



GeRPSy

Generic Role-Playing System

Written by Michael Bauer

GeRPSy

Generic Role-Playing System

v. 2.0

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GeRPSy – OMG100

Written by Michael Bauer

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Rolling the Dice

For more detailed information on the dice system in combat, see p. 14

To play GeRPSy, every player should have their own three six-sided dice, or 3 D6.

Attributes, see p. 3



a so-called D6

Automatic Failure

Luck Points, see p. 4

Gikguio the trickster wants to hide in a dark alley. Not much of a challenge, to hide in dim light, so the GM rules the test is at -1. Gikguio has a Body rating of 4, so the difficulty to hide is now 3.

The fantasy world wizard called The Great Zampano wants to cast a spell to see through thick fog, challenging (+1) even for a wizard like him. Zampano has a Mind of 4. With the +1 difficulty modifier his task difficulty is 5. Zampano is a wizard (class), which grants him a second D6, and he's observant (trait), which both player and GM agree helps in this situation, so the player rolls 3 D6 to beat the difficulty of 5.

Whatever you do, it's either something related to your Body, your Mind or your Soul. The rating in the corresponding attribute is the number you need to roll on at least one D6 to succeed, so lower attribute ratings are better in GeRPSy. For example, your character's Mind rating is 4 and you want to remember a fact, so you need to roll a 4 or higher to succeed. This number is called Difficulty.

No matter the difficulty, rolling only 1s is considered a failure. That means an unskilled character with no applicable trait or class has a 1:6 chance (~16,67%) to fail every check, unless the difficulty drops to zero or below (see below), 2 D6 decrease the chance to just 2.78%, while 3 D6 lower it to just 0.46%. Unskilled characters still have the option to use Luck Points, though, which will be explained later.

Easier tasks might reduce your difficulty for a roll. That's noted as -1, -2 and so on. If a task is so easy that the difficulty is reduced to 0 or below, no roll is needed, the action succeeds automatically. This rule is meant to speed up play. If your GM insists in you rolling a check anyway, do it. If you only have a single D6 there's still a 1:6 chance of failure by rolling a 1, remember? If you'd have more than one D6 though, game speed is often preferred to excessive dice rolling and your character just succeeds.

Difficult situations increase your attribute rating so it'll become more difficult to roll equal to or higher than your attribute. This is noted as +1, +2, +3 and so on. A challenging task might be at +1, a hard task at +2, a very hard task at +3 and everything else is a job for masters or near impossible for most mortals and pretty much down to pure luck.

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If you have more than one D6 to roll for a task (because you have an applicable trait or COW), you can even beat difficulties above 6: Every point above 6 gets added to the difficulty of your second (and third) D6 roll, as shown in the example on the right. If the difficulty rises even higher, any modifiers left over from previous dice are applied to the next. See the sidebar for an example of how that works.

In the example on the right the roll gets beatable because the character has a trait which gets him another D6 – but what if that same player character were playing a character with a Body rating of 6 and no helpful trait nor COW? The difficulty would be 9! Impossible for one D6. But read on...

Devil's Own Luck (DOL)

Maybe the gods favor a character, or maybe it's just a freak incident of sudden super powers, in any case the GeRPSy Engine leaves characters without a chance of success one final chance, called Devil's Own Luck (DOL). When a character tries to rely on the Devil's Own Luck, the player rolls 3 D6, and because the devil's number is the 666, guess what's needed to pass the test – indeed, 3 sixes! If you actually pull it off, make sure you tell everyone at the table how your character managed that – and mark 1 XP!

Successes

Finally, every D6 beating the difficulty by rolling on or over, is called a Success. Most of the time, only one success is necessary to accomplish what you want to do. Extra successes will boost your successful action, and you might be able to climb that wall extra fast or stealthily, or the weapon you repaired looks even better than it used to, or maybe the tavern wench not only wants to share the bed with you, but bear your child, too. In combat, every success beyond the first adds 2 to the damage.

Khrognar the Barbarian's Body attribute is 4 and he's attempting a very hard task: holding up a portcullis so his friends can escape. The Game Master rules that the task is very hard even for Khrognar (at +3), meaning it's a difficulty of 7 and no longer beatable by a roll of a D6. Lucky for Khrognar's player, Khrognar has the trait "strong" which grants him another D6 for the roll. Of the +3, 2 get added to the difficulty for one D6 (difficulty 6) and the one left gets added to a second one (difficulty 5), so one D6 would have to beat 6, the other D6 would have to beat 5. A third D6 from an occupation would only increase the chances to roll a 6 and a 5, but the difficulties would not change.

That's a 0.46% chance of success. But it's been known to happen, so instead of giving up, just let those dice roll!

For example, Zzlaan the Lizardman hides in the shadows, waiting for his prey. The player rolls 3 D6 (+1 D6 for Zzlaan's hunter occupation and +1 D6 for his trait "sneaky") against Zzlaan's Body attribute of 4+, and the dice come up 1, 6, 5, scoring 2 successes. Once the prey arrives, the Lizardman attacks with his spear, throwing it at the stag. Normally the GM would have applied a challenging (+1) modifier to the attack because of the range, but GM and player agree that Zzlaan used his extra success from the stealth check to sneak up on his prey, getting rid of the modifier. 2 D6 come up 5 and 6. Two successes, increasing the damage by 2.

Making Characters

Make sure traits make sense to everyone at the table. Playing a “supernatural” detective might mean different things to different people and there’s a huge difference between your detective being able to sense ghosts or being a ghost himself. Additionally, make sure these traits make sense at all, of course! Playing an “omnipotent” mailman is not allowed for most campaigns, unless it’s the God of Mail himself, and even then it’s unlikely. Describing a character with a color is usually just as silly, as most people would not be able to imagine a situation where playing a “pink” character might be of help.

Ensure your COW is allowed in your campaign. No one likes to enter the evil necromancer’s dungeon with a psycho horseman claiming to be a Starfighter pilot.



Traits

Mostly adjectives describing a character, like strong, clever, intuitive, charming etc., or information like “strong back” or “medic training”. Actions where a trait might be of use get an extra D6. Only one trait can help in a roll, even if several might apply.

Starting characters are described by 3 trait.

Optional Rule:

Players can select a 4th Trait, if they also take a 5th negative Trait like “slow”, “uneducated” and so on. Negative traits remove a D6 when applicable to an action to the point where no action is possible.

Class/Occupation/Whatever (“COW”)

The classic “class” of fantasy RPG’s, sometimes called Occupation, Calling, Archetype, Concept and so on. The name isn’t really important. Every action related to a character’s COW gets a D6 extra.

Starting characters have one COW (not the animal).

Attributes

The three attributes of GeRPSy are Body, Mind and Soul. In GeRPSy, the rating of an attribute is the number your dice have to roll equal to or higher, so a low number in an attribute is better. Attributes are just a general description of a character’s abilities. The details are made up by Traits, the adjectives describing a character.

Body is a measure of physical power and toughness, and manual dexterity. Characters with a good Body rating are physically in good shape and make good fighters, thieves and scouts. They can take a beating and deliver one, and are adept at opening locks, disarming traps and overcoming similar situations.

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The Body attribute governs your Life. Body also directly influences the amount of damage you deal when fighting in melee combat.

The Mind attribute represents your character's intelligence, the ability to think logical, memory and general awareness of his surroundings. A good Mind rating doesn't mean your character is a genius, or has an eidetic memory. A bad rating doesn't mean your character is dumb as a piece of bread either. Mind resembles a general ability to perceive and process information, a combination of wits, awareness, education, intelligence and memory.

Mind influences your Energy stat.

Soul is your character's charm or charisma, the invisible aura which people unconsciously perceive. It is also a measure for willpower and stress resistance. Bards rely on this stat and warriors with high willpower.

Soul governs the Control stat.

Starting characters must distribute ratings of 4, 5, 5 or 4, 4, 6 to their attributes. Remember, lower numbers are better.

Luck Points

Every character starts with 3 Luck Points which can be used to add a single D6 to any roll except damage or DOL. Luck Points refresh after each play session.

Life, see p. 5

Also called Hit Points, the amount of damage you can take before dying.

Conflicts, see p. 14

Energy, see p. 5

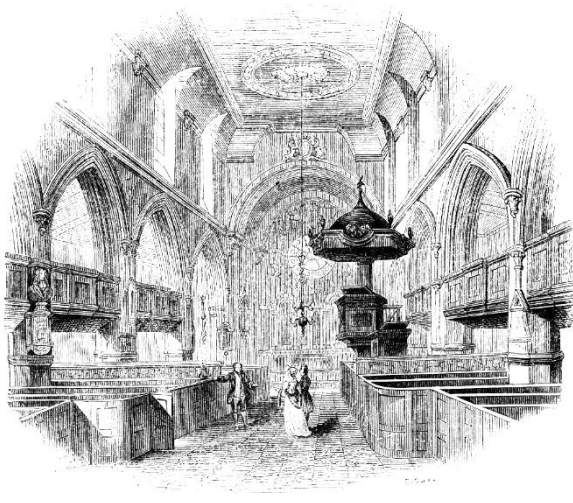
In a way, Energy could be explained as willpower, the ability to go beyond what is normally possible. It is used as a resource for spellcasting and other special powers. It is also a measure for your character's mental durability and Energy is sometimes lost when targeted by a spell.

Control, see p. 5

It is a kind of "social hit points". Control is lost when others intimidate or impress you, when you are seduced or persuaded. It is also used to simulate morale in combat.

Weapons & Damage, see p. 7

Devil's Own Luck, see p. 2



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Secondary Stats: Life, Energy & Control

The formula for the secondary stats are basically the same, only the attributes differ and the related traits. Note that no trait can be counted into secondary stats more than once!

For example, the character called Khrogar the Barbarian has Body 4, Mind 6 and Soul 4. His traits are “strong” (physical), “iron-willed” (mental) and “intimidating” (social), so he gets +5 to each stat because of his traits. Therefore, his Life is 29, his Energy is 21 and his Control is 29.

For more information on how these stats are implemented for objects, see Damaging Objects, p. 33

Luck Points, see p. 4

Spells and Powers, see p. 23

The Energy pool for super hero characters is probably increased. See Keeping up Powers, p. 28

Conflicts, see p. 14

This might be a good idea for players new to GeRPSy, especially those accustomed to high Hit Point values.

Life is the amount of damage and physical stress a character can endure. Once a creature runs out of Life, it's knocked out. Most nameless foes and monsters are then dead, while player characters are unconscious and might be dying if they don't receive medical attention. Life is calculated by subtracting four times the Body stat from a base of 40 and adding 5 for each positive physical trait the character has.

$$\text{Life} = 40 - (4 \times \text{Body}) + 5 \text{ per positive physical trait}$$

Energy is the force of will, the power to push beyond any limits that is inherent to heroes and most adventuring life-forms in general. When Energy reaches 0, a character should get some serious sleep and lay back for a while. 3 Energy points can be used like a Luck point to get a single bonus D6 for one roll. For more advanced uses, see the Chapter Spells and Powers.

$$\text{Energy} = 40 - (4 \times \text{Mind}) + 5 \text{ per positive mental trait}$$

Control is a measure of self-control and morale. Intimidation attempts as well as mind control, seduction, alcohol and other sources can decrease the Control stat. Once Control is depleted, a character either flees, goes into a psychotic rage, drops drunk or entirely falls for another person, depending on the situation.

$$\text{Control} = 40 - (4 \times \text{Soul}) + 5 \text{ per positive social trait}$$

The chapter Conflicts has more information on how to lose and regain points of the secondary stats.

Optional Rule: Heroic Characters

For heroic play where the players take on hordes of enemies, or for pulp adventures equally, calculate secondary stats with a higher base than 40. You can easily scale the survivability of characters by adjusting the secondary stat base.

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Character Creation Re-Cap:

- 1.) *Select 3 Traits (or 4 good and 1 bad)* *See p. 3*
- 2.) *Select a Class/Occupation/Whatever (COW)* *See p. 3*
- 3.) *Put 4, 5, 5 or 4, 4, 6 to attributes Body, Mind and Soul* *See p. 3*
- 4.) *Make a note of 3 Luck Points.*
- 5.) *Calculate secondary stats Life, Energy and Control:* *See p. 5*
$$\text{Secondary stat} = 40 - (4 \times \text{attribute}) + 5 \text{ per positive trait}$$
- 6.) *Flesh out your character, choose a name and some gear appropriate to your COW. Maximum carry weight is* *Starting Gear, see p. 13*
$$25 - (3 \times \text{Body}) + 5 \text{ for helpful traits}$$



Weapons, Damage and Armor

Modern ranged weapons, see p. 8
 Armor, see p. 11

Khrognar the Barbarian hacks at the Lich Queen with his two-handed great sword, rolling 3 D6 and scoring 3, 4 and 6. His Body rating is 4. Two successes! One success is needed to deal damage at all, the extra success adds +2 to the base damage. Khrognar wields a heavy weapon and therefore deals 10 damage to the Lich Queen.

Melee Weapons & Primitive Ranged Weapons

A weapon's damage is mainly dependent on the wielding character's strength and dexterity, and the type of weapon used. Strength and dexterity is measured by the Body attribute.

Light weapons are daggers, staves, slings, clubs, hatchets and more, depending on the setting you play in. They are small weapons which are shorter or lighter than medium weapons. Medium weapons are swords, maces, axes, short bows and generally one-handed weapons of higher weight. Everything wielded with two hands is a heavy weapon, like a great sword, a battle-axe, a maul, a longbow and so on.

Here's a little formula to calculate weapon damage, look below:

Unarmed	7 – Body + 2 per extra success
Light Weapon	8 – Body + 2 per extra success
Medium Weapon	10 – Body + 2 per extra success
Heavy Weapon	12 – Body + 2 per extra success
Very Heavy Weapon	14 – Body + 2 per extra success



At the end of the day, it's all about telling a great story. As GM you can just make up any number of damage a creature or weapon inflicts, as long as it serves the purpose of your story. Just be aware that players might want to get their hands on these weapons after the fight!

Very heavy weapons are only there to represent heavy modern melee weapons. Modern melee weapons in this context are light sabers, vibro blades and so on. These weapons count as one type heavier than their “old school” equivalent, so a vibro-blade battle-axe would count as a very heavy weapon and do 14 – Body damage. In fantasy settings, a very heavy weapon might be used by giants or titans, but the above table only shows generic values. A colossus might also be wielding a hammer doing far more damage than a very heavy weapon.



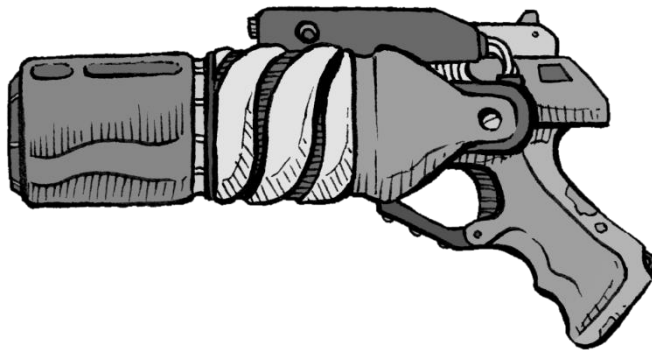
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Modern Ranged Weapons

Modern ranged weapons (MRW) are everything from a primitive black powder gun like a musket to sci-fi lasers and ray guns. These weapons are also categorized as light, medium and heavy weapons. The type depends on their damage capabilities, not on the technology used – for example, a primitive musket is not a light MRW but a medium one, as it has great power in its bullets. A light modern ranged weapon would be a derringer pistol, small caliber projectile weapons, hold-out blaster guns and so on. Light weapons are usually easy to conceal but might include low-tech weapons with poor power. Medium MRW's are most modern-day hand guns like revolvers and pistols, and many sub-machine guns. Heavy weapons are machine guns, Gatling lasers, a naval cannon and so on.

Some MRW's can fire full automatically or short bursts. When firing full-auto or bursts, the weapon's type moves up one step, so a typical modern sub-machine gun would count as a heavy weapon when firing a burst.

Light Weapon	5 + 2 per extra success
Medium Weapon	7 + 2 per extra success
Heavy Weapon	9 + 2 per extra success
Very Heavy Weapon	12 + 2 per extra success



Optional Rule:

Simplified Damage

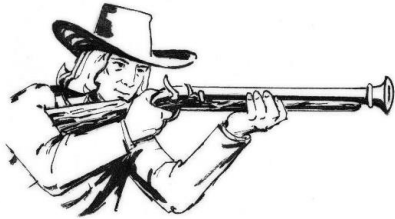
If you like, you can ignore the damage table for modern ranged weapons and just use the same table we use for primitive ranged weapons (and melee weapons). The Body stat would still play a role in the damage (reflecting general dexterity of the shooter) and it's easier to remember when using one damage table for all weapons.

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Ammunition Tracking



Ammo is often an issue with modern ranged weapons and while some gamers like to track ammo per shot, we are trying to provide a mechanic to speed up play and do away with micro-management without completely ignoring ammo.



When using single-shot weapons like bows, slings, muskets and the like, ammo tracking is easy. Every time you shoot, you lose one ammo, no big deal. We track the number, unless we're playing a pulp-style adventure where ammo just counts as unlimited. For most weapons, a reload time can be neglected. A musket and similarly difficult-to-load weapons (like a heavy crossbow, for example) need a successful Body roll and one round to reload. Two or more successes allow reloading in the same round they were fired.

If you like to keep track of your ammo in detail, do it, but GeRPSy doesn't have a list of weapons with their respective magazine capacity. There are, however, many of these lists available for free on the internet, often from other RPG's.

But modern-day weapons have magazines with 10, 20, 30 or more shots. Sci-Fi weapons might use power cells but would require similar counting of shots, especially when able to shoot full-auto or bursts. That would call for a lot of counting (and believe me, we've been there), which we did away with.

If a combat encounter lasts for more than 10 rounds, cross off one magazine or power cell (or equivalent) after the fight, if you like to roughly keep track of ammo use.

Instead, we use the following ammo rule: For most weapons, just ignore ammo, unless ammo is scarce (for example in post-apocalyptic settings). Modern weapons have mechanisms which make reloading easy and fast, so in game terms there's no need to make a break in combat to reload a modern gun. The empty magazine is ejected, the new one inserted, no problem at all for someone who has used such a weapon before.

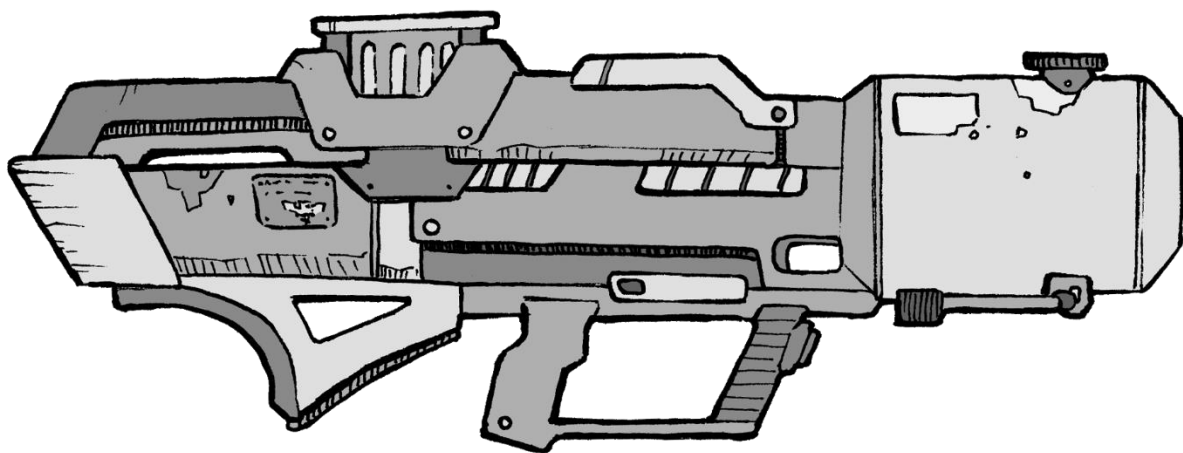
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We found that the best and most fun way to track ammo is actually pure role-play – the acting player decides when they need to reload and their character acts accordingly. The space marine player might say “My old mag is automatically ejected and because we trained this for weeks in boot camp, I simultaneously reach for the new mag, insert it and start shooting again before the empty magazine hits the ground.” All good, sounds cool and reasonable enough. The detective’s player might say “Just as I want to shoot I realize that the drum of my revolver is all empty – the clicking sounds a tell-tale sign to me and my enemies. Just before their bullets fly again I dive into cover, reaching deep into my trench coat’s pocket to find some ammo so I can return fire once I’m done reloading.”

Role-playing ammo is a good way to make players think about their ammo expenditure and it might introduce new challenges for their characters if they feel the story may benefit from it. This is another good way to encourage role-playing and reward players for it.

Some GM’s like to keep their players on adrenaline by reserving the right to rule when a reload is necessary. If the group agrees, this can add to the story. Often enough, though, it’s over-used and players just feel cheated.

Character Advancement, see p. 35



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Armor

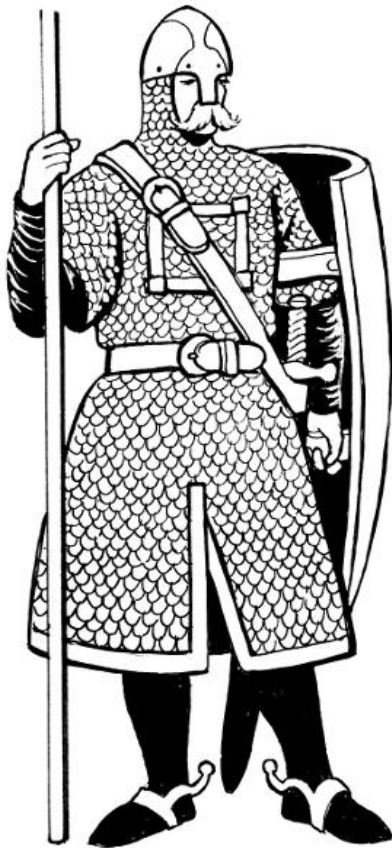
Most characters who engage in combat wear protection – yes, we’re talking about body armor here. Armor comes in as many varieties as there are tech levels and setting genres, so GeRPSy keeps the armor rules as simple as the rules for weapons. There are four kinds of body armor, namely light, medium, heavy and very heavy armor. Each category has its own Protection Rating (PR):

Unarmored	PR 0	0 mobility penalty
Shield	PR 1	0 mobility penalty
Light Armor	PR 2	1 mobility penalty
Medium Armor	PR 4	2 mobility penalty
Heavy Armor	PR 6	3 mobility penalty

Optional Rule:

Modern Armor vs Archaic Weapons

If you want to differentiate between archaic armor and modern armor, feel free to do so. Most modern armor is made to be lightweight and flexible and often doesn’t offer as much protection against primitive weapons as swords or bows. If you want to reflect that, modern armor only has half PR against primitive weapons.



The damage an attacker deals is reduced by a number equal to the defender’s armor’s PR.

Light armors protect only small parts of the body or consist of a material which doesn’t offer much protection. Light leather armor, a leather jacket or an armored vest are examples.

Medium armor offers better protection, often at more body parts, too. Chainmail and light combat armor fall in this category.

Heavy armor is usually a full suite of armor, be it archaic plate armor or futuristic combat armor.

Better armor is always possible, be it through magic, psionics, high tech or heavy tinkering.

Armor hinders mobility. All dice rolls related to mobility are penalized by half the armor’s PR, adding the penalty to the difficulty of applicable actions like jumping, swimming, etc.

Equipment

While equipment is a very important aspect of play, the GeRPSy again tries to keep it simple and not provide rules for all the exceptions which might occur. Instead, we use an easy-to-remember rule how to calculate encumbrance (see below) and ideas how to implement the most important items into your game setting.

Encumbrance

When playing heroic or pulp style campaigns, encumbrance rules can easily be ignored. Otherwise, calculate maximum carry “weight” as

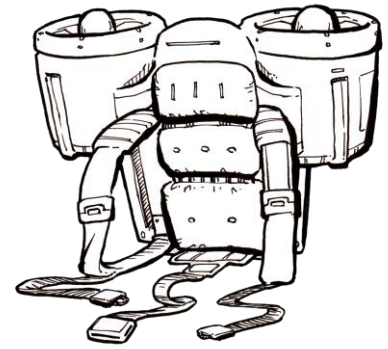
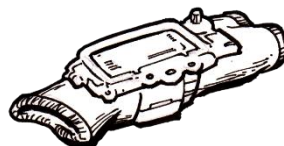
$25 - (3 \times \text{Body}) + 5$ for helpful traits like “strong”, the result being the number of items a character can carry.

That maximum counts for items which do not fit into one hand easily, like a shield, torches, a quiver of arrows, a machine gun ammo belt, first aid kits, a gold pouch and so on.



Weapons and armor count as one weight per category, so light weapons and armor count as one, medium as two and heavy as three weight.

Everything fitting into a hand easily doesn't count towards that limit, for example keys, a quill, a handful of coins, a glass eye, etc. These small items are assumed to be stowed away in pockets, pouches and backpacks.



Why not just pay someone to carry your stuff, adventuring the old school way?

Hirelings, see p. 13

For example, Khrognar with his Body of 4 and his “strong” trait has an encumbrance of 18.

Khrognar has a bedroll, a rope, two torches, rations and a bone amulet, which together use 6 weight.

Khrognar's great sword and his light armor take up 3 and 1 weight respectively, which means his complete gear has 10 weight, leaving 8 weight for upcoming loot.

Barbarian Khrognar also owns the lock of a dryad he rescued as a young man, which doesn't use up weight.

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Optional Rule:

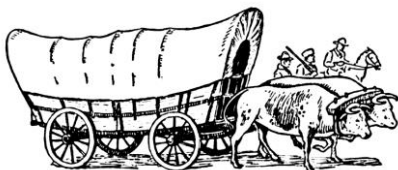
Buy Starting Equipment

If you feel like some COW's may be penalized by the standard way of getting starting gear, let every player have the same amount of whatever currency your game uses, and let them shop for gear.

If you use the simplified economy from GeRPSy (see main text below), starting characters get 400 coin to buy gear. Adjust as you see fit, GM!

More Realistic Economy?

GeRPSy doesn't have price lists for every imaginable item and setting. That would be a little too much for this lightweight book. We are sure, that whatever setting you play in, you probably have a good idea about how much stuff costs. Maybe you're playing the setting of some other RPG book with the GeRPSy rules system, so you can just carry over all currency and price rules from that other game, and should have a nice and balanced economic system ready.



Starting Gear

Starting characters should get a selection of equipment reasonable for their COW. Fighters have a weapon and a set of armor (probably not the best, though), wizards have a staff and robes and a spell book, space marines have a gun and a sidearm plus some armor – you know. Every character should have the basics of what they need for their occupation or class so play can begin without first playing out a shopping session, unless someone wants special items. If specialized equipment is needed for the story, the GM will surely introduce a way to get it, so be patient, players.

Simplified Economy

If trade doesn't play a vital role in your game and you want to keep shopping trips as short as possible, these simplified economic rules are for you. The currency is just called "coin". Double the costs for very good quality items of that type.

Assume a price of 10 coin for any standard item taking up one weight. Standard items are med packs, torches, ropes, a set of normal clothes, and so on.

Weapons and armor are usually not that abundant. They cost 100 coin per weight, so a chainmail medium armor costs 200 coin, while a battle-axe (heavy weapon) costs 300 coin.

Mounts and vehicles should be equally expensive. A basic mount without luxury will cost about 100 coin per person it can carry. Add 1 coin per weight the mount can hold, be it saddle bags, a cart or the hood of a car.

Hirelings and other temporary methods of carrying and moving weight cost 1 coin per weight they can carry per week of service.

Conflicts

The GeRPSy knows three types of conflict, called physical, mental and social conflicts. Physical conflicts are mostly combat-related but apply to athletic competition as well. Mental conflicts are duels of knowledge, wits or memory, while social conflicts cover intimidation, seduction, and more. Each type of conflict will be dealt with in detail.

Physical Conflicts

Mostly used during combat encounters, physical conflicts also cover athletic competition or feats of endurance like surviving starvation.

Combat and damage has already been dealt with in prior chapters, so we'll keep it short here. To see who acts first, everyone rolls against Mind. The most successes go first. Compare the Mind rating in event of a tie, if it still ties, roll a D6 (highest wins) or let the actions be simultaneously. Attackers roll against their Body stat, modified by circumstances. One success is needed to hit, extra successes each add 2 to damage. If the target is wearing armor, its protection rating (PR) is subtracted from the damage. The result is the number of Life the target loses.

Mental Conflicts, see p. 17

Social Conflicts, see p. 18

For the basics, see p. 1

Mind here represents your awareness and your ability to take an opportunity.

Weapons & Damage, see p. 7

Modifiers by Circumstances, see p.30

Life, see p. 5

Optional Rule: Defensive Combat

Sometimes a character might want to just try and stay out of harm's way, staying defensive in combat. When a character focuses on defense alone and doesn't attack, the player may roll an "attack" with each success reducing incoming damage by 3. Armor PR counts as always.

With this optional rule it's not always possible to block all incoming damage. The remaining damage doesn't have to be a serious injury, though. Life points also measure physical exhaustion. Concentrating on blocking or dodging is wearing out even experienced fighters.

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A match of table tennis might be considered a light competition, while a marathon applies a heavy or very heavy exhaustion on the participants. A long chase on foot would be a medium competition.

The rules presented here are meant to introduce more drama to these actions. Not every small chase should be handled like a physical conflict. You can just roll the dice and see who gets more successes, or just compare the Body attributes for a quick resolution.

If a competition requires the contestants to run until no one else remains on the field, for example, make rolls until only one character remains with a Life score above Zero. A conflict like arm wrestling will be over after the first "attack", but more rounds may cost more Life and reduce a character to zero, too.

Why Body or Soul? Because giving up is just as fatal as the body failing, so Soul representing willpower is important, too.

To speed things up just use a simple roll against Body or Soul and let the successes judge how well the character is after the danger is gone. The rules presented here are, again, meant to introduce more drama and fit better when these elements are playing an important role in the setting, like radiation and starvation in a post-apocalyptic setting, for example.

In athletic competition, the GM and participating players agree on a level of exhaustion of said competition, the levels being light, medium, heavy and very heavy, corresponding to the weapon categories. A character's tries to keep up and beat the competitor is, mechanically speaking, an attack. Armor doesn't help against this Life loss at all, on the contrary: each point of PR costs another point of Life when "attacked", as armor is cumbersome.

Depending on the type of athletic competition and how it is won, the conflict either ends when one of the contestants drops unconscious upon reaching zero Life, or after the first "attack", when the competitor with the least Life loss wins. Note that this way of losing Life does usually not endanger the life of the contestants. At zero Life, the competitor just has to give up or counts as beaten by his rivals, while still being able to finish the race, for example. Some darker sports may have the contestants compete until they die, though.

Challenges of endurance like holding one's breath, starvation, poison, disease and the like, are handled differently. The GM assigns a severity of light, medium, heavy or very heavy which account for 2, 4, 6 or 8 points of damage respectively. The player rolls against the worse of his Body or Soul ratings, with COW's and traits helping as usual. Each success rolled reduces the damage by 2 points. Depending on the danger and how it continues, the player may have to roll again after a few seconds (drowning), a few minutes (radiation), a few hours (hostile climate) or days (starvation), until the threat is gone.



Depending heavily on the setting, the effects of being reduced to 0 Life can differ. In a post-apocalyptic setting a character losing all their Life due to radiation might return as a mutant or a radiated zombie. In a post-apocalyptic fantasy setting this radiation might in fact be magical energy and characters reduced to 0 Life will instead be enslaved by an evil wizard, return as an undead or be transformed into a goat.

This is a creative idea for a magical trap, by the way. The Goat Ray!

GeRPSy

Mental Conflicts

As physical conflicts, mental conflicts play the same easy way the GeRPSy handles most rolls. Like physical conflicts, mental conflicts are always considered light, medium, heavy or very heavy, again corresponding to the weapon categories. Unlike weapons, though, the stat applied here is Mind.

Light	8 – Mind + 2 per extra success
Medium	10 – Mind + 2 per extra success
Heavy	12 – Mind + 2 per extra success
Very Heavy	14 – Mind + 2 per extra success

Also unlike in physical conflicts, all damage from a mental conflict is subtracted from the Energy secondary stat.

A rather straightforward mental conflict dealing damage is the use of a spell or psionic or similar power, that targets a character's mind instead of body. These powers also fall into the damage categories presented above and are otherwise handled just like combat with weapons.

Sometimes, though, more subtle conflicts arise. Characters might want to try to outsmart their enemies, proving their mental superiority. This might be a duel of scientific knowledge, a game show, magicians boasting with their arcane knowledge and so on. Depending on the complexity of the matter, a damage category is chosen and then the conflict is handled like in regular combat again, except there's no armor and no defensive mode. Damage is done to the Energy pool directly.

Sometimes it's not so easy to decide if a conflict is mental or social, and if damage should be done to Energy or Control. Not every possible conflict can be covered by the rules and in the case of uncertainty, let your intuition decide and agree on one.



Damage Powers, see p. 23

A trivia game show would be a light to medium challenge, while science and magic are matters so complex, they usually count as heavy or very heavy, especially for uneducated people.

For example, a scientist might want to enrage a fellow researcher with his superior knowledge. In that case, damage should be subtracted from Control instead of Energy.

GeRPSy

Social Conflicts

Social conflicts are a little more complicated than physical or mental ones, but not by a lot. The mechanics for social conflicts cover intimidation, seduction, persuasion, combat morale and everything else which might shake characters' control of themselves.

In game terms, a social conflict is again played out as an attack, this time targeting another's Control. These attacks again have categories similar to those of weapons and the category depends on the context.

Out of context and without any prior relationship between the contestants, a social "attack" usually counts as light. If there has been an event which underlines the social "attack", it counts as medium, while in a context completely in favor of the "attacker", it is a heavy "attack".

Light	8 – Soul + 2 per extra success
Medium	10 – Soul + 2 per extra success
Heavy	12 – Soul + 2 per extra success

In addition to these "active" social conflicts, player characters lose Control under several other ("passive") conditions. Some examples can be seen in the following table:

Event	Control loss
Loss of an important item	1 – 3
An ally flees from combat	3
An ally dies in combat	5
Betrayed by a friend	7
Sudden death of a friend	10

Again, these are examples for passive social "attacks", and only for a specific culture. Some cultures may focus on warfare and an

Social conflicts usually assume that you have the means necessary to actually do what you attempt. A huge, stinking troll will probably never seduce the queen of elves, no matter his dice roll. A wounded goblin will never intimidate an army of paladins, and the swashbuckler with a bloody cutlass in each hand will never convince the guard that it's OK to let him into town. In short, common sense is needed here to agree what social conflicts are possible and which are not. The average enemy will not be able to intimidate a band of seasoned adventurers just because of a lucky roll, but if the party has already taken some bad hits it might be possible.

Social conflict categories:

Light:

Intimidating a soldier who is part of an army. Persuading a merchant who is not interested in making the specific deal.

Medium:

Intimidating a soldier who just took a bad hit. Seducing a drunk. Taunting someone who has just been embarrassed.

Heavy:

Intimidating someone whose friend just fled or died. Taunting a drunk who has just been embarrassed. Persuading a merchant who needs the money badly.

Passive loss of Control adds more depth to the game, but may be too much to keep track of for some players. Remove this rule from your game if you feel it slows down play and doesn't add much to the story.

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GM's, don't humiliate your players' characters too much. Sometimes it may be necessary to teach a lesson, but fleeing from combat might be embarrassing enough for the mighty paladin, there's (usually) no need to explain how he wets his plate armor and cries for his mommy.

Control is in the game to add depth, not to punish characters.

This optional rule is really a recommended rule for all experienced role-players. Taking the reins from a player is usually only encouraged when dealing with power gamers and bad losers.

ally dying is a common sight, so no Control would be lost. In other cultures, death may be a taboo and seeing a friend die might cause severe psychological trauma beyond the loss of a few Control points. Then again, when a character who has fled returns, or a knocked out ally is healed to join the fight again, the lost Control points are restored.

In any case, once a character's Control drops to 0, they are no longer their own master. The character is seduced and falls for their seducer, or the character is intimidated and flees, or the character is taunted and attacks despite knowing better. A character's Control isn't something that is lost quickly, because once it is gone, the player no longer controls their character, but the GM. Characters out of Control might not just do the obvious, like flee, attack, fall in love, or sell something at a ridiculously bad price – the GM can also rule that a character might go berserk against the enemy or even allies, or just break down quivering and wetting themselves. Whatever it is, it sure is something very bad for the character and often for all allies, too.

Optional Rule: Role-Playing Control Loss

If the group agrees, players may stay in control of their characters even after losing all Control points, but they have to role-play their characters' actions accordingly. This ensures no player will be embarrassed too much unless they are OK with it. In fact, this is another great opportunity to add some quality role-playing to your game – the characters might have a setback, but the players are rewarded with some XP for good role-play. The GM still has the final say on the character's actions and might demand something more drastic.

Death and Healing

Lost secondary stat points can, of course, be regained. Otherwise play would be rather short. If a character should drop to Zero Life, though, death may happen. The following pages will deal with recovery both natural and accelerated, as well as character death.

Natural Recovery

After each combat encounter, when the characters have time to catch their breath, every character rolls a D6. Traits and even COW's hinting at a good physical shape and endurance add a bonus die. The sum of all dice is the number of Life instantly regained – the small bruises and cuts they shake off easily. This is called a Recovery Roll. These recovery rolls cannot give a character more Life than they had when they entered the encounter.

The same is true for Energy: Every character regains D6 Energy when they have some time to cool down, and applicable traits add a bonus D6 for Energy regeneration, too.

Characters get a recovery roll after each encounter, and when resting a night.

Control is not regained this way, though. Control is regained when characters win a victory psychologically, for example when the enemy who intimidated them dies or flees, when they are able to make a good bargain at the market, when they successfully seduce or persuade another, and so on. Each of these small victories restore a D6 of Control. Some traits like “confident” or “cool-headed” add a D6 to the recovery roll.

To keep book-keeping from getting too excessive, assume that Control returns to its maximum after each adventure.

Healing, see p. 21

Death, see p. 22

After the fight against the Lich Queen Khrognar has lost 22 of his 29 Life points. Everyone agree that the Barbarian class is known for toughness (+1 D6), but Khrognar's trait “strong” doesn't help here – strong doesn't necessarily mean tough! Khrognar's player rolls 2 D6 for a mighty 12 points of Life restored! It may have looked like bad wounds, but once the blood has dried, it seems like they were just some minor cuts and bruises after all. Khrognar is back to 19 Life.

Optional Rule:

Simplified Control

If you want to avoid keeping track of Control points as presented in the GeRPSy standard rules, treat Control just as any other secondary stat when it comes to natural recovery and healing.

GeRPSy

Healing

Healing is a term which encompasses everything from accelerated natural recovery over healing magic to medpacks. Regardless the exact source, healing always works the same way.

Sarah the Chaste, cleric of the God of Life, uses her healing magic to cure the injuries of her companion Khrognar who is still missing 10 points of Life after fighting the Lich Queen. Sarah's COW is "cleric" so she adds a D6, and she is known for her "healing touch", so she rolls 3 D6 against her Mind of 4, rolling 5, 1 and 6. Two successes, so Khrognar's player gets to roll 2 D6 (a healing roll) to see how many Life points Sarah's healing magic recovers. The dice come up 6 and 3, healing 9 points total and the barbarian is back to 28 of his 29-point maximum Life stat.

Khrognar has used his natural recovery and Sarah's healing magic. Sarah cannot try to heal him again to bring him back to full Life, but another source of healing like a potion might still do the trick. If, after the next battle, Khrognar had lost some more Life points, Sarah could use her healing magic again.

Whenever a character wants to heal a creature, they roll against their Mind. COW's like healer, paramedic, cleric and similar add a D6 as usual, and some traits like "caring", "medical education" add another D6. For every success rolled, the healed character can roll one D6 to see how many points of Life are recovered. This is called a Healing Roll.

Healing Energy points is possible through some means like counseling, some drugs and certain spells. This works just as healing of Life points described above, although different COW's and traits would apply.

Some special powers like spells can also heal Control, but they are few. If they do exist in your game, they work exactly as described above, but very few COW's would help and only some special traits.

No matter which secondary stat pool is healed this way, note that usually no character may be healed twice with the same method. Another healing attempt should only be allowed after another loss of points from the respective pools, or after some hours of rest.

Some very high-tech devices may of course allow for quicker regeneration. It's completely normal in some settings, that a destroyed body can be synthesized in only an hour to host the old personality of a character, unless it was destroyed, too.

GeRPSy

Death

Sometimes, the odds just aren't in favor of the characters. Sometimes it's bad luck. And sometimes, players decide to do something plain stupid. All these events can get a character killed.

Once a character's Life is reduced to 0, that character falls unconscious and is in danger of dying. When this is the case, roll every round against the character's Body attribute. One success is necessary to survive that round. Helpful COW's and traits add dice as always. That so-called Death Roll is made every round until the character receives medical help in any form.

If the player fails the death roll and doesn't get a success, the character starts dying. Player, roll a D6. Re-roll 1s. Take the D6, keeping your result pointing up. That is the number of rounds your character has until death takes them. Every round, turn the die to show the following, lower number. This is the countdown for the dying character's allies.

The GM rolls another D6 in secret. The result is the number of rounds the dying character still lives after the player's countdown die has run out. This number is known only to the GM, so the healers will not know, if they are still in time or not until they've tried to help the dying character.

When both countdown dice run out before help arrives, the character is dead.



Also sometimes, something obviously stupid might seem logical to a player. If the character would know better, the GM should tell the player. After all, no player can know everything the character knows in the game.

A general advice to new Game Masters: Don't let characters die just because of a bad roll of the dice, unless you all agreed to play a grim and gritty game in which characters die a lot. But it's very disappointing to players to lose their character just because the dice came up slightly short of the number they needed. You can always rule that the character stabilizes and can recover after the fight, or that despite falling, the character manages to get a grip on some old rock or rope and still has a chance to survive.

Optional Rule:

Optional Death

Some players have a big problem with their characters dying, others don't. If the group agrees, character death is decided by the player. If the player is OK with the character dying, then the character dies. If not, the character survives just so.

Spells and Powers

The first question should be: Does our setting allow these powers? If yes, of what nature are these and which COW's would be allowed to tap into these?

While the GeRPSy does have a Class/Occupation/Whatever on the character sheet, it is still very open in what these mean. In some settings every living being might be able to use magic, other settings would require a specific class of caster. In the end, this is entirely up to you and your gaming group.

This chapter is dedicated to the supernatural powers many game settings possess, like magic, psionics, super powers and even stuff as mundane as combat maneuvers.

The GeRPSy handles all these elements and others we didn't think of (but you might) in the same way and goes about it very light on the rules.

First of all, no matter the nature of these powers, they're divided into two types and fueled by a character's Energy points. The two types of powers are Damage and Utility. Both types work similarly, but with some minor distinctions.

Unless specified otherwise, each power is activated by rolling against the user's Mind. Appropriate traits and COW's add a D6. Usually, one success suffices to successfully use the power, but more successes often add extra effects.

Damage Powers

These are usually spells, psionics, super powers and also monster abilities like a dragon's breath of fire, with the ability to create a directly damaging effect, be it a fireball, a mind bolt or gamma rays shooting from one's eyes. These powers count as attacks and fall into four levels corresponding to the categories of melee weapons.

Light Power	8 – Mind + 2 per extra success
Medium Power	10 – Mind + 2 per extra success
Heavy Power	12 – Mind + 2 per extra success
Very Heavy Power	14 – Mind + 2 per extra success

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Each power can be evoked at a different level from light to very heavy for different damage. Each level of power costs 2 Energy points and is modified by extra effects put into the power. By default, for 2 Energy per level, a power counts as having a range of touch, affecting one target, armor works normally. The character using the power chooses which secondary stat is affected by the power. Adding range, additional targets or special damage costs additional Energy points as shown in the following table.

Effect	Extra Cost
Works at long range	1
Area of Effect, per 3 meters (10 feet) radius	1
Elemental effect (fire, water, lightning etc.)	1
Attack pierces armor, PR counts as 0	2

For example, The Great Zampano casts the stereotypical Fireball (long range, elemental fire effect, area of effect 6 meters (20 feet) radius, heavy power) and has to pay 10 Energy. A Magic Missile targeting one enemy at long range with medium damage would cost him only 5 Energy.

Range, see p. 30

Elemental fire effects can cause fires, water and lightning can damage electric circuits, acid eats through material, and so on. Be creative!



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Utility Powers

Utility powers are very versatile and can be much more effective and game-changing than a powerful damage power, if cast at the right time.

Keeping up Powers, see p. 28

Players, make up spell or power names as you use these abilities! It's more fun to cast "Open Sesam" or "Magic Key" than "I open the door with a task spell." It's part of good role-play!

The Great Zampano wants to assist Khrognar the Barbarian who has to hold a short conversation with the Queen of Elves without embarrassing the entire group. Zampano casts "Eloquent Emissary" on the Barbarian, granting the trait "eloquent" and the occupation "emissary", both adding a D6 to Khrognar's dice pool when talking to the Queen. When Zampano realizes that the Queen wants to manipulate Khrognar with her words, he thinks about changing the spell – but as Khrognar already has the trait "iron-willed" and the COW "emissary" still fits, Zampano keeps up "Eloquent Emissary" to buff Khrognar's 2 D6 to 3 D6.

What the GeRPSy calls Utility powers are special abilities which do not directly damage an opponent. These can be powers of flight, transformation, healing, manipulation, conjuration, creation, mimicry, stealth and so on. Utility powers can be broken down to four categories of their own, namely Task, Buff/De-buff, Heal and Other powers. Like damage powers, utility powers come in levels. These levels are basic, advanced and veteran and mean 1 D6, 2 D6 and 3 D6 respectively. Many utility powers can be maintained for a longer duration.

Task Powers

2 E per D6

A task power works just as any other roll in GeRPSy and can in fact substitute most other rolls to complete a task at hand, for example opening a locked door, hiding in shadows, examining an artifact or repairing an item. Each power level means one D6 the player can roll to succeed on a task, so like any other rolls in GeRPSy, powers can grant up to 3 D6. Each level costs 2 Energy for one roll.

Buff/De-buff Powers

2 E for 1 D6, 5 E for 2 D6

You can also grant extra D6 to other players, or take away a D6 from an enemy. In game terms, you give or take a trait, which means that this power does not stack with any other good or bad trait that already influences the target. The next level can, in game terms, grant or take away a character's COW for a roll – the target gains or loses a second D6. That way it's possible to buff a target from 1 D6 to 3 D6, or de-buff a target from 3 D6 to 1 D6. Buffing/de-buffing a trait costs 2 Energy, adding or removing a COW costs an additional 3 Energy for a total of 5 Energy for a buff or de-buff of 2 D6. Note that even if the target already possesses the trait, to grant a COW the full 5 Energy must be paid. It's not possible to grant only a COW to buff 2 D6 up to 3 D6.

Combat maneuvers count as Buff/De-buff powers.

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Heal Powers

3 E per D6

As mentioned in the chapter Death and Healing, healing powers work as a free recovery roll for the targets. Every success rolled when using a healing power grants a D6 for the recovery roll. Each D6 granted costs 3 Energy points and the healer can choose how many D6 to grant after making the roll to use the power. The recovery roll, or healing roll in this case, is made by rolling the D6 granted by the healer and adding their results. The sum is the number of Life or Energy (or, in special cases, even Control) regained by the target.

Healing, see p. 21

Other Powers

varying cost

This category covers all which isn't already covered by the other three categories. Breathing underwater, creation of a wall of lightning, the ability to fly – this category has it all. That is why it is both the most flexible and the most complicated of all categories, but complicated not to the extent to make it difficult to understand.

The creation or controlling of a substance like fire, water, earth, lightning, even magic energy and so on, costs a base of 2 Energy per square meter (3x3 feet) and one additional Energy for each point of damage it does on touch (in case of a fire or lightning wall) or absorbs as PR (in case of a magic armor). A human-sized magic armor needs 1.5 square meters (3x6 feet) of substance to protect effectively and has a base cost of 3 Energy plus 1 for each point of PR.

Granting abilities like breathing under water or in toxic atmosphere, withstanding high or low pressure, and similar abilities which are not defying the laws of nature, have a base cost of 2 Energy. Note that most of the time these powers will only make sense when kept up over a period of time.



Armor, see p. 11

Keeping up Powers, see p. 28

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Such powers are, for example, the ability to fly, or breathing in a vacuum, to stop aging, slow time in a small area or for one creature, and of course the classic dimensional gate.

Again, these are just examples. Some settings will allow time travel but not flying, others will allow easy morphing into different creatures but not transforming objects. Be creative when it comes to such powers, especially if it's a bad guy's master plan to use such a power.

If you want to limit access to such powers, demand a certain Mind score of every character who wants to use such a power.

Truly magnificent powers which allow the user to manipulate the laws of nature come at a much higher cost, of course. Depending on the universe you play in, there are different possibilities and necessities, but some more popular effects shall be referenced here with their respective Energy costs. This may be of help for you when you need to determine the cost for other powers. This is only the Energy cost, though. Opening a dimensional gate usually does not just cost some concentration and Energy, but materials, sacrifices and other things as well.

Effect	Cost per round
Transform creature or item (size and/or mass more or less stays)	2
Halt aging process	2
Open dimensional gate	5
Breathe in vacuum	6
Slow time by half for a creature	7
Flying	8

Most of these powers seem rather cheap, but this is the cost for one round only. These are truly powerful abilities and the GM should make a character attempting these work for it a lot, especially when trying to making them permanent effects. For more information on keeping up spells and making them permanent, continue reading on the next page.



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Keeping Up Powers

When concentrating on a power, it's no problem to keep it up. You pay the initial cost each round the power is in effect while in combat, or each minute while out of combat.

If you want to do other things besides keeping up your power, including using other powers, pay 1.5 times the initial cost of the power each round when in combat or each minute while out of combat.

Opening a dimensional gate for just one or five rounds might not be enough to get through, or to attract whatever you want to invite to your dimension. Stopping the aging process for a round is useless entirely, so why even try? Because you have the option to make these effects permanent in GeRPSy. The cost of such a power is ten times its base cost, and the Energy points cannot be regained as long as the power is in effect. That means, the Energy maximum is reduced by the cost for the permanent power as long as this power is in effect.

As usual, the GM has the last word on permanent powers and if they are available at all in your game. And they still might have bad side effects.

Permanent powers are how GeRPSy deals with super powers for super hero settings, by the way. A super hero character's Energy pool entirely or partly used to "buy" permanent powers and/or fuel powers that need activation.

For more powerful super heroes use a higher Energy pool!

For example, to permanently stop aging, a character would have to pay 20 Energy points. The Energy maximum would be reduced by 20 as long as the power works.

Another example, opening a permanent dimensional gate would cost 50 Energy. Only truly powerful characters can achieve this, but there might be ways to reduce the price...

Damaging, heal and task powers usually aren't possible as permanent powers at all, and neither are combat maneuvers.



GeRPSy

Optional Rule: Energy Sources

For high-powered spell-casting settings, and for super hero games, Energy sources provide a good way to boost character's Energy stats without changing the standard rules of GeRPSy and, because many Energy sources can be taken away, they make a good weakness in return.

For some settings, external sources of energy can be used to fuel spells and powers. Examples are power crystals, shaman fetishes, magic wands, psi-batteries and even blood sacrifices. This makes users a lot more powerful, especially if the setting allows for the sacrifice of these sources to fuel permanent powers. Be careful when introducing Energy sources into your game, and don't make them too powerful. A magic wand is already pretty useful when only adding one or two points to the Energy maximum, or even if it's a one-use item. Limit the number of sources one character may benefit from, especially if they grant a permanent bonus to the Energy secondary stat. One way to limit the magnitude of such Energy sources is to not make them items, but places. Ley lines might carry magical energy and where these lines meet, a nexus will grant a bonus to a user's Energy pool. In other games the ruins of an ancient castle might hold a special power available to those who travel there and perform a ritual.



Modifiers by Circumstances

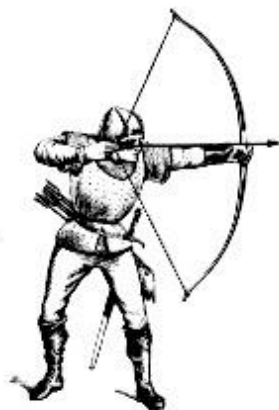
Whatever a character is trying to do, there often are outside influences helping or, more often, interfering with a task. This includes range in ranged combat, dim or no light, weather, terrain features, and more. The possibilities for these circumstances are nearly endless, depending on the setting your game plays in, therefore we will only give some common examples and let you figure out the rest. Everything described here comes down to what you already know from the chapter Rolling the Dice, where we explained about positive modifiers reducing the difficulty and negative modifiers increasing the difficulty.

Range Conditions

Condition	Modifier
Close (2 meters / 6 feet and less)	+0
Short (2 – 25 meters / 15 – 75 feet)	+1
Long (26 – 75 meters / 75 – 225 feet)	+2
Extreme (more than 75 meters / 225 feet)	+3

These range conditions should suffice for most games, but if your game features weapons with higher ranges, just add a +1 modifier for each 50 meters / 150 feet beyond extreme range.

Range conditions are somewhat fiddly, as it often depends on the target movement. If a target is moving in a straight line towards the shooter, it's a lot easier to hit than if moving in a 90° angle to the shooting direction.



Beginning players might see this entire chapter as optional rules. That's why we put it towards the end of the book. You can easily adopt them for your game once you are more accustomed to how the GeRPSy works. Experienced players will already be familiar with the concepts and can implement these rules from the start, or just let common sense guide them to find the modifiers best suited for their situation.

Rolling the Dice, p. 1

Optional Golden Rule:

Ignore The Rules!

Too many rules slow down gameplay, so if you feel these tables and conditions only add more work to the table and take away the fun, just ignore them. The Rolling the Dice chapter offers enough to support any situation for a reasonably experienced group.

GeRPSy

Light Conditions

Presented here are the basic lighting conditions found in most other games, and they apply to many standard actions. When in doubt, though, talk it out and let common sense be your only rule.

Condition	Modifier
Dim light (torchlight, bright night)	+1
Dark light (candlelight, dark night)	+2
Complete darkness	+4

Lighting conditions are more important to some games than others. Horror stories live on light, or rather the absence of it. The same goes for grim crime stories or dungeon exploration. Sight is an extremely important sense for humans and taking it away creates an atmosphere of fear. Sometimes, though, it's enough to include this information in the story-telling, while keeping it from interfering with the game mechanics.



These modifiers are somewhat hard to apply as a general rule. For example, someone hacking with a sword at another in front of them isn't that hard, even in dim light. Using a rapier for a riposte maneuver is harder under the same conditions. Reading a book in dark light is easier than picking a lock and sometimes the bad lighting conditions might even be to an action's advantage, for example when sneaking or picking a pocket. Darkness may completely prevent any successful action, like reading a scroll, shooting at an enemy at long range, and so on. Some setting feature vision augmentation as a basic implant for all characters, so most light conditions may be ignored entirely.

Weather Conditions

Condition	Modifier
Light rain, snow, fog	+1
Heavy rain, snow, fog	+2
Blizzard, hurricane, impenetrable fog	+4

Similar to light conditions, weather conditions won't generally apply to all actions. Presented are examples, and some settings may have completely different weather conditions, for example on different planets in sci-fi games. Take this table as a rule of thumb.



Terrain Conditions

Condition	Modifier
Elevated position (to attack and defend)	-1
Light forest (sight modifier)	+1
Heavy forest (sight modifier)	+2
Bad foothold (slippery, sticky, very uneven)	+1
Very bad foothold (rocking boat or plane)	+2

Again, it's impossible to implement rules for all possible situations the characters might end up in. These examples will undoubtedly help in finding an appropriate modifier for any case, though.

Keeping track of weather adds more book-keeping to the game. If you're into it, do it! We found that it helps when players are in charge of some of the details – one tracks lighting conditions, another weather, and so on. This takes a big load off of the GM.

It often suffices to include these conditions in the story but not add them to the dice rolls unless logic demands it. When all acting characters are in the same heavy forest, the modifier applying to all may cancel itself out, even if it's only to keep the game from slowing down.

Damaging Objects

Once again, these rules are optional. Some settings might require them, though, and games about space combat probably absolutely need them, unless you play these battles pulpy and settle the outcome by a few rolls – which is perfectly fine for more serious play, too. It leaves more to story-telling and reduces the book-keeping you need to do for vehicles.

These stats are for average versions. Some objects like vehicles can be armored, too. Vehicles tailored for battle are assumed to half about double the Life than the average versions, plus armor.

Armor, see p. 11

Objects like crates, cars and space ships have “Life” points, too. Manned objects like tanks, giant battle mechs, submarines, space ships etc. even have Energy and Control stats, representing the crew’s resources.

When calculating Life for these objects, assign a Body rating and calculate Life similar to a character’s. The table below shows a few calculation methods depending on an objects size and durability, providing a good starting point for whatever objects appear in your game. Note that not all objects are entirely destroyed when they lose all Life. They might just cease to function for the moment, but can be repaired.

Object	Life
Wooden door	10 – Body
Metal door	20 – Body
Car	(8 – Body) x 10
Tank	(10 – Body) x 20
Ship	(10 – Body) x 40
Airplane	(10 – Body) x 15
Fighter plane	(8 – Body) x 10
Space ship	(10 – Body) x 50
Fighter space craft	(8 – Body) x 20



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As mentioned on the previous page, manned objects or objects controlled by an intelligence can have Energy and Control stats, too. Energy usually depends on the type of object – a space ship like a Star Destroyer probably has a huge Energy pool to power its attacks and special abilities. Most of the time, though, keeping track of this is too much work. We only recommend it for player-controlled vehicles, and only if Energy is a rather limited resource.

Control is often more important, especially when it comes to morale. When a vehicle is controlled by one or two persons, you may just use their individual Control ratings. But a big ship with a crew of 200? Assume that about one tenth of the crew is the breaking point – when they lose control, the vessel is assumed to be taken out of combat, at least for a while until order is restored. To make things a little easier, further assume that the crew is used to combat and casualties on their own side affect a vehicle on a 1:2 ratio – a fleet loses one ship, each fleet member loses 2 Control. Again, this reflects a certain number of crew members losing spirit on the remaining vehicles, not individual persons breaking down, although that may be true, too.

Taking a Sledgehammer to Crack a Nut

If vehicles shoot individual characters with, say, naval cannons or big-ass laser cannons, you may well assume that they just die unless they're very lucky. If you do need to calculate the damage of these weapons, take the weapon categories for hand-held weapons and multiply damage by 10 (or more).

When rolling out with a “fresh” space ship, we usually assume that Energy is high enough to power whatever might come next. After some months of campaigning without seeing a dock, the same space ship may be down to 50 Energy and players must plan ahead when using powers.

One tenth is about the number necessary to keep order on these vehicles and assumes that both officers and workers are affected. It is a number chosen for playability, not simulation. If you know exactly how many people are needed to keep a certain vehicle in combat, take this number as the vehicle's Control stat.

Weapons and Damage, see p. 7

Character Advancement

XP = experience points

Part of the role-playing experience is gaining experience and advancing the player character. GeRPSy provides a default XP system intended for long-term play. That means, advancement will not be quick, but steady. If you're playing a short campaign or just one session in which you want the player characters to gain XP, we suggest you use the advancement costs as shown here, but adjust the amount of XP given to the players. More XP mean faster advancement, of course.

Advancing attributes is costly, but each attribute has a big influence, not only on difficulty, but also on secondary stats!

Attributes

Advancement	XP Cost
6+ to 5+	15 XP
5+ to 4+	30 XP
4+ to 3+	60 XP
3+ to 2+	120 XP

By advancing secondary stats players have a quick and cheap way of gaining some power.

Secondary Stats

Advancement	XP Cost
+1	3 XP
+2	6 XP
+3	12 XP
+4	24 XP
+5	48 XP

A maximum of 3 COWs should be sufficient, but if you're playing a campaign of immortals, there probably isn't such a limit.

COWs and Traits

Gaining a new COW should only be allowed if the player role-plays the learning process, not by just spending XP. Some GMs may dislike the idea entirely, however, an XP cost of 50 for a second COW and 100 for a third should balance things a little. Gaining a new trait is cheaper and costs only 20 XP. New traits should make sense in the story, but usually there are lots of rather easy ways to explain a new trait.

Sample Setting: Darkness Awaits

In 1954, a man called Arthur Klein accidentally found a way to open a short-lived gate to another dimension, more precise, as has been later found out, the dimension lost souls inhabit for a reason unknown. Believed to be another plane of existence where the souls go to after death, some brave or foolish explorers found ways to gain access to this dimension which is today called the Shadowlands, by opening portals called Shadowgates through technological or spiritual means.

The Shadowlands at first look like the place where an explorer went through the Shadowgate, but wrapped in darkness and twilight. Entropy is visible in this place and it can be a fearsome experience to see a familiar place through the veil of the Shadowlands. When moving away from the gate, though, the Shadowlands change, and more so if the explorer starts to forget about the “real” world – something which is not uncommon, as the entropy of the Shadowlands starts corroding any traveler’s memories. The Shadowlands are a twisted realm of darkness and wonder, made up by memories, fantasies and nightmares, where lost souls wander in search for help and where empty soul husks prey on every memory they can get. Forever caught in the dim light of a burnt-out, ashen sun, the Shadowlands are a place not many people dare visit.



GeRPSy

Souls of the deceased don't always travel on to an afterlife or rebirth, or whatever it is that awaits them. In fact, those with fetters too strong to be broken desperately cling to their fading existence on earth, unable to let go, yet unable to return to their lives. These are called Lost Souls. After a while, they forget and often just hold on to a place they no longer remember, becoming nothing more than desperate Soul Husks which eventually lose all humanity, which fades into the Void. Their Anima, the spiritual energy which gives a soul the will to achieve and continue its existence, crystallizes and becomes a Generic Energy Memory (a.k.a. GEM or "Soul Gem"), no longer tied to the soul it once sparked to life but residual energy which is stuck to a single place and is not in the least sentient.

GEMs can be harvested and even brought through a Shadowgate and back to earth. GEMs can power several special devices ("Soul Technology") invented over the last years, and they can even prolong life – which is the main reason some people pay incredible sums to obtain more and more GEMs, which is in turn the reason why other people travel to the Shadowlands to harvest GEMs. In their own lingo, these people are called Shadowstalkers.

Some philosophic groups argue that all souls probably pass on to this world called the Shadowlands, but most find their way to a certain destination – be it heaven, hell, or just another transition to another yet unknown dimension. Some souls seem to get lost on this way, though. There are rumors that some lost souls never forgot about their lives and congregated in a city in the Shadowlands which they built from GEMs.

This sample setting is intentionally left vague at some points, for you and your group to fill the gaps as you imagine it. For example, no timeline is given and "today" is not further specified. We played this setting in the 1960s as well as in 2080 and found that not only does the players' gear change, but their attitudes and their motivations as well as the role the different factions played in these times.

Darkness Awaits can be played either as an action-filled fight for survival and resources in the Shadowlands, or as a horror-themed exploration into what lies beyond death itself. Everything in between is also possible, of course!

An Overview of Factions

The world of Darkness Awaits knows five influential factions, the Church, Ghostec Inc., the Orphean Order, the Shadowstalkers and the Shepherds. Play can focus on any of these factions with the player characters belonging to one (or more) of these organizations, or free-lancing and working for several independent individuals or for less influential groups.

The Church

The Christian church and in fact most other religions around the globe were gravely hit by the discoveries of Klein and those following in his steps. A proof that the souls of men might not be relieved upon death was a shock to many, but just like with other discoveries, the church adapted quickly. What most people know as the Shadowlands, the Church calls Purgatory. While being different to the classic imaginations its “purpose” remains – the souls of the dead are forbidden entry to Heaven and they must stay in Purgatory until they have been cleaned of their sins. The Church argues that the Lost Souls of the Shadowlands are sinners who will eventually be admitted to Heaven, unless their sins were too grave and they despaired in Purgatory, yearning for a relief of the terrors and making a pact with Hell. Those are granted Oblivion, their humanity shredded away and thrown into the Void, but their Soul Husks remain in Purgatory to haunt the other souls. As it’s written: Hell is other people.

The Church are not united when it comes to the issue of the Shadowlands they call Purgatory. Some groups believe that it is their holy duty to rescue the lost souls or at least offer guidance, others try to rid Purgatory from the demonic Soul Husks and other dangers, yet others try to find ways to seal this dimension off forever and there is also a small group of avant-gardist priests who try to study Purgatory scientifically.

Similarly, some groups shun Soul Technology, fueled by GEMs, while others use it as a means to achieve their goals.

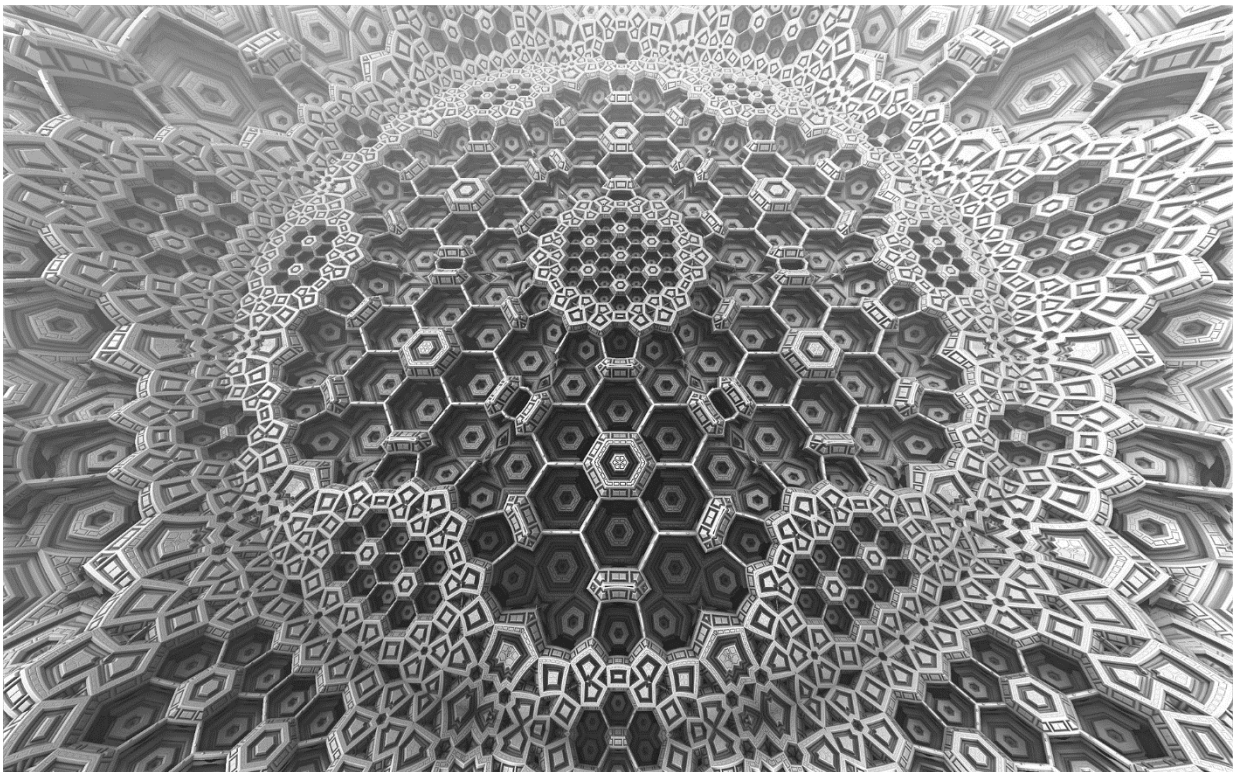
Almost all, however, are against using GEMs to prolong human life, although for different reasons, be they ethics or a fear of what GEMs might be able to do to a living soul.

The Church has access to Shadowgates from Ghostec Inc. and it is rumored they have also ties to the Orphean Order, which would probably grant them access to spiritual gates, too.



Ghostec Inc.

This fast-growing corporation is built on the fundamentals laid out by Arthur Klein and his colleagues and in fact some of these scientists are founding members. Ghostec found a technological way to build Shadowgates and to keep them stable for a long time. Through this technology it is possible to travel to the Shadowlands by paying the corporation a fee – and as they are mostly interested in profit, almost anyone is admitted entrance to the Shadowlands on their own risk. Some other factions have a contract with Ghostec to allow some of their agents Shadowgate access around the clock – for a price, of course.



Ghostec Inc. has its own agents exploring the Shadowlands and harvesting GEMs to fuel their Shadowgate technology – and it is said that their CEO Richard Black is buying GEMs privately, too.

With the power to grant or withhold access to the Shadowlands to others, Ghostec is often seen as a necessary evil, jealously guarding their Shadowgate technology so it will not be copied, and it is even rumored that Ghostec Inc. employ assassins who dispose of unwanted competitors.

Despite all their efforts, though, Shadowgate technology has leaked and there are a few individuals who have built their own versions of a Shadowgate, but as they are lacking the funds of a corporation it is unsure, how safe these are.

The Orphean Order

Named after the character of Greek mythology, Orpheus, who visited the underworld and returned, the Orphean Order is a small but influential organization of individuals who call themselves magi, wizards, sorcerers, shamans, witches and other names. Not enough is known about this group to categorize them any further, but they are known to be able to open a Shadowgate without the use of technology, by their will alone. Many seem to rely on magical traditions of old, but whether these truly work or just help to focus the will of the Orphean remains debated, even among the Order itself.



The intentions of the Orphean Order are manifold, as some have taken over to gather GEMs and sell them, while most seem to be mostly interested in learning about the Shadowlands and its mysteries. A few even offer guide services to travelers and it has been known that some among the Order have opened Shadowgates for money, too.



Similar to the Shadowstalkers, the Orpheans are no tightly-knit group but a group consisting of many subgroups working on their own agenda. There is an official Head of the Order, but that is more for counseling and some legal reasons than for actual hierarchy and government.

Most of the very few apprentices in the Orphean Order join because they sense some supernatural ability in themselves and seek guidance to master these abilities. A thirst for knowledge is welcomed by everyone in the order, but power-hungry individuals have been known to be cast out of the Order for endangering practices. As far as it is known to the Orpheans, these outcasts remained isolated but they are watched from the distance, lest they form a group of their own and regain access to the Shadowlands by opening a spiritual gate together.

Shadowstalkers

Shadowstalkers is a group term given to those individuals who travel to the Shadowlands in search for soul gems, commonly known as GEMs. A shadowstalker may be employed by a faction or a smaller group, or they may form a group on their own, working for the highest bidder. The stalkers, as they're also sometimes called, usually depend on a way to open a Shadowgate, so most of them either regularly pay Ghostec Inc. or they have dealings with the Orphean Order, but rumor has it that a band of shadowstalkers managed to get their own Shadowgate working somehow, maybe by copying Ghostec's technology or by own invention.

Stalkers often live short lives, as the dangers of the Shadowlands weigh out the potential profit from harvesting GEMs. Often enough, shadowstalkers fight each other over their harvest.

Some people become a stalker for the promise of riches, some because they seek just any employment, and a few others because they like the thrill of traveling to the Shadowlands. Some work alone, others form groups or are employed by one of the factions to gain access to the Shadowgate which they would not be able to afford otherwise.

Very few come to the Shadowlands for other purposes, but explorers are known to visit, explore and map parts of the Shadowlands, although the landscape often changes and only a few aspects are permanent.



The Shepherds

The Shepherds are a group of well-meaning people whose goal it is to help the lost souls of the Shadowlands. They try to achieve this by either trying to guide the lost or by fighting the dangers to their existence, like soul husks. According to Shepherd knowledge, there are a few places in the Shadowlands where souls seem to pass on – to where is unknown, though. These places seem completely unimportant when looking at them and include a lake and a circle of stones in a dead wood, but souls traveling there just disappear and many Shepherds believe, these souls pass on to the afterlife. Nothing remains of those who vanish, so some are afraid that while hoping to do what's best they might actually be sending these souls into the Void and into Oblivion, forever destroying them. Whatever these places are, they have no effect on living visitors on the Shadowlands – at least no effect which has been recorded. There are, however, rumors that Shepherds have vanished at these spots, too.



Whatever the truth, the Shepherds are a loose group and divided in itself due to the fact of the uncertainty of how and if they can actually help the lost souls. Some Shepherds are part of other groups, too. Shadowstalkers and Orpheans could be Shepherds as well, and some members of the Church are surely part of the Shepherds, too.

Some more extremist Shepherds believe that GEMs must not be harvested and brought to earth, as they could be a key for the salvation of lost souls. These people are sometimes derisively called Gem Hoarders as they often try to accumulate several GEMs in hope of sparking memories of life in a lost soul. And because of their gathering of GEMs, they often enough become targets of Shadowstalkers and other GEM harvesters, too.

Setting Rules

The Entropy of the Shadowlands

As mentioned earlier in the overview of this setting, the Shadowlands eat away the memories of those traveling there, including the living. Characters traveling to the Shadowlands must succeed on a Soul check for every hour they remain in this world. COWs do not help here, but traits like Good Memory, Strong-willed and similar do help. For every unsuccessful check a character loses 5 Control which can only be regained after returning to the world of the living. When Control falls to 0, a character forgets elemental facts about their lives – first, when Control reaches 0, they forget their COW. It no longer has any mechanical influence on the game until Control is regained. If they have several COWs, characters lose another COW for each hour after hitting 0 Control. When all COWs are gone, a character is

This system is meant to keep trips to the Shadowlands short and force players to move quickly. If your campaign favors a more relaxed stay in the Shadowlands, have players roll a Soul check only once every five hours, or even only once a day.



considered Lost and no longer able to find their way back to earth. They believe they have been in the Shadowlands for all their existence but might be persuaded to be guided, as they are aware of being lost for a reason they don't remember.

Soul Technology

GEM-powered inventions of different purpose, grouped under the name of Soul Technology, also known as Soul Tech or GEM Tech devices. These devices can be weapons, using the GEM as a near-infinite supply of ammunition, high-tech handheld computers without a need to recharge the battery, a car fueled by the GEM and even cybernetics connected to a person's body and mind through the power of a GEM. This depends on the time you play in, but nothing prevents you from having GEM-powered cybernetics in the alternative 1950s of this setting already! GEMs can be used universally to provide energy, seemingly without limits – still depending on the amount of energy consumed by the device, of course. Those Soul Tech devices should be rare, though, unless you want a high-powered campaign. You might compare them to magical items in other games (before the inflation of magic items in certain games).

Opening Shadowgates

Today's technological Shadowgates need GEMs to be powered and operated, as well as computers and/or specialists to make the necessary calculations, especially if the gate is supposed to open at a specific place in the Shadowlands. Due to the general instability of the Shadowlands, though, making these calculations is usually considered too dangerous. It is possible to open a gate leading to some of the static places in the Shadowlands, though.

Opening a spiritual Shadowgate requires the concentrated effort of several Orphean members of whom at least one needs to be experienced in opening such a gate. GEMs can be used to increase the mental power, but only to a degree.

In most campaigns, players will not wield the power to open a Shadowgate by themselves. If they are a group of Orpheans or ex-Ghostec operatives, they might yet have the knowledge of doing so, though. No matter how they get the ability, it is never easy to open a Shadowgate and requires careful planning and preparation. The difficulty of opening a gate is, by the default setting, as high as 12 and needs to be achieved by a Mind check if using technology, or a Soul check if opening a spiritual gate. For every helping player with appropriate knowledge, adjust the difficulty by -1, to a maximum of -5. If using at least 3 GEMs for power or focus, the modifier is another -2. One success is enough to open the gate.

Trying to open the gate at a specific static place in the Shadowlands modifies the check by +4.



Being able to open Shadowgates by themselves might throw a game off balance. Be careful when giving this power to the players. Often it's a better way to have them make contact to NPCs who are willing to help the group, if money is the problem.

Rumors About the Shadowlands

The landscape of the Shadowlands shifts, that much is proven. It is unknown, though, why or how it does that. Some paths seem to remain static, as do several places like lakes, rivers, mountains and the burnt-out sun, but even in these places some minor changes may occur, like missing patches of grass, or a place might be covered in snow when it wasn't before. Some argue that the fading memories of those trapped in the Shadowlands influence the landscape, and newcomers add new elements. That doesn't explain why some aspects remain static, though.

Early explorers tell a fabulous tale of a city of Lost Souls, built entirely from GEMs and memories of stone and wood, but the map they drew of their journey seems inaccurate because so far it has been impossible to locate the city or make contact to the souls living there.

Souls lost in the Shadowlands sometimes seem to remember their lives really well despite being dead for quite a long time. Shadowstalkers tell of Roman legionnaires and 30 Years' War soldiers who seemed to have a clear recollection and some interesting tales about the Shadowlands, too.

Inspired by the myth of Orpheus, some stalker allegedly entered the Shadowlands, finding the lost soul of her husband, but the story has different endings, depending on who you ask. Some say she was able to bring him back to earth and back to his body, while others say she eventually had to give up hope, leaving him to his fate and committing suicide afterwards. But maybe these are two entirely different stories.

Sometimes other things, often believed to be memories, have been found in the Shadowlands, including cars, tanks and even airplane wrecks. Maybe these have been brought there when a soul crossed over to the Shadowlands, clinging to such an object while dying.



Beings of the Shadowlands

LOST SOUL

Lost Souls are as different as any other NPCs in the game. There is no such thing as a typical lost soul we could provide a stat block for. Their appearances also differ wildly, depending on what they looked like in life.

SOUL HUSK

A soul husk is a lost soul who forgot everything about their former life, changing appearance in the process and looking more deathly. But such an unfortunate soul may still have a powerful Anima, the energy that “fuels” a soul, which drives it on. Soul Husks crave for memories and hunt lost souls to rip them apart and devour their memories, extending their own miserable existence a little more in the process. Soul husks are more uniform when it comes to their abilities, but depending on who they were before their transformation a GM can feel free to change the stats.



Body: 4+

Life: 34

Mind: 6+

Energy: 16

Soul: 5+

Control: 25

Traits:

Fearless

Determined

Tough

Abilities:

Damage: 6 claws and bite

Armor: none

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WRAITH



Not much is known about the entities called wraiths and their origin remains a mystery. Some Orpheans believe that a wraith is a confused collection of memories faded from a lost soul and somehow condensed into a misty form, maybe even reborn from the Void. Wraiths are mighty adversaries but lucky for Shadowland travelers they also seem to be quite rare and not inclined to wander about themselves, instead staying at a place and attacking travelers, trying to suck out their memories and leave them as soul husks. For this fearsome attack they need to have successfully attacked a creature already, either with their gaze or fear attack.

Body: 3+

Mind: 4+

Soul: 3+

Life: 30

Energy: 29

Control: 35

Traits:

Fearless

Horrifying

Mist form

Abilities:

Damage: gaze – 4 Energy damage

Fear: 4 Control damage

Drain Memories: 6 Control damage

Armor: none, but wraiths only take half damage from physical attacks (round up)



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FOMORIAN

These creatures, if they indeed are creatures at all, are a complete mystery. They appear like towering giants composed of decaying landscape features like dead trees, rocks, mounds and so on. Reaching heights of 4 to 10 meters (12 to 30 feet), sometimes they have a humanoid form, sometimes they have a crude animal-like form. Some Fomorian are hostile when spotting another being, others become hostile after the unknowing traveler enters a specific place, starts talking, or does some other seemingly unrelated thing. Outrunning a Fomorian is a very hard task and fighting one isn't a good idea either. Most of the time, stealth and deception is the preferred tactic.

Body: 3+

Life: 70

Mind: 6+

Energy: 20

Soul: 5+

Control: 20

Traits:

Fearless

Strong

Tough

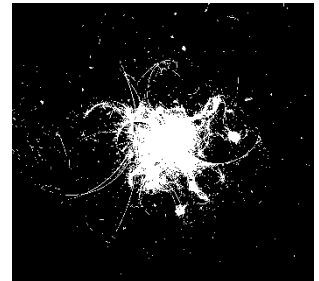
Abilities:

Damage: 10

Armor: PR 5

WILL-O'-THE-WISP "WILLY"

These strange lights hover in the air as if on a slight breeze, mostly ignoring soul husks and other menaces of the Shadowlands, but they seem drawn to lost souls and even more so to the living. When their curiosity is piqued, they float towards the being they're interested in and seem to dance around them, sometimes like a slow and solemn dance, sometimes wild and ecstatic. Sometimes they follow the being for a while, other times they seem to lose interest after a while and drift off. Their origin is as mysterious as their motivation, but some believe they could be a rare form of GEM which doesn't take a solid form. So far, no one has been able to capture a "willy", as they are often called.



Body: 6+

Life: 10

Mind: 4+

Energy: 30

Soul: 5+

Control: 10

Traits:

Curious

Agile

Abilities:

???

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Welcome to the Shadowlands – Introductory Adventure for Darkness Awaits

When the player characters (PCs) step through the Shadowgate they're transported to a small hill on which rest the ruins of the building the Shadowgate was opened in, a decaying memory of the rooms and devices they saw on earth. Most of the ruins crumble behind them once they step outside, but the Gate Room remains, ruined, silent, the Shadowgate seemingly stable. The burnt-out sun is in the dark sky and a fantastic, worrying landscape stretches away from the hill.

[A] To the north the PCs see seemingly endless plains of ashen grass and dead trees. The land stretches into what looks like infinity and darkness.

[B] To the west towering mountains rise up, dark and threatening. A Mind check (+1 modifier) shows a light somewhere at the foot of the mountains, which could be from a fire.

[C] South of the Shadowgate a black lake is visible. Cones of light like from flashlights are visible and it appears that about 4 – 6 people are there. What they are doing can't be made out from the hill.

[D] A path leads east over some more hills and a ruin of what looks like a monastery seems to be at its end.



→ [A] The plains really are endless. The PCs can wander for hours and not encounter anything interesting, unless you throw them an enemy or something else you come up with. If they want to return to the Shadowgate, a Mind check is necessary to navigate, with a modifier depending on how long they have been wandering. Add +1 for every hour. Even if they don't succeed on the roll you might have a sudden flash of light happen with no apparent consequence, but after wandering on for a while they walk towards the hill with the Shadowgate again.

What the PCs will do is highly dependent on what characters they are, which faction (if any) they belong to and why they came to the Shadowlands in the first place.

This little introductory adventure is written for any character motivation, to provide a small overview of what's possible. If the characters are here for GEMs, they'll probably check the light or with the flashlights, if they are explorers they might go anywhere.

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→ [B] The light is not really at the foot of the mountain and some climbing is necessary (Body check). The light comes from a small cave where three floating lights solemnly dance about each other. Inside the cave the PCs can see a soft glow if they succeed on a Mind check. The cave is not very deep, but a Soul Husk is waiting here. Once the soul husk is defeated, the PCs can go further into the cave to find a single GEM on the far wall. A Body check (easier by -1) is necessary to break the crystal from the rock.

Stats for the Soul Husk can be found on page 46.

The dancing lights are Will-o'-the-Wisps (p.48). How and if they interact with the characters at all, is up to the GM.

→ [C] When getting nearer, the PCs can make out 4 people working with some crates at the shore of the dark lake. The water seems endlessly deep and dark, yet sometimes they can make out even darker shadows swimming just below the surface. Old trees and grey, crumbling grass surround the lake. In the grass the remains of a soul husk slowly drift away on a light breeze, the torn body of a woman lying next to it.

The three men and one woman are armed with light to medium firearms and are busy collecting a handful of GEMs from the dead woman's pack. They are a group of Shadowstalkers and were ambushed by the soul husk on the return to their Shadowgate.

The PCs are free to interact with the stalkers as they like. The stalkers are quite reserved and wary, though, if the PCs are more than lightly armed. They are afraid of being robbed of their GEM harvest, but if the PCs offer help, the stalkers tell them to not go to the monastery ruins in the east. They scouted the area and saw several soul husks and a Fomorian in the vicinity.

Unless the PCs kill them, the Shadowstalkers will return to their Shadowgate which waits a little further around the lake. They cannot be persuaded to follow the PCs to the monastery ruins.



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→ [D] Following the path to the monastery isn't hard. Have the players roll Mind checks (+2) when approaching. If they succeed, they see movement somewhere in the ruins. If they have encountered the soul husk at [B] already, they may even notice that the movements are similarly zombie-like. If the PCs have been warned by the stalkers at [C], the Mind check is not modified.

The ruins are big enough to sneak through without being seen by the soul husks. At some point the PCs will spot the faint glow of GEMs at various locations in the ruins. They can get to these when succeeding at Body checks to sneak.

Have the characters sneak through the ruins for a while. When they botch a sneak check, one or more soul husks might become aware of them and attack. If it's the first missed roll, be merciful – a soul husk for every two players is enough. Any more unsuccessful rolls will draw more attention, though, and even if they manage to sneak successfully, at some point have them run into what at first seems like an overgrown rock formation at an odd place in the ruins. The rocks will start moving, though, and turn out to be a Fomorian 5 meters (15 feet) tall.



The Fomorian will not attack immediately, but at some point a soul husk will move into vicinity, which will trigger the Fomorian's fighting instincts. Maybe the characters even bump into the Fomorian while running from the soul husks, in which case the giant will immediately be hostile against soul husks and PCs alike.

Fighting the Fomorian is not a good idea and the PCs should be aware of that. You may hint at its size and that it seems to be made of solid rock. If the PCs are hunted by soul husks, they can get the giant to attack the husks, while taking only defensive actions themselves, thereby decimating the soul husks without having to fight themselves. If they support the Fomorian in the fight, the giant will attack them anyway – it's not intelligent enough to recognize allies.

The optional rule for Defensive Combat (p. 14) is recommended to avoid being hit by the Fomorian. When it realizes the PCs are hard targets it will focus on soul husks first, if they are around.

It's possible to dodge the Fomorian and hide in the ruins, especially once the soul husks are gone. The giant is not very perceptive and so sneak checks are made with a -1 bonus.

Once the PCs have harvested the GEMs in the monastery – they can find 4 which can be harvested with a Body (-1) check – they are free to explore the Shadowlands further or return to earth.

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Aftermath

Game Masters can use the scenario for more adventure ideas. The Shadowstalkers might become allies if treated well (or enemies if treated badly), and the monastery ruins might be a static place which holds even more mysteries in its crypts below. Maybe a Lost Soul has hidden down there, one that still remembers its life and is looking for a way out of the Shadowlands or (back?) to the rumored city of souls.

If the PCs were hired to find GEMs, they can sell them. Maybe it was sort of a test to get into one of the factions, and if they did well, they will get accepted and do more missions for the faction in the future.



GeRPSy

Generic Role-Playing System

The GeRPSy is a universal engine to power your role-playing game. It is suited for the genres of fantasy, sword and sorcery, science fiction, super hero, western, pirates and anything else you can imagine.

Its flexible and light rules allow quick adaption to any genre and background while preserving character depth and role-play.

Combining descriptive and stat-based character creation with a core mechanic running on only three six-sided dice, the GeRPSy is suited for beginners and veterans alike.

To help you get playing, a sample setting called Darkness Awaits with an introductory adventure is included.

Let your adventure begin!

