. If you think that now, you have a reason to take the *armorer* quality, please remember that you'll need a forge nonetheless.

4 - Wounds

A **WOUND** occurs when you're supposed to take a single Effort damage and you can't because there are none left on your pool. When you are wounded you tick off one of your behaviors. Then you can't use it anymore until healed.

Being wounded means that no behavior marker can be set anymore in the ticked off suit's box.
If *both quality of the same color are ticked off*:
- No cards from a quality written in that color.
- You can't even get chips from that color back when you rest.

Yeah. Being wounded sucks. That's the spirit…

5 - What wound did you say?

Each wound is different from the others, below are examples of their possible consequences:

♥ = heavy bleeding, broken bones, can't run, can't bear heavy things, can't climb.

♦ = stressed, broken ribs, clumsy, can't focus or concentrate, bad sight, ears ringing, can be touchy, can't manipulate mechanisms.

♠ = painful, demoralizing, want to drop from the mission, not able to decide with wisdom, can be possessed, can't think clearly or plan things.

♣ = absent minded, prostrated, do not want to communicate anymore, can be disfigured, heavy face wound, can't talk.

OPTION: Outcome-less scenes
Optionally, the GM can rule that in any scene where the player did not draw a single Outcome card, the character gets one chip back.

CHARACTER GROWTH

Moortuus non credite illud quin latet aeterno

Is not dead which can eternally lie

The game went okay, fine. You have been able to display all of the places, scenes and non-player characters you planned to. Great. Now, the gang really sticks to this one-shot you made for them, and they want to carry on.

EXPERIENCE IS A LANTERN THAT YOU BEAR ON YOUR BACK:

In fact, there are two experience system in this game. One (the second to be exact) is intended for players who mostly like to smash things and do measure their happiness according to the number of beasties they slew, crushed, maimed, torn to bits, eviscerated or flattened. Easy. Naive. Quick.

THE TEN LABORS OF X:

However, the main experience system comes from the one designed by **George Rahm & Joseph Hillmer** in Barony, Crimson Cutlass, and quite a few other RPGs. It has always appealed to me because you can improve your position in the "level race" by having your character try to do the kind of things he hasn't done yet. All things said, however, it's not supposed to be a weening contest…

As a final note to this system, I'd say that anyone that brings something to eat or drink, AND the game host deserve a free tick of their choice after each game's end. Be brave, be bright: bring something.

David Lewis Johnson

20 – TEMPTATIONS & VULNERABILITIES

1 - A worthy life is a passionate one

Describing a character's psyche is difficult, using alignments does not really make sense except in the strictest of medieval worlds. To make a list of priorities can be useful but can be troublesome to handle in game. However, **TEMPTATIONS** are an easy tool to use, because they relate to typical game worlds elements. Like, the tendency of one cowboy to drink compared to a more sober one. Just don't overdo it, it is a gimmick, not a punition.

2 - Temptations

Each temptation has an **INTENSITY**:

11 or + = vital need, such as breathing
10 = real urge to succumb, burning hot
9 = painful desire, almost inhuman to resist
7 or 8 = burning desire, makes you sweaty
5 or 6 = intense desire to succumb to temptation
3 or 4 = really hard, must be fought against
1 or 2 = moderate will to "at least try"
0 = absolutely no desire at all

3 - Vulnerabilities

Behaving in character should be rewarded:

If the *vulnerability* of a character is strictly **SUPERIOR** to the intensity of a *temptation*, then the player *must* play the character and let it succumb to it. If the player does NOT want to and says the character does resist, then the character has to pay one chip, or a *backfire*.

If the *vulnerability* of a character is **EQUAL** to the intensity of a *temptation*, then the player that choose to succumb will earn a chip, or get rid of a backfire he may already have.

4 - When to edit them?

It is the GM duty to propose a list of TEN nice **VULNERABILITIES** fitting the theme and mood of the game. Then the player will assign each of the values from 1 to 10 to each of them. The higher the value, the more vulnerable you are. The trick is starting the game fast. So this choice should occur at a proper relaxed time. The first night of the adventure when players start to camp, and their players chat while making a meal or collecting some wood for the fire.

Back to the western example:
*Attraction to pretty **WOMEN***
*Passion for games, especially **POKER***
*Thirst for **GOLD**, including will to steal it*
*Taste for **WHISKY**, and risk of drinking too much*
*Respect for the **LAW** and the sheriffs*
*Love for your **NATIVE LAND** (be it Confederacy, Mexico, Tribe, State, City etc)*
*Coolness versus **NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES***
*Resistance toward **INSULTS***
*Passion for beautiful **HORSES***
*Urge to get **VENGEANCE***

5 - The use of T&S in game

It's up to the GM to evaluate temptations and announce their levels. Better yet, he can note them for each character and just tell the players when their character starts cracking up. Do **not** always target the same player nor vulnerability. The "most beautiful horse you've ever seen is a western favorite for example", especially because everybody thought it would be harmless to put the 10 there. Say 3 o 4 times per game is plenty.

As a final note, AFTER an adventure, a player can switch TWO values no more, no less. This way, the whole 1 to 10 range stays present in all characters.

SOME EXAMPLES OF TEMPTATIONS BY THEMES

SWORDS & SANDALS

Obedience to the king, the republic, the emperor
Loyalty to the tribe, the state
Faith in the cult
Respect for traditions
Awe for dead persons, Fear from outsiders
Indomitable courage in battle
Love for the family
Knowledge of worldwide lore & superstitions

CYBERPUNK

Submission toward the Party model
Open-mindedness for the Matrix
Taste for virtual reality
Love for ecology and Gaïa
Love for mankind and its many meanings
Curiosity for the *Big Before*
Loyalty to the street gang
Fear of radiations, Tolerance for mutants

MIDDLES AGES

Loyalty to the king or liege or banner
Loyalty to the nobility values
Faith into the church, Faith into heresy
Fear of paganism
Holy terror versus diabolism, Hatred for heretics
Fair love for your Dame
Lust for meals, or maidens
Appeal for hunting, falconry

SCIENCE-FICTION

Loyalty to the Federation, For the Emperor
Taste for personal freedom
Care for genetic purity
Care for ecology and species survivals
Xeno-alien curiosity, or Acceptance
Passion to go beyond the Last Frontier
Passion for space loneliness, or Ground Need
Addiction to 3D drugs

CLOAK & DAGGER

Loyalty to the king
Loyalty to the company, the regiment
Lust for eating, for drinking, for poetry
Passion for beautiful women, True love
Thirst for gold, Devotion to church
Wish to discover and explore
Taste for honor matters, Sense of duty. Honor.
Ambition to rise up

WAR MOVIES

Respect for officers
Loyalty to the army, Loyalty to the nation's cause
Hatred for the guys on the other side
Respect for civilians, Respect for prisoners
Care for the wounded, Care for the dead
Crave for medals, Crave for authority
Trust into subordinates
Taste for looting, Taste for arsons

MODERN DAYS

Loyalty to the current political system
Search for personal enjoyment
Search for personal fulfillment
Loyalty to the Party, Hatred for State Enemies
Sense of duty
Taste for success
Love for your family
Ties to traditions

SUPER HEROES

Crave for popularity, Crave for more power
Respect for secret ID
Passion for sciences and research
Respect for human lives, Respect for laws
Loyalty to the team
Concerns for the cost of hunting villains
Weight of « the civilian side »
Obedience to authorities

1 - What does the GM want?

If you want a *simulation* there are computers that handle that way better than human minds. Anyway, what simulation is there in any 500-page long rulebook that reads "dice are made to make noise behind the GM's screen?". If you want *Quality of writing*, then literature is a much better place to look into. And, the game itself being mostly improv' right? If you want *Acting skills?* You'd better make your internet series or try an Amateur Acting Class. Because in RPG we mainly keep playing the same few characters: the same heroes we have been dreaming to be in our minds since childhood.

> **The word ROLE means to make-believe**
> **The word PLAY means to have fun**

So, the ultimate goal of the GM can be summed up in one sentence: "Hope to hear players say it was great, they liked it a lot and can't wait for the following part". It is **the only one award** you'll be given, dude. But it's a tremendous one. Period.

2 - What the players do want then?

To make sure the players comes back, you have to feed them their weekly dose of **CHROME**:
- A few pursuits and races
- Some combats
- To be endangered or even hurt
- Enigmas, and riddles to solve
- Maps to move figures upon
- Interactions with likable or hatable beings
- Stylish NPC, even when they die
- To be fired at, thrown fireballs at
- To be at the center of the universe
- To change things in the game world
- Solve problems and ruin evil plans
- Save the world / princess / kingdom
- Of course, get stronger after all that!

3 - Getting more experienced *by deeds*

This game's experience system is based on **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**. To be short it is a list of things that you gotta do to improve to one level higher. The whole list must be done from scratch after completing a new level so you can't accumulate them before. There are Characters Sheets models where the list does appear and some where it doesn't. The important things are: 1: that it is only the GM choice that can validate every single tick on the list, and 2: that a single situation can only give one single reward.

1: **To accomplish an exploit**, with or without witnesses. But it must be really difficult.
2: **To be endangered** means drawing cards when danger can occur or doing something risky AND that does make sense. No silly selfie.
3: **To be wounded**, whatever may be the reason, a suit box must have been scratched. Except if it is by a friend at game's end…
4: **To duel versus an equal** means fighting (with weapons, wits or words on a TV duel) someone 1 on 1, in a situation where losing is dangerous. It's not mandatory to win.
5: **To explore, travel & discover**. It does not mean finding a secret door, but setting foot on another continent counts.
6: **To fight**, on a battlefield or in an ambush. But blood must drip. Not mandatorily yours btw.
7: **To get rid of a threat for good**. Be it with might, with violence, with tricks, with cunning. But it must be definitive, not temporary.
8: **To make a tough choice**, with bad or sad consequences for you. Not for outsiders.
9: **To play your role well** just means that you don't lose time when your character buy a helmet but play your character consistently.
10: **To save someone**, from a real threat, be it helping someone to flee or not to suicide.

4 - Getting more experienced *by XPs*

As you can see the list is pretty broad and leaves a lot to interpretation. If this is not fine with you, use a basic XP system like that:

One XP for each **won fight** versus dangerous enough foes.
One XP for each **useful and bright idea**.
One XP for having played the character all game long while **sticking to the role**.
One XP for deeds of **real genuine bravery**.

At ten you get a new level.

Please note that, whichever system you use, stick to it. Also note that your actual level does count for what is exactly expected from you:

For example:
At level 1 a foe is a lone wolf
At level 2 it's a wolfpack, or a lone killer or a tiger
At level 3 it's the leader of the "Black Scorchers"
At level 4 it's hanging all of the gang members
At level 5 it's – at least – saving a princess
At level 6 it's winning a battle or slaying a dragon
At level 7 it's saving the barony
At level 8 defeating a rival Duke looks fine
At level 9 taking back a whole province is fair
And, at level 10 defeating the Evil King is the least your obedient subjects expect from you.

5 - What problem causes a new level?

First, with power comes responsibilities and troublemakers, so you get:

An **ENEMY** that will come back, on and on, to track him and make his life worse because of some (real or imagined) wrong that the character has done to him, his dreams or his plans. People like a humiliated goon, a dismissed lover, an enemy that see you as his failure cause etc.

A **WEAKNESS** that forfeits any Outcome cards when it is applying. Did anybody say Kryptonium-326? Did anyone started to panic when the tunnel was full of rats? Remember that: exposed to a weakness, it forfeits ALL your Outcome cards…

6 - What does a new level improve?

But growing up brings strength, allies and skills:

A **NEW QUALITY** of his choice that will give him the relevant chip. It must be something that he practiced, or at least, tried to achieve in game.

A **SPECIALISATION** in a quality he already owns. It means that in a very limited domain of an already small activity he will be able to draw TWO Outcome cards if both apply. That is the swashbuckler specialized in *Duels*, the pilot who is great in *Pursuits*, the temptress at ease with *Bankers*, or the occultist akin to *Ghosts*.
Please note that it does *NOT* give any chip.

A **CONTACT** in the game world that can provide help, shelter, advice or similar limited help. Be it an old colleague, a mentor, a cousin etc. it can help you ONCE per adventure if relevant.

A **TALENT** that you can do at ease whenever you want. Like *Quoting the Bible*, *Computing really fast*, *Knowing famous people*, *Singing really nicely*… It is NOT supposed to give you a card, but it's supposed to be free too. If a player find one talent that he keeps on overusing, give the second and each use hereafter a cost of one chip. Especially if it can be a "combat trick".

In some game world, it will be appropriate to also give a **CAT'S LIFE**, an occasion to survive certain death (but not player's bad choices). Each being a one use device.

THE DEVELOPMENT BOOK

Amant alterna camenae

Alternate measures please the Muses

MAGICKS

Multa paucis
A lot of things with very few words

Joyce Maureira

THE KEYS TO POWER ARE WORDS: POWER WORDS

Our magic system is divided in three parts: first, the basic spells & charms that the gifted among them will keep using daily. Then, the world-changing rituals that characters will sometime interrupt or provide assistance to, but will never complete by themselves. And at the end the summoning rituals from outer beings from unfathomable dimensions.

22 – TRUE NAMES SORCERY OR BREATH MAGIC

1 - How to cast spells with your voice

Sorcery is also called **BREATH MAGIC** because all its power lies in the words of power that are spelled aloud. This form of low magic uses the concept of **TRUE NAMES**: words each conveying a tangible amount of power and enabling you to handle a single, unique, form of magic.

For example:
*EFRIT is the True Name of all things related to Fire Magic. If you want to do **anything magical** involving fire you have to pay for the "EFRIT" quality. Without it you can't. Fast. Easy. Simple.*

To cast any spell, you need:
1 - To have paid for the "Magick" suit (if any),
2 - To have paid for the appropriate True Name needed, each being a separate quality,
3 - To be able to tap enough **MANA** from a nearby source. Each True Name afterward lists exactly what's enough or not.

2 - In True Names ye shall find power

A **POWER WORD** is one *that makes sense* in a magical formula. The more names, the more powerful the spell will be. *Articles* do NOT count, but *nouns*, *verbs* and most *adjectives* DO.

For example:
*1 – Let's start with a single power word like **Flame**. With a tiny bit of mana, and as long as you know the True Name EFRIT (i.e: you have the quality), you can use it to give a little W-o-o-o-o-F strong enough to light a candle.*
*2 – To get a bigger flame, you will need to cast the spell **Create a Flame** where there are two power words: Create & Flame. With such a spell you can evocate a bright, big flame that will last a few seconds, say a single combat round from 3 to 10 seconds.*

*3 – Now say you want a **Fire Ball**, still with two power words: Fire & Ball. With this one you get a nice sphere of fire… that is motionless. At least you can use it to block the way for one round.*

Once again, the principle is easy: the more words, the more powerful, accurate and effective the spell will be.

WITHOUT fatigue a wizard can cast any spell that uses less power words than his level.
For ONE chip, a wizard can cast any spell that use exactly as many power words as his level.
EACH power word **ABOVE** the spell caster experience level will cost **ONE MORE CHIP**. The absolute maximum being TWICE his level.

For example:
*Lazare Arklewood is a second level wizard that has paid for the EFRIT quality. He can cast this **Flame** spell all day long without any fatigue: <u>one</u> power word versus level two. No sweat.*

*He can cast a **Wall of Fire** for one chip (his choice of black or red). <u>Two</u> power words versus level two. Fine.*

*If he wants to cast a **Big Wall of Fire**, or a **Wall of Intense Flames**, there are <u>three</u> power words. One above his level. So he'll need to pay two chips. Same thing for a **Burn the Orcs at the Corner** spell. Still no problems right?*

*Now if he wants to **Burn the Three Orcs Around me** it will be <u>four</u> power words. One for the burning, and one more for every orc because each one is a different target (they are not grouped in the corner). Four words means two more chips for a total of three. Note that if there had been 4 orcs, one could not have been targeted because four words is Lazare's maximum: two times his level of experience.*

Now please note that upon reaching level 3, Lazare will be able to *Create a Flame* as much as he wants each day without any fatigue because two power words is less than his level.

3 - How to factorize the untold?

An <mark>ADJECTIVE</mark> is a careful modulation of a spell power, in order to get *Intense Flames* or a *Big Wall*. Each and every one will add more power word to the formula. However, some very common ones needs to be described right now:

Be cautious, problems start here!

First factor is the <mark>DURATION</mark>. Normally, it is just *Instantaneous*. So it means a spell ends quite at the very exact moment it starts. But its consequences *can* last, like a newspaper ignited that keeps on burning and sets off powder later.

LONGER means several minutes. That does count as ONE more power word.
LONGEST means several hours and counts as TWO power words. Now if you want to make things last longer than this duration, it is a ritual that you need, not a spell.

Second factor is the <mark>RANGE</mark>. Default value is *Close*, it means that a spell takes effect up to a ten feet range. Or even by touch sometimes. But its consequences *can* go on like an epidemic that keeps contaminating new targets.

FARTHER is the range of distinct voice, about as far as a stone can be thrown. That does count as ONE more power word.
FARTHEST is the range of clear sight, about as far as where an arrow can be fired. It counts as TWO power words. Now if you want to make things go farther than this range, it is a ritual that you need, not a spell.

Third factor is <mark>AREA OF EFFECT</mark> which default value is *A single human-sized target* which is enough to aim at a human adult or to produce an effect (e.g.: illusion) of about that same size.

WIDER will affect several targets who are close one from another, or maybe a large room. It counts as ONE more power word.
WIDEST will target a wider group, maybe the size of a large house. It counts as TWO power words. For anything wider you will need a ritual.
INDIVIDIAL TARGETS needs to be picked up one by one (like the example with the orcs). In case of doubts, if there are different arc of fire, then you need to pay for each individual target.

Fourth factor is the <mark>INTENSITY</mark> which default is *One chip*. Even if collateral consequences can add more damage, like an ignited troll that leaps by the window to its death because it's aflame.

MORE INTENSE does cause two chips, or an additional side effect like *Drenched in blood or slime*, *Disarmed*, *Stun*, *Burning*, *Poisoned* or *Falling*. It counts as ONE more power word.
MOST INTENSE does cause a collateral effect that will last but is not fatal, say *Wounded*, *Blind*, *Crippled*, or *Deaf*. It counts as TWO power words. Anything more brutal is a ritual.

4 - Adding more details and verbs

The GM has the final count on the number of power words. An overall **COMPLICATED** spell can count as one more, and a **VERY COMPLEX** one as TWO more. They are in CAPS below.

For example:
A ***Drown that Guy*** *if he's in a swimming pool is fine. A* ***Fill His Lungs with Water*** *is a very complex one in the middle of a staff meeting….*

EXAMPLES OF TRUE NAMES: MANA & POWER WORDS

Please note that there is absolutely NO NEED to write a definite *spell list* before playing. But it's both fun and practical feeling like an ArchMage.

DYTTO = WATER & CLIMATE
Mana sources:
+ Springs, sea, rivers, well, swamp, waterfall
- Keg of water, bottle of water
Relevant spells & power words:
Heal wounds, Cure disease, Extinguish fire, Breath under water, Purify a wound, Clean, Rain, Frost, Cold, Chills, SNOW, ICE, FREEZE A LAKE, GET A LIQUID SHAPE, DROWN

EFRIT = FLAMES & FIRE
Mana sources:
+ Campfire, lit torch, lantern, holy candle
- Ashes, matchbox
Relevant spells & power words:
Light a fire, Cauterize a wound, Flamethrower, Anger, Wrath, LIGHTNING, TAKE A SMOKE SHAPE, and INCINERATE INTO ASHES

BOWWE = EARTH & PLANTS
Mana sources:
+ Trees, gardens, rare plants
- Cultivated fields, cut flowers, vegetables
Relevant Spells & Power words:
Confusion, Entanglement, Poisons, Pollens, Cure or give a disease, ANIMATE A TREE, TRANSFORM INTO AN ANIMAL, TELEPORT FROM ROOT TO ROOT

SHADE = DARKNESS & NIGHT
Mana sources:
+ Cavern, attic, people's shadow, well's bottom
- Shadow of an object, bottom of a keg
Relevant spells & power words:
Shield against an attack, Invisible spy, Evil eye, Fly on a broom, Give disease, Hide, Break an object, Throw things, Light, Disguise shape, BANNISH A SPIRIT, CALL A MINOR DEMON

KERNU = BEAST & WILD SIDE
Mana sources:
+ Untamed animal, predator hide, loads of blood
- Insects, rabbit hide, nuggets, steaks
Relevant spells & power words:
Call an animal, Call thunder, Speak to animals, Turn someone wild, Yell terrifyingly, CONTROL A PRIDE OF LION, A BEE HIVE, PARALYZE, TRANSFORM INTO AN ANIMAL

VIMME = IMAGE & ILLUSIONS
Mana sources:
+ Painting, statue, lake's surface, theatre screen
- Magazine, TV set, newspaper
Relevant spells & power words:
Get invisible, Move an object, Repair, Puppets, Confusion, Absent-mindedness, Arouse desire, Mirror images, See what is far, Obfuscate, ANTIMAGIC, COUNTERMAGIC, ANIMATE A STATUE, A GOLEM, BLIND

ZEFYR = AIR & MOVEMENT
Mana sources:
+ Anywhere, except under water or in space
- Under any roof, in a forest, underground
Relevant spells & power words:
Capture message, Erase fatigue, Trip persons, Give motivation, Blind, Sound illusions, Imitate sounds, BLIND, DEAFEN, FLY LIKE AN EAGLE, RETURN MAGICKS, SMOTHER,

SABAT = KNOWLEDGE & CHARMS
Mana sources:
+ Libraries, monuments, graveyard, old books
- Incomplete body, single pocket book
Relevant spells & power words:
Circles of protections, Create amulets, Counter spells, Detect, Make people speak the truth, mental slavery, Speak with dead, MADDEN, CANCEL A SPELL, TEMPORARILY BLOCK A RITUAL

23 - HIGH RITUALS OF THAUMATURGY

1 - The Art of making miracles

Let's be clear. This system is not intended for players, not at all. It is here as a reference for the GM and as a scenario issue. Most players will meet it in mostly three cases:

1 - When crashing its preparation,
2 - While protecting the ritual being completed,
3 - More rarely, while going from place to place looking for assistants to regroup and gather things of value to sacrifice.

Drop petty magic spells and forget them. The purpose of this page is to rule out world shattering RITUALS. So, if you want to open a door to another dimension, here you are. If you want to make sure every girl from the enemy town never have any offspring anymore, here you are too. And if you dream of crashing a meteor on the nearby town, or upon another at the far other side of the world, you're still in the right place…

2 - Circles of power

Each ritual belongs to a CIRCLE OF POWER:

The *POSSIBLE* is what could be done in another, more natural way. Such as to kill a person, to burn down a place, to bring a lion, to dry a well, to drown your husband or wife…

The *EXTRAORDINARY* is what *can't* be done in a normal situation, except with extreme efforts or very unlikely circumstances. Like to eradicate a whole family, to totally flatten a place, to capture the biggest lion ever, to modify the flow of a river, to fly or to get rid of all the woman with a first name that starts with a Y.

The *SUPERNATURAL* implies to look for something clearly not possible *at all*. Like to mate

a man with a crocodile, to bring in front of you a Blue Chimera from the Seven NightWorlds by a DreamGate, to teleport or to make a blazing fire appear from within each person from the Taq'ray't Clan. We are here at the upper range of magic prowess in a fantasy rich universe.

The *IMPOSSIBLE* just can't be expected and defies even Magic's admitted limits. Like to make the sun stand still, to mate a girl and a Laser Dinosaur, or to fly in space. Barely believable, even for Merlin or Gandalf. Rather what you expect from a very gifted demi-god.

3 - Weaving a ritual

Each circle has three COMPONENTS:
1 - A unique moment when it may be attempted.
2 - A minimum number of assistants above the Arch-Mage and his assistants. **For each zero added** to the number needed you can:
- decrease the time taken by one category OR
- reach a place at the other end of the world OR
- make the effect last forever
3 - An absolute minimum ritual duration.

The POSSIBLE
Dusk or Dawn + a few assistants
Takes one hour and an *appropriate* sacrifice

The EXTRAORDINARY
Full Moon + dozens of assistants
Takes several hours and a *rare* sacrifice

The SUPERNATURAL
Solstice or Equinox + hundreds of assistants
Takes 24 hours + *incredible* sacrifices

The IMPOSSIBLE
Solar or Moon Eclipse + thousands of assistants
Takes a whole week + *scandalous* sacrifices

1 - Power magnitudes

We are going to talk about big **ENTITIES**, let's order them by their **POWER** first:

3 cards: expendable creatures
Skeleton, mocking spirits, imp
2 cards: minor creatures
Zombie, ghoul, poltergeist
1 cards: supernatural creatures
Corrupting spirit, minor demon, lesser angel
0 cards: major creature
Major demon, angels, superior spirits, tales hero
-1 cards: almost all-powerful creatures
Archangel, demon prince, demigod

To affect an entity, you need a relevant quality:

For example:
Invocations, Exorcist, Erudite, Spirit hunter, Witch

2 - Thou shallst not open doors

A **SUMMONING** is a ritual that opens a door between this world and the entity's. There are distinct steps to follow. The first one is to know the creature True Name, which is most probably not well known and most of the time well-guarded. Getting one is the perfect purpose for a quest.
Then you need to draw and enchant a pentacle which is both time consuming and exhausting. It takes from 2 to 6 hours according to magnitude and each hour costs any one chip.
Then, you can do an oracle appropriate to the entity's magnitude in order to call it.

A triumph = it is friendly, next oracle is 3 cards
A success = it comes, but is threatening, 2 cards
A failure = it is angry, next oracle is one card only
A fumble means a hostile something else came…

3 - Thou shallst not do it lightly

If you do not have a pentacle, any summoned creature but friendly one will attack. If you have one, you will need to control it with another oracle (friendly = 3 cards, OK = 2, fail =1, fumble = 0).

If you fail, it escapes and *may* attack you.
If you botch it is free to roam where it wants to go, most probably here killing you.
If you succeed, it will stay with you as long as each and every dusk, you pay any one chip. If you have several you must pay for each, if you do not have enough chips, you lose them starting by the most powerful ones.
If you triumph, it is **BOUND** to an object as a slave and will stay as long as this item is not broken.

A **BANNISHMENT** is dispelling back an entity. You need to succeed at a single oracle… if you know its True Name. An obvious quest's motive. Beware that breaking an item where an entity was bound does not necessarily gets you a friend… It may attempt to possess the nearest or weakest person nearby to do its mischievous will. A single Confidence call will suffice to designate the victim: the player that will spend the less chips.

4 - What's all this is for?

Any entity that is supernatural or above has a soul, some beliefs and some objectives. It is the GM duty to roleplay them. Keep in mind that evil beings will try to pervert all orders they receive to spread havoc, but that even benevolent ones cannot understand the body needs of humans, like needing to breathe air for example. As a result, players should NEVER be given the feeling that they control any such beings. Risking an entity wrath or misunderstanding should be every summoner's daily concern.

MARTIAL ARTS

Quidlibet audendi potestas

The right to dare just about anything

Luigi Castellani

YOUR KUNG FU MAY BE STRONGER THAN MINE
BY MY GUN FU WILL PUT HOLES ALL THROUGH YOUR BODY

The principle?
Automatisms for players, that just need ONE card high enough to be activated.
Can't be clearer. Please note that all the things written below do NOT just apply to kicks and combats. It's up to your players to explore the possibilities of Martial Arts.

1 - The truth about martial arts

Almost anything can be achieved in a martial way. From drawing a sword to making tea. The purpose of this chapter is to allow persons with a total dedication to their art to do absolutely incredible things. So we are NOT talking about guys taking *Guns* or *Brawl* qualities right?

A **MARTIAL ART** implies daily training, mental commitment and rare personal involvement. This has a cost. To take ONE martial art costs TWO qualities at character creation. Afterward, it cost you both your quality and your specialization when gaining a new level.

Yes, this way you can become an expert in both Krav-Maga, Systema ou Gun-Fu. However, it means you will have little skills elsewhere.

2 - Getting katas

Each time a character reaches a new level, in each of his martial arts, he gets a new belt.

A **NEW BELT** means that in each martial arts he practices, even if he just paid for it, the character gets his level of experience in **KATA**

For example:
Ching-Ya-Foo has been into Tae-Kwon-Do for years. She reaches level 5 and sacrifices all to learn Gun-Fu, an American martial art from Sunnydale. Now, in both martial arts she will get 5 different katas. See each as a new move.

With experience, you can improve the chance of your kata to occur (i.e.: lower the minimum card) or add damage to its effects.

3 - Defining how katas work

Each kata is a maneuver that you repeated and practiced for hours, again and again, until it becomes a *natural part* of the martial artist.

A **KATA** allows you to add ONE special effect to the result of a combat to an enemy. Like *Stunning*, *Disarming* or *Immobilizing*.

Take note that you never "try" a kata. You recognize a pattern of movements where you see an opening for your blow, then you place it because it is *natural* to you. As a result, katas are like an **AUTOMATISM**. The main difference is that you have to draw **HIGH** to do it.

You only need to have a card with the needed value appear to place your kata. Be it a GM's Fate card or one of your own Outcome cards.

For example:
Ching-Ya-Foo has a kata for "Push the enemy off-balance backward". Whether it is a card drawn by the GM or one of his, as soon as there's a drawn king, she can launch her routine and score this special effect.

The ONLY way for an enemy to save from a kata effect and cancel it is by spending any chip.

When you have many levels, you have a lot of katas. As such you are able to adapt a variety of responses to attacks or events. It means that if there are TWO such cards you can score it twice, against two different enemies or twice against the same opponent in that round.
This is why you were told *NOT* to bother Old Masters…

However there is a consequence to using a kata. The enemy is warned once you use it on him. So you cannot use the same kata afterwards in the same combat against anyone as soon as the current round ends. *However*, if you have been bright enough to give *different names* to different katas that have the same basic effect, you can use another one.

4 - Improving your katas

Instead of hoarding new kings' katas, you can work even harder on them and improve them.

You can lower the needed card to score a kata by one level costs one kata.

You can add a damage bonus to the maneuver at the cost of plus one Effort for two katas.

5 - Some examples of katas

Examples at ♥
Hit one more target at once
Make an everlasting scar
Break a bone, Render it useless for a while
Break a weapon, Spin it away, Break an armor
Pierce a wall, Break a brick
Bowling like throw on grouped enemies
Immobilize with a lock
Fall control, Roll with the blow
Make target drop object, magazine, or else

Examples at ♠
Hit a target in a complete silence
Demoralize (damage on Confidence)
Stun, Drop back, Knock out
Trip, Make fall, Unbalance
Use a trivial object as a weapon
Fighting blind, Fighting while tied up

Examples at ♣
Paralyze enemy
Mute enemy, Break throat muscles
Blind enemy, Deafen opponent
Impressive wall rebounds
Frighten with defy move, Show off

Examples at ♦
Disarm target, Hit a specific spot
Slipping blow, Jumping blow, Raising up blow
Instant rise
Get freed from a lock
Throw opponent, Bowling throw
Fast draw, Steal weapon, Steal firearm
Hit a target behind someone
Hit and steal something
Hit and put something on target
Rolling dodge, Leaping dodge, Dodging step
Disarming parry, Blocking parry

PSIONICS

Mens agitat molem

Mind over matter
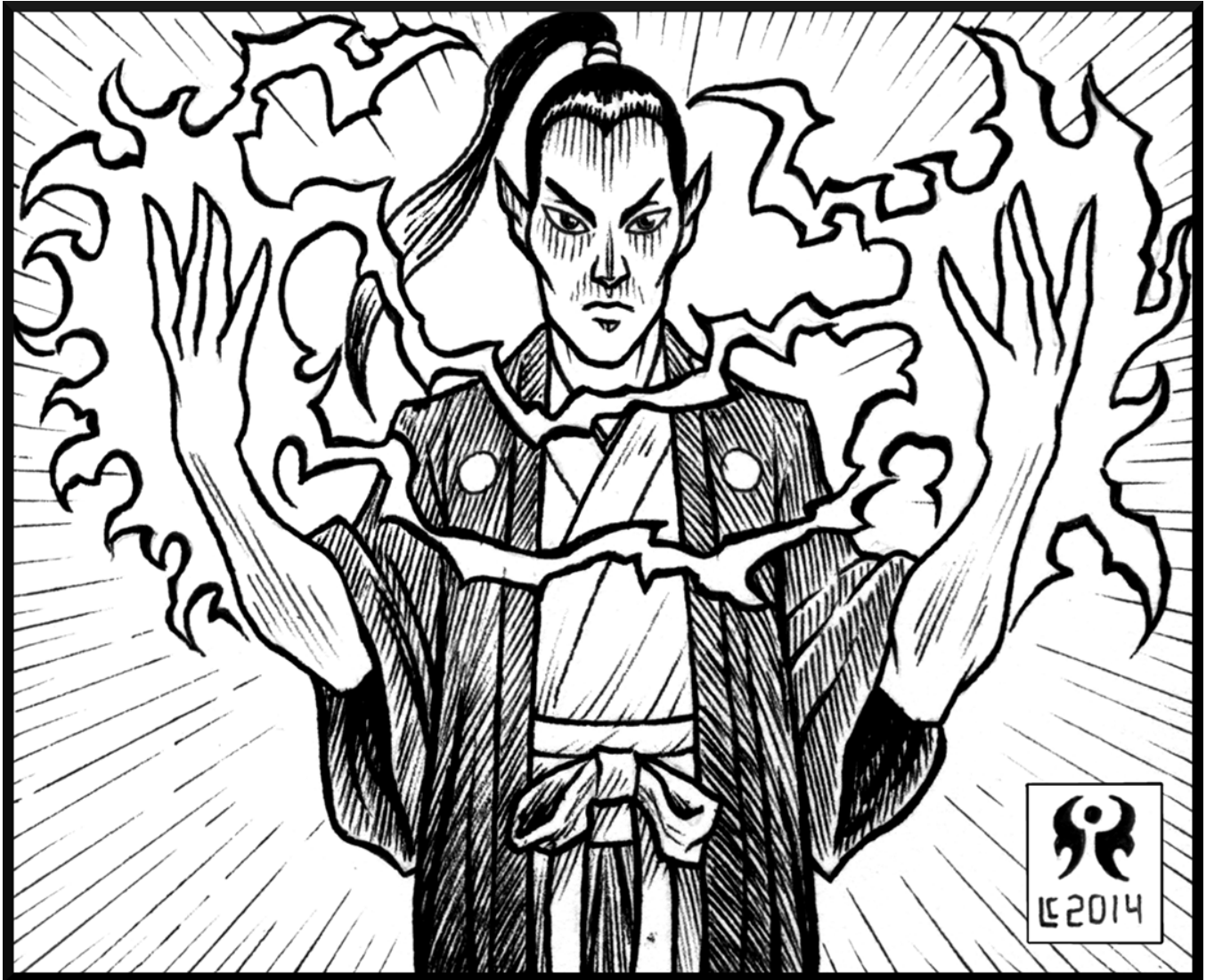
Luigi Castellani

90% OF UNUSED BRAIN POWERS??

Being a psionic is simple: one day you realized you could use these fabled 90% of under exploited gray matter under your skull.

These capacities have just one flaw, but a tremendous one: one day or another, no one knows when, at the most improper times, the psionic will lose the control of them and will start a « psionic rage » episode. In the end there will be much damages, most probably wounded or killed persons and enhanced bias against psionic users.

1 - To be or not to be a psionic

No character should ever enter a psionic career at random. Each of them should be willfully created by a character and must be agreed on by the GM. If the GM does NOT want any, end of the story. If he agrees, **PSIONICS** will be a campaign's main feature not a rotten side course.

If the GM allows psionics, to get any of them the player will have to pay for the 5th suit for the character. This suit will be **PSIONICISM** or any other word you see fit.

The cost of taking the 5th suit does NOT give any powers, it is just an affinity or an « open door ».

2 - Each category of power is limited

For each kind of psionic activity you need to take a distinct quality. So psionics are somewhat far much more limited than wizards that weave their spells. Some call these qualities **THREADS**, the more common are:

ESP: feeling hidden things or reading auras,
Telekinesis: moving objects without touching
Telepathy: speaking without words
Pyrokinesis: *Carrie* when she's angry…
Mekakinesis: to possess and control machines
Precognition: predicting the future
Teleportation: to go elsewhere without moving
Levitation: to glide and fly without wings

At each new level, the character gets *his level times one use of a power per game*. But:
1: You need to choose one lower power use before choosing a one-step higher level one, and
2: You need to do that for each list you pick a power from, and at each level.

For example:
Carrie (the character from Brian De Palma's epic movie) reaches level 3. So she will choose 3 powers from the lists she already knows, which are Telekinesis & Pyrokinesis. She sets on:
1 - Move a small object (lowest telekinesis)
2 - Move a big object (same list so one step above the previous choice).
Now for her 3rd, if she wants to switch the list to choose from, she will have to take the lowest power (i.e.: start a flame) or she can take another power from the Telekinesis list that will be one step above the last one she took. On reaching level 4, she will have to make all the choices again, except if she has taken new psi powers.

There is no more need for complicated rules: *at each level*, to take any power, you need to have already chosen one for each of the steps below on the same list.

You need to take first a **MINOR** power like *Moving a chair*, or *Opening a door*. Then you can choose a more powerful one like *Moving a person* or *Pulling off a door*. Then in the end after several steps you will be able to choose **MONUMENTAL** powers like *Lifting a car* or *Smashing a door*.

In all cases, if conditions are not perfect (like being behind a window, target more than 10 ft. away etc), any psi use costs *one* Confidence.

3 - Psionics tire very quickly

Each use of any power is listed on its single line on the character sheet. A line is good for a single use *per full game*. If you want to use any one more time, it's *one* confidence, a second time is *two* more etc. You can reclaim ALL usages by staying 48 hours in game not using any.

27 – PSIONIC CURSE & RAGING DOOM

1 - Psionics live in terror

To be a psionic is not a gift, it's a curse. Just imagine having trremendous powers but never knowing when they will escape your control. A moment of dread, a bad dream, a loss of confidence and *tadzam*, you just turned into a live unpinned grenade!

2 - The terror to lose control

If at any time, a psionic must pay a Confidence chip for any reason (including psi use) and he can't, he enters **PSIONIC RAGE**.

Possessed by the psionic rage the player does not control his character anymore. It is the duty of the GM to make him target all of his remaining power uses on nearest persons. Each use will cost one Effort. If there are still targets when he has no more chips left, the psionic will start losing wounds instead. It can lead to his death if people do not get out of the way quickly.

3 - Psionics are targets

According to my experience, the best campaigns involving psionics are those where they are wanted dead or alive by big powers. Be they military (for tests), industrial or medias (for sales), political (for influence) or religious (by zealots). Most of their powers will be mere life-savers in these cases. It can yield a very satisfactory perpetual chase atmosphere to the campaign.

The other nice option is the *1984* option where an Orwellian totalitarian power tries to eradicate them as states enemies. The trick being that this dictatorship took power because they used the masses fear of psionics by showing delicately chosen cases on TV. Get it? People will hate your characters, you are alone and nobody has any nice plan involving your survival at all. Beware that this kind of campaign has quite a pessimistic outlook.

There is also the option of having wonderfully powerful psi dudes, but there is a game with vampires if you need to feel that almighty…
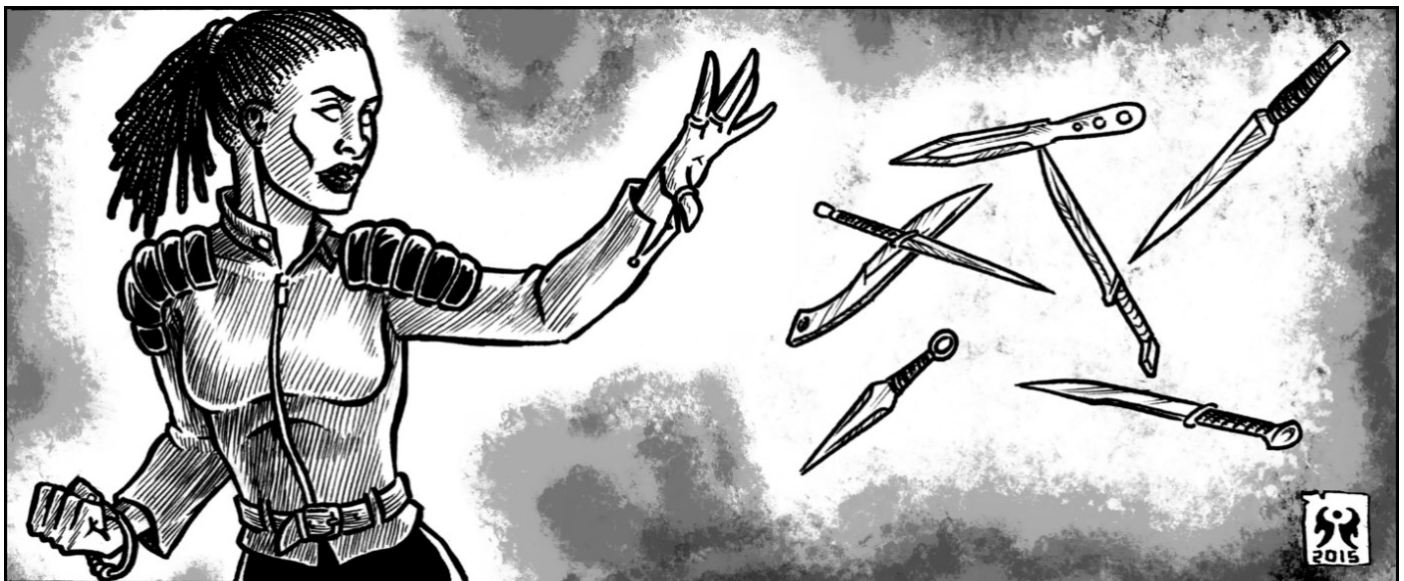
Luigi Castellani

EXAMPLES OF PSIONIC POWERS & THREADS

ESP
Feel a presence, a well, a dead body
Feel an emotion
Send an emotion to someone
Detect lies
Listen to dead people's advices

Telepathy
Guess immediate thought
Send a message
Speak at length with someone
Find most secret thoughts
Modify memory

Télékinésie
Move a little object
Move a big object (i.e.: a crate)
Manipulate a tiny object with accuracy
Hurl a very big object (i.e.: a car)
Crush or destroy a very big thing

Precognition
6th sense
Forewarning dreams
Guess the exact answer
Scan a mind for an information
Guess the future

Pyrokinesis
Start a flame
Start a big fire (i.e.: chimney)
Move a big flame slowly
Start a huge fire (i.e.: a house's arson)
Accurately move flames like tiny figures

Levitation
Levitate above the ground
Glide slowly above the ground
Glide while pulling one more person
Fly gracefully
Peter Pan style without the silly melodies

Mekakinesis
Turn on a small electric device
Control all functions of an electronic item
Control all functions of a big factory tech item
Animate dozens of items at the same time
Totally possess a WWW net

Teleportation
Few inches dodge blink
Teleport in the same room
Teleport on the same level of the house
Teleport to a different nearby house
Teleport somewhere else in the city

Psychic domination
Make someone mumble
Have somebody say a few chosen words
To give a command he will follow to someone
Brainwash and reprogram someone
Permanent vampire-like psychic bond

Hibernation
Keep totally silent
Keep totally undetectable
Forget hunger, thirst and exposure
To stop aging,
To regenerate

Laying of hands
Cure a little disease
Give back a few chips
Heal a wound
Heal someone from a fatal poison
Bring someone back from comatose state

Empathy
Calm fear
Calm pain
Cure traumas
Explore inner mind
Exorcism

STRANGE MUTATIONS

In varietate concordia

United in diversity

Luigi Castellani

WEIRDLY STRANGE

What does a mutation look like? If it is just a weird hair color, it's merely a note at the back of the character sheet. If it works like a quality, well it's just like any other quality. Right?

Now, if this written something enables you to do crazy things above human limits, like paying to score a success every time you call to its power, then in THAT case, it relates to the following chapter. And it means that you will slowly lose control of your cherished character. Because for the metahuman, changes are just a step toward its next transformation: ending as a NPC in the GM's paws…

1 - Mutatis mutandis

Just imagine that I've got a third articulation on my arm, allowing me more varied moves. In game terms it is just a quality named like **Dexterity**, leading to specialization like **Micro-accuracy**. It's weird but it's like any other quality. Now let's imagine that this quality yields me automatic successes or triumphs, then it becomes what we'll call a **MUTATION**. Except in rare cases, all should be taken at character generation, but specializations occur when you'll want to.

For example:
*Cyrus Obsidienne, is from the Rejected Lot gang. She lives in the radioactive hell around Mega-Bayou-City-One in New Louisiana in 2047. She can almost change her skin color at will, so it's a simple quality names **Chameleon Skin**.*
*Sharakh the puma has **Venomous Claws** that do one Effort of damage and give fever. It's a single quality too. If Sharakh wants to do two Efforts of damage he just has to take this quality twice.*
*Esmeraldyne has the upper half of a divine gypsy beauty, and the lower half of an oversized snake. She can take qualities like **Sex-appeal** and specialize in **Kinky gaze**. But she can also take a **Half-Snake Mutation** quality, and why not a **Chameleon Skin Mutation** too.*

A quality described as **MUTATION** does not gives you a card but an *automatic success* if you pay 1 chip.
BEWARE: if you want to score an *automatic triumph*, you will have to sacrifice a little of your beloved humanity.

For example:
Esmeraldyne wants to hide, or need to pass by a very tight corridor. With her mutations she can, but she needs to pay chips for that.

If Cyrus wants to do the same, he cannot pay directly to succeed, he will need to use his card.

2 - Bad mutations

Creeping inhumanity is every mutant problem.

Each mutation, each specialization on a mutation and each triumph given thanks to a mutation adds ONE to your **INHUMANITY**.
By the time you reach a score of twenty, your 1st level character becomes a NPC definitely.

Inhumanity has many other game uses:

For example:
In Mega-Bayou-City-One, being a mutant is a federal crime. Each time you enter screened buildings, you current inhumanity rating is a danger factor for oracles you will make. Each character being unmasked or not depends of the cards compared to HIS inhumanity so not everybody may be caught at the same time.

In a mutant tribe, inhumanity may be tantamount to social status. But the GM must make sure that players understand if THAT tribe's values lay in having few or many points.

In the Radiological Haven of Dr Dämon, each hour spent in the Turbo-Cyclotron brings a inhumanity level danger of gaining one more inhumanity point. If you get 7 or more points in a week you do transform into one of Dr Dämon's proto-alien slave and your mind is erased…

Mutation is only the beginning. Always keep that in mind: 20 inhumanity points or more and your character is gone forever. A 2nd level character can go up to 22 (20+2) before this demise, a 3rd level up to 25 (22+3), a 4th level up to 29 etc.

EXAMPLES OF MUTATIONS GIVEN ABILITIES

Weird weapons
Claws, Horns, Spikes and other natural weaponry
Poisonous skin
Cold, or Heat auras

Weird attack modes
Shattering screams (range attack)
Acid breath
Paralyzing spit
Burning hands
Induce fear
Steal breath kiss
Steal Confidence
Power blast

Uncanny move modes
Adhesive palms to walk on walls
Leaping mode
Levitate
Fly-like rebounds
Extreme silence

Incredible protections
Tough skin
Invulnerability to fire, cold, electricity or else
Force field
Magneto invisibility to detectors and alarms
Chameleon powers
Radiations, or Poisons immunity
Regenerate chips
Danger sense

Healer tricks
Control emotions
Give back one chip
Heal a wound
Heal someone from a fatal poison
Bring someone back from comatose state
Give back one chip

Zany abilities

Absorb one quality for one hour
Change face
Change size
Body fluidity
Water breathing
Additional limb
Speak with animals
Control one element
Control one kind of creature
Open dimension doors

Tricks of the mind
Control emotions
Mental control
Voice domination enthrallment

Psionics like (if you don't use them)
Telepathy
Mekakinesis
Telekinesis
Precognition
ESP
Levitation
Pyrokinesis
Empathy
Mind control

*Just to clarify one thing, our purpose is NOT to try to enter a contest of "Who does Super-Heroes better in a RPG?" My opinion on that is that **Champions**® just closed the subject maaaaaany years ago. However, our goal is to provide a totally universal system that is really playable IN ONLY TEN MINUTES in any settings, so we just needed to have this chapter here.*

*If you care about writing more detailed lists and to add rules on any of our present book feel free to send us a mail at cartomancy.rpg@gmail.com. Or better yet, use our Creative Commons License and publish **your own** epic supplement.*

ITEMS OF POWER

*"Any sufficiently advanced technology
is indistinguishable from magic"*

Arthur C. Clarke

David Lewis Johnson

THE SOURCE OF POWER DOES NOT COUNT, ONLY ITS STRENGTH

At first sight, magical objects, gadgets and alien sciences artefacts do not seem to share a lot together. However, Clarke's sentence is here to remind us that, if you look at it from a distance, globally they are all the same.

After all, be it a powerful wizard using his Wand of Forceful Might, or an ET trooper from the Twelve Suns Empire blazing its model-26 plasma gun, their purpose is just do the same: fry a target.

In this sense, this game is an « effect-based » system, not a « medium-based » one.

1 - Feel it, Dive in it

Cybernetics relates to anything that is made by robots, computers and electronics. Their goal is "human improvement by micro-processors". From the artificial arm with a machine strength to the cyber-eye that sees 3000 times better in total darkness. That said, the word "CYBER" can both describe a human being improved by ultra-tech, or that ultra-technology itself.

The case of the MATRIX is somewhat different. Because, except that you need to plug into it, it's a RPG world inside another RPG world. All you need to gate in is the necessary tools from the software to the physical spine plugs. In any cases, if the matrix exists in your world, the 5th suit relates exclusively to it, and those without it are held at bay from it.

To be strapped with cyber stuff is really cool: you see better, hear better, you are quicker, stronger, you can have weapons and armors inside your skin and you have access to data with nanoseconds delays.

There are minor disagreement of course. Like the passing-by *anti-cyber-crusader* that will try to burn you, the *cyber-butcher* that will steal your cyber stuff with an axe, or the *cyber-snatcher* that will try to hijack your data. But no, that ain't the worst. The real problem is that the more stuff you implant into your body, the less control you have over your mind and the thinner your soul becomes. In the end, you will end up being a non-player-character under the GM's whims.

2 - Neuromancer's mortgage

Each cyberpunk RPG has its many lists of weapons, gadgets and programs. But like the other aspects of this game, our goal has never been to do better, nor even to try to be equal to. Our goal is to manage things the way we want. So in a grand tradition-breaking attitude we will *NOT* use a system based on MONEY. No.

Each IMPLANT has an ACTIVATION level, like an automatism for the critter's special effects on their terror tables. The basic implant has an activation level equal to the KING. If you want your cyber thingies to activate more frequently (i.e.: with lesser cards) you will have to take a higher level one.
Each level means a COST of ONE.

Here are the costs in a single look:

Activation on a	Cost
King	1
Queen or more	2
Jack or more	3
10 or more	4
9 or more	5
8 or more	6
7 or more	7
6 or more	8
5 or more	9
4 or more	10
3 or more	11
2 or more	12

You can take all the cyber stuff you want as long as the GM agrees on what you describe. This is the CYBER EFFECT It will always be written as a sentence with a VERB.

For example:
My eyes implant allow me to see the infrared spectrum. It will be described as "See IR / King" If I really need to detect something in that spectrum I will need to draw a king.

3 - Cybershopping

To get some new stuff you just need to go to an expert's shop. Most implants take time from a minimum 24 hours to a full 96 hours for a full skeleton replacement. Now the dual trick is first your contacts and streetwise (we call it **PRESENCE**) and you capacity to remain in control (called your **HUMANITY**).

Your **PRESENCE** is a mix of true grit, handy bucks, underground friends, squared chin, self-belief and cool attitude. The more you have, the more stuff you can buy.
In game terms, your presence is equal to the **number of experience achievements** you have already done **in your current level**. It's that EZ.

For example:
I am level 4, and I have already fulfilled seven accomplishments. My presence is seven. In a single visit to the cyber shop I can buy any of:
- Seven different implants each with a king activation (cost 1 times 7).
- One single implant with a cost of seven which means an activation on a seven or more.
- Any combination worth seven.

At this moment you think, "*That dude blew it, we gonna all be freakin' full of stuff*". Yep, but there's a problem. A BIIIG one:

You lose one **HUMANITY** point for each visit to the cybershop, and for each point of cost.

You total number available for all of your lifetime equals your level of experience times ten. If you end up with 1 to 10 you are a **CYBERPSYCHO**, frankly borderline with a danger to lose control on each oracle equal to your humanity left. The lower you get the more your cyber half controls the transformation. But at zero, you short-circuit. Yes, like a badly plugged microwave oven. A lightning, a zap and you are an NPC.

For example:
I am level 2, and I have 5 accomplishments done yet so my presence is five and my humanity is 20. I go to the cybershop and indulge myself with:
- An eye camera (king, cost 1)
- A recording ear (king, cost 1)
I lose two humanity points (but I don't lose any accomplishments of course) and I am now at 18.

I reach level 3 and get 10 more humanity. My new total is 28.

In my following adventures I get 6 new level 3 accomplishments done and I go back to the cybershop with a current presence of 6 and I buy the best I can for a cost of 6:
- A titanium blade in my arm that does one wound of damage and activates on an 8 or more. Plus one for the visit, I lose a total of 7 humanity points, and I am down to 21.

I go to the shop later with two more level 3 accomplishments done meaning a presence of 8 and I buy 8 points of mixed cyber stuff. The cost is 9 humanity points lost and I am down to 12.

4 - Damn'it it doesn't work

If you don't draw the good card (GM or Outcome) your wonderful toys just do not work. In this case you can **FORCE** it to work at a cost of one Confidence chip.
…
But at the same time you also lose one more humanity point. And you go one step further in the final surrendering of your character sheet to the GM.

No if you want some ideas on cybertech, just give a glance at the following pages on gadgets and artifacts to spark some fresh ideas.

30 – GADGETS

1 - What is a gadget?

Technically speaking, a **GADGET** can be any objects on your equipment list that has certain powers. Be it from a magical, mystical, alien, and technological or otherwise obscure source is not relevant whatsoever.

At the cost of one of its charges, a gadget gives you one card from the suit, or from one the suits it is « charged » with. This way you can get a success of triumph without even drawing cards.

For example:
Batboy wants to climb to the top of a skyscraper. It is a ♦ oracle at zero card because it is so slippery and tall. But his first two cards are both black ones, and so is the risk card he draws last. Yep, it's a fumble! Batboy is gonna end as a little red crater in the concrete of the street… Ooops. But Batboy bears a Bat-thing gadget with three charges left at ♦, so he burns one, triumphs and gets to the top of the building.
BTW, did that forego his fumble you wonder? No, not at all. He has been sighted by guards and they are all on alert now. At least, he's still alive… yet. If the gadget did have only ♥ charges left, it would have been only a success, meaning Batboy only reached, an entrance at the middle of the building, not its top. And if there had only been ♠ or ♣ charges left, Batboy's player would be in the middle of generating a new character…

2 - The number of charges

Each gadget has a certain number of **CHARGES** for each suit. When they are exhausted, the gadget becomes an expensive decoration item. But at least it's flashy on a shelf close to a perforated heavy armor part… Also, please remember that like any object, a gadget can be broken, stolen or bartered…

3 - DIY gadgets

Gadgets are wonderful treasures. So at one moment, players will expect their characters to bear tons of them. The laser-warrior will crave for a reflective ♦ armor or an impact ♥ one. The screen-wizard from the XXIIIth century will pray to get a ♠ phylactery to solve enigmas or a ♣ holo-jewel to seduce aliens. They will even speak about creating their own...

First, to create a gadget of a kind appropriate to the time the character lives in, he needs to own the *Gadgeteer* quality. It has a cost of one.
Then for each gadget created you need to **PAY** a fixed amount of experience accomplishments that you already got and that you will *erase*.
It represents the time invested on building it rather than adventuring (and it's a good equalizer).
1 charge cost 1 experience tick removed.
3 charges cost 2 experience tick removed.
5 charges cost 3 experience tick removed.
By Charges we mean a *single use of a single suit*.

Then you need *TIME* to construct it too. Between the payment and the gadget being completed you will have to wait for a full game session. It means you will have it in your pocket, the game session following the next one. However, if the same gadget was ever to be built again, as a prototype already exists, it would be available on the next session.

EXAMPLES OF GADGETS

- Parachute
- Hidden armor
- Hidden weapon
- Varied spectrum lamp
- Micro tools
- 3D - Camera
- Holo projector
- Movements detectors
- Air analyzer
- Translater
- World hand communicator
- Disguise, Holo-hider
- Target designator
- Metal detector
- Bio scanner
- ECM or ECCM
- Self deployable radiation shelter
- Underwater gear
- Explosives
- Poisons, venoms
- Stunner, paralyzing gas
- Noise generator, voice changer
- Flamethrower
- Various medicines
- Flight girdle
- Strength enhancer
- Wide spectrum antitoxins
- Ressuscitation pill
- Danger warner
- Chamelon suit
- Personal forcefield
- Mental dominator
- Combat booster drug
- Electrostatic club
- Secret doors detector
- Truth serum
- Leaping mine
- Door shunter

- Password retriever
- Hypnotic ghetto blaster
- Mind reader
- Video, radio decoys
- Trackers
- Unlife creator
- Cheating cards
- Auto make up
- Sight or voice enhancer
- Atmosphere generator
- Sound analyzer
- Stealthy shoes
- Slavery perfumes
- Doors skeleton key
- Glider
- Weapon enhancer
- Nano blade
- Decomtaminater
- Flying assassin drone
- Circuit breaker
- Magnetic shield
- Survival bubble
- Xeno-translator
- Animals controler
- Advanced auto pilot
- Advanced ammos
- Venom blades
- Climbing claws
- Immobilizing net
- Bleeding wound stopper
- Electronic door shunter
- Auto deployable filtrating tent
- Gas mask
- Night googles
- Holo map projector

1 - An artifact is a super gadget

An **ARTIFACT** looks a lot like a gadget. After all it's an item with power too. Once again, his origins and whereabouts do not change a thing on how works. The word *artifact* describes a *way* to work, not its origins.

First, each artifact has one or more **POWERS**. Each is described by a single verb sentence.

For example:
Faerie powder permits you « to make a single living rabbit instantly appear »

2 - That sometimes work…

Then, an artifact does not have charges, it has a CHANCE to occur, just like an automatism. The sole difference is that the number given is expressed as the MINIMUM height to draw on any card to activate it. Each power can be different.

For example:
As long as you don't need a live rabbit, you won't care about getting one. But if you need it you have to draw the needed card somehow. It means that if you drop the powder nothing will appear. However, if you start doing "something else" and draw high enough, a rabbit will appear where you dropped the powder. To say it another way, artifacts are not reliable at all… and misfire a lot.

3 - Or not... Or not when you want…

If you draw the *exact* value of one of the artifact's powers while you are waiting for *any other* power

to happen, then THAT undesired power will set off once (even if dangerous or useless). And then, the whole artifact will STOP working until very specific conditions occur. Please take note that these conditions are not written in a manual. It can be "the next time somebody snoars within 10 feet" or "on the next planets alignment"…

For example:
Imagine if **Faerie powder** can also "Teleport me out of danger to a safer place". And now, after you dropped it for that power to occur while you are fighting ghouls, you draw the (un)appropriate combat card. A nice rabbit with twitchy little nose will appear, but the powder will be functioning no more… Until the next moon eclipse!

Luigi Castellani

EXAMPLES OF ARTIFACTS'S POWERS

- To whisper to the ear of a faraway person
- To hit a person with sudden stupefaction, rendering him motionless
- To leap on the other side of a hole
- To run like a rabbit
- To remain unseen
- To move without noise
- To hit a single target with a missile
- To feel the danger
- To feel the presence of magic
- To extinguish a fire
- To turn a peaceful person angry
- To make a meal taste bland
- To demoralize a fighter
- To double your raw muscles power
- To see afar
- To identify somebody's track
- To light a dozen torches
- To cast a lasting glowing light
- To make sure you do not drink too much
- To protect you from one blow
- To stop mirror from reflecting light
- To imitate a voice or bird song perfectly
- To have a seducing smile
- To frighten a person
- To calm a bunch of kids
- To hide in the middle of light
- To spot a roaming spirit
- To hit a target with one neat blow
- To deflect a blow on someone else
- To make noise as a lion
- To transform a single weapon into a torch
- To run as quickly as the wind
- To open a lock
- To fly like an eagle
- To paralyze an animal
- To drop a zone of darkness when walking
- To be dexterous for once

- To stop an arrow in its flight
- To dodge blows with rebounds
- To break a weapon
- To hit with an air knife
- To silence the mouth of a person
- To make someone slip
- To make someone drop things
- To lock a door
- To make a rain of frogs
- To make someone believe you are his best friend
- To frighten an animal
- To make someone say something
- To make a lot of noise relentlessly
- To go dancing without stopping
- To parry the next attack
- To cancel one wound
- To prevent someone from lying
- To appear as someone else
- To make a blue hare appear
- To cancel the feeling of hunger
- To have someone speak like a cat
- To cancel one cause of damage
- To have secret things appear
- To be able to breath toxic vapors
- To transform a weapon into a flower
- To swim like a fish
- To speak in an unknown language
- To climb on walls
- To walk without fatigue
- To dodge bullets
- To keep perfectly motionless
- To spit flames
- To get the last word in an argument

All these power will always have the same **DURATION**: "last until the artefact owner does something else or else, lose concentration".

EXAMPLES OF POWERS OUTLOOKS

There's a fight versus a 8 feet tall mummy.
A typical 1♦ situation with a danger of 7.
The GM has drawn a Jack of ♥ so the augury are good. However, none add their attitude marker on the correct suit. But, at least their **FATE** is a **success** so they can start damaging it right now. Let's see how they may handle a combat with all their diversified abilities.

WILL THE WIZARD: *"Gentlemen, I cast a simple spell like "Burn the Mummy". It is a two words spell so it will cost me nothing as I am level 3."*
GARY THE GM: *"Ok, this counts as your quality card for this round. You hurt it bad for 1 Effort, but as it is vulnerable to flames I'll make it a two damage hit."*

MIKE THE MUTANT: *"I will use my mutant Mole Claws that I use for digging to attack it. It will cost me a chip, probably a red one, right?"*
GM: *"Ok, but you need to have an opening for it, so you need a card too. This will count as one card for this round. You hurt it for 1 more red chip".*

CJ THE CYBER-RUNNER: *"Maybe I'm going to try some Outcome cards like my Dexterity or my Attitude's. If any card is high enough it will activate my Ultra-tech-monster-buster-mark3 that blasts anything on a Queen or better. If it does not work, I'll have to pay a humanity…"*
GM: *"Wait a sec, you first need to get a queen or better, right. You behavior is wrong and I don't agree on Dexterity for fighting or firing. Do you want to risk the fumble because I see no Queen?"*
CJ: *"Well, no. At least… er… can I get a chip back for laying low?*
GM: *"Sorry, it's a no again. You gotta have cards that you don't use to get this and you haven't…. However you can pay a humanity"*
CJ: *"Ok you party breaker, I do that…"*

MING THE MARTIAL ARTIST: *"I'll meditate until someone has the wisdom to open it carefully."*
GM: *"What?"*
MING: *"Just kidding, I have a BRUCE LEE KICK at the Jack for 3 damage, I use it".*
GM: *"OK, very funny, 3 more chips down so."*
CJ THE CYBER-RUNNER (complaining): *"That's unfair, he did not have cards at all!"*
GM: *"Yes, but I drew a Jack, his kata gets an opening at Jacks or better. Not at all the same case. His kata is activated, your cyberstuff is not."*
MING: *"By the way, can I attack it with my Karate quality? Look I drew a ♦."*
GM: *"Yes, that's one more chip. You did 4 in all."*
CJ (aggravating): *"£*%$¨?00!!!"*

GARRETT THE GADGETEER: *"I have one charge left on my Roto-ultra-butter-cutter at ♦"*
GM: *"Any useful quality to activate? "*
GARRETT: *"I have none. Can I take risk?"*
GM: *"It's an improbable effect, draw exactly a ♦. On a ♥ you miss but don't exhaust the charge. On a black you botch and hit yourself."*
GARRETT: *"Oops, I blew it…"*
GM: *"Your gadget turns on you, you take 2 Efforts of damage. Be careful with butter-cutter".*

PATTY THE PSIONIC: *"Get out of the way morons, I'll use my Telekinesis ability to make it tumble away off from us."*
GM: "How do you activate it guy, you must focus".
PATTY: *"Er… I use my Telekinesis quality?"*
GM: "That's a special effect that you are aiming for. It's Probable so draw any red card. Oh, and buy a Confidence anyway, it's complicated."
PATTY: *"It's a ♥, come on dudes we can escape from here now!"."*

The important rule is this: if players want to do anything in a situation their characters MUST have cards OR triumph (which means free hit). Otherwise they are mere motionless spectators.

ON BEING A GAMEMASTER

Quidquid latine dictum sit, altum sonatur

Whatever you say in Latin sounds deep

David Lewis Johnsson

 There are several different, and sometimes conflicting, aspects to being a game Master.

LULU.COM format made using an 4 page by 4 page format mandatory, so we sticked to it in order to be able to put as many information in the shortest page count while still maintaining rules completeness, or well, almost… We needed to cut the fat somewhere anyway. So we decided to make it easy on GM advices (as English-speaking role-players are far more experienced than French-speaking ones) and add more "characters" info to this volume and rely on players experience… and internet too.

Maybe we could have tried a bigger format but I have always been afraid of games that pretend to be "playable" with 256 pages or more. If you think that our game is original enough, just tell yourself that you have seen nothing yet and prepare for the *ADVANCED CARTOMANCY RPG* rulebook.

32 – THE SPECIFICITIES OF 10 MINUTES ROLEPLAYING

1 - What is your wingspan?

Take one minute thinking what you dream that your short one-shot scenario will turn into?

- Do you want a short quickie for a few hours because you have one great idea but barely more salt to add later?
- Or do you want a teaser for a greater campaign that will make your player drool for some subjects they never had any interest into, or that nobody ever wrote or even thought about at all?

2 - Pure short one-shot

You need a very original setting first. If you don't have it, an original angle of view on a subject already done hundreds of time is enough. A single book, a good movie, two comics books are plenty for a few hours of play. Of course it depends on whether you are into elaborate roleplaying with lots of talking or Hong Kong Kung Fu Movies style with three explosions per minute on the trip between place A and place B. In this case throw everything you can because you're not expecting to come later to wash the dishes…

Some examples:
*Playing **Lethal Weapon** or **Last Samuraï**, or **Event Horizon**.*
*Playing the first episode of the TV show **The Invaders**, **Battlestar Galactica** or **Lost**.*
Playing a gangster movie or an adventure story in Africa from the 30's,
Playing a recon team from the Night Watch lost on the wrong side of the Wall,
*Playing a **Blake & Mortimer** or **Tintin** adventure,*
*Playing the fight against the **Predator** in the jungle or **Alien** in a Nostromo's clone.*

The most important part is that the scenario must have an end that is satisfactory to

everyone. It's not a matter of becoming the rulers of the universe each time, it's a matter of having made decisions that imply that real changes occurred.

Some examples:
Maybe they end up slaves on a prison planet, maybe they are drafted in the Colonial Marines, maybe they buy a space farm, but the characters are not the same anymore. They have lived.

3 - Higher expectations plan

If you'd like to evolve the one-shot into a full-fledged campaign afterwards you first need to hook them once and for all. For that to occur you need to meld subplots in the story that you will come to later. You don't have to be afraid to changes in the rule system in the middle because this game works fine on a mid-term perspective too. Maybe you will not play a 1000 hour campaign with the present rules BUT you can expand a 3 hours one-shot to a 20 or more hours campaign painlessly without system changing.

Some examples:
*Following **Sherlock Holmes** versus the Hound of the Baskerville in the one-shot then catching Jack the Reaper in the following campaign.*
Walking along Napoleon's army in Egypt then look after a fabled Bible's talisman while being purchased by arab tribes and the might of all the British army.
*Meeting Paul Muad'Dib then fight against the Harkonnens all over **Dune**,*
Following Perseus, Odysseus, Jason or Gilgamesh then change their legends forever.
*Having people discover the Urth of Severian in Gene Wolfe's **Books of the new Sun**.*

Have a few follow-ups ready, you never know.

4 - Have a shining start

First an immediate explosive introduction with some trouble to handle from the start:

> *Some examples:*
> In **Alien** *the characters awaken in order to land not to make routine operations.*
> In **Escape from NY**, *Snake Plissken gonna get executed and is offered a deal,*
> In **The Outlaw Josey Wales** *the rebels are executed and Josey escape with Jamie Kid,*
> In **The Walking Dead** *Rick awakens forgotten in a hospital in a world turned mad.*

You really need to get the story **BEGIN RIGHT NOW**. You can play it *James Bond*'s style with a chase or the "you need to get to the X spot on the map". You can start from a real cliffhanger like "it has been snowing since you got to 6000 feet and you are now lost in the blizzard. Your guide just fell to his doom along with the radios. You only have 2 days of cans. Whatcha gonna do guys?".

Or you can inject them straight to the melee like "you are now half a mile from the Mall where you expect to get supplies and medicines for the children of your groups. Oh beware you've noticed Zombies here and there and a this place. WAIT! There is one those skin turned blue that seems to have spotted you and starts rambling in your direction".

5 - Give an immediate clear overview

Once this intro scene is done with, the players NEED to have a clear idea of what to do: who is good, bad, a threat, in danger or what the risks are. If they have to choose a course it must be crystal clear: do we want to escape the creature, save Sophia or the president, get back to the starport and fly the hell out of this planet, find a cure for the buddies etc. Of course there MUST be surprises but why presenting 5 vampires' families if only 2 or 3 intervene in the 3 first hours? One good way is to prepare a **MAP WITH HOLES** to fill later and to print those funny landscape found on Twitter just in case you need to illustrate an unknown location…

6 - Always aim first on the end

It's like with a gun, at one moment you have to forget the rifle and your breath and focus on the target. It will be a **STEPPING STONE** to remember to where you want the players to go and help you notice if you get too much off-track. It will also help you make sure you present the players with all these marvels you want them to encounter. Because you got into this game to show them what your mind is full of (places, monsters, people, stories…), not to watch 'em trying to understand where you wanna go.

You can even go one step farther by using a **TIME MANAGEMENT** of the adventure: if you want them to get the cure at H-hour for the finale, they need to meet the doctor at H-1:00 and to learn about him at H-1:30. This way you have a better control over the flow of your game. Remember: playing a one-shot when you circle around not knowing where to go is a pain in the */* for everyone involved. Imagine you have a short story with three fellows knights turned bad that needs to be defeated in the right sequence order because each one has the bane weapon made for the following one. You know if you can drop a hint now or wait a little because you have staged the battles and the place where they are due to occur. You can work a few between-events to drop just in case you have time but with good time management don't expect much to come. Anyway, you'd better list the part of your story that can be forgotten if in a hurry…

33 – A SCENARIO IS AN EIGHT COURSE MEAL

Organization pays

The previous chapter told you HOW to start a one-shot game. It did not explain WHERE you are heading to. That is more of a SCENARIO issue. Do not get me wrong, I am not trying to sell a method-that-builds-an-ENNIE-award-scenario-in-a-blaze. In fact we are close to the boundary between cosmetic surgery and ER surgery. Like in a real life ER, I am *not* trying to cure the problem, I will just try to fill up the holes and stop the bleeding in a ten minutes delay. If you wonder what is the difference between a one-shot and a scenario it's simple:

If the game starts and ends in a game world where you do not have enough "meat to grind" to spare for later it is a one-shot.
If the game is an introduction to adventures in a wider game world that you can stock with many more details it's a scenario.

The 1st step is the intro scene

At the very beginning there *must* be an initial action that starts it all and sets up the plot. Reading a few lines of a prologue is nice, jumping in the middle of action too.

- ♥ = a fight starts, there is an obstacle
- ♦ = an accident occur, there is a trouble
- ♠ = characters notice a detail or find a clue
- ♣ = meeting someone, being on or off duty

The 2nd step is the involvement

You must find a reason for each of your characters to be involved. But most importantly, your players must acknowledge the fact and let go their characters. Chances of rewards are great, threats and coercion brings wonders too.

- ♥ = want revenge, to fight back, to have fun
- ♦ = see a chance for a reward, to assist, to aid
- ♠ = see a chance for improvement, equipment
- ♣ = moved to feelings, duty, needs, weakness

The 3rd step is the obvious move

There must be an immediate doorway that should be openable by your players. Otherwise they gonna circle *around* your plot and will never get involved *within* the plot. It does not mean that the story needs to be thin. It implies that there's an open way right at the beginning, even if it's a trap.

- ♥ = fight, protection, race, rescue, evade
- ♦ = pursuit, rescue, safety, trap, infiltrate, hide
- ♠ = investigations, researches, wisdom
- ♣ = meeting, healing, caring for, getting a doc

The 4th step is the rising action

Meeting the cast of non-player characters, knowing the places where things occur better, identifying the enemies and allies. To sum it up, the characters journey on the story toward its end and meet their surroundings

- ♥ = travel, purchase of needed things
- ♦ = tracking, following, watching over
- ♠ = decisions, analysis, getting info.
- ♣ = talking to get help, bribery, mobilization

The 5th step is the complication

On the road to completing the scenario there must be setbacks, reversals that cause tension or change mindframes. Depending on the amount of time that you have, there can be a single ones or several. The more the merrier, but watch time.

♥ = road obstacles, hazards, climate, rain
♦ = difficult task to undertake, traps
♠ = things to settle clear first, morale issues
♣ = people trying to drag you back, treachery

The 6th step is the resolution

An answer must be given that gives a satisfactory answer to everyone. It does not mean being successful is mandatory. It means that players must be able to notice that their characters' choices and actions brought a definite change to the game world and that things will never be the same again.

♥ = physical confrontation, fight, assault
♦ = magic move, rescue, evasion, duel
♠ = demonstration, spell breaking, interruption
♣ = jury, argument, ritual completion

The 7th, final step is the consequence

Here, we are first talking of awarding experience to the characters. It's also time to check if the one-shot shall be expanded into a full campaign format or not. If this is the case, the game world will be modified thanks to characters actions and non-players characters reactions to them.

♥ = legacy of glory, heroism, money, land, fame
♦ = technical prowess, nice item, new skill
♠ = scientific discovery, advanced prototype
♣ = reputation, contacts, title, be knighted

The 8th step is not forgetting about the side sauces & the dishes

Think about all these little things that can do wonders to improve the game and the memories everybody will keep of it.
First is the **MOOD** you want to instill in the heart of your gaming event:

For example:
*Will it be **epic** with loads of glorious moments? **Darker** with unfathomable secrets? **Funny** with many merry NPC and situations? Melodramatic with important NPC & allies fighting each other?*

No there is the **GIMMICK**, you know, that tiny little flavored something that will appear on and on.

For example:
The scenario where you are counting every equipment bit by bit to give a survival feeling.
The scenario where there is a clock running that gives a dramatic urgency to every actions.
The scenario where nobody can speak with the character to give an isolation and loneliness feel.
That time where you wound was infected.

Often overlooked, there are the **IMPROVERS**:

For example:
*Including the **characters weaknesses**, enemies, and known NPC from the start to make the player feel they are in a living game world.*
*Including a **rumor** or two about next adventure's villains or events, to introduce them more easily.*
*Writing an **extra scene** or two just in case you eventually have more time than you first thought.*
*Forewarning two **exit scenes** just in case you need to finish earlier for any reason: one will be a **cliffhanger** and the second a **calmer place**.*

Last, but not least, there are the **PROPS**:

For example:
*Having **pics** for places, villains and enemies that you can find on twitter or any TV magazine. Buying a cheap 1$ deck of **cards** and gluing monsters pics on one side with relevant data for you on the other to manage combat scenes. Making nice **maps**, working on **riddles**, having **secret messages** and codes instructions hidden in one of the room objects etc. It's a game, make it fun and sexy. Nothing is mandatory, all is useful.*

1 - Let's sign a contract ya fools

Okay right, you need this chip but you have none, why don't you ask the GM for credit? Just like in real life it is in fact a cheap, harebrained, and pretty stupid way to get more in trouble but later. But as an impoverished Scotsman once said: "as long as ya've got credit, it's like being rich"… A dramatic way to handle this option is to get one transparent glass per player (his "pool") and to put them all in line with the name of the player on your side. And whenever a player asks for chip credit you will drop it IN the player's glass with a mischievous smile on your face…They will be called a **BACKFIRE CHIP** or just **BACKFIRE**.

2 - Solving matters

This being said, the goal of this chapter is NOT to open an in game bank. No. not at all. The goal is to punish and handle pain in the BEEEP players from ruining the game. So, each of the following *faux-pas* is worth one Backfire. Your goal as the GM is to make sure players do not accumulate them. We use to say people do not understand, but done with fairness, this system gives wonders. Because both the individuals Backfire awarded and total amount earned by the group can set actions and reactions later. Like individual "bad luck" events or group random encounters.

Using knowledge the character does not have
Speaking out of character in a serious moment
Drawing cards without explaining why
Forgetting to lose chips as request
Talking about a date, your kids or your ex
Sending any single one memo,
Arguing loudly about GM decisions
Digressing about last night TV show or movie
Not knowing what to do in combat scenes
Yelling in infiltration mission
Being rude needlessly to NPC
Touching one's phone for anything but clock.
Cheating on attitude position or else

But before going any further please take note that players that cheat at a game are either jerks or dudes who failed to understand the rules. For the first ones, please make sure you explain the rules process before making things worse. Maybe you simply did not explain things the right way the first time...

However, once a real cheater, or any player who behaves like an aggressive useless moron is spotted then tell them they are not welcomed anymore PRONTO. Just don't lose any more time with such guys, because you're not supposed to be a social worker or their parent. There is no reason why you should allow any bully to ruin everybody's pleasure. If you let things worsen you gonna be the accomplice of the ruined game for your fellow gamers too. Take decision. Quick.
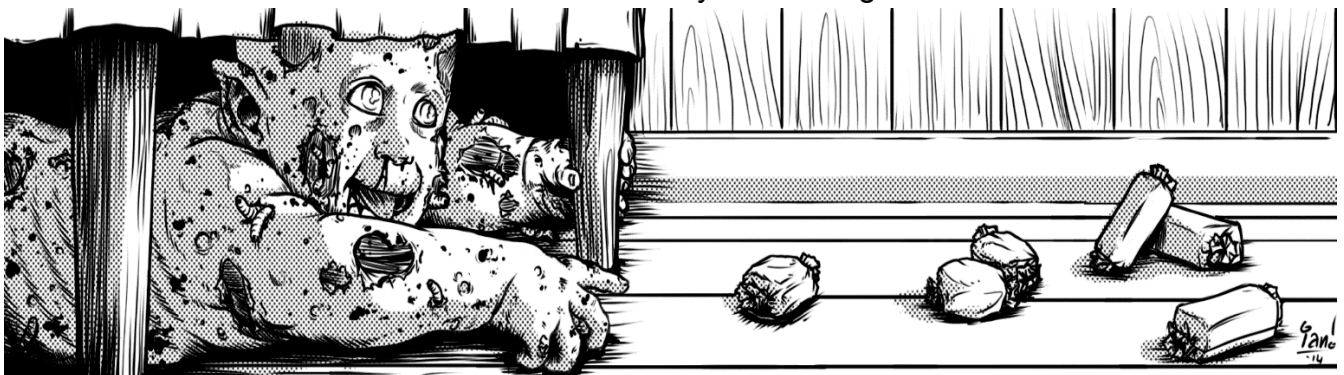
Ian Mac Lean

3 - Now you are mine

Okay right, now you the GM, have in front of you a bunch of guys that have been suicidal enough to ask you for credit chips or to behave badly. Just keep in mind that the purpose of all this is NEITHER to kill the characters NOR to make your former role-playing friends your relentless enemies. It is rather to induce credible and sensible events and direct bad things toward deserving cast members. You do that by paying MISHAP EFFECTS with the BACKFIRE CHIPS they accumulated.

For example:
Decreasing the Outcome of a character by one step cost one Backfire.
Cancelling the use of any one card before it is drawn cost one Backfire.

In such almost *harmless cases*, you simply pick one of the chip and retrieve it from his pool.

4 - Bad luck times

Much funnier is to check for who is going to have a streak of bad luck. And guess what? It will simply be with the guy that has the most.

For example:
Who will fall in the trap at the X spot on the map?
Who will be chosen as the main meal by the cannibals for tonight's meal?
Who is going to break the holy shrine of the tribe?
Who will show the first signs of that disease that is spreading all over the place?

All these are really *severe cases*. So you will just empty the character's pool to pay the debt.

5 - Good luck times

At other times, you will need a "Race winner". Why chose randomly while you can select the guy who has the smallest amount of backfire as the favored one?

For example:
Who the princes is going to fall in love with?
Who will hear that small talks that explains the treachery that is gonna occur in ten minutes?
Who the djinn-in-the-bottle is fond of?

In all these *lucky cases* retrieve one Backfire from the pool of each dudes that wasn't chosen.

6 - Random encounters

Another nice use of the backfires is the ever-popular WANDERING MONSTERS. This system replaces advantageously all tables this way:

As soon as a character has **3 Backfire chips** make him encounter a small problem like a snake with an attitude, a drunkard with a habit he can't quit, a city Gard that is looking to beat someone up or just the loud sound of a nearby panther.
At **6 Backfire chips** the character is in for a big trouble like a sneaky panther lunge, a silent assassin, a mute drunkard, or simply a one-arm bounty hunter that talks to much when you are taking a bath in an abandoned city on the warfront…
When the group reach **10 Backfire chips** it is time to draw one of those lovely little encounters that you've been working on lately. You know the one with the smoking 88mm gun that blows US tanks up, or that clever orc leader that carefully plans his ambush or that Death Commandos air assault from the Space Cruiser.

One last word about this system. In most game you have to tell the players that they are noisy because they talk out loud while on an infiltration mission. Imagine now that you just have to slowly drop chips in their backfire pools.
Who said players are dumb? Sure, that kind of things they DO understand quickly…

FIENDS & FOES

Quum per saecula mira mors etiam pereat

Yet with strange eons even death may someday die

In most RPG, enemies are described by quite a healthy numbers and details. It's not quite the same here because our motto remains:

FEW NUMBERS &
ONLY IMPORTANT WORDS

Its **VALOR** gives the *number of cards drawn*:

Cheesecakes ones	= 3 cards
Serious ones	= 2 cards
Confirmed ones	= 1 cards
Frightening ones	= 0 cards
Terrifying ones	= -1 cards

Its **CLASS** gives its *Efforts* and capacities:

MOOKS have 1 or 2 Efforts and do mostly one single Effort of damage, or even Confidence.

THREATS have 2 Efforts or more and do from 1 to 3 Efforts or more. Most bear armors. Some do have a **QUIRK** that make them stronger.

DANGERS have their level in Efforts, Armors and even Confidence. They can score wounds but mainly cause 2 or more Efforts.

TERRORS are given up to two times their level in chips. But they have an individual table to score various wicked effects on characters.

Luigi Castellani

1 - The GM never draws for the NPCs

The goal is to leave the GM free to handle the scenario. Enemies have a **CLASS**. The two most basic ones represent the bunch of rabbles:

MOOKS have 1 or 2 Efforts, no armor and cause one Effort or Confidence of damage.
Ex: an orc, a guard, a wild dog

THREATS have 2 Efforts or more, maybe 1 or 2 armors and cause one Effort of damage, two for those with the best weapons, rarely more.
Ex: a seasoned fighter, a lion, a big bad wolf

IMPORTANT: outnumbered 2-to-1 or worse, losing players lose 1 additional Confidence.

2 - More powerful enemies of the upper classes can score direct effects

A **DANGER** is any enemy with a numbered level. They can score **direct wounds if ALL cards drawn (Fate & Outcomes) are inferior to their danger level**. It can only be cancelled by sacrificing a heavy armor which is destroyed in the process.
Ex: a really bad beast, a gladiator, or a samurai.
A **CRITTER** or **TERROR** is even worse…

If there are more characters than enemies. The one who drew the lesser cards will take the hit. Non engaged characters are usually the last to be damaged, except for attacks from the back.

If characters are outnumbered, or if some of these enemies can score several such hits per rounds, it is up to the GM to adjudicate who gets what. Drawing low, being engaged, being defenseless

means having more risks to take automatic wounds.

As a general rule, **DANGERS** have 1 Effort or armor *per level.* You can replace a few armors by Confidences and use them to cancel any single one character Outcome card in an oracle.

Ian Mac Lean

3 - Mooks & threats resumes

No reason to fill up tons of forms. Personally, for each setting style (sci-fi, horror etc) I buy a cheap deck of cards and I glue a pic on each back, and on the front side I glue a white paper where I will write the enemy name and **number of Efforts**, **armors** and **damage** etc. Plus a counter line.

*Small ugly **TROLL**, 2 cards, 1 card if 2 or more*
E = 54321   A = 1   Damage = 1

4 - Dangers resumes

For a danger you just need to **add the level** of the enemy. If all cards drawn are below, it will cause the lowest drawing character a wound. But it may have **several such attacks**, and so it can wound several characters in a single 10-seconds round.

*Champion **GOBLIN**, 4th level, 1 card*
E = 4321   A = 21   Damage = 2

5 - Critters resumes

For terror critters write the following:

Shorthand critter's **FORMAT** is:
Level = X cards Efforts Armor Confidence
Like: 3rd = 2X 2E 1A 0C.
Or: 2X EE A -
Then damage, *only if different from 2E*
Then table with more severe effects at bottom

It's important to follow an increasing pattern:
1st = the slight, funny effects like stealing an item or hitting two characters this turn.
2nd = the serious, dangerous effects like wounds, stunning, tripping, disarming or more.
3rd = the grievous, impairing effects like blinding or putting in coma for a few hours.
4th = the permanent, dramatic effects like permanent blinding or limb chopped off. But please, NO immediate kill before level 10…

David Lewis Johnson

A VERY FEW CRITTERS EXAMPLES

Smiling *LEPRECHAUN* (2nd level)
3 cards - 1E 0A 3C

Causes only 1 Confidence of damage

ACE = vanish after stealing an object

Smelly *ORC LEADER* (3rd level)
2 cards - 3E 2A 1C

Causes 3 Efforts

2 = outrageous insults, -1 Confidence
ACE = break your weapon or shield under fury

Arrogant *COP* (3rd level)
1 card - 3E 0A 3C

Causes 3 Confidences of damage

2 = tonfa blow, target loses next action
ACE = Immobilize you and pin you down

Gargling *SNOW TROLL* (4th level)
1 card - 5E 3A 0C

Causes 3 Efforts of damage

3 = stuns character for one round
2 = break a rib, 4 Efforts
ACE = break the leg, automatic ♦ wound

Trained *SOLDIER* (4th level)
1 card - 4E 2A 2C

Causes 3 Efforts of damage

3 - 2 = autofire, 1 wound, no actions for 2 rounds
ACE = hurl grenade, wound in a 20 ft. radius

Red-eyed *Z-200 CYBORG* (5th level)
1 card - 3E 5A 2C

Causes 2 Efforts of damage to TWO targets

4 = blinding flash, group lose 1 card
3 = reinforcements, one more cyborg comes
2 = laser grenade, everyone exposed loses 2 Efforts and is stunned on next round
ACE = cyberblade, the lowest drawing character takes 3 wounds…

Slimy *TIME ABERRATION* (6th level)
1 card - 6E 6A 0C

Causes 2 efforts

5 to 2 = acid burn, one wound
ACE = engulf lowest drawing character, smother him to death at one wound per round.

Sweet voiced *VAMPIRE* (8th level)
0 card - 7E 2A 7C

Causes 2 Confidences of damage

7 or 6 = moves a character like a puppet once
5 or 4 = gaze paralyses an enemy for one round
3 = voices paralyzes whole group for two rounds
2 = bites and steals one quality for 24 hours
ACE = bites and enslaves the best looking character for 48 hours then will kill it painfully

Ancient *DRAGON* (10th level)
0 card - 12E 5A 3C

Causes 1 wound of damage

9 = both wings flapping wind, all characters must pay 1 Effort or fall to the ground and lose action
8 = wing blow, target lose next action
7 = claw strike, 3 damages on 2 targets
6 = tail lash on a 180° behind, all there take 2 Efforts damage
5 = bite strike, one wound damage
4 = breath fire in a 180° arc of fire, everybody there loses 1 wound
3 = breath fire in a 90° arc, all standing up lose 2 wounds
2 = chop off one limb and chew it, target lose all remaining Confidence and takes 3 wounds
ACE = grab character and incinerate head, please generate a new character asap

The important thing is this: each terror is an important opponent. It is the GM duty to offer inventive, original, unpredictable critters. This is your opportunity to give them their chance to shine.

SOME RANDOM EXAMPLES OF MOOKS & THREATS' QUIRKS

♥ = TOUGH ONES

KING = TANK, takes half damage
QUEEN = UNCATCHABLE, impossible to hit with a ranged weapon
JACK = VICIOUS, keeps hurting fallen characters, dealing them one more Effort per round until the victim hurt them once for good
10 = PAIR ATTACK, does ONE MORE damage
9 = HARD BOILED, TWO armors
8 = BARBARIAN, ONE savage armor
7 = Bodybuilder, TWO damage
6 = Equipment in a very bad shape
5 = Awful body odor, disgusting
4 = Bald
3 = Bearded one
2 = Hairy, dirty, smelly
ACE = TITAN, double damages

♠ = SMART ONES

KING = HULK, turns stronger and stronger, GM draws one less card each round
QUEEN = TREATOR, will use dirty tricks against the weakest character or try to kill a henchman
JACK = SECOND LIFE, comes back to life once after being defeated
10 = DECOY, does ONE MORE damage
9 = VETERAN, TWO armors
8 = TECHIE, ONE pimped armor
7 = Wears scary symbols (scalps, trophies etc)
6 = Frightening look (covered in blood)
5 = Sadistic gaze and demeanor
4 = Very deranged insults and threats
3 = Scary *Death Metal* voice
2 = Keeps yelling
ACE = KAMIKAZE, causes TWO more damage by inflicting one to itself

♦ = DASHING ONES

KING = EXPERT, can't use specializations (or masteries) against him
QUEEN = ACCURATE, always cause one damage minimum per round
JACK = GADGETEER, cancels one character card per round
10 = QUICK, does ONE MORE damage
9 = WELL EQUIPPED, TWO armors
8 = UPDATED, ONE advanced armor
7 = Exotic equipment, very uncommon
6 = Old-school equipment, cared for with love
5 = Very good shape equipment
4 = Magnetic gaze
3 = Perfumed, elegant, smells very good
2 = Nice bag, cool clothes
ACE = DUELLIST, one card per round to try to score special effects versus one character

♣ = SCARRY ONES

KING = VENIMOUS, one more damage per round until first aided
QUEEN = MIRROR, causes same damage it suffers to its close combat attackers
JACK = BOOBYTRAPPED, inflicts to its killer the same damage that last blow did
10 = TOXIC, does ONE MORE damage
9 = SPECIALIST, TWO armors
8 = GOLDEN, ONE shining armor
7 = One-eyed
6 = Toad face
5 = Tattooed
4 = Scars everywhere
3 = Keeps laughing like a madman
2 = Showoff
ACE = INIGO MONTOYA, does engage one character in a separate zero card melee

SOME RANDOM EXAMPLES OF SITUATIONS & SCENES

♥ = PHYSICAL

King = Duel challenge, Provocation
Queen = Fatal beauty
Jack = Convocation to a rendezvous
10 = Lose one needed object, rust attack, repair
9 = Cliff, Pike to climb
8 = Place to pass by, to pass around or to dodge
7 = Climate hazard, Storm, Disease
6 = Place to pass through, to force through
5 = Pickpocket, Theft, Arson
4 = Trap, Net, Pikes, Fences
3 = Carefully planned ambush
2 = Surprise fight with natives
Ace = Surprised by natives

♦ = TECHNICAL

King = Poisoning, Assassin
Queen = Assassin, fighter kind, sniper
Jack = Secret door, Labyrinth
10 = Is that a short way or a real hazard?
9 = Need some food, Gasoline leak
8 = Vehicle repair, Exhausted mounts
7 = Problems afar in sight in the distance
6 = Pursuit of enemies
5 = Booby-trapped item, Poison,
4 = Pursuit in the dark, at night
3 = Recognized by old enemies
2 = Pursuit by enemies
Ace = Impossible tracks, U-turn mandatory

♠ = MENTAL

King = Love or professional rivalry
Queen = Double play, Bad talks,
Jack = Rumor, Reputation endangered
10 = Poisoned thingies
9 = Kidnapping, Mistaken identity
8 = Death of a relative, Burial, Ceremonies
7 = Secret code, Coded message
6 = Shadowing, Following, Secret lookout
5 = Mysterious note, Weird signs, Riddle
4 = Job offer, Sudden unemployment
3 = Dead body, Macabre surprise
2 = Reward proposed, deserved or received
Ace = Alliance offer, Bribery

♣ = SOCIAL

King = Manipulation
Queen = Honor dilemma, threatened legitimacy
Jack = Friend in danger, Relatives at bay
10 = Compromising love affair, Untold love
9 = Rendezvous ends badly, Predators
8 = False friend, Threats, Dangerous note
7 = frigid welcoming, Wounded enemies found
6 = Hostage, Loyalty shift, Rebellion
5 = Arrest, Court summoning, Judiciary wrong
4 = Informer, Bribery offer
3 = Femme fatale, Handsome gigolo
2 = Imposter, Subterfuge, Intimidation
Ace = Interrogatory, Custody search, Taxes

RED events are supposed to happen immediately. Things do happen, people are seen or not, events occur, obstacles or places are here in front of the characters. They all share one degree or another of urgency. However, most can be solved, or dodged directly. It does not mean that they must be "sold" immediately to players. A little description of the nice fellas they meet before it turns out they damaged the tires and stole the stores is much better.

BLACK events are not spotted immediately because they mostly need time to take their full course. You need to become intimate with a *femme fatale* to realize she gonna steal, betray or sell you to your enemies. In that sense, most black events need a cause then a detonator which is the moment at which the players realize the reality of danger.

SOME RANDOM EXAMPLES OF MOTIVATIONS

♥ = POWER

King = Push your limits the farther possible
Queen = Eradicate a group, a party, an ethnic group, an opinion, a religion, a memory
Jack = Stop blowing up things stupidly
10 = Survive to "this" one more day
9 = Get rid of a target once and for good
8 = Publish a book, poems, memories, a game
7 = Show them what you've got!
6 = Get rid of a weight, a duty
5 = Get more responsability, Climb hierarchy
4 = Pass over a handicap, an addiction
3 = Avenge an atrocity, serve justice
2 = Get back home, Find roots
**Ace** = Make an eternal *chef d'œuvre*

♦ = STYLE

King = Show off, Be envied, have the greatest records ever, Become a legend
Queen = Be forgotten, Lay low, Get a new ID
Jack = Make the greatest hit ever
10 = Become a hermit, Make peace,
9 = Ruin someone, Destroy some other faction
8 = Start political career, Buy back a fief
7 = betray actual group which I hate or despise
6 = Find great love, Get back 1st one
5 = Change life, Start all over again
4 = Change of group definitively, Get away
3 = Become a star, Be respected
2 = Transmit own faith, values, job, secret
Ace = Help family, clan, ex-wife, sister

♠ = INTELLECT

King = Gain a legendary title, honor, fame
Queen = Be recognized, admired, sang and celebrated, Sign autographs
Jack = Get retirement wealthier than dad
10 = Go where it is dangerous, Taste for risks
9 = Compulsive Don Juan, Nymphomaniac
8 = Get revenge on a horrible person
7 = Found a family, a dynasty
6 = Get a fief, Get back a lost title
5 = To be a richer, healthier, more renown guy
4 = Die gloriously, Pay back mistakes
3 = Make his duty, Burning faith, Patriotism
2 = Prove his worth definitely
Ace = Stay the best, a champ, THE reference, the big one

♣ = INFLUENCE

King = Become absolute master in a field
Queen = Compleat a weird collection
Jack = Travel in all countries, Explore
10 = Find someone that vanished
9 = Transmit a secret knowledge
8 = Discover and explore an unknown land
7 = Build a shop, a company, Be one's boss
6 = Find a lost item, get back a stolen one
5 = Finish a dirty job, Kill X
4 = Find the answer to an old riddle
3 = Make one last glorious big hit
2 = Keep on hiding a shameful secret
Ace = Become a national hero
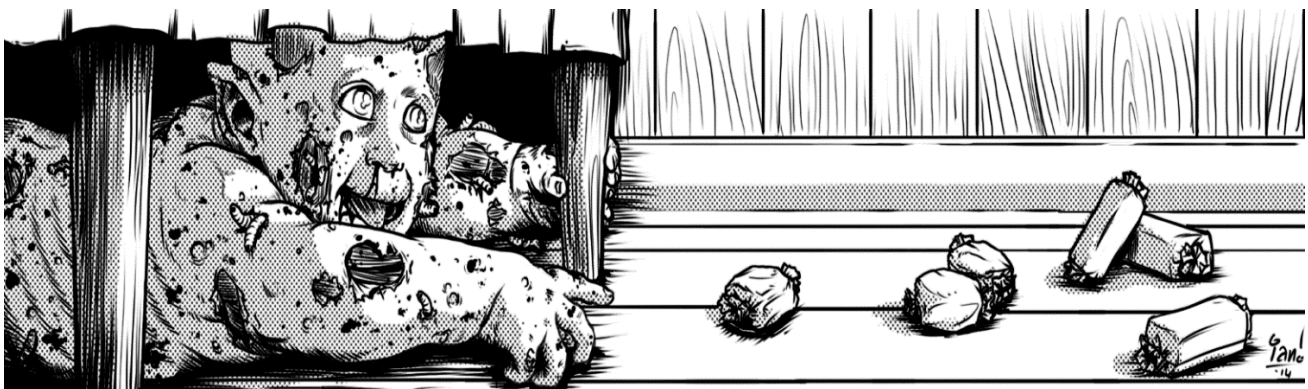
Ian Mac Lean

SOME RANDOM EXAMPLES OF LINKS IN THE GROUP

♥ = Having something in common

King = survivors from the same disaster. **Queen** = betrayed by the same person. **Jack** = have the same enemy or grudge. **10** = hunted by the same ex-friends. **9** = have the same boss or job. **8** = identical rare collection. **7** = come from the same academy or school. **6** = want to buy or sell the same thing. **5** = owe something to the same person, same kind of debts. **4** = same hobby or passion. **3** = same ex-wife or husband. **2** = same physical feature, look like twins. **Ace** = veterans of the same psychic war.

♦ = Being close from childhood

King = friends since the wedding of a common friend. **Queen** = went to same school. **Jack** = lived in the same village or neighborhood. **10** = were pursued by the same monster that destroyed their villages. **9** = disinherited because of the same persons. **8** = same orphanage. **7** = lived in the same place. **6** = same parents. **5** = same family drama. 4 = only survivors of their clan, language. **3** = hidden secret or enigma that they are the subject of. **2** = same skin mark, name or tatoo. **Ace** = parents were friends of samereligion, background or clan.

Luigi Castellani

♠ = Being rivals

King = want to settle in the same place. **Queen** = want revenge from the same criminal or accuser. **Jack** = fought one another in vain for the same privilege. **10** = had the same teacher or mentor. **9** = share the same story of a forgotten or lost family treasure. **8** = tried to get the same reward in vain. **7** = veterans of the same war, but on different side. **6** = both want to be the same to take revenge on the same enemy. **5** = track the same info or treasure or girl. **4** = want to go to the same secret place. **3** = opposite fan, contrary ambition. **2** = common inheritance. **Ace** = love rivals or long lasting family feud.

♣ = Sharing a melodramatic link

King = friends of a guy that died and left them a task (funeral urn, hidden kid…). **Queen** = were betrayed by the same organization. **Jack** = marooned at the same place by their respective ex-friends. **10** = one save the family of the other (intentionally or not). **9** = took part to the same battle, defended same position. **8** = saved one's another's life in a skirmish. **7** = fought or still fight against same addiction. **6** = want to return to the same far place or lost paradise. **5** = were accused of the same crime, went to the same jail. **4** = were paid by different commanders to do the same dirty job. **3** = were accomplices of a crime, or jailed for that. **2** = got the same initiation in a place far away from everything. **Ace** = took part to the same famous adventure but on different sides.

Remember that it is one link for each pair of characters. So with four characters named ABCD it is 6 links: AB, AC, AD, BC, BD and CD.

CARTOMANCY *the 54-card RPG*

I AM:

I COME FROM:

I WANT TO:

WE ARE:

BEHAVIOR & QUALITIES

ACCURACY	BODY	SPECIAL	MIND	INFLUENCE
♦ ☐	♥ ☐	☐	♠ ☐	♣ ☐

◯ = EFFORT

CONFIDENCE = ◯

EQUIPMENT ON ME

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

HOW TO DRAW OUTCOME CARDS?

1 – To have a QUALITY agreed on by the GM.

2 – To have your BEHAVIOR marker on the suit asked for by the GM.

3 – To take the risk of a FUMBLE and agree on a MEDIOCRE success.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS DONE

☐ Be endangered
☐ Be wounded
☐ Duel versus an equal
☐ Explore, travel & discover
☐ Get rid of a threat for good
☐ Make an exploit
☐ Make a tough choice
☐ Play your role well
☐ Save someone
☐ Take part in a fight

CARTOMANCY
the 54-card RPG

BEHAVIOR & WOUNDS

♥	♦	A	♣	♠
BODY	ACCURACY	SPECIAL	INFLUENCE	MIND

ON ME AT ALL TIMES I BEAR THESE ITEMS...

☐
☐
☐
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☐

LEVEL

I AM A...

WHO...

I COME FROM...

I AM LOOKING FOR...

I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THIS...

☐ Be endangered for real
☐ Be wounded
☐ Duel versus an equal
☐ Explore, travel & discover
☐ Get rid of a threat for good
☐ Make a worthy exploit
☐ Make a tough choice
☐ Play my role well
☐ Save someone in danger
☐ Take useful part in a fight

QUALITIES

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EFFORT   **CONFIDENCE**

LEAVE YOUR DICE BEHIND

CARTOMANCY RPG FOR BEGINNERS:

A complete role-playing game, easy to learn and quick to play, for a good quick stress-less start with no funny dice.

CARTOMANCY RPG FOR VETERANS:

A universal system, using only a basic deck of common cards. Playable in less than ten human minutes, including character creation, rules explanations and combat system.

OUR TARGET: ONLY ONE SINGLE RULE TO KNOW

There's not a single + or - factors, no computations, no adjustments or bonuses. No math at all, we promise. However, you'll find a bit of resources management and chip strategy.

WHY IS CARTOMANCY RPG LIKE THAT?

*I have been roleplaying since 1981. But when we started roleplaying with my elder son, none of my favorite games seemed to please him. Mostly because all were overly complicated and he clearly wasn't interested in a math contest. So, we got rid of all games with the **"Die + Stat + Skill"** formulas. Thus, we planned on using a D% or multiple successes system… Unfortunately, the day we had a few hours to play, Murphy's Law struck! We had no single D10 and a single tiny D6…And we were 25 miles from the nearest store. Damn'it!*

"HEY, LOOK! THERE ARE CARDS HERE!"

However, there was a drawer, with a deck of cards. 43 in all. Not enough for Bridge or Gin. But we tried something, changed this then that… Eventually, a few weeks later, the game was what you are now holding in your hands.

"DAD, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO BE YOUR GAMEMASTER!"

Then, after only five or six hours as a player, my 12-years old panda told me he felt confident enough to be my GM. And I realized this game may be useful for other persons. We hope you like it. And we expect countless hours of roleplaying fun with your families, friends, cellmates or invaders from outer worlds.

Sincerely yours,
M@nu & G@ël DELVA

By Emmanuel & Gaël DELVA