

UNTOLD AEONS

Evelyn Hobert

January 12, 2021

CONTENTS

1	ROLLING DICE	3
2	CHARACTER CREATION	4
	Characteristics	4
	Derived Attributes . . .	5
	Backgrounds	5
	Starting Skills	6
	Motivations	7
3	SKILLS	8
	Standard Skills	8
	Professional Skills . . .	9
4	STORY POINTS	10
5	STRESS & SANITY	11
	Sanity Checks	11
	Adapting to horror . . .	12
	Recovering Stress	12
6	COMBAT	14
	Wounds	14
	Healing	14
	Initiative	15
	Attacking & Defending	16
7	OPEN QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK	19
	Playtesters	21
	RULES SUMMARY	22

ROLLING DICE

A standard dice roll in Untold Aeons has two "pools" of dice: the skill pool and the difficulty pool. For each pool you roll a number of d6 dice equal to your skill level, or difficulty level respectively. You don't simply add up the values of these dice, but instead you count successes and failures. If you rolled more successes than failures you succeed, otherwise you fail. Successes and failures are counted as follows:

Roll	Skill Dice	Difficulty Dice
6	2 Successes	2 Failures
5	1 Success	1 Failure
4	1 Success	1 Failure
3		
2		
1	1 Advantage	1 Drawback

In addition to this, whenever you roll a 1 on a skill dice you generate an *Advantage*, and when you roll a 1 on a difficulty dice you generate a *Drawback*. These cancel each other out. These don't affect whether you succeed or fail, but they add additional effects to your roll.

Idea: When appropriate, let players roll their skill but without the difficulty dice, and the Narrator rolls the difficulty dice behind the screen. This way the players have some idea of how well they did but are never quite sure.

BONUSES & PENALTIES

Any situational bonuses simply add extra dice to the "skill pool". Similarly, situational penalties add extra dice to the "difficulty pool".

CHARACTER CREATION

CHARACTERISTICS

There are 4 main characteristics that define your character, which all range from 1 to 5. Each of them represents an aspect of your character. Sometimes they can be used like regular skills (*e.g. an Intellect roll could be used to solve a puzzle*), but they're mostly used to influence other mechanics.

To create your character you must distribute 12 points between the 4 characteristics, with a minimum of 1 and maximum of 5 for each characteristic.

Agility

Your character's physical nimbleness, speed, and general athletic capability. It is mostly used for dodging / diving for cover in combat, athletic feats, and your speed in chases.

Toughness

Your character's physical strength, endurance, and health. It determines your Wound limit and Soak, generally making you capable of taking more hits in a fight.

Willpower

Your character's mental fortitude, discipline, drive, and ability to withstand stress. It determines your Stress limit, and is used to resist the effects of stress and retain your composure.

Intellect

Your character's intelligence, education, and ability to learn and process information. Characters with a higher Intellect will have higher initial skills. Intellect can also be used as a "General Knowledge" skill.

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

After deciding on your Characteristics you should calculate your derived attributes:

Wound Limit ($10 + Toughness$)

This represents how much physical damage you can take before you become incapacitated.

Stress Limit ($10 + Willpower$)

Characters with a higher Stress limit are able to withstand more stress before succumbing to it.

BACKGROUNDS

Your character's background represents how you make a living and what your expertise is. In more concrete terms, your background determines your starting professional skills you have access to, but doesn't have much direct influence on the game beyond that.

Todo: *more fluff and more example backgrounds (With a reference to more later in the book?)*

ARTIST

Art/Craft (Any two), History or Science (Biology), Language (Any)

AUTHOR

History, Science (Literature), Science (Any) or Occult, Language (Any)

CRIMINAL

Locksmithing, Sleight of Hand, Appraise, Electronics or Heavy Machinery

LIBRARIAN

Accounting, Language (Any), Any 2 skills as personal specialties

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

Language (Latin), Science (Biology), Medicine, Science (Pharmacy)

OCCULTIST

Science (Anthropology), Art/Craft (Photography), Occult, Language (Any)

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

Art/Craft (Photography), Disguise, Locksmithing, Law

PSYCHOLOGIST

Psychoanalysis, Language (Any) or Accounting, Science (Pharmacy or Biology), Any skill as personal specialty

PROFESSOR / SCIENTIST

Language (Any), Any 3 skills as academic specialties

SOLDIER

Navigation, Heavy Machinery, Language (Any), Any skill as specialty

STARTING SKILLS

After distributing points between your primary characteristics and picking a background you can get started with developing your skills. This is done by spending Experience to improve your skills (as explained below).

Firstly, add all your background skills to your character sheet with a starting rank of 1 (unless they are already on there). Then you can spend 30 Experience, plus an additional $4 \times$ *Intellect* Experience, on any of your skills. If you want to add more professional skills on top of your background skills you will have to pay the cost to learn them.

Note: you are *not* allowed to improve your "Mythos Knowledge" skill during character creation. This can only be done during play.

IMPROVING SKILLS

To improve a skill – or learn a new skill – you need to spend Experience. Experience is typically awarded by the Narrator at the end of every session (or plot arc).

Improving a skill costs Experience equal to the *current* rank in that skill. For example: *if your Persuasion skill is currently rank 3, then it would cost 3 Experience to increase it to rank 4*. To learn a new professional skill you have to spend 2 Experience to gain your first rank in your new skill. You'll have to spend additional Experience to increase it beyond that.

MOTIVATIONS

Todo: *Talk about character Motivations and guide the player to picking starting motivations.*

SKILLS

There are two different kinds of skills: standard and professional skills. Standard skills are all the skills that are on the character sheet by default and start at rank one. These are skills that everyone knows at least to some extent.

Professional skills on the other hand are skills that only some people know, and they aren't listed on the character sheet by default. They're usually more specialised and unique skills.

STANDARD SKILLS

Standard skills are skills that every character possesses (at least at a basic level), and have a starting rank of 1. Professional skills are skills that must be learned either in character creation or during play, therefore these have a starting rank of 0.

General	Social	Combat
Driving	Charm	Brawl
First Aid	Deception	Firearms
Investigation	Insight	
Perception	Intimidation	
Stealth	Persuasion	
Streetwise		
Survival		

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Professional skills can be just about anything you want, but here's a list of some more common ones. Some skills, like "Science" or "Language", require a specific specialisation to be listed, which is done in parentheses after the skill. (These are also marked in the list by having "(*Specific*)" after the skill.)
E.g. "Science (Biology)"

Accounting	History	Piloting
Appraise	Language (<i>Specific</i>)	Psychoanalysis
Animal Handling	Law	Science (<i>Specific</i>)
Art/Craft (<i>Specific</i>)	Locksmithing	Sleight of Hand
Disguise	Medicine	
Electronics	Navigation	
Heavy Machinery	Occult	

— CHAPTER 4 —

STORY POINTS

(I.E. STORY / FATE POINTS)

There are two pools, the Narrator and player pool. The Narrator starts with one Story point, and the players pool starts with 1 point for each player. When a point is used it moves to the other pool. E.g. a player uses a Story point it moves to the Narrator's pool. This means that using a Story point can give you benefits, but will likely come back to bite you at some point in the future.

Whenever someone uses a Story point to get a bonus or re-roll a check they should also describe what's actually happening that would change the outcome of the roll. For example: a player using a Story point to re-roll an Investigation check could say, "...".

PLAYER USES:

- Reroll dice (sorta like pushing)
- deus ex machina: "good thing I brought that shovel!"
(used at the Narrator's discretion)
- +2 on any roll
- +2 difficulty to an NPC's roll
- Trigger a critical hit in combat. (more details on page 17)

NARRATOR USES:

- Trigger a hallucination/phobia/mania/...
- +2 on an NPC's roll
- +2 difficulty to a player's roll
- I need more here :p

STRESS & SANITY

Instead of a Sanity number, characters just have permanent side effects (manias, phobias, ...) when stress goes above the limit. These can then be roleplayed and can also change over time. (e.g. "recovering in a mental ward" as a way to getting rid of them)

SANITY CHECKS

When something happens that could cause distress to a character the Narrator may ask for a "Sanity Check" to see how they react. Sanity checks always use the character's Willpower, and the difficulty of the check will be set based on the severity of the cause. Any Advantages or Drawbacks rolled will result in a short term effect.

Effects	
Success	Gain Stress equal to the difficulty
Failure	Gain Stress equal to the difficulty plus number of failures (<i>before</i> cancelling them out)
Advantage	Adrenaline rush, fearless, bonus on next san check, ...
Drawback	Scream in terror, involuntary action in combat, freeze, ...

If your stress goes above your limit you must make an Willpower roll with 1 difficulty dice for each point you are above your limit. If you succeed nothing happens, though you must roll again if you gain more stress, but if you fail you become Shaken.

If your Stress goes above *twice* limit make an Willpower save or go temporarily insane / fall unconscious. This follows the same pattern as the save for becoming Shaken. So the difficulty is how far you're above your limit (twice the limit in this case), and failing the save makes it happen while succeeding postpones it a bit.

SHAKEN

The goal should be to give the players an "oh no..." feeling when they become shaken.

When you initially become Shaken you suffer from a temporary bout of madness. You are free to roleplay this however you like. Additionally, the Narrator can also use Story points to trigger phobias, manias, delusions, ... for Shaken characters.

While shaken the effects of any Advantages or Drawbacks you roll on a Sanity check become amplified. Drawbacks might cause you to flee in terror, become catatonic or even gain a phobia or mania. On the other hand, if you roll an Advantage on a Sanity check with a difficulty *higher* than your relevant Hardened level your Hardened level increases by one.

ADAPTING TO HORROR

Hardened levels represent how used your character is to seeing different kinds of horrors. There's 3 categories: *Violence*, *Helplessness*, and *Unnatural*. These levels act like the mental equivalent of armor, reducing the stress "damage" you take by your hardened level in the relevant category.

Being hardened also affects and changes the personality of the character, becoming more cold and uncaring for example.

RECOVERING STRESS

Once a day you make an unopposed Willpower check. If your stress is below your limit you lose 1 stress for every success. If it is above your limit you

lose stress equal to half the number of successes (rounded up). You always recover at least 1 Stress.

GOALS FOR SANITY MECHANICS

- Mental Trauma instead of a "Sanity" stat
- Harden over time (i.e. stress "armor")
- Temporary Positive Effects (Adrenaline rush, ...)
- Temporary Negative Effects (Flee, ...)
- Stress gain from Sanity checks
- Shaken when \geq Stress Limit
- Go insane / faint when $\geq 2 \times$ Stress Limit
- Give players more agency in the outcome of sanity checks? (like Trail of Cthulhu)

— CHAPTER 6 —

COMBAT

Goal for combat: Every roll should be meaningful, not just endless "roll to hit, roll for damage, repeat"

WOUNDS

The health / wounds system is very analogous to the stress system.

If your total damage taken is more than your limit you must make a Toughness roll with 1 difficulty dice for each point you are above your limit. If you succeed nothing happens, though you must roll again if you take more damage, if you fail you are Severely Injured.

If your total damage taken goes above *twice* your limit you must make a Toughness save or die. (same mechanic as above) You must also make another save every time you take additional damage (including the damage from being Severely Injured).

The Narrator is also always allowed to ask for stress rolls when significant injuries are suffered. This is done at the discretion of the Narrator.

SEVERELY INJURED

You have suffered a severe injury and are currently incapacitated (be it passed out or simply unable to fight / act) Additionally, you take one damage every minute (or round?) until your receive medical care

HEALING

MEDICAL CARE

A character can receive medical care for wounds either from a First Aid or Medicine skill. First Aid can only be attempted shortly after the injury

was suffered, and can only be attempted once. The difficulty of the First Aid check is based on the severity of the character's wounds and how much time has passed since the injury. A successful First Aid check heals a number of wounds equal to *half* the number of successes rolled (rounded up, and *before* cancellation).

The Medicine skill works very similarly except it takes at least 1 hour to execute, and it heals for the full number of successes rolled instead of just half.

NATURAL HEALING

Once a day you make an unopposed Toughness check. If your injuries are below your limit you heal one wound for every success. If they are above your limit you heal a number of wounds equal to half the number of successes (rounded up). You always heal at least 1 Wound.

INITIATIVE

There are 2 possible types of turns: Fast and Slow turns. In a Slow turn you can take an action *and* move, in a slow turn you can either take an action *or* move. At the start of a round everyone involved in the fight chooses if they want to take a Fast or Slow turn. If multiple combatants go at the same time they can choose the order in which they act. The side initiating the fight also goes first. So, the turn order is as follows:

1. Initiating side (*Fast*)
2. Defending side (*Fast*)
3. Initiating side (*Slow*)
4. Defending side (*Slow*)

ATTACKING & DEFENDING

MELEE FIGHTS

Melee attacks are always resolved as opposed checks between two combatants, usually using the Brawl skill. The attacker always uses their Brawl skill, and the defender has a choice between a few options: Defend, Fight back, or Dodge.

Defending and fighting back both use the Brawl skill, while Dodge uses the Agility characteristic instead. The details of how each choice affect the outcome of a roll are summarised in this table:

Action	Defender Skill	Outcome		
		Attacker Wins	Defender Wins	Tie
Dodge	Agility	Attacker Hits *	No Hit *	No Hit *
Defend	Brawl	Attacker Hits	No Hit	No Hit
Fight Back	Brawl	Attacker Hits	Defender Hits	Attacker Hits

* The Defender also falls prone, regardless of whether they succeed or not.

BONUSES & PENALTIES

You get a +1 bonus to any melee attack roll for every other opponent that's currently engaged with your target.

DAMAGE

The damage dealt by a successful hit is equal to the base damage of your weapon, plus the number of successes rolled (*before* cancellation). Instead of having a fixed base damage like firearms, melee weapons will often deal extra damage based on your Toughness. This is denoted by a "+" after the damage number. The additional damage is equal to *half* your toughness, rounded up. So for someone with a Toughness of 3, a weapon dealing "2+" damage will have a total base damage of 4.

Unarmed attacks always have a base damage of "0+", so their base damage is entirely determined by your Toughness.

CRITICAL HITS

Critical hits double the amount of damage you deal from your successes (but not the weapon base damage). They can only be triggered by spending a Story point after successfully landing the hit.

FIREARMS

Ranged attacks have a difficulty set based on the circumstances of the shot. The target also can *not* defend or fight back like they could in a melee fight. They can still dodge however if they're aware they're being shot at. If they choose to do so the difficulty of the shot is increased by half the target's Agility (rounding *up*). However, the person diving for cover will be prone until they get up again (which takes an action).

BASE DIFFICULTY

	<i>Point Blank</i>	$\leq \text{Range}$	$\leq 2 \times \text{Range}$	$\geq 2 \times \text{Range}$
Difficulty	1	2	3	4

DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

- +1 difficulty when firing at moving target, small target, partial cover, ...
- -1 difficulty when firing at a large target, ...

You also get a +2 bonus to your skill if you spend a round aiming and preparing the shot.

WEAPON TRAITS

Rapid Fire <N>

When you use this weapon you may choose to rapidly fire many shots instead of just one. If you do this you take 1 penalty dice to your Firearms skill. Then, if your attack succeeds, you manage to hit a number of shots up to your MoS (Margin of Success), but never more than **N**. Each shot deals damage as usual (base damage + #S).

RESOLVING ADVANTAGES & DRAWBACKS

(See Genesys p.104 for ideas)

Advantage: - 1: - +1 on next allied skill check - notice something useful - -1 to target enemy next skill check - 2: - extra maneuver - bypass cover/armor/... - 3: - ?

Drawback: - 1: - Suffer 1 stress - 2: - opponent gets free maneuver - +1 to all opponents when targeting this player until next turn - 3: - ?

OPEN QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

- What a bout a RQ-esque Passions mechanic?
- There isn't enough damage...
 - Maybe remove Toughness as armor?
 - * Or use $\lfloor \frac{Toughness}{2} \rfloor$ instead?
 - * This would mess with the Piercing trait too
 - Or use $5 + Toughness$ for wound limit? (could do this for stress too tbh)
 - Re-think crits / chances for extra high damage
 - * It doesn't really make sense to have crits based on advantages, that sorta goes against the "two axes of success". It'd also mean that crit hits generally have lower damage, cause advantages and successes are inversely-correlated.
 - * Maybe crits when your MoS > some number? Maybe as a weapon trait?
 - * Or... Story points for crits? This has potential! :p
- All Stress saves should be Willpower
 - This does mean we need more things to do with Intellect.
 - * Magic / reading tomes is one option
 - * Idea rolls; maybe make them more mechanically relevant
 - * Honestly, just starting skills, idea rolls, and magic is *probably* enough...
- need more Story point uses (especially for the Keeper) and a reason to avoid hoarding them
- maybe also remove Knowledge in favour of Intellect
- Maybe let people roll for sanity with Mythos Knowledge instead of Willpower when it's appropriate

- Idea: what about just getting rid of Backgrounds entirely? instead players could just pick 4(?) professional skills + spend xp on anything. Simple. Quick. Free!
- HYPERLINK ALL THE THINGS!
- Rename Science to Knowledge? it's more general and just better I think
- How to handle shotguns? No clue :p
- Maybe get rid of item traits as a system:
 - work rapid-fire into the weapon ammo stat or something (like coc)
 - still have effects for weapons, but don't strictly codify them
- Look at Darkest Dungeon for Stress ideas
- Also have a look at savage worlds with their "edges and hindrances"
- Combat Idea:
 - Combine Dodge and Disengage into one "action"
 - Instead of always falling prone, just do it on disadvantage?
 - This leaves Defend and fight back as the two main combat options
 - Or maybe totally get rid of the defend/fight back distinction, but just have regular "passive" defense, with the fight back effect as a result of rolling advantages on your defense check
 - Look at the DG combat system too!
 - Idea: only options are Dodge and passive defense (opposed Brawl). Passive defense doesn't do anything special, except you deal your base damage against your opponent if you get an advantage on the opposed roll Dodging (or disengaging) uses Agility, and means you're scrambling for cover or distance. It's still an opposed roll against your opponent's Brawl, but if you lose you will fall prone.

PLAYTESTERS

Thank you to everyone who's helped me with playtesting and providing valuable feedback!

- Gabriel Reich
- Wayne (@Wayne Rossi#2400)
- ... and others!

RULES SUMMARY