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1. Introduction

QuestWorlds is a roleplaying rules engine suitable for you to play in any genre.

It is a traditional roleplaying game in that there is a GM and players. The players play characters, each guided by the internal thoughts of their character as to what decisions they make, and the GM plays the world, including non-player characters (NPCs) and abstract threats.

It features an abstract, conflict-based, resolution method and scalable, customizable, character descriptions. Designed to emulate the way characters in fiction face and overcome challenges, it is suitable for a wide variety of genres and play styles.

It is a rules-light system that facilitates beginning play easily, and resolving conflicts in play quickly.

We refer to a rules-light but traditional roleplaying game as a storytelling game, after Greg Stafford's definition in *Prince Valiant*.

1.1 Why QuestWorlds?

QuestWorlds is meant to facilitate your creativity, and then to get out of your way.

It is well suited to a collaborative, friendly group with a high degree of trust in each other's creativity. Characters in *QuestWorlds* are described more in terms of their place in your imagination and the game setting than by game mechanics.

If your group are often at odds and rely on their chosen rules kit as an arbiter between competing visions of how the game ought to develop, or use mechanical options to decide "what action to take," *QuestWorlds* is not a rules set that provides that structure. Make sure to discuss with your group whether you are collectively on board with trying a new play style dynamic, or if you would rather stick to more structured systems.

1.2 Version

The first version of these rules *Hero Wars* was published in 2000 (ISBN 978-1-929052-01-1)

The second version *HeroQuest* was published in 2003 (ISBN 978-1-929052-12-7). We refer to this as *HeroQuest* 1e to disambiguate.

The third version *HeroQuest: Core Rules* was published in 2009 (ISBN 978-0-977785-32-2). We refer to this as *HeroQuest* 2e.

HeroQuest Glorantha was published in 2015 (ISBN 978-1-943223-01-5). It is the version of the rules in *HeroQuest* 2e, presented for playing in Glorantha. We refer to this as *HeroQuest* 2.1e.

QuestWorlds was published as a System Reference Document (SRD) (this document) in 2019. The version of the rules here is slightly updated, mainly to clarify ambiguities, from the version presented in *HeroQuest* 2e and *HeroQuest* 2.1e. This makes this ruleset *HeroQuest* 2.2e, despite the name change. However, to simplify we identify this version as *QuestWorlds* 1e.

An Appendix lists changes in this version. As the SRD is updated we will continue to track version changes there.

1.3 Basic & Advanced Mechanics

As the *QuestWorlds* engine is oriented towards rules-light play, we designate some mechanics as “Basic” and others as “Advanced.”

Basic rules represent the minimum mechanical structure you need to play a game with the feel of *QuestWorlds*, while advanced rules add mechanical depth to areas of play which you might wish to emphasize, though possibly at a cost in speed of play.

In this document, we put advanced mechanics in their own section from the relevant basic mechanic section.

The advanced mechanics can be added to play individually; you do not have to bring them in together. In cases where an optional mechanic depends upon or interrelates with another optional mechanic, we note that in the text.

If this is your first time reading these rules, you may wish to skip over these sections. Return to them once you understand the basic mechanics. Similarly, if this is your first time playing these rules, you may wish to omit the advanced rules at first, getting a feel for the game in its simplest form, and then add them in as you want more depth. Your GM may even decide to employ certain advanced rules on a case by case basis, providing more detail or nuance to particularly interesting conflicts where beneficial, while otherwise taking a lighter approach.

Who Is This Document For?

The primary audience for this document is game-designers who wish to utilize the *Quest Worlds* rules framework to implement their own game.

We also recognize that some people will use this document to learn about the *Quest Worlds* system before purchasing it, and some players in games where the GM has a rule book, may use this as a reference to help understand the rules.

For that latter reason, we address the rules here to a player.

However, this remains a technical document with few examples, advice, or other non-rules text to help you play your game, as such are beyond the scope of this System Reference Document.

It is expected that the designers of games you play based on these rules will include such guidance and context as is relevant to their game's particular genre or setting, presented in a format better suited for learning how to play.

1.4 Numbering

Sections within this document are numbered. This is for the benefit of game designers and reviewers.

This does not imply that game designers need number the rules in their own games.

Numbering however makes it easy to refer to rules in this document when page numbers may vary by presentation format for the purposes of error trapping or tracking changes. If you need to give us feedback about this document, that will assist us.

1.5 Participants

1.5.1 Players

You and your fellow players each create a Player Character (PC) to be the “avatar” or “persona” whose role you will play in the game. The PCs pursue various goals in an imaginary world, using their **abilities**, motivations, connections, and more to solve problems and overcome **story obstacles** that stand in their way.

When we say ‘you’ in this document we may mean the player or their PC. Which should be clear from context, or explicitly noted.

1.5.2 Game Master

Your Game Master (GM) is the interface between your imagination and the game-world in which the PCs have their adventures; describing the people, places, creatures, objects, and events therein. Your GM also plays the role of any Non-Player Characters (NPCs) with whom your PC interacts in the course of your adventures.

We generally refer to the GM as ‘your GM’ in this document’s player-facing language. However, if you are the GM for a given game, this naturally refers to you.

2. Mechanics

In a *QuestWorlds* game, stories develop dynamically as you and your GM work together to role-play the dramatic conflict between your group’s PCs in pursuit of their goals and the challenges, or threats that your GM presents to stand in your way. Stories advance by two methods: conflict, where your PC is prevented from achieving their goals because there is something that must be overcome, a **story obstacle**, to gain a desired person, thing, or even status: the **prize**; or revelation, where something must be overcome, a **story obstacle**, to learn a secret, uncover the past, or reach understanding: the **prize**.

Over the course of play, your GM will present various **story obstacles** as conflicts to the PCs, resulting in either **victory** or **defeat** for your character, which determines whether or not you gain the **prize** you sought. These conflicts can represent any sort of challenge you might face: fighting, a trial or debate, survival in a harsh environment, out-wooing rival suitors, and so on.

Rather than mechanically addressing the individual tasks that make up these conflicts, *QuestWorlds* usually assesses your overall **victory** or **defeat** in a single **contest** where you and your GM make an opposed roll pitting your characters **ability** vs the **resistance** the **story obstacle** presents to you achieving the **prize**.

Whenever the GM presents a **story obstacle** for you to overcome, you should **frame the contest** by describing what you are trying to accomplish, the **prize**, and which of your **abilities** (see below) you want to use to achieve that **prize**, and how.

Based on that **framing** and other factors, your GM will assess what **resistance** the characters face.

You roll a twenty-sided die (D20) against your PC’s **ability**, and your GM rolls a D20 against the **resistance**. Your GM will assess your overall **victory** or **defeat** in the contest based on the **success** or **failure** of both rolls, and narrates the results of your attempt to overcome the **story obstacle** and gain

the **prize** accordingly. The direction of the story changes, in either a big or small way, depending on whether you gain the **prize** or not.

We encourage your GM to work with your suggestions when narrating the **victory** or **defeat**, but the final decision rests with them.

2.1 Abilities

Characters in *Quest Worlds* are defined by the **abilities** they use to face the challenges that arise in the course of their story. Rather than having a standard list of attributes, skills, powers, etc. for all characters, anything that you can apply to solve a problem or overcome a **story obstacle** could be one of your **abilities**. While your GM may provide some example **abilities** to choose from that connect your PC to a particular story or game world (whether created by your GM or by the designer of a particular game), you get to make up and describe most or all of your **abilities**.

Some **abilities** might be broad descriptions of your background or expertise, like “Dwarf of the Chalk Hills” or “Private Detective” - implying a variety of related capabilities. Others might represent specific capabilities or assets such as “Lore of the Ancients,” “Captain of the Fencing Team,” or “The Jade Eye Medallion.”

Ultimately, **abilities** are just names for the interesting things your character can do.

2.1.2 Ratings and Masteries

Quest Worlds **abilities** are **rated** on a range of 1–20, representing the **target number (TN)** you need to roll or less to succeed on your roll during a **contest** (see §2.3 for more details). **Ratings** are also scalable beyond that range using tiers of capability we refer to as **Mastery**. When you raise a **rating** of 20 by one point, either permanently through character advancement or a temporarily with **modifier** to a contest roll, the **rating** increases not to 21, but to 1M.

The “M” after the **rating** signifies **mastery**. You have now reached a new order of excellence in that **ability**, such that your die rolls will almost always succeed. Unless opposed by similarly exalted **resistance** (see §2.3.5.2 for more details) the number in front of the M is now the **target number** you seek to roll or less to achieve a **critical**!

As a **rating** climbs, you may even gain multiple **masteries** in it. **Mastery** tiers above one (representing an overall **rating** of 41 or more) are marked with a number to the right of the M symbol. Each successive **rating** increase over 20 becomes a new **mastery** tier. Thus, if you have 10M2, you have two **masteries** (representing a total **rating** of 50, 10+20+20). 10M3 means that you have three **masteries**, and so on.

Specific *QuestWorlds* games or genre packs may use other symbols relevant to their setting or genre to denote **mastery** instead of M. If so, this should be clearly noted by their designers.

In summary, to reflect abilities (or **resistances**), higher than 20, you divide the **ability** by 20, noting a **mastery** for each multiple of 20 the **ability** exceeds, and treating the remainder as the **target number**. So, for an **ability** of 27, $27 \div 20 = 1$ remainder 7, which translates into a **rating** of seven with one **mastery** written as “7M”; while for an **ability** of 43, $43 \div 20 = 2$ remainder 3, which translates into a **rating** of three with two **masteries**, written as “3M2” on the character sheet.

2.1.2.1 No Relevant ability

You may sometimes be faced with a **story obstacle** for which you have no relevant **ability** whatsoever. In such cases, you may still enter into conflict with the **story obstacle** using a minimum base **target number** of 6 for your **contest** roll. Like **ratings**, it may also be subject to **modifiers**.

2.1.2.2 Making Ratings Quantitative

While *QuestWorlds* generally treats **ratings** as abstract measures of problem solving power rather than quantitative measures of in-fiction traits, some games may also depart from this practice in order to more closely couple key fictional elements to the mechanics. For example, a magic system might classify certain supernatural effects as Apprentice, Journeyman, or Master level, and require **ratings** of 15, 5M, or 1M2 (respectively) in a relevant **ability** to even attempt them.

Such departures from abstraction should generally only be made where the increased complexity they bring leads to rewarding choices in a key area of interest to the setting or genre at hand. In most cases, you and your GM can simply follow the fiction surrounding your **ability** and its context within the setting for guidance as to what applications of the **ability** are credible.

2.1.3 Possessions and Equipment

Your character will generally be considered to have whatever equipment is reasonably implied by your abilities. Having an “Athenian Hoplite” **ability** will mean that your character possesses bronze armor, a shield, a spear, and a short-sword; while a “Country Doctor” would be expected to have a well-stocked medical-bag and possibly a horse & buggy in the right setting.

However, if you wish your character to possess something that is particularly special, interesting, or unusual, you may also enumerate it as a rated **ability**

in its own right, just like any other **ability** your character might use to solve a problem.

In play, the degree to which you can overcome **story obstacles** with your possessions depends not on any qualities inherent to the objects themselves, but to the **rating** of your relevant **ability**. However the significance of various sorts of gear lies in the types of actions you can credibly propose, and what their impact might reasonably be. An “Invisibility Cloak” **ability** implies very different fictional capabilities than “Souped-up Muscle Car” does.

Conversely, if in the course of play you find your character in a situation without equipment essential to utilize an ability effectively, or where your character’s gear is poorly suited to the task at hand, your GM may take into account in assessing credibility-based **modifiers**.

2.1.4 Wealth

In *Quest Worlds*, wealth is treated as just another way to overcome **story obstacles**. Many characters may not even have an explicit wealth **ability**, with their wealth or assets instead implied by **abilities** representing their background, profession, or status. Whether explicit or implied, the relevant **rating** is not an objective measure of the size of your fortune, but instead indicates how well you solve problems with money and resources.

Similarly, treasures and other windfalls that arise during play may be represented in the rules via **plot augments** (see § 2.4.3) in **contests** where using the resource is relevant.

2.3 Contest Procedure

You choose an **ability** relevant to the conflict at hand, describe exactly what you are trying to accomplish, and how. Your GM may modify these suggested actions to better fit the fictional circumstances, and describe the actions of the NPCs or forces on the other side of the conflict.

2.3.1 Resolution Methods

The Basic resolution methods are as follows:

2.3.1.1 Automatic Victory

Sometimes, your GM may not call for a **contest** at all, in which case you are simply victorious in overcoming the **story obstacle** at hand. This may be because **defeat** in the conflict to overcome the **story obstacle** would lead to

uninteresting results or a narrative dead-end, such as when finding an important clue is essential to the progress of an adventure.

Your GM might also do this in cases where, within the fictional context, the particular **ability** you have brought to bear on the **story obstacle** is such that overcoming the **story obstacle** should be a trivial matter under normal circumstances (e.g. - a professional hunter bringing in the evening meal in a forest filled with game animals). In such cases, **defeat** would simply not be credible unless your GM wanted to introduce some further complications to the story. Generally, your GM will only use **automatic victory** when you have a relevant **ability** to justify its application.

For cases where overall **victory** may be a given, but the degree, timeliness, or cost of that **victory** may be interesting concerns, consider the Advanced rules in §2.19.

2.3.1.2 Simple Contest

The **simple contest** *QuestWorlds'* primary resolution mechanic for overcoming **story obstacles**, and is used the most often. It also provides the foundation for other types of **contest**, including several Advanced ones. As such, it receives both an overview of key concepts here as well as a more detailed treatment in §4.

At its most basic, a **simple contest** can be summarized as follows:

1. You and your GM agree upon the terms of the **contest**.
2. You roll a D20 vs your relevant **ability**, while your GM rolls a D20 vs the **resistance**.
3. Your GM compares the **success** or **failure** of the two rolls, and assesses your overall **victory** or **defeat**.
4. Your GM then narrates the **outcome** of the conflict as appropriate.

If you enter into conflict with another player rather than a **story obstacle** presented by your GM, you both roll your relevant abilities for the **contest** instead of against a GM-set **resistance**, and your GM interprets the **results**, as described above.

2.3.2 Framing the Contest

2.3.2.1 Contest Framing Overview

When a conflict arises during the game, you and your GM start by clearly agreeing on:

- What goal you are trying to achieve. We call this the **prize**.
- What the **story obstacle** is you are trying to overcome.
- What **tactic** you are using to and overcome it.

This process is called **framing the contest**.

2.3.2.2 Conflict: Goals vs Obstacles

Contests in *QuestWorlds* don't simply tell you how well you performed at a particular task: they tell you whether or not you overcame a **story obstacle**, which moves the story in a new direction. Unlike some other roleplaying games, a **contest** in *QuestWorlds* does not resolve a task, it resolves the whole **story obstacle**.

If you need secret records which are stored in a vault within a government compound, your goal is to get the information - while the fact that it is secured against your access is a **story obstacle** you must overcome to attain that goal. Overcoming that **story obstacle** may involve many possible tasks, evading guards, lock-picking, forging credentials, etc. - but the **contest** doesn't address those individually. The **contest** is framed around the entire conflict against the **story obstacle** as a whole.

In a fight, your **story obstacle** may be the opponents themselves, who you are fighting to capture or kill. Just as often you are seeking another goal and you might just as easily attain it by incapacitating or evading your foes. In this case, beating the enemy is a task, not the **story obstacle**. For example, if an **ally** has been accused of treason by the King, your goal could be to prove the **ally's** innocence. The power of the King threatening your **ally** is a **story obstacle** to be overcome, and a trial by combat could be a **contest** to resolve the conflict with an **ability** like "Knight Errant."

In a court trial, your goal is likely a particular verdict, while the **story obstacle** might be the opposing lawyer, an unjust law, or even the justice system itself. In this case, jury selection, a closing argument, revelatory evidence, or legal procedural challenges are tasks, not the entire **story obstacle**. The overall conflict encompasses all those things.

A conflict to overcome a **story obstacle** moves the story forward when it is resolved. If it is merely a step toward resolving a **story obstacle** it is a task and not a conflict. While those component tasks may be interesting parts of narrating **tactics** and **results**, your GM should be sure to look for the **story obstacle** in conflict when framing a **contest**.

If there is no **story obstacle** to your actions, your GM should not call for a **contest** but simply let you narrate what you do, provided that seems credible.

For example, you are traveling from one star system to another. In the next star system you hope to confront the aged rebel who holds long-forgotten secrets that could bring freedom to the galaxy. Your GM feels there is no useful **story obstacle** for you to **contest** against, and so lets you describe heading down to the spaceport to secure a ship, meeting the captain and crew of your vessel, and traveling to the next world. Your GM encourages you to summarize what

happens quickly so you can get to the meeting with the old rebel. Your GM knows that will be the real **story obstacle**, convincing the old rebel to part with their secrets.

2.3.2.3 Tactics

You either choose an **ability** that represents any ‘key moment’ in overcoming that **story obstacle**, or a broad **ability** that lets you overcome the whole **story obstacle**. We call this choosing a **tactic**.

Your **tactic** might describe your using an **ability** that helps you overcome a task within the **story obstacle**: sneaking past the guards, picking the locks, choosing the right jury or skewering your opponent with your foil. Or, your **tactics** might describe using a broad ability like “Ninja”, “Lawyer”, or “Fencer” to overcome all those challenges that might form part of the **story obstacle**. Either way, if you succeed at that roll, you overcome the whole **story obstacle**. Or by failing at that roll, you fail to overcome the **story obstacle**, not just fail at one task.

When deciding on your **tactic**, focus on how your unique abilities would help you overcome the **story obstacle**. This as the “key moment” where we focus on your PC. Use this moment to reveal your PC’s strengths to the group.

Your GM will determine if your **tactic** passes a **credibility test**. If you try to jump a 100 meters gap or run faster than a speeding car, your action is not credible and your GM will ask you to choose a different **tactic**.

Credibility depends on the genre, as what is not credible in a gritty police procedural might be in pulp where you might be able to leap from a bridge onto a speeding train. If in dispute, your GM should discuss with the group whether they consider your **tactic** credible for the genre.

Extraordinary abilities in some genres give you the capability to do the incredible. For example in a superhero genre you might fly or be invulnerable to bullets, in a fantasy genre hurl magical lightning bolts. A genre pack for the game should help define what incredible **tactics** are allowed for that game as part of an *Extraordinary Powers Framework*.

The GM can narrate the remaining tasks that make sense of the story depending on your **success** with that roll, or have them occur ‘off-stage’ for speed. Think of the way TV or Cinema often cuts to the key moment of drama in a break-in, over showing us the whole heist from beginning to end.

2.3.2.4 No Repeat Attempts

A **contest** represents all of your attempts to overcome a **story obstacle**. If you lose it means that no matter how many times you tried to solve the problem,

you finally had to give up. You can try again only if you use a new **tactic** to overcome the **story obstacle**.

2.3.3 Resistance

Your GM chooses a **resistance** to represent the difficulty of the **story obstacle**.

When setting **resistances** it is important to understand that whilst traditional roleplaying games simulate an imaginary reality, *Quest Worlds* emulates the techniques of fictional storytelling.

Understanding this distinction will help you to play the game in a natural, seamless manner.

For example, let's say that your GM is playing a game inspired by fast-paced, non-fantastic, martial arts movies in a contemporary setting. You are running along a bridge, pacing a hovercraft, piloted by the main bad guy. You want your character, Joey Chun, to jump onto the hovercraft and punch the villain's lights out.

In a traditional, simulative game, your GM would determine how hard this is based on the physical constraints you've already described. In doing so, they would come up with imaginary numbers and measurements. Your GM would have to work out the distance between bridge and hovercraft. Depending on the rules set, they might take into account your relative speed to the vehicle. Then they would use whatever resolution mechanic the rules provide them with to see if Joey succeeds or fails. If you blow it, your GM will probably consult the falling rules to see how badly you injure yourself (if you land poorly), or the drowning rules, if you end up in the river.

In *Quest Worlds*, your GM starts not with the physical details, but with the proposed action's position in the storyline. They consider a range of narrative factors, from how entertaining it would be for you to **succeed**, how much **failure** would slow the pacing of the current sequence, and how long it has been since you last scored a thrilling **victory**. If, after this, they need further reference points, your GM can draw inspiration more from martial arts movies than the physics of real-life jumps from bridges onto moving hovercraft. Having decided how difficult the task ought to be dramatically, your GM will then supply the physical details as color, to justify their choice and create suspension of disbelief, the illusion of authenticity that makes us accept fictional incidents as credible on their own terms. If they want Joey to have a high chance of **success**, your GM describes the distance between bridge and vehicle as impressive (so it feels exciting if you make it) but not insurmountable (so it seems believable if you make it).

In other words, in *Quest Worlds* your GM will pick a **resistance** based on dramatic needs and then justify it by adding details into the story.

Resistance numbers are derived from a **base resistance**, which is modified according to the **resistance class**, as per the following table:

RESISTANCE CLASS TABLE

Class	Value
Nearly Impossible	Base +M2
Very High	Base +M
High	Base +6
Moderate	Base
Low	Base -6
Very Low	Base -M or 6, whichever is lower

By default, the **base resistance** starts at 14.

All **contests** use the base number + **resistance class**, except for **contests** to determine **augments**.

Augmenting always faces a **moderate resistance**, this is always the unmodified base value.

2.3.4 Die Rolls

To determine how well you use an **ability**, roll a 20-sided die (D20). At the same time, your GM rolls for the **resistance**.

Compare your rolled number with the **TN** to determine the **result**, a level of **success** or **failure** for the roll (not the **contest** as a whole).

- **Critical:** If the die roll is 1 (even when the **TN** is 1), you succeed brilliantly. This is the best **result** possible.
- **Success:** If the die roll is greater than 1 and less than or equal to the **TN**, you succeed, but there is nothing remarkable about the success.
- **Failure:** If the die roll is greater than the **TN** but not 20, you fail. Things do not happen as hoped.
- **Fumble:** If the die roll is 20, you fumble (even when the **TN** is 20). You fail miserably. This is the worst **result** possible.

Note that whatever your **result** the **outcome** will depend on comparing your roll with your opponents. So you might **succeed*, but still lose the **prize**. At the same time, your GM should take into account your **result** when narrating the **outcome**, and not use your incompetence as a reason you failed to gain the **prize** if you succeeded, instead focusing on the **resistance**'s superiority despite your **success**.

2.3.5 Outcome

Your roll and that of your GM's roll are compared to determine your overall **outcome** which will be either **victory** or **defeat** for the **contest** as a whole.

If you have a better **result** than the GM, then you have a **victory** and you gain the **prize** set out when the **contest** was framed.

If you have a worse **result**, then you are **defeated** and do not gain the **prize**.

If you both have the same **result**, the better roll wins.

If your rolls tie, then it is a standoff.

A **critical** is a better result than a **success** which is, in turn, a better result than a **failure**, which is a better result than a **fumble**.

Your GM describes what happens, based on their interpretation of the **outcome**.

2.3.5.1 Better Roll

QuestWorlds supports two options for the “better roll”: the highest roll, or the lowest roll. Some groups prefer lowest roll, some higher. The preference toward “low is better”, is often because 1 is a **critical** and 20 a **fumble**, and toward “high is better” because the winner has rolled a higher number. Groups wanting higher abilities to win out slightly more often should use higher roll.

We also use the phrase “worse roll” to indicate the losing roll.

2.3.5.2 Confusing Ties

Your GM will describe most tied **outcomes** as inconclusive standoffs, in which neither of you gets what you wanted.

In some situations, ties become difficult to visualize. Chief among these are **contests** with binary **outcomes**, where only two possible results are conceivable.

Your GM can either change the situation on such a tie, introducing a new element that likely renders the original **prize** irrelevant to both participants, or they can resolve the ties in your favor as a **marginal victory**.

2.3.5.3 Bumps

A **bump** affects the degree of **success** or **failure** of your die roll. A **bump** up improves your **result** by one step, changing a **fumble** to a **failure**, a **failure** to a **success**, or a **success** to a **critical**. **Bump** ups come from two sources: **masteries** and **hero points** (applied in that order). A **bump** down reduces

result by one step, changing a **critical** to a **success**, a **success** to a **failure**, or a **failure** to a **fumble**. **Bump** downs come from one source: **masteries**.

Bumps always affect **results** not **outcomes**, although the outcome could change as a effect of gaining a different **result**.

2.3.5.4 Bump Up with Mastery

If you're engaged in a **contest** against a **resistance**, and you have an **ability** of 10M versus a **resistance** of 10, you enjoy an advantage. You get a **bump** to your die roll from that **mastery**.

You get one **bump** up for each level of **mastery** your PC has greater than your opponent's. So against a **resistance** of 14 a PC's **ability** of 7M is treated as 7 vs. 14 but we **bump** the **result** one step in the favor of the PC; a PC's **ability** of 3M2 is treated as 3 vs. 14 but we **bump** the **result** two steps in favor of the PC.

This reflects the fact that an **ability** above 20 would always succeed on a D20. Because each **mastery** represents **automatic success** (apart from a **fumble**) on a D20, you roll against the remainder, and treat the **mastery** as a **bump**. So on an **ability** of 27 is 7M, which means a **target number** of 7 and **bump** the **result**; an **ability** of 43 means 3M2 or a **target number** of 3 and **bump** the **result** twice.

Opposed **masteries** cancel out, each contestant reducing their **rating** by the same number of **masteries** until only one or neither of them has **masteries**. If you have two **masteries**, then you enjoy the same great advantage over an opponent with a single **mastery** as someone with one **mastery** has over an opponent with no **masteries**. If you have an advantage of two or more **masteries** over an opponent, you can pretty much count on pounding them into the dust.

This allows *Quest Worlds* to represent large differences in ability or **resistance**.

2.3.5.5 Bump Up with Hero Points

You can spend a **hero point** to **bump** up any **result** by one step. You may only **bump** your own rolls, not those of other PCs or **supporting characters**—with the exception of **sidekicks** and **retainers**, which, as extensions of your character, you may spend **hero points** on. You can decide to use a **hero point** for a **bump** after the die roll **results** are calculated (including any **bump** ups from **masteries**).

You can only spend one **hero point** per roll.

2.4 Augments

You may sometimes face **contests** where more than one **ability** may be applicable to the conflict at hand. In such cases, you may attempt to use one **ability** to give a supporting bonus to the main ability you are using to frame the **contest**. This is called an **augment**. For example, if your character has the **abilities** “The Queen’s Intelligencer” and “Master of Disguise”, you might use the latter to **augment** the former when infiltrating a rival nation’s capitol. Similarly, a character with “Knight Errant” and “My Word is my Bond” **abilities** might use one to **augment** the other when in conflict with a **story obstacle** the character has sworn to overcome.

Abilities that represent special items, weapons, armor, or other noteworthy equipment can be a common source of **augments**. However, this grows tired if over-used and you should try and restrict repeated use equipment used in this way to **contests** where they are particularly interesting or apropos.

Augments can also come from other characters’ **abilities** if one character uses an **ability** to support another’s efforts rather than directly engaging in the **contest**. **Augments** can even come from outside resources like support from a community, see §8, or other circumstantial help.

If you have a good idea for an **augment**, propose it to your GM while the **contest** is being framed. When making your proposal, describe how the **augmenting ability** supports the main one in a way that is both *entertaining* and *memorable*. Don’t just hunt for mechanical advantage, show your group more about your PC when you **augment**, their attitudes, passions, or lesser known **abilities**. If you are **augmenting** with a **broad ability** like “Fool’s Luck”, be prepared to describe the unlikely events that tilt the scales in your favor. Your GM will decide whether the **augment** is justified and can refuse boring and uninspired attempts to **augment**, where you are just looking for a bonus to your roll and not adding to the story.

You may only use one of your own **abilities** to **augment** the **ability** you are using in the **contest**, and you may not use an **ability** to **augment** itself. However, **augments** from other players supporting you can add together with your own, along with other **modifiers**, including those from **benefits of victory** and from **plot augments**.

If your GM accepts your **augment** proposal, it will be resolved by one of the methods below. The main **contest** then proceeds as normal, with any bonus from the **augment** added onto the **rating** of the **ability** chosen when **framing the contest**. The **augment** remains in effect for the duration of the **contest**.

2.4.1 Rolled Augments

To grant an **augment** to yourself, or another PC, in an upcoming **contest**, you engage in a **simple contest** against a **moderate resistance** before the main contest begins to determine whether the **augment** attempt results in an advantage. Frame this **augment contest** with your GM, making it clear how your supporting **ability** will achieve the goal of making your **ability** in the main **contest** more effective. **Augment contests** may not themselves be **augmented**, and if your **augment** attempt ends in **defeat**, you may not make another attempt at an **augment** for the main **contest**.

If you are victorious in the **augment contest**, your GM will award a bonus of +3 to the **ability** used in the main **contest**. If your description of how you were using the **augmenting ability** was particularly entertaining, your GM may increase the bonus to +6.

If you are using the advanced mechanic for **degrees of victory or defeat**, use the table below to interpret the **outcome** of the **simple contest**. Note that **penalties** for **defeat** when attempting an **augment** are much lessened compared to a regular **contest**.

AUGMENT TABLE

Contest Outcome	Modifier
Complete Victory	+M
Major Victory	+9
Minor Victory	+6
Marginal Victory	+3
Marginal Defeat	0
Minor Defeat	+0
Major Defeat	+0
Complete Defeat	-3

2.4.2 Quick Augments

While an **augment contest** before the main **contest** can be dramatic and exciting, it does also slow down the flow of play. An alternative approach, called a **quick augment**, alleviates this by replacing rolling with a bonus equal to one-fifth of the **augmenting rating**. If your GM accepts your proposal for an **augment**, simply divide the **augmenting ability rating** by five, round down if necessary, and add the modifier as a bonus to your **ability** in the upcoming **contest**.

It is at your GM's discretion whether to roll **augments** or use **quick augments**. Your GM may choose one preferred approach and use it in every instance, or

choose one or the other on a case-by-case basis based on interest and flow of play.

2.4.3 Plot Augments

A plot **augment** occurs when your GM decides that your **victory** over a previous **story obstacle** is sufficiently relevant to the **contest** at hand as to warrant a bonus much like a supporting **ability** can. The previous **contest** need not have been immediately prior to the current one, as long as its **outcome** remains relevant. The magnitude of a plot **augment** can be +3, +6, +9, or +M. The more challenging the previous **contest** was and the more relevant that **victory** is to the current challenge, the higher the **augment**.

3. Character Creation

The first step in creating your character is to come up with a concept that fits in with the genre of game that your GM intends to run. With that, you can assign **abilities**, **ratings** for those **abilities**, and if required **flaws**.

In addition, you will want to give your character a name, and provide a physical description. We recommend focusing on three physical things about your PC that others would immediately notice, over anything more detailed.

3.1 As-You-Go Method

1. Concept

The concept is a brief phrase, often just a couple of words that tells the GM and other players what you do and how you act. Start with a noun or phrase indicating your **occupation keyword** or area of expertise, and modify it with an adjective suggesting a **distinguishing characteristic**, a personality trait that defines you in broad strokes:

- haughty priestess
- hotshot lawyer
- naïve warrior
- noble samurai
- remorseful assassin
- sardonic ex-mercenary
- slothful vampire

2. Now provide your character with a name.

3. If the series uses other **keywords**, such as those for culture or religion, you may gain one for free.

4. When events in the story put you in a situation where you want to overcome a **story obstacle**, make up an applicable **ability** on the spot. The first time you use an **ability** (including the two you start play with: **distinguishing characteristic** and **occupational keyword**), assign a **rating** to it. This may be a **breakout ability** from a **keyword**. You are restricted to only one **sidekick**.
5. If you want, describe **flaws**.
6. Once you have 12 **abilities** (including the two for character concept), and up to three **flaws** you are done creating your character.

3.2 Assigning Ability Ratings

You have now defined your **abilities**. These tell everyone what you can do. Now assign numbers to each **ability**, called **ratings**, which determine how well you can do these things.

Assign a starting **rating** of 17 to the **ability** you find most important or defining. Although most players consider it wisest to assign this **rating** to their **occupational keyword**, you don't have to do this. Assign a **rating** of 17 to your **distinguishing characteristic**. In some cases, you may treat your **distinguishing characteristic** as a **breakout ability** from a **keyword** in this case, treat it as a +4.

All other **abilities** start at a **rating** of 13.

Now spend up to 20 points to increase any of your various **ratings**, including **keywords**. Each point spent increases a **rating** by 1 point. You can't spend more than 10 points on any one **ability**.

Some genre packs may require you to have additional **keywords** that reflect the setting. These additional **keywords** come from the 12 **abilities** allowance, so in many genres you will have fewer wildcard **abilities** but better fit the setting.

3.3 Keywords

You may build your PC around one or more **keywords**. A **keyword** gives you a package deal: you get a number of **abilities** by selecting a pre-existing character concept, which the player then modifies.

Keywords are best suited for use as the PC's **occupation**.

In certain genres, you may require multiple **keywords**: for example, one for **occupation**, another for species or culture, and perhaps a third for religious affiliation.

Here are two ways to handle **keywords**. If in doubt, choose Umbrella.

Keywords as Packages: Treat **keywords** simply as shorthand for a package of **abilities**. These can be increased together during character creation, but are too unrelated to increase together during a game. You are still free to use the **keyword** as an **ability**, and in fact may prefer to write only the specific **abilities** they've improved on their character sheet.

Keywords as an Umbrella: Treat **keywords** both as raisable **abilities** and as a collection of more specific **abilities**. This approach keeps the character sheet from getting too cluttered but encourages specialization. If your character is particularly good at an aspect of that keyword, you create a **breakout ability** under the **keyword** at a **bonus** from the **rating** of the **keyword** you write these specialized **breakout abilities** under the **keyword**, along with how much they've improved from the **keyword**:

Detective 17 Forensics +2 Handgun +1

In this example, whilst the **rating** for most **contests** in which Detective was an appropriate **tactic** would be 17, for contests involving Forensics it would be 19, and for those involving firing a handgun it would be 18.

In some settings, an **ability** may be listed in more than one of a PC's **keywords**. Choose only one to detail it under.

3.3 Flaws

You may assign up to three **flaws** to their PC. Common flaws include:

- Personality traits: surly, petty, compulsive.
- Physical challenges: blindness, lameness, diabetes.
- Social hurdles: outcast, ill-mannered, hated by United supporters.

Flaws are assigned a **rating** equivalent to your **abilities**. The first **flaw** is rated at the highest **ability**, the second shares the same **rating** as the second-highest **ability**, and the third equals the lowest **ability**.

Certain **keywords** include **flaws**. **Flaws** gained through **keywords** do not count against the limit of three chosen **flaws**. All **flaws** after the third are given the same **rating** as the third **ability**. You may designate **flaws** from **keywords** as your first or second-ranked **flaw**. When **flaws** manifest during play, your GM places you in a **contest** against them, and rolls their associated **ratings** as **resistances** to your efforts. This method applies to **flaws** that primarily present you with additional **story obstacles** to overcome.

Your GM may decide during play that certain **flaws** are better expressed as **penalties** to your attempts to overcome other **resistances**. Divide the value by 5 and round (a **flaw** of 19 imposes a -4 **penalty**). This is appropriate where the player specifies that your **ability** to solve problems drops under certain specific conditions. Examples might include:

- Tongue-tied in large gatherings.
- Lousy with a stick shift.
- Can't stand snakes.

4. Simple Contests

Simple contests are the default resolution method for all **story obstacles**.

4.1 Simple Contest

4.1.1 Procedure

1. Your GM **frames the contest**.
2. You choose a **tactic**, and figure your PC's **target number (TN)** using the **rating** and any **modifiers**. The PC's **TN** is the **rating** of their **ability**, plus or minus **modifiers** the GM may give you.
3. Your GM determines the **resistance**. If two PCs contend, your opponent figures their **TN** as described in step 2.
4. Roll a D20 to determine your **success or failure**, then apply any **bumps**. Your GM does the same for the **resistance**. Compare your rolled number with your **TN** to see how well you succeeded or failed with your **ability**. Remember to apply any **bumps** from **masteries** or **hero points**.
5. Determine **victory** or **defeat**.
6. Describe the **outcome** based on the **story obstacle**.

4.2 Group Simple Contest

In the **group simple contest**, multiple participants take part in a **simple contest**. Each of you in your group conducts an individual **simple contest** against the GM, and the **outcomes** for each side are collated to determine the victor.

A **group simple contest** may pit all of you against a single **resistance**, representing one **story obstacle**. Alternatively, a **group simple contest** may be a series of paired match-ups between two groups of contestants. If you are forced to participate in more than one **contest**, then you face the standard multiple opponent **penalties**.

4.2.1 Procedure

1. Your GM **frames the contest**.

2. You choose a **tactic**, and figure your PC's **target number (TN)** using the **rating** and any **modifiers**. Your **TN** is the **rating** of their **ability**, plus or minus **modifiers** the GM may give you.
3. Your GM determines the **resistance**. If two PCs contend, your opponent figures their **TN** as described in step 2.
4. For each of your group, roll a D20 to determine your **success or failure**, then apply any **bumps**. Your GM does the same for the **resistance**. Compare your rolled number with your **TN** to see how well you succeeded or failed with your **ability**. Remember to apply any **bumps** from **masteries** or **hero points**.
5. Determine the number of **Outcome Points (OPs)** scored by the victor in the **contest** from the **group simple contest** table. On a tie the **victory** goes to the **better roll**.
6. Sum the **OPs** gained for each side.
7. The side with the highest number of **OPs** is the victor in the **contest**.
8. Describe the **outcome** based on the agreed **prize**.

4.2.2 Group Simple Contest Resource Points

GROUP SIMPLE CONTEST TABLE

	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical	1	2	3	5
Success	2	1	2	3
Failure	3	2	1	2
Fumble	5	3	2	0

6. Relationships

Abilities may represent your relationship to NPCs.

6.1 Supporting Characters

Many relationships connect you to NPCs controlled by the GM.

When you try to use one of these relationships to solve a problem, your **tactic** is your relationship **ability**. You can't simply go to the **supporting character** you have a relationship with, stick them with the problem, and expect to see it solved.

If you succeed, the **supporting character** helps you solve the problem. If you fail, they don't. As with any **ability**, you must still specify how the NPC goes

about overcoming the **story obstacle**. Calls on relationships are almost always **simple contests**.

In crucial situations, it may seem dramatically inappropriate for you to solve a problem indirectly, by working through others. Your GM can expose the **supporting character** to serious risk. If the character dies or otherwise suffers a change of status that renders them useless to you, you permanently lose the relationship **ability**.

Before putting **supporting characters** at serious risk, your GM should make sure the players understand the magnitude of the possible consequences.

When **supporting characters** undertake significant risk, the **supporting character** may suffer a **consequence of defeat** commensurate with the level of the **defeat** in the **contest**. Or it may simply be your relationship that is damaged or destroyed.

6.2 Allies

An **ally** is a character of roughly the same level of accomplishment as you, often in the same or a similar line of work. For every favor you ask of them they'll ask one of you. These reciprocal favors will be roughly equivalent in terms of risk, time commitment, resistance class, and inconvenience.

6.3 Patrons

Patrons enjoy greater access to assets than you, either through personal ownership (as in a Merchant Prince) or authority (as in the governor of a province). They may lend you advice or provide you with assets but are too busy and important to personally perform tasks for you. They may hire you to do jobs, or issue orders within a command structure to which you both belong.

When you roll your **patron** relationship, your GM adjusts the resistance class depending on what you have done for them lately.

6.4 Contacts

A **contact** is a specialist in an **occupation**, skill, or area of expertise. **Contacts** provide your information and perform minor favors, but will expect information or small favors from you in return.

You can describe a **contact** as being a particular individual, or as a group of similar individuals.

6.4.1 Occupational Contacts

Any **occupational keyword** can be treated as a source of **contacts**. However, using an **occupational keyword** as a source of **contacts** will always be a **stretch**. To more reliably draw on particular **contacts** associated with your occupation, you should take an explicit ability. Use a **breakout ability** if you are using **umbrella keywords**.

6.5 Followers

A **follower** is a **supporting character** that travels with you and contributes on a regular basis to your success.

There are two types of followers: **sidekicks** and **retainers**.

Followers need not be people, or even sentient beings: you can write up a spirit guardian, trusty robot, or companion animal as a **follower**.

6.5.1 Sidekick

A **sidekick** is a **supporting character** under your control. Most of the time they stay at your side to render assistance, but they can also go off and perform errands or missions on their own.

You should give your **sidekick** a name. You should, when asked, explain how the **sidekick** came to be your **follower**, and why they continue in that role.

Sidekicks start with three **abilities**, one rated at 16 and the others at 13. Any of these **abilities** may be a **keyword**. At least one of them should indicate a **distinguishing characteristic**.

If the sidekick is nonhuman or a member of an unusual culture, one of its three starting **abilities** must be its species or culture **keyword**.

Once you have determined the **sidekick's** base **abilities**, they allocate 15 additional points between three of them, spending no more than 10 on any one **ability**.

You can improve these **abilities** through the expenditure of **hero points**.

You may use any of your **sidekick's** **abilities** as your own. The **sidekick** can go off and do things without you.

6.5.2 Replacing Lost Sidekicks

As a **consequence of defeats** in which they participated, **sidekicks** can be killed or leave your service permanently.

Defeat in physical **contests** can lead to literal death. Metaphorical deaths from non-violent **contests** indicate a break you. The **sidekick** may angrily withdraw from your service, but is more likely to sorrowfully retire. You may be able to bring a **sidekick** back from metaphorical death by overcoming **story obstacles**.

If you lose a **sidekick**, you may create a new one without needing to spend a **hero point**. You must explain how the new **sidekick** has come to be your new **follower**.

You may find it convenient to promote **retainers** to **sidekick** status, giving them names and personalities, with a sudden improvement in **abilities** and **ratings** to match.

6.5.3 Retainers

A **retainer** is a more or less anonymous servant or helper. You may specify a single **retainer**, or, where appropriate to your character concept, an entire staff of them.

Like any other **ability**, a **retainer ability** allows you to overcome relevant **story obstacles** by engaging in a **contest**. To model the contribution of **retainers**, when you are acting, you can use them to **augment** your **ability**. Your GM can rule that **consequences of defeat** apply to **retainers**.

Retainers generally regard you with all the affection and loyalty due to an employer or master. If you treat them more poorly than is expected for their culture, your GM should increase the **resistance class** of attempts to make use of their talents.

If you lose **retainers** for any reason, you can replace them simply by providing a convincing explanation of how you go about it.

6.6 Relationships as Flaws

Certain relationships with **supporting characters** act as **flaws**. They impose obligations on you, prompting your GM to present you with **story obstacles** you have no choice but to overcome.

6.6.1 Dependents

A **dependent** is a person, usually a family member or loved one, who requires your aid and protection. Your GM should periodically create storylines in which your **dependent** is endangered.

Rather than taking a **dependent** as a **flaw**, you may find it more fruitful to specify the nature of your relationship as an **ability**, such as *Love for Wife* or *Love for Son*.

6.6.2 Adversaries

An **adversary** is a rival, enemy or other individual who can be relied upon to periodically disrupt your plans.

The **adversary's** goals are probably the opposite of yours, although they could be a bitter rival within the same community, organization, or movement.

To treat an **adversary** as an **ability**, rather than a **flaw**, describe your emotional response to them. Examples: *Hates Leonard Crisp*, *Fears the Electronaut*, *Sworn Vengeance Against Heimdall*. That way, you still inspire your GM to add the plot elements you desire, but can use your antipathy toward the enemy to **augment** your **target numbers** against them.

7. Hero Points

Hero points (HP) are a resource that you must carefully allocate. They allow you to heighten your **victories** and dull your **defeats**. They are the currency you pay to improve your **abilities** over time.

7.1 Improving Your Character

You start each session with one **HP**. Any time that you take a significant action the GM can award you another **hero point**. The action should involve a **contest** but need not be successful. An action should be heroic or villainous in order to earn a **hero point**, not dull. Are the other players interested in what just happened? Don't trigger **contests** just to win **hero points**, your actions should drive story or character development forward.

During a session you can spend those **HPs** as normal.

Your GM should award a maximum of 5 **HPs** in a session to you.

Unspent **HPs** at the end of the session become **experience points (XPs)** and accumulate between sessions.

When you accumulate 10 **XPs**, you can buy an advance. An advance allows you to select two of the following. You cannot choose an element more than once.

- [] +9 to a standalone **ability** or breakout **ability**; or +6 to a **keyword**.
- [] +6 to a standalone **ability** or breakout **ability**; or +3 to a **keyword**.

- ☐ a new standalone **ability** at 13; or a new breakout **ability** at + 1.
- ☐ a new standalone **ability** at 13.
- ☐ Turn a stand-alone **ability** into a **keyword** by adding a new +1 breakout **ability** to it.

In some genres you may wish to maintain a tally of the total **XPs** earned as a measure of your reputation.

7.1.1 Catch-Ups

To encourage well-rounded characters, a package deal, called a **catch-up**, becomes available whenever you acquire via improvement a new **mastery** in one of your **abilities** (**keyword** or stand-alone). Any time you one of your **ratings** crosses a **mastery** threshold (i.e. 20 -> 21, 40 -> 41, etc). you may also improve up to three **abilities** or **keywords** of your choice increase by three points each, as long as the chosen **abilities** are currently rated five or more points lower than your newly adjusted **rating** in the raised **ability** that triggered the **catch-up**.

You may not increase the bonus of **breakout abilities** under a **keyword** with a **catch-up**, nor does net effective value of a breakout **ability** crossing a **mastery** threshold trigger a **catch-up**. Only a **keyword**'s base **rating** is considered in this context.

7.1.2 Directed Improvements

On occasion your GM may increase one of your **abilities**, by +3, +6 or +9, or give you a new **ability**, usually rated at 13. These are called **directed improvements**.

Directed improvements are usually rewards for overcoming particularly important or dramatic **story obstacles**. They happen immediately, rather than at session's end.

Your GM will tend to use them to raise **abilities** that would otherwise fall behind, but should increase due to story logic, or introduce new **abilities** for the same reason.

9 Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Ability Anything you can apply to solve a problem or overcome an obstacle

Advantage Point (AP) A measure of advantage in an **extended contest**.

Ally A **supporting character** of roughly equal ability to your own.

AP Abbreviation for Advantage Point.

AP Gifting When you help another character, whilst uninvolved in a **contest**, by giving them **advantage points** in an **extended contest**.

AP Lending When you help another character, whilst engaged in a **contest**, by lending them **advantage points**, in an **extended contest**.

Asymmetrical Exchange In a **extended contest**, where you are pressed by an opponent, but want to do something other than contend directly for the **prize**.

Asymmetrical Round In a **scored contest**, where you are pressed by an opponent, but want to do something other than contend directly for the **prize**.

Assist In a **scored contest**, if you are unengaged you may use an **assist** to reduce the **resource points** scored against another character.

Augment Using one **ability** to help another **ability**

Automatic Victory You have an appropriate **ability** and the GM feels **failure** is not interesting, or makes the PC looks un-heroic.

Background Event An off-stage **bonus** or **penalty** applied to a **resource**.

Base resistance The **TN** for a **moderate resistance class**, from which all other **resistance classes** are figured as a **bonus** or **penalty**.

Benefit of Victory Long term positive modifier, because you won a **contest**, against a challenging opponent (not -6 or less than your **ability**). Usually a **state of fortune**.

Bid Also an **AP Bid** or **advantage point bid** is your wager in an **extended contest**.

Bolster A **story obstacle** to apply a bonus to a community **resource**

Bonus A positive modifier.

Boost Spending points ahead of a **group simple contest outcome**, to improve the victory.

Bump An increment of the **result** of a roll, up or down. So a bump up moves a **fumble**, to a **failure**, to a **success** to a **critical**, a bump down moves a **critical**, to a **success**, to a **failure** to a **fumble**. One step is moved per **bump**. It is usually the impact of a **hero point** or **mastery**.

Catch-Up When you cross a **mastery** threshold you can increase lesser used **abilities** to ensure they keep pace.

Climax A **long contest story obstacle** that provides the conclusion to a story.

Contact A **supporting character** who shares an **occupation** or interest with your character.

Contest Where there is uncertainty as to whether a PC can overcome a **story obstacle** or discover a secret, then your GM can call for a contest to determine if the PC succeeds or fails. A contest may be **simple** (one roll) of **extended** (a series of rolls).

Consequences of Defeat Long term negative modifier, because you lost a contest. Usually a **state of adversity**.

Contest of Wherewithal A **contest** that allows a **dying** character to complete one **final action**.

Contest Framing Setting the stakes of the **contest**, what is this conflict about. Often not the immediate aftermath of victory.

Complete Defeat No, and.... You have lost, and the impact is long-lasting, maybe even fatal or terminal.

Complete Victory Yes, and... You have won, and the impact is long-lasting, possibly a permanent change in your favor.

Credibility Test Is it possible to perform the action without an **ability**, with an ordinary **ability**, or only with a **extraordinary ability**?

Crisis Test Used to determine if a **resource** that has a **penalty** creates a crisis.

Defeat Your **result** is worse than the **resistance's** result.

Defensive Response In a **long contest** you can choose a defensive **tactic** which reduces the **resource points** you lose on a negative **result**.

Degree of Victory or Defeat How well did you triumph, or how badly did you fail: **Critical, Success, Failure, Fumble**.

Dependent A **supporting character** who depends on your PC.

Depletion Use of a community **resource** leads to its depletion.

Directed Improvement When your GM grants you a new **ability**, or an increase to an existing one, to recognize a story event.

Distinguishing Characteristic The dominant personality **ability** that others recognize in a character.

Dying A **state of adversity**, where the character's **defeat** will end their participation.

Edge In an **extended contest** adds to the **APs** lost or transferred when you win an **exchange**.

Exchange In an **extended contest** a round is divided into two **exchanges** where both aggressor and defender act. In a **group extended contest** a

round consists of a sequence of **exchanges** where everyone acts in turn. The GM determines the order of action.

Extended Contest A type of **long contest** in which you track the relative advantage one opponent has over another using **advantage points**.

Experience Points (XP) When you do not spend a **hero point** in a session it becomes an **experience point**, which can accumulate between sessions.

Extraordinary ability Certain genres allow player characters to have **abilities** that exceed human norms, these are **extraordinary abilities**. A genre pack normally outlines what is possible as part of its extraordinary powers framework.

Failure Rolling over your **target number**. It can be a **fumble** or just a plain **failure**.

Final Action An attempt by **defeated**, but unengaged, PCs to re-enter an **extended contest**.

Flaw An **ability** that penalizes you instead of helping you.

Fumble The worst **failure result**, a notable failure either due to incompetence or bad luck.

Follower A **supporting character** under your control. Either a **sidekick** or **retainer**

Framing the contest You and your GM agree on the **prize** for the victor, and your tactic in trying to win it.

Group Chained Contest A **chained contest** in which more than a pair of opponents contend for the **prize**

Group Extended Contest An **extended contest** in which more than a pair of opponents contend for the **prize**

Group Scored Contest A **scored contest** in which more than a pair of opponents contend for the **prize**

Group Simple Contest A **simple contest** where one side has multiple participants.

Graduated Goals When a contestant has a **primary** and **secondary** goal, and may have to choose between them if their **outcome** is not a **major** or **complete** victory.

Handicap In an **extended contest** subtracts from the **APs** lost or transferred when you win an **exchange**.

Hero Point Allows you to alter fate for a player character, either by a **bump** to their **result** or a **plot edit**. If unused, becomes an **experience point** at the end of the session.

Hurt A state of adversity, a flesh wound or injured pride, heals at the end of a session.

Keyword A single **ability** that encompasses a range of abilities within it, such as an **occupation** or culture. An **ability** within an **umbrella keyword** is a **break-out ability**, an **ability** within a **package keyword** is a **stand-alone ability**.

Long Contest A **contest** where we drill-down to the individual exchanges that resolve the conflict. We support **scored**, **extended**, and **chained contests**

Major Defeat No, and. You have lost, and the impact is long-lasting.

Major Victory, Yes, and. You have won, and the impact is long-lasting.

Marginal Defeat No, but... You don't get what you want, but the damage may be mitigated.

Marginal Victory Yes, but... You get what you want, but you may have to make a hard choice.

Modifiers Adjustments to a **target number** due to circumstance.

Mastery An **ability rating** that rises above 20 is said to have a **mastery**. **Masteries** cancel each other out in **contests**. **Masteries** that are not cancelled provide a **bump**.

Minor Defeat No... you don't get the agreed **prize**.

Minor Victory Yes... you get the agreed **prize**.

Mismatched Goals When the opposing sides in a **contest** want different **prizes**.

Occupation An **ability** that indicates the profession, or primary area of expertise, of your character.

Outcome A **contest** has an **outcome**, described as a **victory** or **defeat** in obtaining the **prize** that was agreed in **contest framing** for any PCs involved.

Outcome Point A point scored in favor one side in a **group simple contest**

Parting Shot An attempt to make your opponent's **defeat** worse in a **long contest** (**scored** or **extended**), by 'finishing them off'.

Patron A **supporting character** with superior assets.

Penalty A negative modifier.

Prize What is at stake in the **contest**, decided during **framing**.

Rating An ability has a rating, indicating how likely a character is to succeed at using it.

Resistance The forces opposing the PC in a conflict, or concealing a secret that must be overcome by using an **ability** in a **contest**. One of: **Nearly Impossible, Very High, High, Moderate, Low, Very Low**.

Resistance Class The **bonus** or **penalty** to the **resistance TN**, depending on the GM's interpretation of how *dramatically* hard the **story obstacle** is.

Resolution Point (RP) In a **scored contest** an **RP** tracks the advantage one contestant has over the other.

Resource A community **ability** that your PC may draw on.

Result The **outcome** of a die roll against a **TN**. One of **critical, success, failure, and fumble**.

Retainer A **follower** of your PC who is not 'fleshed out' and cannot act independently.

Rising Action A **scored contest** where the **story obstacle** is a step towards the final **story obstacle** of this story.

Risky Gambit In a **long contest** you can take an action that puts you at more risk on defeat, but enhances victory.

Round A **long contest** is broken into a series of rounds, each of which is an attempt to obtain the **prize**. In an **extended contest** a round is further broken into a number of **exchanges** in which all participants have the chance to act.

Scored Contest A **long contest** where we track the relative advantage one contestant has over another using **resolution points**

Sidekick A fleshed out **follower** of your PC who can act independently.

Supporting Characters Additional characters under the player's control that play a supporting role to their PC.

Simple Contest A one roll resolution method, the default **contest** type, used when learning the **outcome** matters more than the breakdown of how you achieved it.

Stand Alone Ability An **ability** raised separately to a **keyword**. It may have been added to the character as part of a **package keyword**, or on its own.

State of Adversity How 'banged up' a PC is, physically or metaphorically, following a **defeat**: **Hurt, Injured, Impaired, Dying and Dead**

State of Fortune A 'boost' to the PC which may be physical or metaphorical.

Story Obstacle Something that prevents you from getting what you want, the **prize**. A **story obstacle** is the trigger for a **contest**.

Stretch A **penalty** applied to an **ability** because it stretches credibility that it is a reasonable **tactic**.

Success Rolling under your **target number**. It can be a **critical** or just a plain **success**.

Target Number (TN) The number, either an **ability rating**, or a **resistance**, to roll under or equal to in order to **succeed**.

TN Abbreviation for **Target Number**

Unrelated Action An action when you are disengaged in a **long contest** that does not relate to your attempt to win the **prize**.

Victory Your **result** is a better roll than the **resistance**.

Version Changes

Version 2.2

- Uses of he/she changed to they/their
- Flagged some rules that are not required, as optional to allow those using the SRD to safely omit them if not required.
- Clarified that contest results are only reciprocal between PCs. When the contest is against a resistance set by the GM, the results indicate whether the PC gains the prize, and the GM narrates the result for the resistance based on this.
- Rephrased the contest results to emphasize: Yes, No, And..., But..., This change is designed to dissuade GMs from misunderstanding that the prize is obtained on a marginal victory, one of the most common result types, and instead encourage GMs to allow PCs to fail forward on such a result by introducing downstream complications.
- Provided clarity that consequences of defeat and benefit of victory are optional and the GM should focus on using the prize to narrate the outcome of a contest, only applying mechanical benefits if they make sense.
- Specific Ability Bonuses are dropped. They were hard for the GM to adjudicate and the same intent is better served by using a stretch on a broad ability when contesting against a PC with a more specific ability.
- A winning group in a Group Simple Contest does not suffer a Consequence of Defeat as a result of a low RP difference victory any more, the GM should narrate consequences from the level of victory, if appropriate.
- Dropped the negative consequences for the winner in an Extended Contest during the Rising Action. If the winner is a PC the degree of success already suggests consequences in addition to the prize on a marginal victory. So this rule is over-complication.
- Made it clear that only a PC should use a parting shot, not the resistance.

- Switched to addressing you the player, using your GM for the Games Master, and we for the game authors
- Long contests include both extended contest and scored contests. Between 1 and 2 extended contests switched to scored contests, this approach restores both variants, but requires changing the generic name to a long contest.
- Dropped edges and handicaps from extended contests - we use a resistance not stats, so makes no sense to have edges and handicaps
- Added alternate mechanisms for determining if resistance advances and when
- Added story-based resistance mechanics
- Added story-based improvements
- Added States of Fortune to mirror States of Adversity. Overall mirrored benefits and consequences more closely
- Added Escalating Contests
- Added Mythic Russia's Plot Edits
- Added Mythic Russia's Pyrrhic Victories for Extended Contests but as Climatic Contests
- Changed degree of success and failure, to degree of victory and defeat, as success and failure are for individual rolls, victory and defeat once compared.
- Simplified how multiple opponents are handled
- Clarified contest outcomes for long contests, and how to determine the overall winner in a long contest
- Do not allow transfers in an extended contest where the abilities differ by 6 or more. Consistent with benefits of victory and prevents 'loading up on mooks' as a strategy.