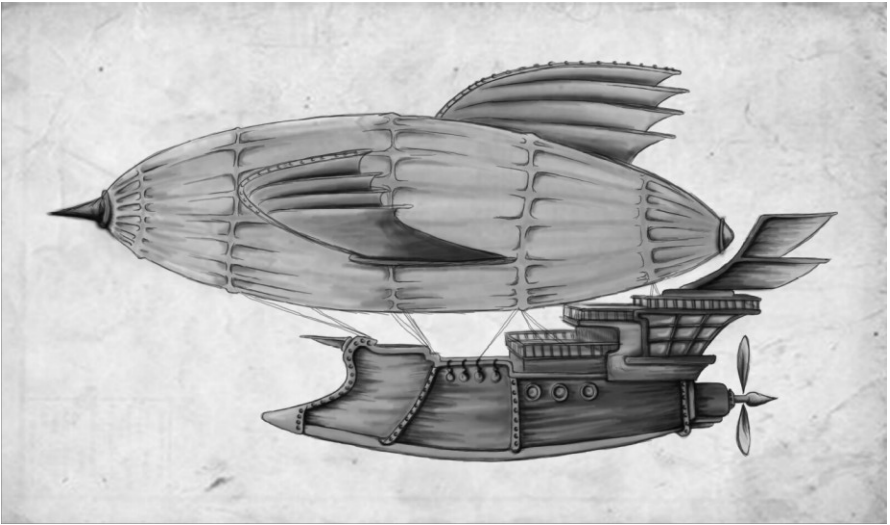


The Code of Steam and Steel



The Super-lite Role-playing Adventure Game
of Scientific Romance and Steampunk
by Simon Burley

The Code of Steam and Steel



A Role-Playing Adventure Game

of Scientific Romance

by

SIMON BURLEY

Published by

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Martyn aka Wijn Chijn Flynn
Mark Baker aka Lady Veronica Raffles
John Parr aka John Forrester
Jane Barnett aka Molly
Jane Read aka Gertrude
John Read aka Bert
Liam Wardle aka Tom "Dodger"
Nigel Phillips aka Guido Fitzhenry
David Dobson aka Henry Allen
Geoff aka Edward Huntingdon
Phil Rice
Alyson Rice

Mme Papadelle – "Our airship is sooo fast, but it smells like a Turk's bottom."

Harry Trumpton – "There's always time for Tiffin."

Tyrone Matthews – "Don't ask the Engineer to fly the Zeppelin."

Capt. Hugo Protheroe Whatley RN (Retd.) – "Are you fellows here to carry the bags?"

Dr Nicholas Donovan – "A Scientist has to earn the 'mad'."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This game was created for the Seven Hills 2015 RPG Convention and its theme – “STEEL”

With gratitude to:

All the great pioneers of Scientific Romance – especially Jules Verne and H.G. Wells – and their decedents.

All the guys of the UK Roleplayers forum

The playtesters at - Winter Stabcon 2015

The players at – Indiecon 2015 and
London Anime and Gaming Convention 2015
(see facing page)

All my fellow designers in the:
UK Roleplayers Design Collective

And my wonderful wife, Carol

INTRODUCTION

Big Ben was ringing 3am as Colonel MacMillan perused the night-shrouded streets of London.

Pulling his mono-scope into place, he scanned the horizon from his vantage point atop Nelson's column.

"Hmmm... I can see where the Prussian air-ship has set down," he murmured to his associate – the Lady Melissa Poole - as she sat daintily on her shooting stick beside him, "But heaven alone only knows what the Hun's trying to achieve."



He indicated the shadowy shape squatting astride the London Overground Central Station.

"They seem to be detaching the gondola," Lady Melissa chipped in, binoculars obscuring her handsome features, "And they look to be preparing to take off. There's barely enough stowage left to hold anything but a skeleton crew."

The pair watched in wonder as the Teutonic dirigible lifted from the its perch and headed skyward again, leaving the bulk of its undercarriage behind. Just what WAS going on?

Suddenly MacMillan noted two puffs of steam, or smoke, arising from the abandoned construction. Then...it moved!

Extending four metallic claws to form rock-steady supports upon the station roof, the mysterious object gave up its secret. Squatting in the midst of the Queen's own capital was a mockery of animal form - a giant metal Prussian battle perambulator!

MacMillan looked at the steam rifle clutched in his hand.

"This is going to need a bigger gun," he mused.

Welcome to THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL. This is a Role-playing game. A set of rules that allows people like you to get together with your friends and create stories and adventures based in the worlds of Scientific Romance and Steampunk.

In this one slim volume you'll find all you need to immerse yourselves in the world of airships, steam rifles, sword-sticks, patriotic heroes, plucky heroines, johnny foreigners, mechanoids, high tea, low cunning, Tiffin and heinous international plots.

What makes THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL a bit different is that it's a "lightweight" role-playing game. It allows you to create Adventurers and undertake heroic exploits without getting bogged down in all the detail of exactly how fast an ornithopter can travel or how many shots there are in that elephant gun. It's all about having fun and sharing Scientific Romance stories together.

In a role-playing game, the players create and play out the adventures of characters from a book or film. In a Steampunk Adventure Role-playing game, they take on the role of scientific adventurers from an alternate page in history. Usually, there is a Referee who creates and controls the actions of the bad-guys, plans out the storyline and makes sure everyone has a good time.

Because of the lightweight nature of these rules, THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL can be picked up and played just about anywhere and doesn't have to take hours to play. All it needs is one or more pairs of six-sided dice, something to write with and a few sheets of paper. It's ideal to fill the odd couple of hours on a train journey or at the end of an evening.

Of course, you don't HAVE to play it like that.

This little book contains all you need for hours of adventure or, even, a long-term Steampunk RPG campaign if that's to your taste. Obviously it isn't as detailed as most other games, but it's a complete game. It's a light-weight fun-to-play game that gives the FEEL of Scientific Adventure stories, without going into all the detailed physics.

On the facing page you'll see Colonel Rufus MacMillan's CHARACTER SHEET. This is a piece of paper which tells you all about him and what he can do. Take a quick look at it to familiarize yourself with some of the key features of the game. It's what his player has in front of himself during the game.

INTRODUCTION

This is Rufus MacMillan's character sheet, so it has his name, and the name of his player on it.

A sketch of the character. (Optional)

Fortitude is the physical damage he can take. It goes down a lot in battles.

CODE OF STEEL CHARACTER SHEET

Colonel Rufus MacMillan



Player: Desmond

How stable he is mentally.

Fortitude

6 5 4 3 2 1 0 Neg.

x

Faculty

6 5 4 3 2 1 0 Neg.

6 5

In a scrap, he uses his fisticuffs score of 12 to fight.

Form

6 5 4 3 2 1

x

When appropriate, He uses his trusty steam-rifle to foil his opponents.

Abilities

A measure of his standing and how he comports yourself.

Ordinary

Fisticuffs

2 6 12

Extraordinary

Steam-Rifle

3 4 12

Humdrum

Hunter

1 5 5

Development Points

3

His usual occupation is hunting the African plains.

Character statement: Rufus honed his skills in the plains of Africa but he became a man through serving in the Crimean War.

Quick-Interference from some sort of animal

He's earned 3 points to spend on new abilities.

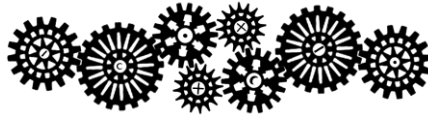
This is a summary of who he is, what he does and what happens if his player rolls a double.

All of the terms on the character sheet are explained in the following chapters.



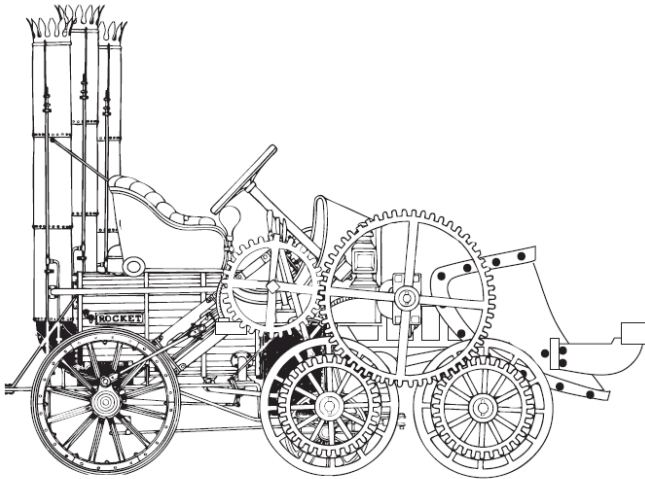
In *THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL*, creating the characters only takes a few minutes.

In the same way any conflicts or battles that occur in the game can be resolved quickly and easily allowing the plot to move forwards. This gives the players more time to focus on the characters themselves – their personalities, internal conflicts, moral struggles and their relationship with the World at Large.



As you read through the book, you'll find the RULES presented in plain type.

These occasional interludes, in italic type, contain examples which are intended help you understand those rules a bit more clearly. You should only read these if you've read rules and need a bit more advice. Otherwise, feel free to skip them.



INTRODUCTION

Few Adventurers survive to an honored retirement. Normally there are three ways out:

You can die from one of the many dangers you encounter on your exploits – or be forced permanently into a nursing home due to horrendous injuries sustained through your heroism.

Or your mental faculties can crumble. More than one dare-devil has been driven out of their mind by the constant pressures of saving Queen and Country from unimaginable Threats.

Finally, if you make too many wrong choices, you will become known as an untrustworthy renegade. There are some unwritten rules of good manners and etiquette that only the most depraved would break. Anything else is simply bad form.

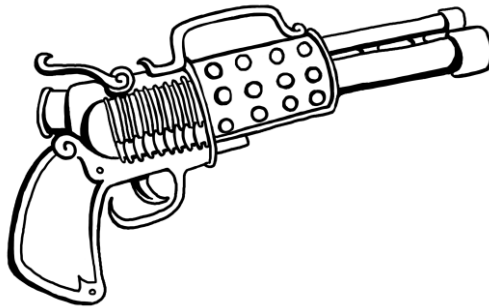
In *THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL* you can “lose” by being physically harmed. However, you can also lose just as easily through mental or social damage.

* * *

DYING

A Hero's life is far from safe. You can be stabbed, shot, blown up or crushed by giant machinery. The means of your potential demise are only limited by the imagination of your Referee.

In the novels, films and on TV, the Heroes usually survive. However, in a game there has to be a real chance of coming to a sticky end – otherwise where's the jeopardy?



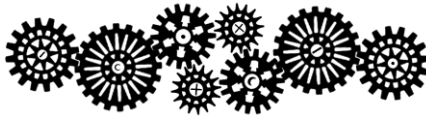
MADNESS

Constantly staring death in the face and being mere seconds from destruction can become wearing. And, when some of the causes of that death and destruction are the creations of lunatics science which should not exist, it is hardly surprising that that so many adventurers snap and retreat into catatonia or delusion.

SOCIAL PARIAH

The worlds of Scientific Romance are a constant struggle between the civilized and the savage. Sometimes all we have to cling to is our upbringing and good manners.

If you act in an evil, untrustworthy or socially unacceptable manner, you will simply be unable to operate in civilized society.



As you'll see from Colonel MacMillan's character sheet, THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL contains rules which handle all the different types of challenge an swashbuckling adventurer may be faced with on a daily basis.



1. BIRTH OF A HERO

This chapter is all about how players of THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL make the swashbucklers, scientists and dare-devils they play in the game.

In this chapter you'll see how a player takes a character from a thought, an idea, a figment of their imagination to a fully-fledged hero ready to play.

Characters in THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL can be just about anything the player wants – as long as the Referee agrees and it fits in with the World they've envisaged.



Most of the characters are going to be human but with some kind of Scientific, Mechanical or Technological enhancement. However, there's nothing to stop them being a mechanoid, mutant, foreigner or whatever.

First of all you need to give the player some kind of outline or background to the game. This should include the type of storyline being simulated. Are you sticking to mere mechanical enhancements or are the players allowed to choose from a more varied palette of extraordinary abilities?

They also need to have an idea of what the main forces at play in the World are. How historically accurate are you going to be. Who's in charge? (The British Empire and her Allies, presumably). What other factions are important – who are the Big Villains. And how do the players fit in? Are they under commission from Her Majesty, Soldiers of Fortune or ordinary citizens sucked into events beyond their control? What wars have been fought and which ones are still going on?

It isn't essential to have the entire world mapped out for the first game. In fact, sometimes it's fun to leave things a bit vague. Then you can see what ideas the players come up with when they design their characters and weave these into your game-world after the event.



It all depends who sort of world you envisage. Gothic/Victorian/Edwardian fiction features many weird characters and events beyond that of the anachronistic mechanical science of Wells and Verne.

Invisible men, vampires, animated corpses, shape-shifters, psychics, mystical pictures/artifacts and many other extraordinary individuals exist in the pages of fiction alongside the Scientific Romance we're trying to create here.

Some Referees like including some or all of these elements – other prefer to keep their wonders mechanical. Some wait to see what their players come up with.

A typical example of this is when a player creates a psychic character. You, as Referee, may not have envisaged having this in your game but if – for example – a player's character has the ability to mesmerize her opponents, it's only logical to assume that there'll be secret societies and scoundrels out there with the same skills.



The second thing you do is to give the player something to write with and a piece of paper – or a copy of the character sheet on the next page.

It's easier to use a character sheet but there isn't actually a lot to write down so you can cope with just blank sheets of paper.

Next, the player writes their name on the sheet.

THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL CHARACTER SHEET

Name:		
Player:		

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Fortitude								

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Faculty								

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Form								

Abilities

Ordinary				
----------	--	--	--	--

Extraordinary				
---------------	--	--	--	--

Humdrum				
---------	--	--	--	--

Development Points	
--------------------	--

Character statement:
Quirk:

Abilities

The player now picks three Abilities. One is used for activities, combat and survival whenever the character is interacting with the world on an ordinary level and/or is unable to use an mechanical equipment or enhanced abilities. (Often, but not always, this applies in close range encounters.)

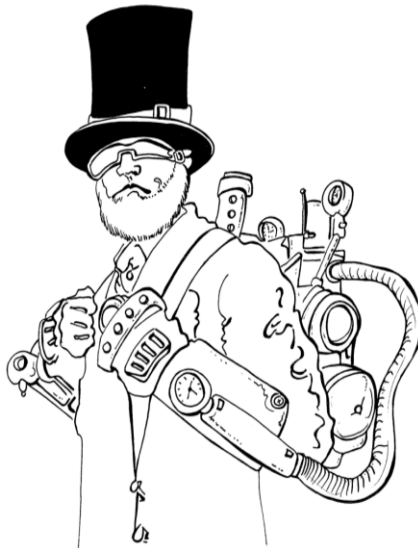
The second is used for activities, combat and survival whenever the character needs to use extraordinary or unusual means in order to succeed. (This often, but not always, covers long-range attacks).

The third ability is more general one and is used in non-combat situations. It is often just a statement of the characters' role in society – “Hunter”, “Journalist”, “Scientist” etc.

These can be three apparently unrelated abilities or can all stem from the same basic description.

In an ideal world, the players will have some sort of idea about the character they want to play and will be able to tell the Referee what they want fairly easily.

If they can't do it, then there is a list of some suggested abilities in an appendix at the back of this book.



ORDINARY ABILITY

The first ability to select is the one which the character relies on when they're in stress situations where they want to rely upon their native skills. Often this is when they're in a conflict and their opponents close to hand-to-hand combat range.



Let's pretend that Gina is sitting down to play a game of THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL with her Referee, Jane. Desmond's probably already there with Colonel MacMillan. Gina needs a character of her own.

She decides she doesn't want a typical "Upper class" type. She wants an urchin/artisan of some kind. Since this is more appropriate as a General ability, Jane asks her how she survives "on the street". Gina decides her character will travel with some kind of toolkit. She could choose "spanner" as her ordinary ability – but chooses to keep it broader and opts to use the word "gizmo's" to describe all the odds and ends in her toolbag.

EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY

This is the second ability that most players select. This is the item, technique or skill the character possesses which is beyond the realm of normal humanity. It is something – usually a gadget of some kind - which doesn't exist outside the steam-punk world, at least not in the time period in which the game is set.



Gina decides that one of the gizmo's in her character's toolbag is quite remarkable. It is a fully functional, clockwork, flying songbird. She can program it by adjusting the position of the pins on a rotating drum in its chest.

Note that this means that all the other gizmos in her toolbag are merely tools of the kind that could be found around the turn of the century.

HUMDRUM ABILITY

The third and final ability to pick is the Humdrum one. This is a broad description of the character's position in the world – and often describes a job, occupation or responsibility they fill.



Gina's character's Humdrum Ability is "lamplighter".

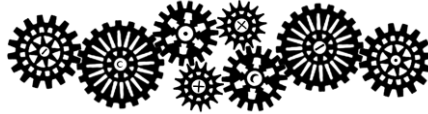
At first her Referee, Jane, is a bit taken aback by this as it seems rather limited. However, Gina explains that as her character travels the streets at night lighting the gas-powered street-lamps, this means that she will be "streetwise". It will also give her access to the "Guild of Lamplighters" who, between them, will know just about all the gossip that there is to be known.

In addition, she also has the skills and abilities to repair the streetlights and other gas-powered devices. This will also give her some characterization as she won't be fond of this new-fangled "electricity" thing coming in.



QUIRKS

Whenever a character uses an ability, their player rolls two six sided dice. (This is explained later.) If the player rolls a double, special things happen. One of these is a side effect of their abilities. This should, ideally, be a “one off” wild and wacky event of some kind.



Gina decides that, when she rolls a double on the dice, her character's sensitivity to vapors will come into play. She calls this “Does someone smell gas?”

Something will happen in the scenario involving gas of some kind which could be beneficial, harmful or just the cause of some coarse humor.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABILITIES

The abilities the player selects can be unrelated, or can all come from the same basic rationale.



EXAMPLE OF THREE DIFFERENT ABILITIES

Rufus MacMillan can handle himself in a brawl by using the pugilistic abilities he picked up in the Army as part of the his regiment's boxing team. He has acquired a Steam Rifle from a scientist whose life he once saved. He has made his personal fortune as a Hunter in the wilds of Africa. None of these abilities are related to each other.

EXAMPLE OF A SINGLE ABILITY

Gina's character, Alison Cooper, is a lamplighter. Her facility with the contents of her toolbox and gas-work in general ties in with this. She has acquired a small flying device in order – she says – makes lighting inaccessible lamps easier. She hasn't explained why the bird can also play music.

ABILITY SCORES

Time for some numbers.

Different characters can have the same ability, but at different levels. Lots of characters can fire rifles – few of them are marksmen.

To determine the ability level of each of their characters' three abilities, the players have to do a bit of arithmetic.

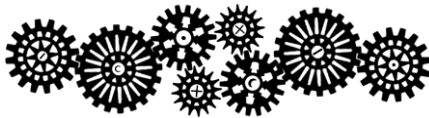
They are given the numbers from 1 through 6.

They write them down in pairs on their character sheet next to the abilities – using each number only ONCE.

They MULTIPLY the pairs of numbers to get the score for each ability.

The Highest possible score is 30 and the lowest is 2.

These calculations are really easy to describe and do. However, this system carries a load of implications which will affect how successful the characters are in the game and the players will probably ponder over this for a while to try and work out the best combination.



Gina loves the “Gaslighter” idea she’s come up with for Alison and wants her to be good at that. She’ll rely on other characters to do the physical stuff like fighting, but would still like to have a chance to contribute.

Her “clockwork songbird” is neat but feels it’ll be of limited use.

She’s got the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 to play with. She puts the 1 into her Extraordinary ability.

She puts 4 and 6 into her Humdrum ability and 2 and 5 into her “gizmos”. This leaves a 3 to go into “clockwork songbird”.

BIRTH OF A HERO

This gives her:

Abilities

Ordinary	Gizmos	2	5	10
Extraordinary	Clockwork Songbird	1	3	3
Humdrum	Lamp-lighter	4	6	24

Add up the three scores. This total can vary from 28 up to 44. It doesn't need to be written on the character sheet as it is only used once.

The more "balanced" a character, the lower the total of their ability scores will be. Characters with a total of 44 will have one ability score at 30 and another one at 2 – a much more extreme spread.

This total is used to calculate the Hero's starting characteristics.

CHARACTERISTICS

There are three characteristics:

FORTITUDE is a measure of the adventurer's physical status or condition. When a character takes, physical or fatigue damage or similar – this is reduced. Everyone starts off with full Fortitude – usually 6 - at the beginning of each battle but it goes down when they get hit.

Fortitude can represent more than mere cuts and bruises. A character may choose to give up and surrender when their fortitude crumbles in the face of a superior moral argument – for example.

FACULTY is a measure of an adventurer's mental condition.

Whenever the character receives a shock, such as facing a frightening situation or losing a fight, their Faculty will go down.

FORM is a measure of how the character holds and conducts themselves. Good manners, keeping a stiff upper lip and playing in sporting manner contribute towards this but there are many other factors which can go into considering something “good form” or “bad form”. When events happen which will affect their reputation – such as being forced to cheat to win a combat – their Form goes down.

Each of these characteristics is explained in detail in its own section.

However, basically, they all go up and down during the game to reflect what happens in the character’s life.

All player characters start with three values based upon the total of their Ability scores. (See page 15). Calculate this total and then consult the following table:

Ability Total	Fortitude	Faculty	Form
44	6	3	4
40-41	6	3	5
35-37	6	4	4
31-32	6	4	5
28-29	6	5	5

During play, these scores will never go above 6 and will never go below 1 without the character suffering consequences. If an adventurer’s score becomes negative in any of these ratings, the character is out of the game.

If a score falls to exactly zero, the character is in a bad way but can be saved.

(This is explained in more detail later on)



BIRTH OF A HERO

Because Gina's character has the following scores:

Abilities

Ordinary	Gizmos	2	5	10
Extraordinary	Clockwork Songbird	1	3	3
Humdrum	Lamp-lighter	4	6	24

her total is 37.

Because of this, she starts off with:

FORTITUDE: 6

FACULTY: 4

FORM: 4



DEVELOPMENT POINTS

Players earn development points during play. (They aren't easy to get!) So this box is left blank at the moment.

CHARACTER STATEMENT

This is a pithy one or two line statement which sums up the character and their background. Players should take a couple of minutes to think about this one before writing it down.

If the players have any ancillary ideas about their characters, they should be actively encouraged to write them down.

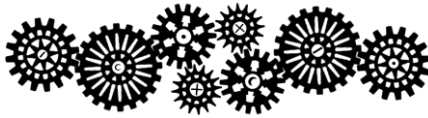
Gina's character is pretty straight-forward, so she chooses to add a twist into her background to spice things up.

Character statement: If Alison Cooper had been born into anything other than a working class family, she would have received a formal education, been sent to University and may have ended up as one of the country's great engineers. Instead she's just the best lamp-lighter and gas technician in the Home Counties.

Quirk: "Does anyone smell gas?"

NAMES

The player now needs to choose a name for their Hero. There are no rules for this. It depends upon the imagination of the players and the tastes of the Referee.

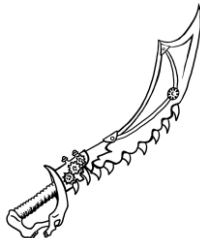


Gina chose "Cooper" as a typical artisan name. "Cartwright" or "Weaver" would have done as well. Alison is just a classic English Christian name.

CHARACTER ILLUSTRATIONS


There is an (extremely small) box on the character sheet where the player can add an illustration of their Hero if they wish. This isn't essential.

However, if all the players can get an illustration of their characters printed on a small card, disk or similar - and the Referee does the same with the opposition - this can make visualizing the game much easier.



BIRTH OF A HERO

THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL CHARACTER SHEET

Name:	Alison Cooper	
Player:	Gina	

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Fortitude	X							

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Faculty			X					

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Form			X					

Abilities

Ordinary	Gizmos	2	5	10
----------	--------	---	---	-----------

Extraordinary	Clockwork Songbird	1	3	3
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Humdrum	Lamp-lighter	4	6	24
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Development Points			
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Character statement: If Alison Cooper had been born into anything other than a working class family, she would have received a formal education, been sent to University and may have ended up as one of the country's great engineers. Instead she's just the best lamp-lighter and gas technician in the Home Counties.

Quirk: "Does anyone smell gas?"

DOCTOR
ALLEGORY'S

Patented Packet

DISCOMBORBULATOR

FOR THE TREATMENT OF HYSTERIA, MENTAL FATIGUE,
CONFUSION, OVER EXCITEMENT, CATATONIA, NEURASTHENIA.
AIDS IN DEMENTALIZING AND BRAIN STRAIGHTENING,
RESTORES SANITY. CURES ONANISM.

2. PLAYING THE GAME

As usual in these kind of books, making the characters is up front. This should have given you an idea of the flavor of this game.

But how do we actually make it work?

First of all, the Referee needs to have all details of the current adventure written down. This is often called the SCENARIO.



The Scenario normally contains an outline of the plot of the adventure, some locations where the action might take place and details of any characters in the adventure other than the Heroes.

These characters are called Non-Player Characters – or NPCs. They are all controlled by the Referee. An example Scenario – **The Steel of the Gods** - is given later in this book.

STORYLINES

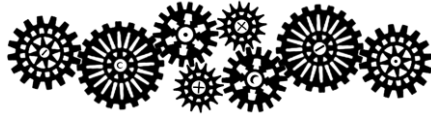
In addition to the plot of the scenario the characters are playing, each character will acquire a number of storylines which apply personally to them.

These storylines are sometimes called HOOKS or PLOTLINES.

A storyline is a plot which applies only to the specific individual Hero and runs parallel to the main plot. In films and comics these are often referred to as “sub-plots”. It is a short – one or two line – statement of a situation involving the character. It may be related to one or more of the major plotlines of the ongoing campaign or it may be a stand-alone issue.

A storyline should help the player role-play their character without overly hampering them.

It should be capable of being “resolved” in some way - at which point the person resolving the sub-plot gains a Faculty point, and the player concerned ditches the storyline.



You have a Fear of Flying.

You have cancer.

You are a reformed alcoholic.

Your twin sister has disappeared and you are searching the World for her.

You are a reformed criminal.

You have a clockwork heart.

You're always hungry.

You have no dress sense – you need someone to compliment you on the way you look.

You carry a gadget of unknown function or origin.

Your parents died in a airship disaster.

Each character gets a new storyline at the beginning of each game session. They carry them with them between game sessions until they are resolved.

The Referee should prepare a series of appropriate storylines before each game session. A good way handling this is to write them onto cards or pieces of paper.

Ideally, they should then hand a blank card to each player for them to write down a storyline which could affect their character. If it is a new game, or any major events have taken place in the game world, the current situation should be explained to the players first.

PLAYING THE GAME

Each player writes down a plot and submits it to the Referee. The Referee reads each one and either approves it – adding it to their own pile – or rejects it. The player doesn't need to submit a different one.

The pile of storylines is shuffled and one is handed randomly to each player. The player keeps the card (or writes the plotline down on the back of their character sheet) until the plotline is resolved.

The Referee can keep any undistributed plot-lines for future game sessions.



NARRATIVE PLAY

Most of the game is played out through a narrative interaction between the Referee and the players.

They tell the players what their characters can see.

The players say what their characters are doing.

The Referee informs them what happens as a result of their actions.



JANE: (The Referee) St Paul's is as deserted as you'd expect it to be at midnight. The Grand Hall is dark, lit only by the dim moonlight coming through the windows.

GINA: Alison lights her Davey Lamp.

DESMOND: Rufus looks around for the paving slab The Professor described.

MELANIE: Melissa keeps watch to make sure no-one has noticed the lights and the noise of the searching. She pulls out the Professor's diagram and passes it to the Colonel.

DESMOND: (Putting on the gruff voice he uses for his character.) "Thank you, my dear" He continues looking around.

JANE: After five minutes or so of searching, MacMillan locates a paving slab bearing the same symbols as those on the Professor's sketch.

GINA: Alison pulls out a brush from her toolbag and dusts away the dirt. Is there a keyhole hidden in the middle of the letter "d"?

JANE: Yes, there is.

GINA: I pull out the key we were given, slip it in and turn.

JANE: There is a grinding sound and a puff of released air sends stone dust flying as the key is pulled out of your hand. The flag stone pivots down around a concealed hinge and disappears into the dark. There is a thudden clang.

MELANIE: (Using her "Melissa" voice) "Gracefully, my angel, if we can manage it. We don't want to be waking the dead now do we?"

GINA: "Sorry, my lady." I wave my lamp into the dark.

JANE: There's a flagstone floor about ten feet down.

DESMOND: Rufus leaps down. What can I see?

JANE: Not a lot by the limited lamplight shining from above. You're in some in some kind of chamber or corridor. The stone walls are lined with the earthenware pipework of Victorian utilities.

GINA: I pass my lamp to Lady Melissa and drop down. I look for the gas pipes and locate a release valve. Clipping on a mantle from my tool-box, I light it. "This is how we see down here whilst we're working." I say as the room fills with light. "We're lucky, I'm actually quite familiar with the layout of the city's pipework."

(This is probably all complete Bunkum and has just been made up by Gina on the spot. It sounds good though, so Jane decides to run with it.)

JANE: The chamber is actually the middle section of a corridor which runs off in both directions. However, you both notice a hole in the floor through which you can see a stone staircase spiraling into the depths. Through the hole you hear the distant sounds of immense machinery at work and what sounds like a pipe organ being played.

GINA: "Not so familiar with any lower levels, though....."



The great bulk of play can be resolved like this, without rolling a single die.

However, sometimes situations will arise where the outcome isn't obvious from the Referee's notes. In this case, we need some rules to help determine what happens. In these situations, dice are rolled to determine what happens.

THE TWO GAME MECHANICS

There are two basic rules which are followed whenever you need to resolve a situation and just talking it out won't do.

THE SINGLE DIE ROLL

This is used whenever you are in situation which requires a check against one of the Heroes' three **characteristics**: FORTITUDE, FACULTY or FORM.

In these cases you roll a single six-sided die and have to roll

equal to and under

or

equal to and over

the relevant statistic, depending upon the circumstances. As Referee you add modifiers to this score. (It is through clever use of these modifiers that you show your skill as Referee.)

It's impossible to list every time during a game that you'd need to make these rolls – or every situation in which they're relevant. Here are a few examples:

- *A player may wish their character to do something which is dishonorable. Maybe they need to steal some evidence of treason from a Lord's townhouse. A six-sided die is rolled and must score equal to or OVER their current FORM score.*
- *An anarchist has infiltrated House of Commons and gone on a rampage, slaughtering several MP's. The Heroes have captured him and are debating whether to hand him over to the Police or throw him out off the roof. To kill him in cold blood would require a roll of a six-sided dice. This has a -2 modifier on the roll and the total has to be equal to or OVER the Heroes' current FORM scores. Only Heroes with a score of 4 or less would even consider killing in cold blood.*
- *If the players are trying to fast-talk their way through a foreign port, they would have to roll equal to or UNDER their current FORM score. If it's a place they're used before then there'll be a -3 modifier to this roll.*
- *There's a gas leak! All the Heroes must roll equal to or under their FORTITUDE score or pass out. If, after their next actions, they are still in the house and haven't patched the leak, they'll need to roll again with a +1 modifier on the roll. Each round they roll, another +1 modifier is added.*
- *Searching the haunted castle, the brave adventurers encounter what seems to be a ghostly apparition. A roll of a six-sided die equal to or under their current FACULTY will prevent them from running away in fear.*



Every time a situation arises where one of a character's three characteristics seems to be relevant, the Referee should decide whether it is a roll UNDER or OVER which is appropriate. A roll of EQUAL to the characteristic normally succeeds. However, a clever Referee can apply modifiers to rolls to make them easier or harder to represent the current situation.

THE DOUBLE-DICE ROLL

You use this mechanic whenever you are using an **ability**.

Two six sided dice are rolled.

If the ability the Hero is using *is* appropriate to the current situation, the numbers on their faces are MULTIPLIED to give a score between 1 and 36.

If the ability the Hero is using is *not* appropriate to the current situation, the numbers on the faces of the dices are ADDED to give a score between 2 and 12.

The score of the relevant ability is added to the total (however it was calculated) to give a score between 3 and 66. This is then compared to another number generated by an opposing character or pre-determined by the Referee. If the number rolled is higher than the opposing number, the character has succeeded in whatever they are attempting.

If the scores are EQUAL, they have not succeeded.



Death in the skies

Rufus MacMillan has unmasked a Prussian spy on the Imperial Airship "Wonder". Because of the situation, he forgoes using his Steam Rifle but, instead, engages the bounder in fisticuffs. This is an extremely appropriate use of the ability, so two dice are rolled - getting a 3 and 4 - and multiplied for a total of 12. This is added to and added to his ORDINARY score.

Two dice are rolled for the spy, getting a 4 and 5 for a total of 20. This is added to his COMBAT score (of 10).

$$12 + 12 = 24 \quad , \quad 20 + 10 = 30$$

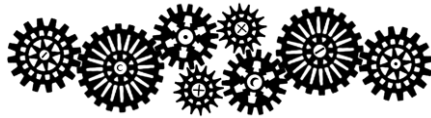
30 is more than 24, so the scurrilous Prussian dodges Rufus's roundhouse blows and ducks under to deliver a stinging uppercut.

You shall go to the Ball

Lady Melissa Poole is trying to obtain invitations to a Ball at the Prussian Embassy.

Melanie rolls two dice and gets a 4 and a 5 for a total of 20. Added to her CHARM ability of 10, this gives a total of 30.

Dave, the Referee, rolls 2 and 4 for the Prussia proconsul's secretary and gets a total of 8. The secretary's BUREAUCRACY score is 20 so his total is 28. This is less than 30 so Melissa manages to get her invitations.



DIFFICULTY LEVEL

Obviously, the double dice rule is used a lot in combat situations. When it is used outside combat – for instance when a character is using their HUMDRUM ability - the Referee has a determine a score to aim for.

Use the following table to help:

Roll	Description
10-	Failure
10+	Easy
20+	Difficult
30+	Very Difficult
40+	Extremely Difficult
50+	Virtually Impossible
60+	Impossible

Panda-monium

Dr Von Grosslich has released the animals from London's various Zoos onto the streets of the Capital. Rufus MacMillan has been retained to hunt and retrieve Marlborough Zoo's prize specimens – two rare pandas.

Because of the general chaos, this is Extremely Difficult. Desmond rolls two dice and gets a 3 and a 6 for a score of 18. Adding MacMillan's HUNTING ability of 5 gives 23.

To succeed at an Extremely Difficult task would require a total of 40. On this occasion, Colonel MacMillan fails to recover his prey.

PLAYING THE GAME

Out of the Dark

Alison Cooper has a LAMP-LIGHTER score of 24. An attack by Prussian anarchists upon the Chelsea gas works has plunged the capital into darkness. Alison tries to reroute gas from other sources.

Her player, Gina, rolls a double 6.

6 x 6 = 36. Add on 24 and you get 60.

Alison achieves the virtually impossible task of simultaneously relighting every lamp in London.



The most common roll made in the game is a DIFFICULT one. A total of more than 20 will succeed at most tasks.



DOUBLES

Whenever a double is rolled, something special or unique happens – whether the roll succeeds or not.

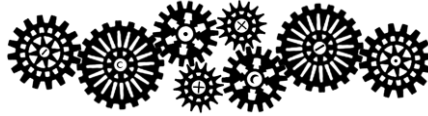
A total of 1 (that's a double 1) is a **CRITICAL FAILURE** and always fails – often spectacularly. A total of 36 (that's a double 6) is a **CRITICAL SUCCESS** and always succeeds – often spectacularly.

On any other double, the Referee or player (as appropriate) can choose from the following options:

- A player can ask the Referee for a specific item of information.
- The player or Referee can retain the option to reroll one die on a future die roll of any type. (This must be used before the end of the current game session.)
- The Referee can retain the option to insist a player reroll one die on a future die roll of any type. (This must be used before the end of the current game session.)
- A player can retain the option to insist a another player or the Referee reroll one die on their next die roll of any type. (This must be used before the end of the current game session.)
- Some non-lethal but noticeable collateral damage is caused – this can be as simple as a tear in an outfit – revealing petticoats - but can involve damage to items being manipulated.
- A new plot element can be introduced. This can be pretty much anything the player wants from a passing airship, to a new storyline for one of their team-mates.
- A change in the plot direction can be introduced. For example, the secret installation doesn't belong to the mad scientist Dr Grosslich – it's actually a secret American base – funded by the new Yankee government.
- A player can choose to change the emotional state of one of the Referee's characters.

OTHER EFFECTS

In addition to the options listed above, the Hero's special effect will come into play when a double is rolled. This will not normally happen on a Critical Success or Failure.



Man's best friend

In a bar room brawl at a Bavarian sea port hostelry, Rufus MacMilan rolls a double 5. With a growl, the bar-owner's German Shepherd joins in the battle at his side.

Fate worse than death?

Whilst Lady Melissa Poole and her comrades are busy with Dr Grosslich's henchmen, Melanie – her player – rolls a double 2. The good doctor takes a shine to the brave young adventuress and orders his men to take her alive.

There are additional options if the roll is made as part of a Battle. This is explained in the next chapter.

The double-dice mechanic produces as wide range of results due to the fact that the number rolled are multiplied together rather than added – which is what happens in most games. This makes the game unpredictable and can lead to some unlikely results – which is EXACTLY what happens in Scientific Romance adventure stories.

Obviously, the Referee will need to make some rulings. Hopefully common sense will apply.

Here are a few more examples:

- Common actions don't need a roll. A typical character wouldn't need to roll to pick up a heavy box.
- Uncommon actions can only be attempted by a character with a relevant ability. An ordinary person couldn't attempt to pilot an ornithopter.

- A character with a related ability can attempt to do something if they add the die rolls. Alison Cooper is a Lamp-lighter and expert in gas supply systems. If she were to attempt to rewire electrical circuits, she would ADD the two die roll scores.



FORTITUDE

- Every character starts off with a score of 6 in Fortitude.
- Losing Fortitude points shows that a character is taking Damage. This can be injury, stunning, fatigue or will power damage.
- If a character's Fortitude score falls to zero, they fall unconscious or surrender.
- If their Fortitude falls below zero then they are dead or they are seriously injured and must spend a significant amount of time in hospital recovering. In the latter case, they are suspended from the game until the Referee indicates if they may return.

The decision about whether the character is dead or injured is made by the Referee depending upon the circumstances. Usually the character will be dead but there are occasions where being badly injured is the more obvious outcome.

- Fortitude points are usually lost during battles (see the next chapter).
- They can be lost during the storytelling part of the game if something dramatic happens to the character – an exploding airship, collapsing buildings, being asphyxiated etc.
- Fortitude normally returns to 6 for the beginning of the next major part of the story – provided the player has narrated a scene in which their character has recovered. This normally – though not always – involves Tiffin or drinking a hot, strong, cup of Tea.
- Whenever a hazardous situation arises where Fortitude is a factor, the player rolls one sixed sided die and attempts to roll equal to or under their Hero's Fortitude score. The Referee may apply modifiers to this roll.
- Rarely – and in extreme cases – a character may suffer a PERMANENT reduction in Fortitude. This is normally follows a significant battle and a period of time spent in hospital. If a character's leg is completely shattered and is held together by calipers, they might have a maximum Fortitude score of 5, for example. This is an extremely rare situation and will only be applied by the Referee when absolutely appropriate.

FACULTY

- Faculty is a measure of the hero's mental strength, resolve and sanity.
- It can never be higher than 6 and shouldn't go below 1.
- An adventurer's Faculty will go up and down during the game, reflecting the strain of their lifestyle and how well they cope with it.
- If an adventurer's Faculty goes down to zero, they suffer a nervous breakdown. They must retire from adventuring and check into a nursing home until an opportunity arises to recover themselves. The Referee will announce when this is appropriate.
- If their Faculty falls below zero, the character has gone insane and is out of the game. This may be marked by some extreme behavior which threatens their travelling companions or places them in danger in some manner.
- A character may lose a Faculty point at any time when the Referee feels they are in a scary or stress-filled situation.
- Whenever an uncertain situation arises where Faculty is a factor, the player rolls one sixed sided die and attempts to roll equal to or under or equal to or over their Hero's Faculty score. This is typically when there is a possibility that they might run away.
- A character can lose Faculty when they lose a battle. (Next chapter.)
- A character can gain Faculty if they win a battle in style.
- Players may choose to spend a Faculty point to introduce a new plot element for themselves or another player during a game. Alternatively, they may spend a point to deflect a plot element directed to them by the Referee onto another Hero.
- If the player resolves one of their plotlines, they gain a Faculty point.
- If they resolve a plotline belonging to another player they gain a Faculty point.
- If a Hero gains a Faculty point when their score is already at 6, they gain a DEVELOPMENT POINT instead.

FORM

- Form represents how the character is viewed by the world at large. It is a measure of their good manners, bravery and general esteem..
- A Hero's Form will go up and down during the game, representing how well they manage to maintain the veneer of civilization in the face of extraordinary events..
- It can never be higher than 6 and shouldn't go below 1.
- If a Hero's Form goes down to zero, then they are generally seen as a pretty bad sort. They must retire from public life to become a hermit in some out of the way colony, until an opportunity arises to redeem themselves. The Referee will announce when this is appropriate.
- If their Form falls below zero, then the character is viewed by all and sundry as a totally reprehensible scoundrel. They are unable to operate in civilized society. The character is out of the game.
- Whenever an uncertain situation arises where Form is a factor, the player rolls one sixed sided die and attempts to roll equal to or under (or over) their Hero's Form score (or over, as appropriate). The Referee may apply modifiers to this roll. A typical situation is when a character is trying to impress a new acquaintance.
- If a character is at risk of losing a battle and dying, they may spend two Form points to cheat in order to be victorious in the conflict. Their player must be able to narrate exactly how they achieved this victory.
- If a character is at risk of losing a battle and dying, they may spend a single Form point to run away from the conflict. The player must be able to narrate how their character got away.
- If a Hero gains a Form point when their score is already at 6, they gain a Faculty point instead.
- At the end of every game, if the players and Referee agree that the character has shown "good form" then they may attempt to gain a Form point. Their player must roll one six-sided dice.

If the roll is OVER (not equal to) the character's current Form score, they gain a Form point. The player must be able to recount a specific instance of brave or civilized behavior from their character during the game in order to gain this roll.



SUMMARY

Apart from the details of Conflicts – which are covered in the next chapter – the rules listed above are all you need to run the game.

Basically:

- Before the game session, you design a Scenario.
- You give each character a new storyline at the start of each game session.
- You handle most interactions through a verbal interchange with the players – you talk to them.
- From time to time, you ask them to make die rolls against their characteristics or abilities.
- You and the players look for opportunities to resolve plotlines.
- Every Hero must attempt an heroic or memorable act at least once per game. If they manage, they may roll to gain a Form point at the end of the session.
- Throughout the game you watch for instances where the Heroes can lose Fortitude, Faculty or Form and for instances where they can gain them back.
- You should try to build towards a climactic encounter, but not have many, if any, other physical conflicts during the game.

3. CONFLICTS

This chapter is all about combat. Here you'll find out about spats, melees and other types of affray. - how they are handled by a Referee and their effect upon the game.

Battles in novels, on TV and in most films are quite rare – occupying the minority of the pages in the book or relatively few minutes of screen-time. Fights are hazardous and unpredictable. They are often over quite quickly.



The rules in this game allow Referees to handle quite complex situations in mere minutes with the minimum of die rolls.

Battles are physical conflicts between Heroes and their Opponents. In **THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL** they are rare and usually occur at the end of a scenario or play session. There may be a smaller encounter part way through, to sow seeds or set up events for later in the game, but it is the battle at the end of the game which is important.

In this game, battles are quick and brutal – but their fallout can have a lasting impact upon the Heroes' lives.

EQUIPMENT

You need no equipment to play out a battle in **THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL** other than character sheets (including details of the villains), two six-sided dice and something to write with.

If you have small card or disk bearing an illustration of your character, this can be useful to visualize which opponents are pairing up.

PAIRING UP

When the bad guys and good guys meet up for a battle, there is usually more than one person on each side. Opponents square off against each other in pairs.

This is mandatory. If 4 Heroes encounter 4 Opponents then they WILL break off into 4 pairs.

The Referee names an opponent or presents his/her illustration card. One of the players then needs to volunteer their character to tackle that Opponent. If no-one steps forward, the Referee gets to choose his challenger.

One of the Heroes is then presented and the Referee chooses an opponent for them.

The Referee then presents another Opponent and so on. Presentation and selection continues to switch between sides until everyone on one side is paired up.

A gang of RUFFIANS counts as a single Opponent (see below).

Opponents do not have to be organic or – even – active. The Referee can designate a challenge of some kind as an opponent in a combat.



Whilst one character fights the Giant Clockwork Dragon and two others hold off its oriental handlers, Rufus MacMillan has to enter the burning wreckage of the airship to rescue the Crown Prince who is trapped inside.



CONFLICTS

If one side has any characters who have not been paired up, they can either:

- Choose to gang-up on one of their opponents, so that they are fighting two-on-one.
- Choose not to participate in combat but perform other actions – such as leaping aboard the departing submarine, hoping to find a hatch before it submerges.

Characters remain in these pairs until one or the other character is defeated, or a double is rolled.

If their opponent is defeated, the character should pair up with any available opponent. If there is no “loose” adversary to tackle, then they may gang-up against an engaged opponent or perform other actions as above.

USING ABILITIES

In combat, Heroes use their Ordinary or Extraordinary abilities.

Opponents often have only a single score – especially if they are not technologically highly developed. They can still prove extremely dangerous, however.

To start a round of combat, the Referee nominates a pair of opponents.

To use their abilities, the players and Referee each roll two six-sided dice for their combatant in the nominated pair. The scores of each pair are added or multiplied and the total is added to the characters’ ability scores to get a total.

The combatant with the lowest total takes damage. If both totals are equal, both sides take damage.

THE PLAYER OR REFEREE MUST NARRATE THE EFFECTS OF THE EXCHANGE.

After the effects of damage are assessed (see below) the battle moves on to the next pair. This continues until everyone has taken part in the combat. At this point any unengaged characters can state their actions for the round to the Referee who will inform them of what happens.

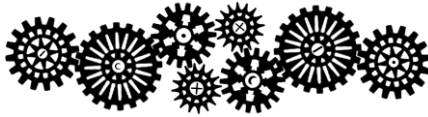
DAMAGE

If a character has been injured, they take damage.

The amount of damage they take is equal to the LOWER of the two dice their opponent rolled. This comes off their Fortitude total.

If this would reduce their Fortitude score to zero, they are unconscious and have lost the battle.

If it would reduce their Fortitude total to less than zero, then their Fortitude total falls to zero and they lose the battle as above. Any excess damage is taken off their Faculty total.



Example (1)

At a train station in the Punjab, Rufus MacMillan and Lady Melissa Poole are waylaid by the Maharajah's elite guard. Jane – the Referee - rules that only two warriors are close enough to attack in the first rounds.

Desmond rolls 2d6 for MacMillan and rolls a 5 and a 3. Because his Steam-rifle is an appropriate attack this is multiplied to give a score of 15. His skill with the rifle is 12 for a total of 27.

Jane rolls 2d6 for the elite guard and gets a 4 and 3. Given the warrior's score of 10, this is a total of 22.

27 is more than 22 so MacMillan wins the round. As Desmond rolled a 3 and a 5, his opponent takes 3 points from his Fortitude total.

Desmond – says:

“Before the approaching warrior can swing his sword, Colonel Rufus MacMillan's well placed shot catches him in his shoulder.”

Melissa uses her CHARM ability to convince her opponent that it is unsporting to fight a lady. Though he takes no physical damage, his willpower begins to crumble – this is also represented by loss of Fortitude.

In round two, more Warriors approach, but Rufus and Melissa are re-inforced by infantrymen from a nearby barracks.

CONFLICTS

GANGING UP

If two or more people are teaming-up against an opponent, they add their relevant ability scores together. They then roll a **single** pair of six-sided dice **between** them. After the scores are added or multiplied as usual, the result is added to their combined ability total.

If two characters are teaming up against an opponent but take damage, then they can divide the damage between themselves in any way they wish. If they can't agree how to divide the points, the Referee decides for them.



Example (2)

After tracking the fleeing guardsmen to their master's palace, MacMillan and the Lady Melissa catch one of them. Their attack scores are totaled (STEAM-RIFLE: 12 plus CHARM: 10 for 22.) 2 dice are rolled, getting a 2 and a 4.

2 x 4 plus 22 gives a total of 30.

The warrior rolls a 4 and a 3. This gives him a total of 22.

He takes 2 points of damage.

VICTORY

When an character is out of the battle, their opponent must engage any free opponents in the next round, gang up on an opponent or switch to performing more general actions.

When all of the participants on one side are reduced to zero or fewer Fortitude points, then they have lost. Every participant on the winning side who gains a Faculty point.

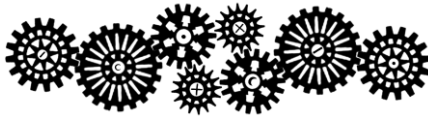
If a character wins by cheating they lose 2 Form points (see below). If they cheat to win only their own battle, they will capture their opponent and may join in with other parts of the battle. They may not gain any Faculty points for winning this battle, however. If they choose to – and can narrate it – they can choose to cheat and win the entire battle. In this case all the opponents escape and no-one gains any Faculty points.

AIRSHIP/VEHICLE COMBAT

If the characters are in an airship – or some other vehicle - in combat with another vehicle, then one roll is made for each conveyance. If there is a trained pilot/driver at the controls then these scores are multiplied and the character's ability score added. If someone lacking specific training is in control, the two die scores are added together before adding that amateur's most relevant skill.

Any additional characters aboard who have appropriate abilities may add those to the vehicle's total.

Damage taken is the TOTAL of the two die rolls. This is divided between those occupants of the ship who are participating in the battle in any way that their characters wish. No damage may be allocated to non-combatants being carried. They are assumed to be safely strapped in.



Vehicle combat example

After a pitched battle at the Maharajah's palace, MacMillan and Lady Melissa board a train, carrying the steam-powered elephant toy they were after. They are joined on the locomotive's footplate by Alison Cooper and the train's engineer.

As they leave the city, they are attacked by an un-marked airship. Pirates!

The Engineer is at the controls. Despite his rather low TRAIN DRIVER score of 5 (probably why he's working in the colonies), he IS trained to drive trains. Melissa uses her TINKERING score to fiddle with the trains controls – which is another 5 to add to the total. To this they can add MacMillan's 12 STEAM-RIFLE score and Alison's CLOCKWORK SONGBIRD score of 3.

That's 2d6 (multiplied) plus 25.

They roll a 3 and a 5 to get a grand total of 40.

The Referee knows the Pirates' total is 30. They roll a 4 and a 5 to get a grand total of 50.

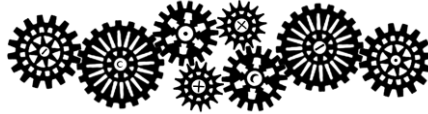
CONFLICTS

The team of adventurers crew take 9 points of Fortitude damage from the Airship's cannon. They decide to split these between themselves equally but make sure the driver of the train doesn't take any. Each player character takes 3 points of Fortitude damage.

ENDING VEHICLE COMBAT

One or two members of a vehicle's complement can choose to end a battle by using 1 or 2 Form points to escape or win as usual. (See below).

The players whose characters are ending the battle must narrate how *their* character achieved this outcome from their position(s) in the conveyance.



DOUBLES – CRITICAL HITS AND MISSES

If the dice roll is a double, something special or unusual happens.

On a double one, the Attack automatically fails, regardless of the final total. In addition, the character loses the entire combat, falling immediately to exactly zero Fortitude points.

If both sides roll a double one, then the highest Attack total succeeds with the attack, doing a single point of damage. However, their opponent gets to choose an option from the list below. This selection must not directly favor either of the current combatants. The conflict continues as normal.

On a double six, the Attack automatically succeeds, regardless of the final total. In addition, the character automatically wins the combat with their opponent taking 6 Fortitude points damage. If they are fighting multiple opponents, they all fall to exactly zero Fortitude points.

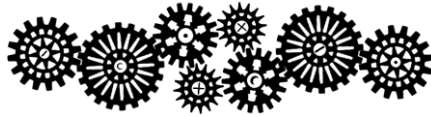
If both sides roll a double six, then the highest Attack total succeeds. However, instead of doing six points of damage, they do damage equivalent to the highest number of the pair from which their Ability was originally calculated.

Example

If Rufus MacMillan (STEAM RIFLE 12) and an Elite Indian guard (SWORD 10) both roll a double six, MacMillan will have the highest total – $36 + 12 = 48$

As his STEAM RIFLE Attack was calculated from 3×4 , MacMillan will do 4 points of Fortitude damage.

In this case, BOTH combatants choose an option from the following list which doesn't directly favor either one of them.



DOUBLES – SPECIAL EFFECTS

If the player or Referee rolls a double which is NOT a double one or six, then they get to choose an event from this list – whether or not their total is successful:

- The Hero can swap opponents with one of their comrades. (They have a free choice. Neither the opponent nor their comrade get a say in the swap.)
- The character can perform an additional non-combat action. (Grab and object, turn out a light, drink some tea etc.)
- Remove a RUFFIAN from the game.
- Ask the Referee for a specific item of information.
- The player or Referee can retain the option to reroll one die on a future die roll of any type. (This must be used before the end of the current game session.)
- The Referee can retain the option to insist a player reroll one die on a future die roll of any type. (This must be used before the end of the current game session.)

CONFLICTS

- A player can retain the option to insist a another player or the Referee reroll one die on their next die roll of any type. (This must be used before the end of the current game session.)
- Some non-lethal but noticeable collateral damage is caused.
- A new plot element can be introduced. This can be pretty much anything the player wants from the Police turning up, to a new storyline for one of their team-mates.
- A change in the plot direction can be introduced. For example, the track ahead is blocked and the train must divert onto a little used branch line leading to an abandoned mine.
- A player can choose to change the emotional state of one of the Referee's characters.

In addition to the above events, the character's QUIRK will also come into play.



RUFFIANS

There are three types of Ruffian – Thugs, Goons and Cronies.

Cronies have names. They attack as separate characters. However, they minimal Ordinary, Extraordinary and Fortitude scores. These are normally all 2 but the Referee can amend this to create special cronies.

Thugs and Goons always attack in gangs. Thugs attack with crude weapons and wear ordinary clothes, animal skins etc. Goons wear co-ordinated suits, uniforms or overalls and carry weapons which look impressive.

Thugs and Goons Attack score is equal to the number of minions in their group. The Referee rolls two dice and adds or multiplies the results, adding the number of Ruffians in the group who are currently conscious. The Referee will normally ADD the die scores for Thug attacks, and MULTIPLY them for Goon attacks. However, this can be varied according to how effective the Ruffians specific attacks are against the characters' abilities.

The Hero will automatically knock out or kill a number of THUGS equal to the highest of their two die rolls every round.

If GOONS score any damage on a Hero, the Hero automatically defeats a number equal to their lowest die roll that round. If the Goons failed to score any damage, then an amount equal to the Hero's highest die roll are taken out.

RUFFIANS AND GANGING UP

If two or more Heroes gang up on a crowd of Thugs or Goons, they may divide the gang between them in any way they want. If they can't agree, the Referee will decide upon the split.

If a more powerful Opponent gangs up with Thugs or Goons against a Hero, they add the number of Ruffians to their Attack total. Any damage scored by the Hero is used to eliminate the Ruffians before that Opponent takes damage.



CONFLICTS

DESPERATE MEASURES

If a Hero is due to lose a combat, and be knocked out of the game, they may choose to FLEE or CHEAT. This may only be done if the damage they have just taken will reduce their Fortitude or Faculty scores to less than zero.

If the FLEE, they lose one Form point, ignore the damage taken in the latest attack, and disappear from the scene of the combat. If they CHEAT, they automatically win the combat. This costs two Form points. They ignore the damage taken in the last round and their opponent is automatically defeated.

In both cases, the player must be able to narrate an appropriate explanation of how their character successfully fled or cheated. If they can come with a plausible explanation of how they did it, they can bring the entire combat to a close for all characters through cheating.

When cheating to win a combat, the player may narrate the scene to defeat only their own immediate opponent or – if they can compose an appropriate explanation – they can end the entire combat in victory for themselves and their allies. Generally, if they cheat and defeat their own opponent, they will capture that opponent. If they cheat to win the entire combat, the Opponents escape.



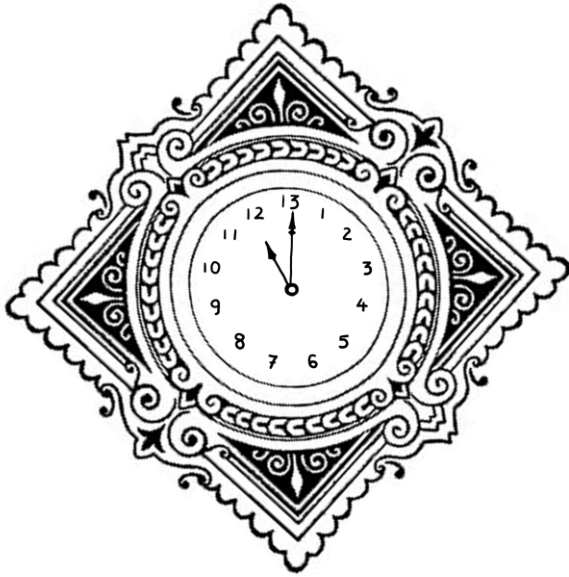
End of the line

Rufus MacMillan has 6 Fortitude and 4 Faculty. A desperate one-on-one battle with a giant Prussian war machine has reduced him to 1 Fortitude point. In the next round, the Referee rolls a double six. Not only does MacMillan automatically lose the battle, he doesn't have enough Fortitude and Form points to take the 6 points of damage. He will be out of the game – either dead or driven out of his mind in terror. Desmond, his player, narrates a how a well-aimed shot from MacMillan's Steam Rifle shatters one of the perambulator's key hydraulic links, deactivating it. This costs him two Faculty points.

END GAME

When everyone one side has fallen or fled, the battle is over.

Any character who took part in the combat gains a Faculty point.



4. THE STEEL OF THE GODS

This chapter doesn't contain any rules. It contains a simple, example scenario. One use of this is to show new Referees how they can design their own adventures.

Alternatively, a Referee can actually choose to run it – as is – either as a stand-alone adventure or as the start of an on-going campaign.

THE WORLD



This adventure is set in an alternative version of the 19th century – sometime in the 1870's. The widowed Queen Victoria reigns over the expanding British Empire – which is a powerhouse of civilization and technological innovation. On the streets of London steam-powered carriages – “trackless trains” – share the street with Hansom Cabs and horse-drawn omnibuses. The air is filled with airships plying to and from the dizzying towers to which they tether – rarely coming to Earth.

Anachronistic travel and other technologies has brought forward other social innovations. The British Empire is well on its way to becoming a true Commonwealth of nations. A citizen from its far flung corners is welcomed in an increasingly multi-racial England as a fellow Briton. Anyone not from the Commonwealth – French, Prussians, Yankees and their ilk – is considered a “Johnny Foreigner.”

Thanks to the social innovations of the now-deceased Prince Albert, the United Kingdom is enjoying the benefits of a vestigial Welfare State and National Health system.

Europe is rent by the Franco-Prussian War. It seems likely that Bizmarck's forces will succeed against the current “Napolean's” rather rag-tag forces. There is some concern in Parliament that the war should not spill over the channel and representations from both sides for assistance and support are currently falling on deaf ears. However, only a fool would think that more covert agents from both the French and Prussian “Empires” are not currently at work across Britain.

Oh, and Charles Darwin's voyages have discovered an Australia where the Dinosaurs still rule.....

THE CHARACTERS

The characters are adventurers who could be called upon to undertake a mission on behalf of the crown. Adventurers with enough experience, skill and downright spunk to tackle a dangerous errand successfully – but ones who are not directly affiliated with the Government or Royal Family.

Inform the players of the background and ask them to design appropriate characters for fit in with the above setting.

If you feel that they're lacking any key skills that the adventure requires, invent a non-player character who has the following scores:

Ordinary: 6
Extraordinary: 6
Humdrum: 20

They should fill in the gaps in skills left by the player characters. However, they will see themselves as technical support and will be loathe to take a direct part in any “adventures”.



Jane is the Referee. Desmond, Melanie and Gina are playing Colonel Rufus MacMillan, Lady Melissa Poole and Alison Cooper.

The Referee decides that they have enough combat, social and scientific skills to succeed. What they lack is subtly and the ability to sneak around.

Jane chooses to throw in a confident, upper-class dilettante jewel thief known as “Mr Charity”. (He sees himself as a latter-day Robin Hood):

*Ordinary: Knife - 6
Extraordinary: Mechanical Arm – 6
Humdrum: Jewel Thief – 20*

STORYLINES

Copy the following storylines onto separate cards/pieces of paper.

You haven't heard from your half-French step-brother for several months

You have some shrapnel in your back. Things are getting worse.

Every pet you've ever had has died under tragic circumstances.

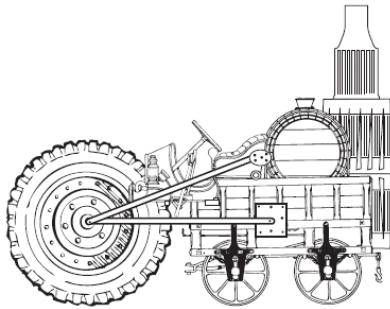
You have an alcohol problem.

You're yearning to see the Americas.

Divorced – you never want to see your spouse again.

Give the players cards/paper and ask them to each write a storyline based upon the background you've given them. Shuffle them in with the six storylines above and deal one to each player.

Go around the table and get your players to introduce their characters and their storylines to each other. If they spot any links and decide that one or more of their characters know each other from previous adventures, that's fine.



SCENE 1: ILL-MET BY MOONLIGHT

The players are all in London. One by one, they are contacted by people they know and trust. They are told that if they go to a specific Tea Shop in Limehouse at 11:00pm tonight, they will hear something of interest to them.

Ask the players what their characters are doing. Their responses can vary from them all turning up and just waiting for their appointment – to them mistrusting each other and some kind of conflict ensuing. Often one character will wait outside to assess the situation before entering the tea shop.

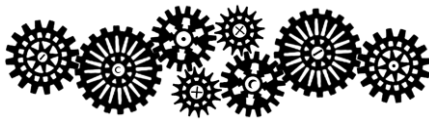
At 11:00pm, this side street – Black Alley – is quiet and the “Rose Blossom Tea Shop” is quite clearly closed. There is a sign to this effect upon the door. The door is, however, unlocked and there are some candles and a box of matches sitting on a table just inside.

You should allow the characters to arrive one by one and introduce themselves to each other. None of them will have any clue as to why they are here.

At 11:15pm, they will be joined by two figures – dressed in the finely tailored clothing of a Civil Servant and his Secretary. An roll of “difficult” (20) using any appropriate skill will identify the man as Sir Roger Steadman – Principal Private Secretary at the Foreign Office.

Sir Roger will introduce himself and his assistant – “Sarah”. If the characters haven’t already done so, he’ll assign Sarah to brew a cup of tea for everyone. He will have “men” guarding the shop from outside – who’ll round up anybody who hasn’t joined the tea-party yet and invite them inside.

If necessary, assume Sir Roger has an ability score of 20 in any rolls he needs to make, his “men” have scores of 10 and Sarah has scores of 5.



Rufus MacMillan and Lady Melissa will most likely march straight into the Tea Shop. Whilst MacMillan checks the place out, Lady Melissa will almost certainly brew a pot of tea and see if there aren't the ingredients for some sandwiches.

“Mr Charity” will have arrived early and be hiding in the shadows in the shop. There'll be a roll of MacMillan's HUNTING ability against Charity's JEWEL THIEF so see if he is spotted or not.

Alison Cooper will be waiting outside. When Sir Roger arrives he may or may not spot Charity. His men will have to roll to beat Alison's LAMP-LIGHTING score to spot her and/or avoid being spotted themselves. (She is an expert on lighting and shadows.....)

As soon as he thinks he's got as many characters together as he is going to get, Sir Roger will explain why they've been summoned.

(As you speak for Sir Roger, keep a famous British actor in your mind. Even if any impression you attempt of the actor isn't successful, it will give Sir Roger a distinctive and memorable character.)

He will order Sarah to open his valise and bring him "the sample". This will turn out to be a silk wrapped bundle. In the bundle is an ornate clockwork bird – modeled after a European swallow. Sir Roger will produce the key – from a ring in his waistcoat pocket – and give the mechanism a partial turn until a single "click" is heard. The bird will flap its wings and take to the air – circling the room in search of an open door or window for over a minute before landing gracefully. He will then invite one of the characters to pick the bird up and hand it back to him. When they do so, they will be surprised at how incredibly light the mechanism is. It feels like steel but is featherlight.

"This arrived a week ago," Sir Roger explains "Flying in through an open window at the palace of Westminster. Damn cheek!

"A message roll in its chest identified it as being sent by a Herr Doctor Hans Grosslich – a Prussian scientist. He claims to have developed a special super-light steel alloy. However, he has concerns about revealing his formula to his own Government at the present time and seeks asylum in Britain.

"There was only space for a limited message but we surmise that his worries stem from the fact that such an alloy could be used to develop a whole new generation of war-engines and heavier than air ornithopters. This could tip the balance of power in Europe and tempt the Hun into even more expansionist policies.

"As you see, the very existence of this clockwork flying device seems to support his story. Every test we've made on it indicates it's made out of normal teutonic steel – inferior to Sheffield steel of course but still eminently usable. However, it weighs a fraction of the weight of normal steel and our top scientists have been unable to work out why.

"Obviously Her Majesty's Government cannot send representatives to a sovereign state – especially one that is nominally an ally – in order to spirit away one of their top scientific bods. So we need a small group of skilled patriots to volunteer to undertake the mission – completely without official sanction, of course.

"Will you take the commission?"

He thoroughly expects the characters to leap at the chance of adventure. If they do query their terms of employment, he'll find it rather distasteful and ask Sarah to pass him some paperwork from his valise. He'll peruse it as he answers the character's questions.

The mission will be fully funded. Upon completion the characters will be rewarded – whether through gold sovereigns or the receipt of honors. Savvy characters may be able to negotiate a “gentleman's agreement” to have some small item created for them using this new wonder steel.

When they accept the mission, the characters will be given a map showing them where Grosslich's home is assumed to be (a small village in Reichenbach), paperwork to allow them to pass as tourists through France and Prussia and wallets/purses carrying more than enough currency – English, French and Prussian - to allow them to complete the job.

There are a number of additional factors:

- 1) Sarah will be a bit slow in producing the required items from Sir Roger's valise.
- 2) The tea she brews will be of inferior quality (she won't pre-warm the pot, for example).
- 3) Try to be subtle in bringing these clues into play. However, if anyone queries them – Sir Roger will explain that “she's new”.
- 4) If anyone specifies that they are searching the tea shop and makes an Extremely Difficult roll (40+) they will discover that the main counter is hollow. Concealed within are a series of mechanisms loaded with wax cylinders – recording the conversations which take place. If appropriate and they specify in advance, players may add their characters' appropriate ability scores before making the roll. However, they may only make one roll.
- 5) If the devices are discovered, the manufacturers marks on the brass brackets used to hold them in place clearly identify their country of manufacture as France.

They don't need to discover the hidden devices or any of the above clues for the plot to continue, so you don't need worry about the players discovering them or make them easy to find.

The full story is that French spies have kidnapped Sir Roger's previous assistant, Robert Clyde, and interrogated him. They've found out about the bird and the location of Her Majesty's Secret Service's secret meeting houses – or at least the ones Sir Roger knows about.

Following the meeting with the characters, they will know all about Grosslich's new steel and will take their own actions to secure its formula.

If players discover some or all of the above information and draw erroneous conclusions – possibly suspecting poor Sarah – you should do nothing to put them straight.

SCENE 2: PREPARATIONS

The characters should now plan their trip to Prussia to collect Dr Grosslich. It's up to your taste and theirs how much effort you put in at this stage.

At a basic level, it's simply a choice between land and air travel. Airship travel would be quickest and easiest. Cutting through or going around an active warzone in Western Europe will be difficult and time-consuming. The Government will happily give the characters access to a captured Zeppelin and a crew of German-speaking tommies to pilot it. This will take the characters straight into Scene 3.



However, if you or your players fancy making more of a meal of this stage, feel free to extemporize. They can plan detailed, direct or circuitous routes from London to Grosslich's village – possibly based around a map of 19th century Europe downloaded and printed from the Internet. They might fancy a cruise to the Mediterranean followed by cutting up through Italy, or circling round through the Scandinavian countries. Whatever they seem to fancy, try to let them do it – dropping in occasional supportive descriptions of local color as their journey unfolds.

The British Government will (secretly) supply them with whatever they need to complete the journey but this must all be negotiated and in place before the characters' sojourn begins.

If they ask, characters may be allowed to borrow Grosslich's clockwork bird. This will act as verification to the Prussian inventor that they are really there to rescue him. In addition, any appropriate ability roll of VERY DIFFICULT (30+) upon examining the mechanism will reveal that – if its control drum is played backwards – the bird will return to its point of origin. This will make it extremely easy to find Grosslich's current location.

POSSIBLE SIDE ADVENTURE:

If the characters have discovered any of the clues from their initial meeting with Sir Roger Steadman – they may be able to track down and rescue the missing Robert Clyde. This shouldn't seem too easy, but feel free to reward any good players who choose to follow this route. As they travel around and make their investigations, just throw in a few random clues and allow some of their guesses and deductions to come true.

When they discover where Clyde is being held – at whatever location their minds have come up with – they will discover that he is being guarded.



Assume that there are 2 Goons present for each character plus one Crony with an ORDINARY ability of “Cosh” at level 2 with 5 Fortitude points.

Clyde himself will be unconscious and locked in a room. Though he is physically unharmed – apart from having been on a diet of French food for several days – the characters will discover a chair with straps attached and a strange device. Obviously designed to clip onto a human head, it has series of spinning prisms and small phials of narcotic gas. This is what the French agents have using to mesmerize the otherwise patriotic young clerk.

Questioning Clyde or captured frenchies will reveal that the leader of the group is a shadowy figure know as “Le Chien du Nuit”. He is not present because he has left with the bulk of his forces to plan an ambush upon the characters at their point of departure (see below).

Note: It is not necessary for the characters to recue Clyde and/or discover the above information in order for the plot to continue. Only play out this side adventure if the players actively seek it out.

SCENE 3: BUSHWACKED

At some point on their journey to Prussia, the characters will be attacked by a group of French agents. They are under the leadership of top French Spy **Pierre Robespierre**, code name “Le Chien du Nuit”. He has discovered details of the characters’ mission. His plan is to capture them and impersonate them – completing their mission but bringing the target to Paris instead of London.

What Robespierre knows depends upon the characters’ actions so far. If they discovered the hidden recording devices in “The Rose Blossom Tea Shop” then he will only know what he has gleaned from Robert Clyde and from shadowing key figures – such as, Sir Roger Steadman, Sarah, one or more of the player characters. He knows a clockwork bird flew into a palace of Westminster, caused a disturbance and led Sir Roger to throw together a clandestine team. In this case, Robespierre just assumes something big is up and is acting based upon calculated guesses. Should he capture one of the characters, he will question them to try and uncover more information.

If he has successfully retrieved the recordings of the characters’ meeting with Sir Roger, he’ll know all the information discussed at that meeting and have no further use for the characters once they’ve been defeated.


Where the ambush takes place depends upon the players’ plans. Normally it will be at – or just after – their point of departure. Ideally, Robespierre’s forces will have incapacitated and replaced those people in charge of the transport the characters have chartered.



My personal preference is to have the characters travel in a captured Zeppelin provided by the British Government. Robespierre’s people replace the crew so it is manned by French agents pretending to be English Agents pretending to be Prussian agents.....

The action usually kicks off when one of them is caught eating a croissant, accidentally serves afternoon coffee, puts mayonnaise on a sandwich, forgets Tiffin or adds garlic to any meal.

A CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL OPPONENT SHEET

Name:	Pierre Robespierre	
Scenario:	The Steel of the Gods	

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Fortitude	x							

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Faculty				x				

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Form				x				

Abilities

Ordinary	Pistol	1	3	3
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Extraordinary	Mechanical Arm	4	6	24
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Humdrum	International Super Spy	2	5	10
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Development Points	10
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Character statement: One of France's finest secret agents.
Quirk: Opponents are oddly drawn to an element of the French lifestyle

If the characters have managed to rescue Robert Clyde, they may be aware of Robespierre's plans and may "get the drop" on him. Allow them to catch the French agents before they attack and replace any civilians. At the very least, the continentals won't be able to respond in the first round of combat – they won't roll two sixed dice, will just use their "raw" ability scores and – even if they win – won't do any damage to the characters. At best, you should feel free to give the characters bonuses to their attacks if they have come up with appropriately cunning plans.

There will 5 Goons present for each character plus one Crony with an ORDINARY ability of "cosh" at level 2 with 5 Fortitude points.

Leading them is "Le Chien du Nuit" himself – Pierre Robespierre. He is detailed on the facing page.

Characters may be limited to their Ordinary abilities in this conflict depending up where it takes place and the exact nature of their Extraordinary Abilities. No Steam rifles on a hydrogen-filled Zeppelin for example.

OPTIONAL RULES FOR UNUSUAL SETTINGS:

As this could easily be the players' first battle, you may wish to play it "straight" – as detailed in the preceding chapter – especially if the setting is fairly normal, such as a railway station.

However, if the characters are ambushed in a more unusual location – on a ship, airship or moving train for example – you may wish to adopt the following rules:

- 1) When the characters initially "pair up" with their opponents at the start of the conflict, work with the players to produce a "d6 table" which lists six possible locations for those individual conflicts. When the combat starts, each player rolls a six sided die to find out where they are fighting.
- 2) As Referee, you decide which of the locations are particularly hazardous. Inform the players that any character – whether a player character or one of the Referee's - who rolls a 1 on one of their combat dice in that location – even if their attack succeeds – will suffer a consequence.
- 3) When a character rolls a 1, work with the players to produce a further d6 table to determine the possible consequences.

Let's assume Rufus MacMillan, Lady Melissa Poole, Alison Cooper and Mr Charity have been ambushed aboard the captured Zeppelin by Robespierre and his cronies who have been impersonating the crew.

The opposition will consist of 20 Goons (4 characters x 5), Robespierre and his crony – Olivier.

Jane – the Referee – starts to write down possible locations on a Zeppelin – and asks the players to contribute ideas. Between them they come up with:

Roll	Location
1	In the “drawing room”/main meeting area
2	On the bridge
3	Exterior walkway*
4	The “semaphore room” at the prow
5	Up amongst the gas bags*
6	Something else. Make up another d6 table of less possible outcomes (on top of the airbag, hanging from the landing gear etc.)

** These two locations are potentially hazardous.*

Jane starts the combat by ruling that Mr Charity is pairing up with Olivier (taking the two Referee-controlled characters out of the equation.) She then puts forward Robespierre. Unsurprisingly, Desmond nominates Rufus MacMillan to tackle him. This leaves Alison and Lady Melissa versus the Goons. They agree to tackle 10 apiece.

A six sided die is rolled for each pair.

Charity/Olivier get a 6. As Jane isn't going to roll extra dice for non-player characters, she rules that Charity lures Olivier into fighting inside one of the engine rooms – out of sight. (No more dice are rolled. She'll simply decide the winner who'll reappear at a dramatically appropriate moment.)

MacMillan/Robespierre roll a 4. They're fighting in the Semaphore room at the prow of the airship – in amongst the gears and mirrors.

Alison Cooper rolls a 1. She's fighting her Goons in the Zeppelin's main dining area/meeting room.

Lady Melissa, however, has a roll of 3. This means that she has been caught by her 10 Goons on one of the exterior walkways. If either Melanie – her player – or the Referee roll a 1 as part of their combat rolls they'll suffer a consequence of some kind usually involving someone or something falling overboard.

The battle will continue until one side or the other wins. The odds are that it should be the players' characters who win but it will be a struggle and the outcome is far from certain.

Should the players lose – and choose not to cheat to gain victory – then Robespierre and his cohorts will strip them of their equipment, outer clothing and identification and move to impersonate them. (If necessary, some of Robespierre's thugs will be revealed as women – or men with the ability to impersonate women.) Wearing just their underwear, the player characters will be bound and thrown into a locked cabin. It will take all of their guile to escape.

If, as is more likely, the player characters win, Robespierre will use one of his three remaining Form points to betray his men and escape – swearing to return for his revenge.

SCENE 4: A VISIT TO THE DOKTOR'S

Apart from Robespierre's attempted hijack – and any other events you decide to throw in as Referee – the journey to Reichenbach in Prussia will also give the opportunity for the characters to get to know each other. This is the opportunity for some role-playing but don't let it go on for too long.

Reichenbach is a medium sized town in the foothills of the Sudetic chain of mountains – specifically the Riesen Gebirge area. Upon arrival, the players have to make a couple of decisions:

- 1) How are they going to infiltrate the local region? (Landing in the middle of town in a dirty great Zeppelin might be considered to be lacking in subtlety.)
- 2) How are they going to find the reclusive scientist Doktor Grosslich? (This is where bringing along his bird might prove useful.)
- 3) Having found the Herr Doktor, how are they going to convince him that they really represent the Queen – when they're not carrying any official papers?
- 4) How are they going to depart?

Most of these tasks are relatively simple to achieve through a bit of thought and role-playing. Alternatively, a successful very difficult roll (30+) against an appropriate ability will succeed in finding Doktor Grosslich's location.

He lives in a small run-down Fachhallenhaus overlooking the town. He has no live in servants but an old married couple visit twice a week to bring supplies and clean (the frau) and undertake any household maintenance (the ehemann). If spoken to, they will describe the doctor as extremely reclusive and eccentric.

The house is easy to approach but, at the first sign of any threat, Grosslich will board and activate an armoured war perambulator he has built. This is a 15 foot tall metal humanoid – one hand is a metal fist, the other is a cannon. It has an attack score of 50 provided its pilot makes a Difficult (20+) science (or similar) score.

Only one roll is made per round. If the score plus the pilot's science score exceeds 20 then that initial score is added to 50 to get the perambulator's attack total. If the "science" score is less than 50, the mechanoid automatically loses the battle that round. Grosslich has a SCIENCE ability of 20.

It has 15 Fortitude points. However, if it takes more than 4 points in a single round (5 or 6 on the dice) then any points above 4 are also passed through to the pilot. That is, if the mechanoid takes 5 fortitude, the pilot also takes 1 fortitude etc. Hopefully, the characters will be able to convince Grosslich of their good intentions and he will surrender to them before doing too much harm.

SCENE 5: THE STORY OF DOKTOR GROSSLICH

When the characters have finally won his trust – or beaten him up – Doktor Grosslich will be keen to get to England at the earliest opportunity.

If the characters ask if he wants to take any notes or materials with him, he will simply tap his head and say he has the formula memorized. Any search of his house will fail to turn up any further samples of the wonder metal. The metal warrior he'd used to defend himself is made of more mundane steel.

Grosslich's ideal plan is to travel straight to England without discussing any of his scientific secrets with the characters. This is because he doesn't have any. There is no secret formula for the new steel. Grosslich purchased it from a mountaineer who had found it at the top of the Schneekoppe – at 5266 feet high the tallest mountain in all of Prussia. Being part of the Riesen Gebirge area, it is relatively close to Grosslich's home.

THE STEEL OF THE GODS

The mountaineer wasn't carrying a large amount of the metal, just enough to fashion the bird Grosslich sent to summon the characters. However, he did intimate that there was more of it at the summit of the mountain.

Grosslich doesn't want to reveal this true story as it makes him less valuable. Being the creator of the new metal makes him much more desirable than merely knowing its location. Hence, he'll try to keep the true story to himself if at all possible until he's safely in England.

A FURTHER COMPLICATION

Unknown to Grosslich and the players, his avian clockwork messenger was intercepted by the Prussian Secret Police on its way to Great Britain. Their leader – Fritz Bismarck (a cousin of the great man) – realized that Grosslich might be unwilling to reveal his secrets to representatives of the Motherland. Even torture isn't 100% reliable. However, if the mechanical bird was allowed to reach its destination and the British Government dispatched a recovery team, Grosslich would be almost certain to reveal his secrets to them or, at least, unearth any hidden research notes. Plus it would put valuable British agents in his hands and – well – torture often DOES work.....


So Bismarck is waiting with an overwhelming force to pounce at an appropriate point.

If the characters swallow Grosslich's lies and head straight back to England, Bismarck will strike to prevent them from leaving Prussia. If they discover the Scientist's secrets and head towards the summit of the Schneekoppe to recover any more samples of the mysterious metal, they will follow at a distance and strike when the characters have found them.

Bismarck's attack force consists of two Zeppelins, each with an attack total of 50. (20 for the Captain, 2 Officers/Cronies with scores of 10 apiece and a crew of 10 goons.) Bismarck will normally stay out of the way during battles. However, if he decides to over-rule the Captain, the total score of the Zeppelin he is travelling in will go up to 65.

Even if the Zeppelins catch the players' characters on the ground, use the vehicle combat rules (should the players choose not to surrender). Roll two sixed dice once for the Prussians and once for the Heroes, adding 100 to the Prussians' total and whatever the Heroes' can scrape together for theirs. (Grosslich can add 10 points of improvised gimmicks to the Heroes' total.)

A CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL OPPONENT SHEET

Name:	Fritz Bismarck	
Scenario:	The Steel of the Gods	

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Fortitude	x							

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Faculty		x						

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Form		x						

Abilities

Ordinary	Tactics	4	3	(12+3) = 15*
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Extraordinary	Spot weaknesses in mechanical devices	1	6	6
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Humdrum	Head of the Prussian Secret Police	2	5	(10+5) = 15*
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* Development Points - Fritz has spent a lot of points upgrading his abilities.	0
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Character statement: Head of the Prussian Secret Police.
Quirk: Someone cracks and surrenders, offers to make deal or gives up some useful information.

Hopefully when the Secret Police make their appearance, the players will have to good sense to surrender and not try to fight their way out. The forces against them are overwhelming. Even if they spend Form points to try and win by cheating, narrating a way out of this is pretty much impossible. Feel free to drop hints to the players that the odds are heavily against them.

SCENE 6: THE CLIMAX

Hopefully when Bismarck and his forces make their appearance, the characters will surrender. Though they'll have to escape, at least this time they'll only have to take on the crew of a single Zeppelin.

Before then, however, there are a few loose ends to tidy up:

- 1) Bismarck will interrogate Grosslich. Even if the characters had believed Grosslich's tale and were heading straight home, Bismarck will get the truth out of him and the Zeppelins will head for the top of the Schneekoppe to recover more of the wonder metal.
- 2) Whether they get to the top of the Schneekoppe before meeting Bismarck or are taken there as prisoners, disembarking from a Zeppelin at the summit of a mountain in high winds and snow is a Difficult (20+) task. Bismarck may choose to force prisoners into taking the risks instead of his own men – he will keep hostages of course.
- 3) Bismarck will interrogate at least one of the characters. Each torture session will consist of a single two dice roll, pitting Bismarck's Head of the Secret Police ability of 15 against the character's most appropriate ability. (They may well be adding the two rolls instead of multiplying them.) If they win, they resist the torture for that session. If they lose, they reluctantly give up one key item of information to their captor. The player may choose what it is, but the Referee must agree that it is a vital piece of information.
- 4) Robespierre may choose to reappear. The most likely scenario is that he will have sneaked aboard a Zeppelin and release one of the characters in return for a temporary alliance. Of course what he really wants is for the characters to cause confusion whilst he escapes with the superlight steel.

- 5) Even after hours of searching, no-one will find very much more of the wonder steel on the mountain's summit – possibly enough to fill two backpacks. It seems to have fallen to earth as part of a meteorite. (Difficult, 20+, science roll to realize this.) What's most disturbing, though, is the fact that the metal isn't in the form of Iron Ore. It's already fully refined.

An advanced, fully refined, metal alloy which is beyond the ability of Science to reproduce – falling from space. Is this a harbinger of something yet to come?

Hopefully, between all the above plotlines, the actions of your players and the plot twists they come up with when they roll doubles, you'll be able to produce a satisfying climax to this adventure.

When the characters return to England, they'll receive their promised rewards even though the mission didn't turn out in the way Sir Roger Steadman expected. The British Empire rewards its Heroes.

The French and Prussians, however, are now well aware of the characters' abilities and may seek to prevent them interfering in their affairs again.



5. ADDITIONAL RULES

By this stage, you should know all you need to run a game of THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL. However, there are a few things that can make the game even better.

This chapter's a bit of a mish-mash. It contains all the rules which wouldn't fit in neatly into any of the other chapters.

Most of these rules are suggestions or options. Others seem pretty essential to me – especially the rules about Heroes training and getting better at what they do.

DEVELOPMENT POINTS

Characters can have no more than 6 Faculty points. Every time they should gain a Faculty point but are already on 6 Faculty points, they gain a Development Point instead.

Development points can only be SPENT. Unlike Fortitude, Faculty and Form points they are never lost during play or in combats.

Development points can be spent on two things, developing new abilities or upgrading existing ones.

New Abilities

When the character has 2 or more development points, the player can choose to spend them to get a new ability.

To gain a new ability, the player states the ability they want. This can be Ordinary, Extraordinary or Humdrum. They must be able to create a credible story to explain how their character could develop the ability. Rufus MacMillan isn't going to suddenly turn into a Doctor, for example.

They split a chosen amount of their development points into two numbers. These numbers are multiplied to get the value of their new ability. This cannot exceed the score of any existing ability in that category.

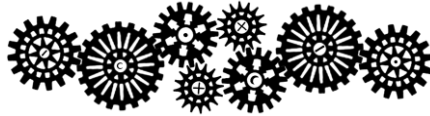
Neither number in the pair of numbers can exceed 6. That is, no more than 12 development points can be spent to buy an ability. The highest possible ability score is $6 \times 6 = 36$.

Rufus MacMillan has been spending some time during the long hauls on trains or airships on the footplate or down in the Engineering areas. He has 5 development points. He chooses to spend 4 of them – keeping 1 back for future developments. He splits the 4 into 2 and 2.

2 x 2 = 4. MacMillan now has the Humdrum ability ENGINEER at level 4. This is acceptable because it is less than his current Humdrum ability – HUNTER – which is at level 5.

Upgrading Abilities

To UPGRADE an existing ability, the character must replace it with a higher score produced entirely from Development points. When their current total in Development Points exceeds their ability score by exactly one point, they can spend all their points to replace it.



MacMillan has HUNTER with a score of 5. To improve it, Desmond must accrue and spend at least 6 development points. These can then be spent and McMillan's HUNTER score will go up to 6. His Development Points will fall to zero. He will have to raise another 7 points in order to upgrade his HUNTER ability again.

CHARACTER CREATION OPTION – PAIRED ABILITIES

If you use this option, you allow each player to give their character two sets of abilities.

Each set of Ordinary, Extraordinary and Humdrum abilities uses the numbers from 1 through 6. They'll just end up with 2 Ordinary abilities, 2 Extraordinary abilities and 2 Humdrum abilities giving them more story-telling options.

During conflicts, the player can choose which abilities they are using each round. This should give them a better chance of employing an appropriate ability and – therefore – being allowed to multiply the two dice when they are rolled.

REWARDS OPTION

You may choose to give Faculty points as rewards for good play. Options here include:

- A Faculty point to anyone who visualizes and describes a particular event or combat well.
- A Faculty point reward to any player who played particularly well in a given adventure.
- Asking players to nominate the best character at the end of each game. The Hero with the most votes gains a Faculty point. No Hero may gain win this bonus Faculty point twice in succession.



SHARED STORYLINE REWARDS

When a character resolves one of their storylines, they gain a Faculty point. If they resolve the storyline of another character, they gain the Faculty point instead of that character. Characters can also spend Faculty points to introduce or deflect new storylines from their characters onto those of other players.

If you feel this introduces a competitive element between the players which doesn't suit your style of play, you can try this alternative:

- 1) Characters may not spend Faculty points to create or deflect storylines.
- 2) Whenever a player resolves a storyline for ANY character – their own or those of other players – the card representing the storyline is placed in a pile. The character does NOT gain a Faculty point.
- 3) This pile is kept mutually for the benefit of all characters.
- 4) Any player at any time may discard one of the cards from the pile to introduce a new element of plotline to the game.
- 5) At any time where the number of cards in the pile exceeds the number of players in the game the players may mutually agreed to discard all the cards. At this time, every character gains a Faculty point.

AMBUSH

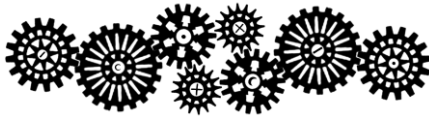
If either side in a combat initiates it by surprise, then their opponents may not attack or even roll dice in the first round of combat.

The attackers roll two dice, multiply them and add their Attack score. This total is compared to their targets' raw Attack score – Ordinary or Extraordinary, whichever is most appropriate - with no dice roll added.



FAST COMBATS

If you need to resolve a combat more quickly, roll dice once for all the Heroes and once for all of their Opponents. These rolls are added to the Attack scores of every character for that round.



CREATING OPPONENTS

There are four options for creating Opponents:

- They can be created in exactly the same way as the Heroes.
- They can be randomly rolled – as foreigners often are. (This is explained in the next Appendix.)
- You can just write down any abilities or numbers you want, bearing in mind that the highest score for any ability should be 36.

There is a bit more advice on this in Appendix 3.

RECOVERY

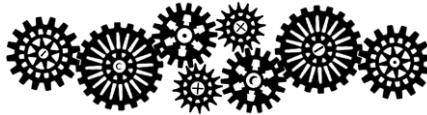
Normally, if a Hero is reduced to zero Fortitude points, they are out of the current fight. They do not recover until the end of the scene.

Sometimes, however, it might be necessary for a fallen Hero to recover. If they are the only Pilot in the group, for example, and there's an airship to be landed.

There are a number of ways the facilitate recovery:

- 1) A Hero who is not directly involved in combat can move to their fallen comrade and administer first aid.
- 2) A player can forgo their attack in a round and – instead – narrate a way in which one of their abilities could be used to revive their colleague.
- 3) A player can choose to expend a Faculty point to give some recovery to their team-mate.

In every case, the fallen Hero regains 1d6 Fortitude points. Each recovery can only happen once per combat.

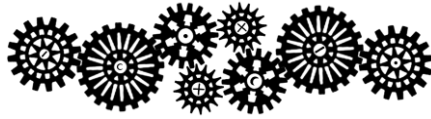


THE d6 TABLE

Sometimes situations arise where it is not obvious what the outcome should be. In this case, the Referee can simply state what happens. However, it is a lot more fun to draw up a table of possibilities on the spot and roll randomly. This is a lot fairer as it gives both “nothing happens” and “massive explosion” a chance of happening without it being the decision of a single person.

As you draw up the table, ask the players to call out possibilities as well. This will tap into their imaginations and give a wider range of outcomes. You need 6 possible outcomes so that you can roll a 6-sided die to determine what happens. However, if you get more outcomes and/or some of them are more unlikely or outrageous (“A cloud of poison gas is produced which blows across the countryside killing animals and local inhabitants”), you may decide to put “something else” as option 6 on the first table. You can then produce a secondary table listing the more extreme events.

The table doesn't have to be exhaustive but should contain results which are beneficial to the characters alongside some which are negative. Neutral results are possible – “nothing happens” is a perfectly acceptable option.



Leaving his comrades to tackle Dr Grosslich's mechanical minions, Rufus MacMillan has pursued the villain to his inner sanctum. Alas, with a maniacal laugh his nemesis has disappeared through one of his ubiquitous escape tunnels – but not before activating a complex explosive device.

Lacking technical skills, MacMillan's only option is to blast the device with his Steam Rifle. A d6 table is produced:

Roll	Effect
1	No effect. The bomb is still going to go off. (You can roll again.)
2	The bomb is deactivated.
3	The countdown is temporarily stopped.
4	The bombs is deactivated but the detonator goes off, doing damage to everyone in the room.
5	The bomb explodes.
6	Something else. Make up another d6 table of less likely outcomes (poison gas, ricochet, collapses villain's escape tunnel etc.)



ADDITIONAL RULES

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

Wherever possible, you should try to apply the rules given above to determine the outcomes of player actions. If one of their Ability scores seems applicable, use the roll of two dice to decide their level of success – adding the scores instead of multiplying if the ability score is only marginally applicable.

If one of the character's Characteristic scores (Fortitude, Faculty and Form) seems more applicable then roll a single die (with appropriate modifiers) against that.

If a range of unpredictable outcomes is required, produce a d6 table as outlined above.

From time to time, however, none of the above seems to fit neatly into the actions a players states for their character. Sometimes we want to know if the character succeeds or fails in an action but can't find an appropriate ruling on the spur of the moment.

If you come across a situation like this, do not slow down that action whilst you try to make a decision. When in doubt, make a single die roll against the character's FORM. All other things being equal, a true Lady or real Gentleman will succeed more often than an uncivilized ruffian. Good character will always win out.



REFERENCE TABLES

Some players find it difficult to multiply two die rolls and add their ability level quickly during a combat. These players may find it useful to write the results of the die rolls on some tables on the back of their character sheet.

An optional back page for the character sheet is provided below which includes a space for this option.

THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL CHARACTER SHEET (2)

Ability Use

ORDINARY						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

EXTRAORDINARY						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

HUMDRUM						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

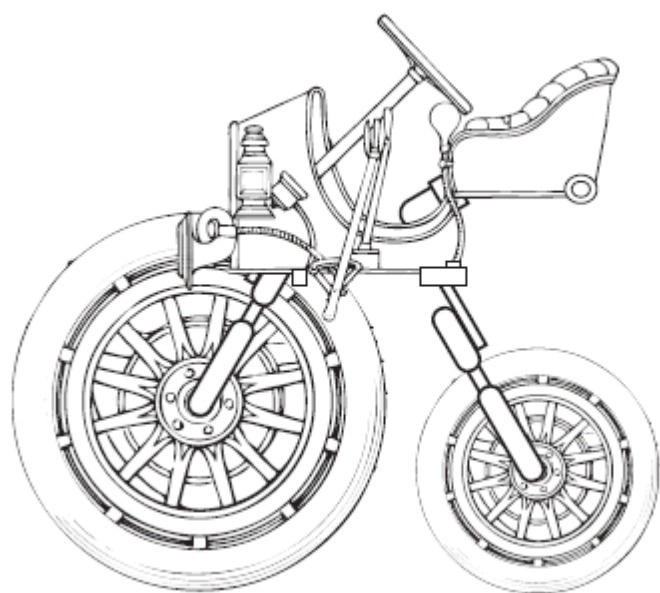
Roll	Description
10-	Failure
10+	Easy
20+	Difficult
30+	Very Difficult
40+	Extremely Difficult
50+	Virtually Impossible
60+	Impossible

DOUBLES – SPECIAL EFFECTS

- The Hero can swap opponents with one of their comrades.
- The character can perform an additional non-combat action.
- Remove a RUFFIAN from the game.
- Ask the Referee for a specific item of information.
- The player or Referee can retain the option to reroll one die on a future die roll of any type.
- The Referee can retain the option to insist a player reroll one die on a future die roll of any type.
- A player can retain the option to insist another player or the Referee reroll one die on their next die roll of any type.
- Some non-lethal but noticeable collateral damage is caused.
- A new plot element can be introduced.
- A change in the plot direction can be introduced.
- A player can choose to change the emotional state of one of the Referee's characters.

In addition to the above events, the character's QUIRK will also come into play.

Storylines:



APPENDIX 1: ABILITIES

If you've read and understood Chapter 1, hopefully you will have been able to make a adventurer in the worlds of Scientific Romance without needing this Appendix.

This Appendix contains lists of abilities for players who find it difficult to conceive any themselves. Don't expect the list of Abilities to be exhaustive. I'm quite intelligent and I've read a few novels, but there are literally millions out there. There will be some abilities I've has failed to include.

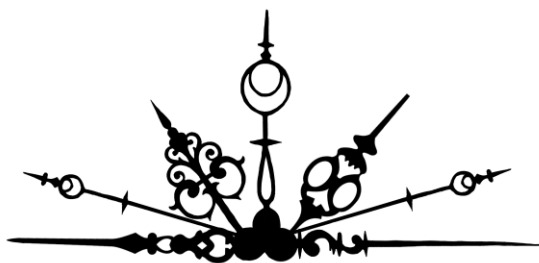
ABILITIES

There are three classifications of Ability in this game – Ordinary, Extraordinary and Humdrum. Ordinary and Extraordinary abilities are used in conflict situations. Humdrum abilities are used in the storyline which develops between those conflicts.

Usually the abilities a linked or related in some way though this isn't essential. Sometimes the two or three of the abilities are facets of a single Ability.



CIRCUS STRONGMAN could appear on a the same character sheet as both Ordinary and Humdrum abilities.



In this Appendix I'll list and describe a bunch of Abilities in each category. Some Abilities will appear in more than one category. However, they will have a different description in each.

ORDINARY ABILITIES

Acrobatics

The character is extremely agile which means that they are good at avoiding attacks when in close combat.

Fast recovery/Resistant to damage

The character recovers from damage at a remarkable rate or is extremely tough and can absorb more damage than usual before going down.

Fisticuffs/Martial Arts

Basically the character is good at brawling. They may have been taught by an Oriental Sensei, an Army drill sergeant, or just picked a few skills through fighting in bars. Whichever it is they're very useful when the fists come out.

Nimble

The character can move extremely quickly, dodging and responding to attacks almost before they happen and ducking under their opponent's defences.

Social Skills

It is not uncommon for people to try to talk their way out of situations. Whether it's through charm, negotiation or intimidation, they'll try and escape without either side taking any actual damage. The exact Social Skill the character uses should be specified on the character sheet.

When this ability is used, the "Fortitude damage" taken by opponents is actually temporary Faculty/Social damage. It is recorded as Fortitude damage as usual but does not represent actual physical harm.

Strength

The character is very strong. They can attack people by throwing things at them or just by hitting them – HARD!

Technical Skills

The character can improvise weapons out of the equipment they carry or the local environment. (Releasing steam from a nearby valve is a typical tactic.)

This Ordinary ability is often teamed up with a matching Humdrum ability and – even – Extraordinary ability.

Weapon

The character has a weapon of some kind which they can use to shoot at targets or hit things with. In the Ordinary category the weapon should be pretty basic:

Rifle, Pistol, Sabre, Cosh, Bow and Arrow, Cross-bow etc.

This is different from Strength or Martial Arts because, in theory, the character can be disarmed. But this just leads to more interesting stories.



EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES

There is an issue with Extra-ordinary abilities. Which ones are generally acceptable and which ones are not depends upon the degree to which the Referee and Players want to stress the SCIENTIFIC part of the Romance and the degree to which they stress the ROMANCE. Many contemporary books contain characters with abilities which defy Scientific explanation. Invisibility, Vampirism, Resurrection, Immortality, Shape-shifting, Mind reading and the like can all be found in Victorian or Gothic novels alongside the fantastical science of Submarines, Airships and Rockets.

Exactly which of these are acceptable in your game is up to you – and your players. I discuss the options in a later Appendix.

However, for now, I'm going to present two lists here. The first is for those who prefer their game with more science and mechanics. The second contains additional options for those who prefer a more fantastical game.

SCIENCE:

Armour/Exo-skeleton

The character has some kind of suit which gives them enhanced abilities – strength or protection, for example - when in a combat situation.

Avatar

The character has a device of some kind – usually a mechanical representation of a natural being or creature - which they can use in combat.

Difference Engine

The character has a calculating device which allows them to analyze combat situations and adopt the most appropriate response.

Energy discharge

The character can produce some kind of energy to blast other people with. The most usual options here are a flame-thrower or electrical blast but other possibilities also exist.

The Energy is created by some device or gadget rather than the character themselves.

Because there are many types of Energy Discharges, the exact one used should be specified on the character sheet. *STATIC ELECTRICITY* rather than *ENERGY DISCHARGE*, for example.

Flight

The character has a device which enables them to fly. If they swoop down from above they can deliver what is known as a “power dive” to hurt opponents. Or, they could just lift them up into the air and drop them. (This also covers other movement enhancing devices such Spring-heels.)

Mechanical Enhancement

Most often one or more mechanical limbs. The character has suffered some kind of massive physical trauma in the past – often on a battlefield – and has been rebuilt better than ever using the best technology currently available.

Medicine

The character has access to pharmaceutical products (drugs) which give them enhanced abilities – speed, pain resistance etc. – when they are in combat.

Mesmerism

The character is a skilled hypnotist and can use these techniques to befuddle their opponents.

Weapon

The character has a technological weapon of some kind which they can use to shoot at targets or hit things with. Rufus MacMillan's Steam Rifle is a typical example.

ROMANCE:

The Character Statement on the Character sheet must clearly specify where these abilities come from and how they work.

Illusions

The character can create images which can hurt opponents in two ways. They can lead the opponent into dangerous or self-harming situations. Alternatively the illusions are so real that they opponent *thinks* they're being hurt, even though they aren't.

Invisibility

The character is difficult to hit because they can't be seen and have to be detected by other means. This means they are able to sneak up on opponents and attack them.

Innate

The character possesses one of the Abilities from the SCIENCE list above. However, instead of coming from a device, it is a natural ability. If the character can fly it will be because of wings rather than a jet pack, for example.

Psychic Attack

The character can scramble their opponent's brains causing them pain.

ABILITIES

Seer

The character can see into the future or at a distance. Often through the use of a focus such as a Crystal Ball.

Shapeshifter

Whether a werewolf or an errant scientist whose serum has unwanted side effects, this character actually changes shape into two or more totally different physical forms. The score for this ability is generally used only when the character is in their alternative shape.

Telekinesis

The mental ability to move objects. When used as an attack, this is very similar to an Energy discharge as outlined above.

Teleportation

The character can instantly move from one location to another without passing through the intervening space. (Often accompanied by them wrapping themselves in a cloak and disappearing in a puff of smoke.)



HUMDRUM ABILITIES

Artistocrat/Gentleman/Lady

A member of the Upper or middle classes – this character knows how to operate in the more refined echelons of society.

Connections

It doesn't matter where this character lands, they almost always encounter an "old flame" or someone that owes them a favor.

Construct

The player character isn't an organic being but is an artificial creation of gears, levers and clockwork. They need to be rewound/refueled rather than eat and need to be repaired rather than recover. They are some other obvious advantages/disadvantages and the player will have to be very clever in specifying their Ordinary ability. This background is far from Humdrum and may not be allowed by the Referee.

Criminal

Whether a gentleman jewel thief or streetwise low-life, this character has a variety of useful skills and contacts.

Doctor

Really? Do I need to explain this one?

Driver/Pilot

This character is comfortable at all manner of mobile mechanical device – from steam trains to ornithopters.

Engineer

Though they can probably repair anything from a railway engine to an airship, this character's specialty probably should be specified on their character sheet.

Explorer/Navigator

This character is skilled at navigating the seas of the world, or exploring uncharted locations on land.

Flim Flam Artist

A fast-talker or grafter used to tricking people into believing they're whatever the character wishes to be at that particular moment.

Performer - physical

The character is in show business – either on stage or in the circus. They specialize in a physical act – such as Acrobatics or Juggling. The exact act should be noted on the character sheet. Note: If they want to use this ability in combat, they must list it as their Ordinary Ability as well.

Performer – Magician, Escapologist or Hypnotist

The character is in show business – either on stage or in the circus. They specialize in a mental or illusory. The exact act should be noted on the character sheet. Note: If they want to use this ability in combat, they must list it as their Ordinary or Extraordinary Ability as well.

Performer – Musician or Singer

The character is in show business – either on stage or in the circus. They specialize in a musical performances. The exact act should be noted on the character sheet. Note: If they want to use this ability in combat, they must list it as their Ordinary (hitting someone with an instrument) or Extraordinary Ability (using a specially designed instrument as a weapon, or a trained voice as a sonic attack) as well.



Psychic

The character has mental abilities such as telepathy. This background is far from Humdrum and may not be allowed by the Referee.

Scientist

It's probably unfair to blame all the ills of the world on Scientists and their unrestricted experimentations – but they certainly share some of the responsibility.

Soldier of Fortune

A skilled warrior, this character has probably seen action in a number of wars, on a variety of continents across the world. Very useful in dangerous situations. Not so welcome at a Tea Party.

Trader

Though primarily focused in the seedy world of commerce, this character is a skilled communicator and negotiator who can prove extremely useful on adventures.



APPENDIX 2: MAKING CHARACTERS

In this appendix I give some suggestions for using dice to create player characters. This is for those Players or Referees who need a bit of help with coming up with ideas for their Heroes or their Opponents.

It will also be useful for those of you who like to adjust or “hack” the game system.

It is an established fact that players enjoy adjusting game systems! Two RPG Referees using the same set of rules will run different games.

ROLLING ABILITIES

If players aren't able to invent three Abilities for themselves, or cherry pick ones from novels/films, then hopefully the list given in Appendix 1 will have sparked their imagination. They should be able to pick three to make the kind of character they want to play.

Sometimes, however, you'll want to help them make their choices. I can think of three situations when this might occur.

Firstly, if you've got a player who – for some reason – is being completely unimaginative today. Maybe they haven't read many novels or they're overthinking the character creation process.

Secondly, if you've got a player with limited imagination whose character has just left the game for some reason and needs to create new one. If they try to produce a clone of their previous character – or, even, an upgraded version – you'll want to intervene.

There's no point in a player just recycling the same ideas over and over again.

Thirdly, when you've got to make some Opponents. After you've designed your first dozen or so, sometimes it becomes hard to stay original.

In these situations you might want to consider rolling dice to see what abilities the characters get.

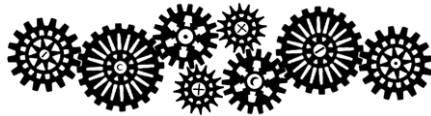
USING ABILITY TABLES

On the next few pages are some tables you can use to help create characters. To find a ability, just roll a 6-sided die and look up the results on the relevant table.

You could roll a 6-sided 3 times to generate three random abilities and then try to work out an idea for a character that uses all of these together. This requires a lot of imagination but can sometimes produce some of the most satisfying and original characters to play.

Usually, however, people roll one six sided die once to get a ability from one of the tables and then choose the other two abilities to fit in with the ability which has been rolled. This is the easier method but is more likely to produce stereotypes.

As there are far more than 6 abilities which can fit into each category, some abilities have been amalgamated into a single entry.



On the Humdrum table, for example, I've listed all of the various Performers on the same die roll.

If a players rolls such an amalgamated category, their character doesn't get all the abilities listed – the player should pick one which is appropriate to their character concept and which fits in with the other abilities rolled.

Some abilities are amalgamated without the individual abilities being listed.



A player who rolls a PSYCHIC ability, for example, will have to decide if their character is a mind reader, seer or a telekinetic. (Assuming the Referee allows this ability.)

ABILITIES

If I hadn't amalgamated the abilities in this way, there'd only be 216 possible combinations of abilities from which to create characters. In reality there are thousands of different possible combinations.

THE SCIENCE VS. ROMANCE CONUNDRUM

I've included 4 tables. That's because I've split the EXTRAORDINARY table into those abilities which come totally under the Scientific umbrella and put the more Fantastical and controversial abilities on a separate table.

I don't expect anyone to roll directly on the Romance table. There is an option on the Science table which directs players to the Romance table.



ORDINARY ABILITY TABLE

1)	Acrobatics or Nimble
2)	Fisticuffs/Martial Arts
3)	Social Skills
4)	Strength or Fast Recovery/Resistant to Damage
5)	Technical Skills
6)	Weapon

EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY TABLE - SCIENCE

1)	Armour/Exo-skeleton
2)	Avatar
3)	Difference Engine or Flight
4)	Mechanical or Medicinal Enhancement
5)	Mesmerism or roll on Romance table
6)	Weapon or Energy Discharge

EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY TABLE - ROMANCE

1)	Invisibility
2)	Innate – Roll on the Science Table
3)	Innate – Roll on the Ordinary Table
4)	Psychic
5)	Shapeshifter
6)	Teleportation

HUMDRUM ABILITY TABLE

1)	Aristocrat/Gentleman/Lady or Connections
2)	Engineer or Scientist or Construct
3)	Criminal, Flim-flam Artist or Driver/Pilot
4)	Doctor or Psychic
5)	Explorer/Navigator, Soldier of Fortune or Trader
6)	Performer

Example of rolling one ability

Gerald chooses to roll one ability on the Humdrum table. He rolls a 1, which is Aristocrat/Gentleman/Lady or Connections. He chooses to be an ARISTOCRAT.

For Ordinary he chooses a version of Social Skills which he calls STANDING.

For the Extraordinary ability he chooses Weapon – which he specifies as an ELECTRIFIED SWORD-STICK. He visualizes his character as Lucius Eastchester a well known and popular minor Lord. He prefers to use his status and fame to talk his way out of difficulties. However, he has prevailed upon a rising young physicist to create a special electrified sabre which is concealed in (and recharged by) the jeweled cane he always carries.



Example of rolling all three abilities

Sallyanne rolls three times. 3, 3 and 5. Her character has an Ordinary ability of Social Skills. Its Extraordinary ability is a Difference Engine or Flight. Her Humdrum Ability is as an Explorer, Soldier of Fortune or Trader .

Soldier of Fortune doesn't fit with her other two abilities. Sallyanne feels Social Skills fits with Trader. Though taking the Difference Engine would explain why she is such a successful Trader, Sallyanne really wants the Flight Device - which she picked up as part a really good deal.

Her character's name is Georgina Griffith – and she has the Abilities:

Ordinary: MAKE A DEAL

Extraordinary: MECHANICAL WINGS

Humdrum: VENTURE CAPITALIST



ROLLING ABILITY SCORES

As well as having a mental block when it comes to choosing Abilities, some people have a problem allocating scores to them.

It is possible to use dice to roll help create these scores.

There are three ways to do this:

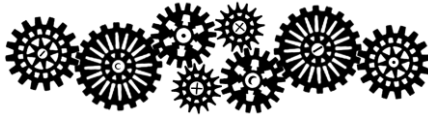
1) Roll Once

Decide which ability you are going to roll for. It is usually the Ordinary ability because this comes first on the character sheet.

Roll two six-sided dice. If you roll a double, reroll one of the dice until it shows a different score from the other two.

Write the two numbers down on the character sheet.

Allocate the remaining four numbers as usual.



Example of Rolling Once

Let's return to Gerald – who seems to have some imagination – and his swashbuckling Lord Eastchester.

Lucius's Ordinary ability is his STANDING. Gerald rolls two dice and gets a 6 and a 3. His STANDING score is 18.

This gives him 1, 2, 4 and 5 left to allocate. Gerald wants Lucius to be quite a well known Lord so he doesn't want to put 1 into his Humdrum score. He puts the 1 into his ELECTRIFIED SWORD-STICK. There isn't a lot of difference between 1x2 and 1x5 so Carlton also puts the 2 into the ELECTRIFIED SWORD-STICK giving it a total of 2. Lucius won't be winning many bouts against experienced fencers!

He allocates the remaining 4 and 5 to his ARISTOCRAT. This gives him 4 x 5 for a total of 20.

Lord Lucius Eastchester is brilliant in a social setting. Few doors will be closed to him. He's better at talking his way out of trouble than fighting, however.

2) Roll Twice

Decide which ability you are going to roll for. It is usually the Ordinary ability because this comes first on the character sheet.

Roll two six-sided dice. If you roll a double, reroll one of the dice until it shows a different score from the other two. Write the two numbers down on the character sheet.

Decide which ability you want to roll for next. This is usually Extraordinary.

Roll the two dice again. If you roll a double or you roll one of the two numbers already allocated, roll that die again. If one of the dice showing an as yet unallocated number, leave it on the table. Keep rerolling until both dice show different unallocated numbers. Write these two numbers on the character sheet.

Write the remaining two numbers on the character sheet next to the remaining Ability.



Example of Rolling Twice

Let's go back to Sallyanne and Georgina Griffith. Sallyanne rolls two dice and gets a double 3. She lets one die lie, showing a 3, and rerolls the other one. She gets a 4.

She writes 3 and 4 on her sheet next to MAKE A DEAL.

She rolls two dice again. Double 6. She keeps one 6 and rolls the other die. She gets a 3. As she's already allocated 3 to MAKE A DEAL, she rolls it again. After rolling another couple of 6's, eventually it comes up 1. She writes 6 and 1 next to MECHANICAL WINGS.

This leaves 2 and 5 to write next to VENTURE CAPITALIST:

Georgina Griffith's abilities are:

*MAKE A DEAL: 12
MECHANICAL WINGS: 6
VENTURE CAPITALIST: 10*

3) Rolling Three Times

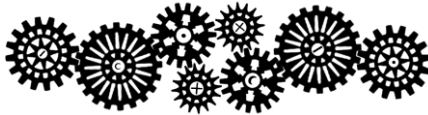
In this method, you roll two sided dice three times. You take the scores as they are and don't make any re-rolls. The limitation that you have to use all the numbers from 1 to 6 once only is suspended.

This method isn't recommended for player characters. It is far more random than any of the other systems given. Characters can get scores ranging from 1 to 36 – instead of the usual 2 to 30. Some characters could roll lots of 1's whilst others roll lots of 5's and 6's.

(However, Role-players being what they are, I just KNOW some of you are going to do use this method.)

If you do decide to do it, you might want to introduce some kind of balancing factor. (I've got some ideas for this but I think I'll keep them for the first rules-expansion book.)

The place that **Roll Three Times** comes into its own is when you want to make some Opponents quickly. It is especially appropriate when you are creating foreigners or megavillains.



Example of Roll Three Times

Dave is a Referee and needs an Opponent. He rolls 2d6 three times and gets:

5 x 5 = 25, 5 x 1 = 5 and 4 x 6 = 24

Thats:

Ordinary: 25

Extraordinary: 5

Humdrum: 24

He rolls another 3d6 and gets 4, 6 and 5. STRENGTH, ENERGY DISCHARGE and SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

He rationalizes this as Gerard "the Gorilla" Aguillard, brutal international mercenary who enjoys using a flame-thrower.

APPENDIX: 3. BEHIND THE SCENES

This appendix is a bit self-indulgent. This is where I – the author – step out from behind the rules and I reveal why I wrote this game. I also give some advice on how to play it

There are LOADS of RPGs out there, all with their own quirks and individual rules. Some are brilliant – others are dire. Most people have a set of rules they favor over the others. Hey, I've even written a couple of sets myself!

So what makes THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL different?

It's quite simple really. This is a game which concentrates upon the CHARACTER of the heroes rather than their ABILITIES. It isn't the Abilities they possess that makes someone a Hero, it's what they do with them.

Let's take a step back and take a closer look at a typical Scientific Romance novel, TV show or film. How long do they actually spend fighting?

It's not that much when you think about it.

Special effects – such as submarines, baroque time machines or exploding airships – cost money to do well. Producers structure the narrative in order to conserve their cash. They have short explosive battles at the climax of stories and only where absolutely necessary elsewhere.

Most Scientific Romances are about exploration, discovery or exploring moral questions.

The same principle applies to Role-playing games. When I give up my valuable time to get together with my friends, I want to have a full and rewarding role-playing experience. I don't want to spend the whole evening fighting battles – no matter how exciting.

That's where THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL comes in. I wrote these rules specifically to allow plenty of space for role-playing by massively reducing the amount of detail in the rules devoted to battles.

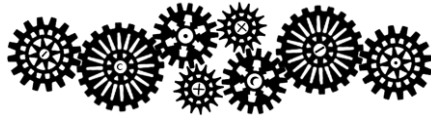
As a consequence, we've got a game that can be played in a much shorter period of time than many Role-playing games.

You can complete a scenario – roughly equivalent to a single episode of a TV series or short story - in a couple of hours. In an evening’s play you can get through enough story to represent an entire film or novel.

Of course the consequence of this is that you, the Referee, are going to need a lot of plot to fill the time. If you’re trying to come up with this yourself, this can take a large amount of effort.

There aren’t a lot of Steampunk TV shows or films and even the number of novels is limited compared to other genres. And everyone knows “the classics”.

The best thing to do is to adapt stories from other genres into Scenarios for the game. “Reskinning” stories like this is a lot of fun. It’s enjoyable see how long it is before the players recognize the source material. (I quite like dressing up Shakespeare plots in this way.)



THE STEEL OF THE GODS – the scenario given earlier in these rules – can easily be completed in a single game session but represents enough content to fill a short novel.

The game only needs a couple of dice. You don’t need any figures or maps. That means you can play it just about anywhere – on a train journey, for example.

To get the best out of these rules, you need to accept that they’re here to give you a framework to play out Steampunk adventures quickly and easily. If you need more detail, there are plenty of more “chunky” rule systems out there.

To get the best out of these rules, you might want to consider the following advice when running the game.

THE WORLD TRUMPS ALL

Ask any two people what the term “Steam-punk” means and – once you get past the Goggles and Brass, pretty soon you’ll find they have different ideas.

To a large extent that’s why I hung these rules on the phrase “Scientific Romance.” At least everyone knows the works of H G Wells and Jules Verne.

So when you sit down to play THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL, you’ll find that you and your players might have some different expectations from the game. Your need to handle these expectations.

The first thing you need to do is to be clear about the world in which your game is set. Steampunk stories can be set in a surprisingly wide variety of settings. You need to choose one and clearly spell it out to your players before they make their characters.

It strikes me that main choice is between setting your games on an alternative version of Earth or in a totally made-up setting.

Setting your games on Earth gives everyone several common reference points. Usually this sort of campaign is set somewhere around the turn of the century because this is where the novels of Verne and Wells are set. It’s during the height of the British Empire, boundaries are being pushed back in science but it hasn’t become common-place and boring yet. Queen Victoria’s on the throne, England is spreading civilization across the globe and we’re thrashing the Australians at cricket! Obviously, in the steampunk universe, science has developed more quickly and in different ways but, if we need some inspiration all we need to do is a bit of research.

That’s why I set the example scenario in these rules THE STEEL OF THE GODS on Earth in the 1870’s. As soon as you do that, players have an idea of the kind of world we’re talking about – and I needed to be able to hook players and referees quickly into the game. A quick bit of research about the Franco-Prussian war and I had enough to make the setting seem “real”.

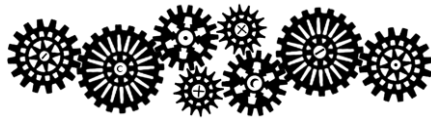
The drawback with setting your campaign on Earth is that you are straight-jacketed by actual history and you do need to do research to maintain the verisimilitude of your world. Obviously you can make some changes to historical events – on my world Charles Darwin discovered living dinosaurs on his voyages down under – but not too many. You don’t want to undermine the feeling of “reality” you’ve bought by setting your games on a world so similar to our own.

The alternative to setting your games on Earth is to create a totally fictional one. If you do this, you can let your imagination run free with fleets of airships doing battle as mighty empires rise and fall.

The disadvantage is that you need to explain your world to your players before they make their characters. This can slow things down at the start of the campaign.

There are other options – you can have the players design characters from 1930's Earth and then transport their Football Star, Journalist and Scientist to your Steampunk world by Rocketship. Alternatively, you can buy a ready-prepared Steampunk setting and play it using these rules.

However, if you're going to make it up yourself, the main choice is Earth or elsewhere – make your decision now.



THE EXTRAORDINARY CONUNDRUM

I've already referred to this in Appendices 1 and 2. Just how “fantastic” do you want your Steam-punk world to be? Is being invisible acceptable to you as an extraordinary ability in your world or would you prefer everything stayed within the realm of plausible technology?

My line is pretty clear on this. If you've read Appendices 1 and 2 closely you'll see that I can accept the idea of a scientist taking a swig of his secret formula and becoming extremely strong. However, if he also physically changes form and gets all hairy it's a step too far for me. Personally.

And that's what this issue is all about – personal preference. You might love the Steampunk genre and think it's all about the technology. One of your players might think it's all about the history and the mystery. You might look down on any idea of the occult being in your game but your player might have a vision of a Turban-clad mystery man from the East that gives mysterious warnings about the future.

To avoid disappointment, you need to make a decision about this as soon as possible.

There are several possible approaches:

- Ban all “fanastical” Extraordinary abilities and keep everything within the realms of Physics (and – possibly – Chemistry). The world stays plausible.
- Allow metaphysics and phenomena from the classic novels. Vampires, Werewolves, Psychic Abilities, Magic all co-exist with retro-science leading to some interesting conflicts.
- Make no decisions but wait to see what the players come up with – both in character creation and when they roll doubles to introduce new plot elements. If they start to introduce metaphysical or supernatural elements then they obviously want them in the game.
- Be clear that these elements are not to your personal taste but tell the players they can introduce them if they really want to.

One rule which works well – and my personal recommendation – is to allow a character to have a fantastical or metaphysical Extraordinary ability but to place a limit on it.

If a character has one of these abilities then one of the two numbers selected to determine its power level must be the number 1. That is – a fantastic or metaphysical Extraordinary ability cannot have a score of more than 6.



CHARACTERS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN RULES

Some of you might be used to more rules-heavy games than THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL. At some point in the first chapter you probably thought – “They only get three abilities. How’s that going to work?”

Well it gets worse, at any given time one of those abilities won’t be used. Sometimes you’ll be situations where you can’t use your Extraordinary ability.



For example, if Rufus Macmillan were lost at sea or in the desert, he might be forced to choose between powering his Steam Rifle or reserving the last of the water for his comrades to drink.

So NOW you’re probably thinking - “They only get three abilities AND they can’t use one of them some of the time? That’s NEVER going to work.”

And it won’t – if you’re the kind of person who relies upon the rules to give them a good game.

THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL is a *role-playing* game. It’s written for people who want to get together to share an adventure together without too much die-rolling and rules-searching. These are people who accept that the few rules that there are in this book are all there for a reason and embrace them for the sake of having a good time.

Characters like Colonel Rufus MacMillan are much more than the sum of their three Abilities. He has an origin, a backstory. His player knows how his abilities work and so does the Referee. So do all the other players, probably.

Most of the time, whilst playing THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL, the Referee describes what’s happening and the players tell him or her what they are doing. Not a dice is thrown. Not a rule is invoked.

The overall imperative is the keep the game moving not to get bogged down with the minutiae of the rules.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Alison Cooper comes across a child crying because her cat is stuck up a tree. She uses her CLOCKWORK BIRD to coax it down.

“Wait a minute – that sounds like an Extremely Difficult piece of programming to me! Surely she needs to make a die-roll?”

Why? What purpose would be served by Alison trying and failing to help the little girl? If getting the cat out of the tree allows Alison to make friends with the little girl – and advances the plot – that’s what we all want.

Of course, if Gina tries to push things and quotes this incident when she tries to program the bird to do something difficult in stress situation, that’s when it’s your job as Referee to step in.

You or the players can use the Ability scores to help determine your vision of the characters.

A character with a PILOT score of 30 is obviously much more skilled than a character with a DRIVER score of 10.

Don’t get hung up on the exact numbers, though. I could give you a table comparing stating exactly what the players can do at each level, but I don’t want you getting hung up on the exact score. The numbers should be taken as a indicative guideline, nothing more.

Try to encourage the players to come up with reasonable explanations that fit their choice of abilities for their Adventurers.

Give your players as much advice and guidance as you can. Make suggestions. However, ultimately it’s the players who have to live with these characters. Let them make Heroes they want to play and then let them play them. If what they want to do is reasonable and within their character concept then let them do it.



DREAM BIG

Sooner or later there's going to be jeopardy and we'll need to rules to find out if the Heroes win or lose – live or die. But jeopardy isn't the focus of THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL. Story is.

Because it's all in the mind, you can do anything you want in this game. The rules are kept light in order to allow you to go anywhere you want and tell any sort of story you want. Unless you particularly want a down and dirty crime-based campaign set on the streets of London, then spread your wings. Take your players across the world onto to other continents. Let them travel by Land, Air and Sea. Let's face it, the Martians are probably going to invade at some point so even Space isn't completely off limits. (You can't beat a good tripod.)

Nothing and nowhere should be off-limits in THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL. If you want to do it, try it. If the rules don't let you do it, then ignore them and do it anyway (or drop us a line at GOLDEN AGE HEROICS and we'll sort it for you).

And don't think you have to roll a die every five minutes to keep the game going. The longer you can keep talking and put off rolling a die, the better. If THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL gets you round a table for a couple of hours and all you do is swap ideas and move the story forward, great!



STORYLINES - THE REFEREE'S RESPONSIBILITY

It is your job as Referee to add layers of development and sub-plots to each character in your games. As part of the planning for each adventure, you **MUST** write out a list of plot developments – enough for one for each character in the game.



For example, Rufus MacMillan has a rebellious teenage son, Duncan who is off travelling the world. Unknown to MacMillan, he is seriously in debt and has borrowed money from some unwise sources. Young Duncan and some Chinese Triad enforcers will be appearing MacMillan's next adventure....

At the beginning of every adventure you must ensure that every hero is given a new storyline. Ideally you should co-opt the players into the creation of these storylines as described earlier.

The players should keep a card or piece of paper with the storyline on throughout the adventure. If they aren't resolved during the adventure, they must be written on the back of the character sheet and kept there until they are resolved.

When planning the next chapters of the campaign, you should bear in mind any unresolved plotlines sitting on the characters' sheets. Ideally, players are supposed to use their imaginations so resolve plotlines – both their own and those of other characters - spontaneously as they come up during the game. However, if a plotline has been sitting on a character's sheet unresolved for weeks then you, as Referee, should consider giving a helping hand.

The above example would allow Rufus to reconcile with his estranged son and allow Duncan to resolve a storyline which had been sitting on the character sheet since MacMillan was first created.



STORYLINES - THE PLAYERS' VETO

Giving out storylines is not straightforward, however. The players have the ability to deflect, alter or pre-empt the Referee's sub-plots. This can happen:

- At the cost of a Faculty point
- At the cost of a Form point
- When the player rolls a double in a conflict or when using a Ability
- By spending a card from the Resolved Storyline pile (if you are using the optional co-operative rules above.)



For example, when Duncan makes his first appearance, MacMillan's player can choose to reduce his Form or Faculty by one and announce that Duncan is actually related to one of the other characters.

Alternatively, in the middle of a battle, Gerald rolls a double 2 for Lucius Eastchester's attack roll with his swordstick.

Though his attack fails, he announces that one of their opponents, Gerard "the Gorilla" Aguillard, has taken a shine to Alison Cooper and won't attack her or allow any of his comrades to do her any serious damage.



RESOLVING STORYLINES

You shouldn't allow character sheets to fill up with unresolved plotlines. One of your jobs as Referee is to keep track of the Heroes unresolved plot-lines and try to deal with some of them.

There are five ways that a plotline can be resolved:

- As Referee you can run one or more adventures specifically designed to resolve a character's storyline. Ideally, you should run an adventure which resolves more than one storyline for more than one character. If you can manage this, give yourself a pat on the back!
- As Referee you need to keep your eyes open. If something unexpected happens in a game – possibly as a result of a player introducing a new plot element following the roll of a double – and can spot an opportunity to resolve a character's story element “on the fly”, give yourself a double pat on the back!
- The players can initiate an adventure specifically designed to resolve one more of their plotlines – simply by coming up with a plan and asking you to run it.
- During a game, if a player spots a way to resolve one of their plotlines successfully, this happens and they gain a Faculty point – or add a card to the mutual success pile.
- During a game, if a player spots a way to resolve the plotline of another player, they gain a Faculty point – or add a card to the mutual success pile.

It's through the introduction and resolution of storylines that you build the extended campaign. It's what turns your game into a franchise instead of just a load of “one off” unrelated TV episodes.



THE HEROES OF THE PIECE

It is possible to create a Steampunk character for THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL in under 5 minutes – but still create one that has enough facets and possibilities to be interesting to play for months or – even – years.

Choosing (or rolling) the three Abilities is relatively straightforward. Where players tend to take their time is in allocating the six numbers which generate their Ability scores.

They can spend ages trying to pick the most beneficial distribution of the numbers 1 through 6.

I'll let you into a secret – THERE ISN'T ONE.



There are a couple of reasons for this:

- a) However, you write the pairs, at least one of them is going to contain the number 1 – so one of the character's abilities is going to be fairly weak.
- b) The final scores can range from 2 up to 30. This is an incredibly wide range.
- c) The player can choose to be highly specialized in one ability or spread their abilities more evenly. (You'd be surprised how many people put their 5 and 6 into Extraordinary to get a score of 30).
- d) They have to decide whether to specialize in battle abilities (Ordinary/Extraordinary) or their story ability (Humdrum). They'll spend more time telling the story than they do fighting, but the outcome of conflicts have a big effect upon how their character develops.

The best advice you can give your players here is to try to choose levels which fit with their character's concept.

Some people will try to “mini-max”.



*The highest total you can generate using this method is 44.
(5 x 6 = 30, 3 x 4 = 12, 1 x 2 = 2).*

This creates a “glass cannon” – a Hero who is stunning in one area by incredibly weak in another.

*The lowest total is 28.
(1 x 6 = 6, 3 x 4 = 12, 2 x 5 = 10)*

This creates more of a “balanced” Hero.

This shouldn't a problem as those characters with lower Ability totals will start with higher characteristics. This means that they'll get their Development points more quickly.

Beware! Many players will want to regale you with their character's back-story within minutes of creating their character. Smile, be polite, but hurry them along because you really want to get playing as soon as possible.

Some players will want to write a more detailed origin for their character and give a detailed rationalization of their abilities. It's up to you whether you allow this or not. On the plus side, it shows they really care about their character and your game. It gives you some hints about how they intend to play the character and what sort of stories they're interested in playing. It'll also give you loads of plot-hooks to hang future games on. And it'll keep them happy. On the negative side, it will take the character in a specific direction and may close down some of the options for future stories. It's much more fun to keep things open and allow the storylines and campaign to grow and develop as you go along.



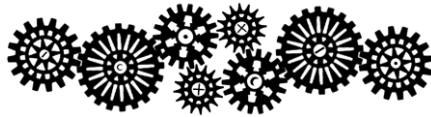
If I was Refereeing Alison Cooper, for example, she'd be a key figure in delaying the electrification of London's street lights. The burgeoning electricity companies would have her in their sites and may seek to frame her for a devastating gas explosion.

THE VILLAINS OF THE PIECE

The actual game statistics of the opponents aren't as important as their personalities. Most of the game is about telling the story of the adventure, and the Heroes should be exploring the World and making discoveries. At most, they will be dealing with the effects of their nemeses' actions, and planning for or anticipating their eventual meeting, rather than actually fighting them.

There are several levels of Opponent. Thugs, Goons and Cronies are explained in the combat chapter. For the other bad-guys, you can use several ways of making them:

- Minor specific opponents have no Extraordinary Ability. Their Abilities are created using the numbers 1 to 4.
- Medium specific opponents have no Extraordinary Ability. Their Abilities are created using the numbers 2 to 5.
- Powerful specific opponents have no Extraordinary Ability. Their Abilities are created using the numbers 3 to 6.
- Normal Opponents are created using the same system as the Heroes.
- Random Opponents are generated using the systems outlined in Appendix 2.
- Mega-villains ignore the game systems and can have any level of ability the Referee wants.
- Non-villain characters can have any statistics the Referee wants. These can be adjusted upwards to create opponents capable of taking on several Heroes at once.



I must admit I often have non-villain opponents with single Attack scores. For example, most of my foreigners have an Attack score of 10 regardless of how they are described.

A mechanoid or "boss" can have much higher scores. It is HIGHLY unlikely that a single Hero would be able to combat them alone. The most they can hope to do is to keep it occupied until their comrades can dispatch any associated ruffians and join them in the battle.

Opponents normally have a Fortitude of 6 – just like the characters – but you don't need to specify their Faculty or Form scores. However, the Referee should feel free to give special characters 8 or more Fortitude if they want them to last a bit longer in combat. Similarly, giving a foreigner 4 or 5 Fortitude can make the game more fun for the Heroes.

Personally, I'd randomly roll a few opponents to get me started in the campaign – using a mixture of all the systems given in the book and gleaning ideas from the characters' backgrounds and storylines.



PLANNING SCENARIOS

Possibly the most important part of the Referee's job is to plan adventures for the Heroes. After all, if they haven't got an adventure to play, it doesn't matter how good their face-to-face Refereeing skills are.

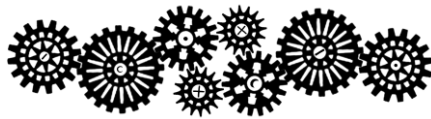
When planning an adventure, the most important part is the story. This should usually be some kind of mystery for the characters to unravel – preferably featuring a moral dilemma of some kind.

Other ideas can come from several sources:

- Initially you should keep your stories within the world/universe you have created. In fact, a scenario which takes the Adventurers on a quest which visits all the key sites in your game-world is often a great way to start the campaign.
- Adventures can be designed for specific points in the campaign (the Adventurers meet and become a group, they come into conflict with foreign powers, they make a discovery which tips the balance in their favour, they become unofficial employees of the Empire etc.)
- Once your world is fully explored, however, you can set your adventures literally anywhere – even in outer space. There's no reason why they shouldn't discover a lost civilization at the Earth's core or travel to the Moon or Mars or to a duplicate Earth on the other side of the sun to meet their evil counterparts.

- Another thing to bear in mind is that the characters will be using their abilities, so you need to build in problems that can be addressed by the use of those abilities rather than abilities that they don't possess.
- Adventures can be gleaned from any background information the players give you about their characters.
- You can design adventures designed to feature one of the characters and their abilities. (Perfectly fair as long as every character gets an equal number of these spotlight adventures.)
- You can design adventures specifically to resolve characters' plotlines.
- There can adventures featuring the return of popular opponents or other ancillary characters.
- And of course, you should create adventures based on ideas gleaned from novels, newspapers, comics, TV or films.

If you run one adventure of each type (starting with a “quest”, including at least 3 three “Campaign point” adventures and one “spotlight” adventure for each Hero, and culminating with a memorable climax) you'll have a campaign everyone will remember.




IN CONCLUSION

My name's Simon Burley. I write Role-playing games. I hope you'll enjoy, are enjoying or have enjoyed this one.

Feel free to get in touch:

simonburley@squadronuk.co.uk

CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL CHARACTER SHEET

Name:	Colonel Rufus MacMillan	
Player:	Desmond	

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Fortitude	x							

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Faculty			x					

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Form		x						

Abilities

Ordinary	Fisticuffs	2	6	12
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Extraordinary	Steam-Rifle	3	4	12
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Humdrum	Hunter	1	5	5
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Development Points	3
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Character statement: Rufus honed his skills on the plains of Africa but he became a man through serving in the Crimean War.

Quirk: Interference from some sort of animal.

THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL CHARACTER SHEET (RUFUS MACMILLAN - 2)

Ability Use

ORDINARY						
+12	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	13	14	15	16	17	18
2	14	16	18	20	22	24
3	15	18	21	24	27	30
4	16	20	24	28	32	36
5	17	22	27	32	37	42
6	18	24	30	36	42	48

EXTRAORDINARY						
+12	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	13	14	15	16	17	18
2	14	16	18	20	22	24
3	15	18	21	24	27	30
4	16	20	24	28	32	36
5	17	22	27	32	37	42
6	18	24	30	36	42	48

HUMDRUM						
+5	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	7	9	11	13	15	17
3	8	11	14	17	20	23
4	9	13	17	21	25	29
5	10	15	20	25	30	35
6	11	17	23	29	35	41

Roll	Description
10-	Failure
10+	Easy
20+	Difficult
30+	Very Difficult
40+	Extremely Difficult
50+	Virtually Impossible
60+	Impossible

DOUBLES – SPECIAL EFFECTS


- The character can swap opponents with one of their comrades.
- The character can perform an additional non-combat action.
- Remove a RUFFIAN from the game.
- Ask the Referee for a specific item of information.
- The player or Referee can retain the option to reroll one die on a future die roll of any type.
- The Referee can retain the option to insist a player reroll one die on a future die roll of any type.
- A player can retain the option to insist another player or the Referee reroll one die on their next die roll of any type.
- Some non-lethal but noticeable collateral damage is caused.
- A new plot element can be introduced.
- A change in the plot direction can be introduced.
- A player can choose to change the emotional state of one of the Referee's characters.

In addition to the above events, the character's QUIRK will also come into play.

Storylines:

Rufus' rebellious teenage son is risking his life on various ill-considered ventures across the world.

THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL CHARACTER SHEET

Name:	Lady Melissa Poole	
Player:	Melanie	

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Fortitude	X							

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Faculty			X					

	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Neg.
Form			X					

Abilities

Ordinary	Charm	2	5	10
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Extraordinary	Tinkering	1	3	3
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Humdrum	Lady	4	6	24
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Development Points	2
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Character statement: Scion of the British upper-crust, Melissa Poole knows anyone worth knowing and was destined for a life of luxury. That was before she developed her knack with gadgets and a taste for adventure.

Quirk: Someone admires - or develops a crush on - her.

THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL CHARACTER SHEET (MELISSA POOLE - 2)

Ability Use

ORDINARY						
+10	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	11	12	13	14	15	16
2	12	14	16	18	20	22
3	13	16	19	22	25	28
4	14	18	22	26	30	34
5	15	20	25	30	35	40
6	16	22	28	34	40	46

EXTRAORDINARY						
+3	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	5	7	9	11	13	15
3	6	9	12	15	18	21
4	7	11	15	19	23	27
5	8	13	18	23	28	33
6	9	15	21	27	33	39

HUMDRUM						
+24	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	25	26	27	28	29	30
2	26	28	30	32	34	36
3	27	30	33	36	39	42
4	28	32	36	40	44	48
5	29	34	39	44	49	54
6	30	36	42	48	54	60

Roll	Description
10-	Failure
10+	Easy
20+	Difficult
30+	Very Difficult
40+	Extremely Difficult
50+	Virtually Impossible
60+	Impossible

DOUBLES – SPECIAL EFFECTS

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- The player or Referee can retain the option to reroll one die on a future die roll of any type.
- The Referee can retain the option to insist a player reroll one die on a future die roll of any type.
- A player can retain the option to insist another player or the Referee reroll one die on their next die roll of any type.
- Some non-lethal but noticeable collateral damage is caused.
- A new plot element can be introduced.
- A change in the plot direction can be introduced.
- A player can choose to change the emotional state of one of the Referee's characters.

In addition to the above events, the character's QUIRK will also come into play.

Storylines:

Melissa's real mother was a maid employed by her Father's family. She was cast out shortly after Melissa was born and hasn't been heard of since.

THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL CHARACTER SHEET (2)

Ability Use

TECHNOLOGY						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

NATIVE						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

GENERAL						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

Roll	Description
10-	Failure
10+	Easy
20+	Difficult
30+	Very Difficult
40+	Extremely Difficult
50+	Virtually Impossible
60+	Impossible

DOUBLES – SPECIAL EFFECTS

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- A change in the plot direction can be introduced.
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In addition to the above events, the character's QUIRK will also come into play.

Storylines:

ORDINARY ABILITY TABLE

1)	Acrobatics or Nimble
2)	Fisticuffs/Martial Arts
3)	Social Skills
4)	Strength or Fast Recovery/Resistant to Damage
5)	Technical Skills
6)	Weapon

EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY TABLE - SCIENCE

1)	Armour/Exo-skeleton
2)	Avatar
3)	Difference Engine or Flight
4)	Mechanical or Medicinal Enhancement
5)	Mesmerism or roll on Romance table
6)	Weapon or Energy Discharge

EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY TABLE - ROMANCE

1)	Invisibility
2)	Innate – Roll on the Science Table
3)	Innate – Roll on the Ordinary Table
4)	Psychic
5)	Shapeshifter
6)	Teleportation

HUMDRUM ABILITY TABLE

1)	Aristocrat/Gentleman/Lady or Connections
2)	Engineer or Scientist or Construct
3)	Criminal, Flim-flam Artist or Driver/Pilot
4)	Doctor or Psychic
5)	Explorer/Navigator, Soldier of Fortune or Trader
6)	Performer

Initial Characteristic Table

Ability Total	Fortitude	Faculty	Form
44	6	3	4
40-41	6	3	5
35-37	6	4	4
31-32	6	4	5
28-29	6	5	5

Unopposed Task Difficulty Table

Roll	Description
10-	Failure
10+	Easy
20+	Difficult
30+	Very Difficult
40+	Extremely Difficult
50+	Virtually Impossible
60+	Impossible



THE CODE OF STEAM AND STEEL
is an Adventure Role-playing game of
Scientific Romance and Steam-Punk.

Specifically designed to focus
upon the Adventurers, their
Exploits and the Dilemmas
they face – rather than spending
hours playing out common brawls.

Play it anywhere with just two
six-sided dice, pencil and paper.

A game can last a couple of
hours, a campaign can span a lifetime.

- Five minute character creation!
- Ten minute affrays and set-to's!
- Hours of Jolly Good Fun!
- Easy to pick up and play.
- Hard to put down.
- THE lightweight, fast-play Role-playing game
Of Scientific Romance. Pip pip!