GitHack

A fantasy roleplaying game engine

Ralph Lovegrove 2023

1.0 Introduction

This is my OSR game. There are many like it, but this one is mine.

This is a sort of "inverted OSR". More often than not the OSR follows a template of zero-to-hero, poor survivability at low levels, etc. StormHack's protagonists aren't fragile and they can take risks and survive. They're people who have already been places and seen things, and other people will have heard of them.

It's also inverted because the protagonists don't get experience, their Demons do. How much experience is up to the player, because it's directly tied to how much they use their demons in the first place (and you may or may not want to). But playing a PC with little or no demonic side next to a horribly tainted sorcerer is a viable game choice (say, a Moonglum to an Elric).

Aside from that... it's a fantasy RPG engine with all of the normal expectations you'd place on playing a fantasy RPG.

1.1 The Sword and Sorcery Genre

This game is explicitly "sword and sorcery" (first coined by Fritz Leiber in response to Michael Moorcock I believe). This probably doesn't matter at all to you, but there's a lot of Fantasy RPG stuff that isn't Sword and Sorcery, particularly the stuff with a hard-on for extensive world-building and trilogies. S&S fiction forms a body of work that maps out a wider fandom (e.g. the Hyborean age) but you can read the stories independently of one another. They are immediate and self-contained and don't need any wider context.

And there are two very obvious pillars of Sword and Sorcery, which are combat and magic, and these are big parts of the game system. But there's also the energy and competence of S&S protagonists. They're aware of their own mortality, but at the same time they're canny, brave and able to take risks (see above).

1.2 Inspiration

Whitehack, a very different OSR style game by Christian Mehrstam. Adaptable, freeform, no baggage, easy to make it yours.

The very first **Stormbringer** game (St Andre, Perrin, Chaosium). Very swingy character generation. Should be thought of as "roleplaying in the worlds of Moorcock" in the way CoC is "roleplaying in the worlds of Lovecraft" rather than cleaving to any authentic canon or presentation. Amazing approach to demon magic, like nothing else in the 80s.

Sorcerer by Ron Edwards. Great S&S bibliography in the first supplement, **Sorcerer and Sword**. When I read it I mentally connected with Stormbringer 1e. Inspired notions of demons as poorly defined, personal externalised ambition.

2.0 Dice

This engine uses polyhedral dice which you probably have lying around in excess. Just the standard set, mind (even numbers from 4-12 plus 20).

Have 2d20 on hand per player, as well as a handful of d10s (I have a ton of these from the 90s). The Ref will do well to also have a load of d6s handy.

2.1 Ability Checks

When you do something, you'll try to roll a d20 and get equal to or under an Ability Score, but you'll also want to roll as high as possible:

ROLL	WHAT HAPPENS
Hit, 1-4	Marginal success, with tradeoff
Hit, 5+	Complete success
Hit, 10+	Critical success

2.2 Advantage and Disadvantage

When you have a Background that's useful for the plan, justify why it's appropriate (maybe narrate some backstory, a flashback, an anecdote, etc.) and claim an additional d20 as an Advantage. Roll 2d20 and pick the result you like.

Advantages can also come from cunning plans, superior positions, help from others, etc.

Disadvantages might be imposed where the situation is difficult or desperate. In that case roll 2d20 but the Ref picks the result to go with.

2.3 Dice Clocks

Dice Clocks are a pacing tool that the Ref might use at the table. For a given challenge they might throw down a bunch of dice, and you need to knock the dice out one by one, by rolling the face value on the die or higher on a successful roll. When all the dice are cleared, your task is done. This technique might be used for time-sensitive tasks (e.g. picking a lock in combat) and it can also be used in battle to keep track of large numbers of enemies.

2.4 Saving Throws

Saving Throws work just like another Ability Check. The difference is rather than the protagonist choosing to do something, saves come from something being imposed on the protagonist (a sudden hazard, poison, magic, etc.).

2.5 Damage Dice

In combat, weapons have one or more dice associated with them. These are rolled and added to the damage done in the fight. Demon weapons will have the die associated with the weapon's form, plus additional damage dice.

2.6 Demon Dice

Demon Dice are d10s. They're used to commit the Demon to a kind of effect. There are 6 types of demon, each with a list of permutations for what their magics can do and how committing dice to them affects the magic. When you invoke a demon, you take all the dice that it has active and roll them for the scene. Any result that comes up 8, 9 or 10 has that value added to the Demon's Chaos.

3.0 Protagonist

This is the Character Creation chapter. Your characters ("player character", "persona", etc.) are the most important people in the game. You as the controlling player are going to be particularly invested in this character but everyone at the table should be a fan of your character, and you of theirs.

Protagonists have

- six Ability Scores in the range 3-18 (10 average)
- various Backgrounds tagged to some of these Ability Scores
- Demons, also tied to Ability Scores
- other sundry bits like trappings, preferences, appearance, etc.

Nearly all of the Protagonist's info will be written onto the Wheel which dominates the character sheet. You can write free-form on the Wheel; Backgrounds go inside the circle, and Demons go outside (with notches on the wheel where the Demon attaches to the person).

3.1 Ability Scores

There are six Ability Scores:

	CARDINAL	FIXED	MUTABLE
Physical	Strength	Constitution	Dexterity
Mental	Charisma	Wisdom	Intelligence

These go in order around the Wheel as Str-Con-Dex-Int-Wis-Cha. The Cardinal scores tend to be about engaging with things, whereas the Mutable are about observing and adapting. Fixed tend to be about capacity and resilience (and often get used for Saving Throws). However it's your RPG so use them interchangeably as the situation fits. Some suggestions:

SCORE	SITUATIONS
Strength	Fighting, breaking things, restraining/holding on
Constitution	Enduring, resisting (poison, disease, fatigue, sleep)
Dexterity	Crafting, finesse, grace, physical activity using

	balance/agility, stealth
Intelligence	Noticing things, comprehending, making connections, seeing fine details
Wisdom	Feeling/sensing things, willpower and mental fortitude, empathy
Charisma	Communicating and influencing, presentation, wit, performance, dance

Note the chance of success: if the average score is 10, that's a 50% chance on a 1d20 roll. In general, the chance of success will range from 30-70% before you factor in Advantage. Advantage/disadvantage is a bit like having the score shifted up or down by 5 points, although the marginal/complete/critical success probability won't scale exactly like that.

3.2 Backgrounds

Protagonists have 3 backgrounds:

- Family (homeland, people you grew up with)
- Company (people or organisation you fell in with as a young adult)
- Legacy (traits, secrets, inheritance, title or other benefit from ancestry)

Write the Backgrounds in a given segment on the Wheel. When you do something in play that leverages a Background, claim Advantage. Write them free-form and broad (e.g. "mercenaries", "troubadours", "Priesthood of Mu"). I suggest just starting with very simple statements and then fleshing them out in play / when it applies in the game.

3.3 Eminence

When you've defined your Backgrounds, consider up to three lines to describe your Eminence. This is what the other protagonists will know about you. It could be a reputation (for a general skill, for a specific event you were involved in) or it could be a demeanour (something you present in person). Make these face the other players (keep them in a shared document online, write them on a card and put it in front of you on the table, etc.)

If the protagonist somehow becomes marked or tainted, this will form part of their Eminence. It may even eclipse other things about the character.

3.4 Demons

"Magic" means Demons, although Demons don't necessarily present as "magic", setting-wise.

Demons are ambition, obsession, perfectionism, the need to externalise impossible ideas and feelings. They can be literally summoned entities from beyond normal human space, but they could also be supernatural powers from some beast within, or even obscene expertise far above what is generally thought possible (something that might get you burned at the stake in the wrong company). Demons make protagonists good, impossibly good, better than anyone "normal" could hope to be. They also have a cost, which is extracted when their master relies on them once too often.

Demons attach themselves to the outside of the Wheel, which is divided into 36 segments or Decans, 6 per Ability. This is where the demon is embedded, and once it's there, it's stuck. If you use your Demon it will grow and eventually undergo Metamorphosis; this is indicated by marking additional Decans on the Wheel.

There are six kinds of Demon, mapping onto the Ability Scores like an external supernatural design that imitates the internal, human self. These are Puissance (Str), Durance (Con), Conveyance (Dex), Voyance (Int), Temperance (Wis) and Obeisance (Cha). The number of Decans infected and Demons available will depend on the campaign (1-3 notches is weak, 9 would be strong and 15 could be powerful) but note that the game is playable with relatively untainted protagonists shoulder to shoulder with absolute monsters.

3.5 The rest of the character sheet

A few other things you may decide on and write down:

- preferred weapon, armour, fighting style if any
- default Stance in combat, if using Stances
- people and places, shared world-building
- faith, ethnicity, etc.

Make a note of how many boxes you have for the Harm track (equal to Con), and you're done.

4.0 Sword

This is the first of the two main subsystems.

4.1 Combat Basics

1. Combat happens in Rounds, and each Round has 3 phases in order:
   - 1st (fast) Party phase
   - Monster phase
   - 2nd (slow) Party phase
2. Start each round by declaring Stance (if you're using those rules). Then roll Initiative on Dex. If you pass, you get to act before the Monsters in the 1st Party phase, otherwise you act after in the 2nd Party phase.
3. On each Party phase, the protagonists act by hitting, moving etc. Roll attack rolls and work out damage to Monsters.
4. On the Monster phase any Monster that can target and strike at the Party will do so. Roll defence rolls and work out damage to the Harm track.
5. Repeat this until one side quits/flees/is dead etc.

4.2 Attacks on Monsters

Roll the attack roll (usually Str). If you get a hit, work out damage by

- taking the number on the d20 die
- subtracting the Monster's Armour Class
- rolling and adding weapon damage dice

4.3 Defences against Monsters

Roll defence (usually Dex). If it's a miss, take damage:

- roll all the Monster's damage dice per its stat block
- Compare each die to the protagonist's Armour Class
  - If the roll is lower than the worn AC, there's no damage
  - If the roll is up to 2 points higher than AC, mark Fatigue
  - If the roll is 3 or more points higher than AC, mark a Wound

4.4 Weapons

All weapons have one or more dice; typically d4 for small weapons, d6 for medium and d8 for large. Where a weapon has more than 1 die (some large weapons, and also Demon weapons) it's possible to attack more than 1 Monster die in a horde.

Monsters have damage dice listed. Where there's more than one die it could be a claw/claw/bite attack, for example, or just a very large or Demon weapon on the monster's side.

4.5 Armour

Armour runs on the same Armour Class scale for both Monsters and Protagonists. The absolute limit for most humans is Heavy armour. Monsters can be bigger, tougher, and alien so they're not so limited.

AC	EXAMPLE
0	Thin clothes (or no clothes)
1	Thick travelling clothes
2	Light armour (padding, leather)
3	Medium armour (chain, scale)
4	Heavy armour (plate)
5	Very heavy (special training to wear, very limited movement)
6+	Monsters only

4.6 Harm and Healing

Protagonists have a Harm track of boxes. When you take a hit, tick one box if it's Fatigue and mark a cross if it's a Wound.

In general: the Harm Track is numbered and each box is separate. If Fatigue is healed you wipe away ticks but leave any crosses where they are. New damage will be filled in on the next empty box.

Healing

Fatigue gets wiped away with rest, starting right after the combat. Half an hour might be enough to wipe out 3 fatigue boxes right there (maybe less if the PCs are on a forced march) and a night's rest should pretty much clear all Fatigue.

Wounds need time to heal though, and successful rolls on Con (if you're on your own) or some Doctor skill (if being treated). Note that the Harm Track is numbered and the boxes start at 1 and go up to the character's Con; so when you're trying to clear a wound, you need to make a roll equal to or better than the number on the box.

A PC is allowed one Con roll per night to recover one wound. They don't need to target a specific wound box, they just restore the best result they achieve. Medicines may give some Advantage.

When they're being looked after the chances are better:

1. The doctor may roll more than once per day, depending on resources
2. The doctor may have access to medicine that gives Advantage on the roll.

Deep Wounds, Festering Wounds, Incapacity and Death

Mark a Deep Wound with a Star. This needs special treatment to shift. Deep wounds could be gained by a few ways:

1. If the PC has failed 3 healing rolls in a row, one of their wounds may be Deep and need treatment. Make a d20 roll; the wound closest to the rolled number is the one infected.
2. Some Monsters inflict Deep Wounds (but Fatigue as normal). Deep Wounds might be specific to one source (e.g. bite, but not claws).
3. When the Harm Track gets filled, more damage turns Fatigue into Wounds and potentially Wounds into Deep Wounds.

Deep wounds can Fester. If a person continues to fail healing rolls, the Deep Wound spreads to the next Wound down (change the cross to a star).

Should the Harm track get filled up, this happens:

1. Roll a Con save. If you beat the worst wound, you take it in your stride. If you pass, but you don't beat the worst wound, you're briefly out of action but you'll come back in a round or two. If you fail, you're incapacitated.
2. If you're still moving about and taking damage on a full Harm track, start marking off full boxes from the lowest point. Any damage will turn Fatigue into a Wound and a Wound into a Festering Wound. Repeat until you stop getting thumped or you're incapacitated.
3. Speaking of which, if you're incapacitated you need to be stabilised. Either roll Con or the person helping you rolls a relevant roll vs. the worst Wound. Clearing the Wound means you're stable. Success means no change. Failure means you turn another Fatigue box into a Wound. Once you're all Wounds, Con failure probably means death.

4.7 Stances

Combat Stances are a way of keeping track of what the party is doing in combat. Pick a Stance at the start of a Combat Round. You can change it every round if you wish.

STANCE	TACTICS	MONSTER PRIORITY	SCORE
Charge	Move towards enemy and strike	High	Str
Guard	Move with and defend something	Medium	Con
Flank	Move undetected, get the drop on the enemy	Low	Dex
Spot	Keep your distance and call out opportunities	Low	Int
Cast	Do something requiring concentration	Medium	Wis
Talk	Communicate with the other side	High	Cha

Note the Monster Priority. In a mixed group, where the Monster has choice of a few targets, they will always go at the High priority (visibility) ones first.

The Stances explained

When you **Charge** you will always get your chance to swing, even if you failed your Initiative and the Monster hits you with something that incapacitates you. You're going to attract the most anger from the Monsters, and you may get separated unless the rest of the Party comes with you.

When you **Guard** you'll stay close to that place/person/thing and as long as you're guarding, the Monsters will have to go through you to get to them/it. If the Monsters aren't coming to you you may not get to hit them, but any Monster coming into range is fair game.

When you **Flank** you're taking advantage of having not been seen yet. If you scored a hit on Initiative, add that damage to your backstab/sniper shot. Getting into this position before combat is easier than doing the same during combat, and delivering

the backstab is likely to draw attention unless you killed your target on the spot (e.g. with a 10+ hit, the Ref might allow you to keep your hidden status), so more likely than not you need to change Stance next round. If you want to hide again, take a round to Spot, and use that time to hide and sneak.

When you **Spot** you're not attacking (but you still defend whenever targeted). You're looking for opportunities. If you call out to an ally you can give them Advantage on a roll (including defence rolls); if you have Initiative, you can do this twice, and if not, just the once. You can also use this time to reposition.

When you **Cast** you may be doing magic, or you might be fiddling with a device, or picking a lock, or rifling through treasure for a certain ring. You're not attacking, but you still get to defend, of course. The Ref may ask for a separate roll while you're doing this, and possibly set a Dice Clock if the task is difficult.

When you **Talk**, you're trying to communicate (impress, taunt, distract, appeal for a truce, etc.). The outcome of this is unpredictable and of course standing in the front and talking makes you a priority to Monsters, who might not be in the mood for talking. But if you think they have some reason they might listen to you, then the effect could end up changing their intentions. If it doesn't work out, you still get to defend (but not attack).

5.0 Sorcery

Sorcery is obviously the other essential subsystem of this Sword and Sorcery engine.

5.1 Demon Basics
1. At any point in the game a Demon will have at least 1 magic Die, and may have more. Use these for Invocations.
2. When you Invoke the Demon, take their dice and assign for the effect per the Realm.
3. Roll the Demon's dice. The effect will happen whatever, but every die that comes up 8, 9 or 10 adds that number to the Demon's current Chaos.
4. The Invocation lasts for the scene. Note that dice used in the scene (e.g. for Demon Weapon damage) are not counted towards Chaos, they're just part of the effect for the scene.

5. If the Demon's Chaos hits its Threshold, a Metamorphosis happens, with Fallout.
6. The maximum number of Dice the Demon can have is equal to the number of Decans it has infected. You can escalate this number any time, but you can't reduce it until a Metamorphosis happens, at which point it drops back to 1.

5.2 Invocation, Chaos, Metamorphosis, Fallout, Taint

The Demon is always there, but it's only when a Protagonist **Invokes** their Demon that they use its power. Invocation might be called a Suit or Petition or Appeal or a Spell. When Invocations are made, take the Demon's dice and assign them to the effect, and then roll all of them. This is the time when the Demon's Chaos may go up.

An Invocation can be triggered by any suitable in-game event, and the trigger will be right for that character. Let's say a character carries a legendary sword. They might trigger it by drawing it with intent, if their Demon is their superlative skill. Or they might whisper to the sword and cause its runes to flame green, if it's an intelligent weapon conjured from beyond.

Chaos is the measure of how out of control the Demon is. Each Demon has its own Chaos rating which goes up with Invocations. Once Chaos hits a Threshold, the Demon will undergo Metamorphosis. The Threshold is equal to

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100 + 10x[number of Decans]
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Metamorphosis works like this:

1. Mark another Decan. If this Decan is over a Background, that Background is Tainted.
2. Work out Fallout. This will depend entirely on the situation, the protagonist, how their power presents itself, etc.
3. Reset the Demon's Dice to 1, and its Chaos to 0 (noting a new Threshold).
4. Raise the Angst at the table by 1 (for everybody) to represent the growing sense of doom and dread.

Fallout is the awful stuff that happens to the people around the sorcerer when their Demon hits a Threshold. As mentioned above it relies a lot on context, but in general here's some things that could happen (for the Ref to use their judgement):

- the area could be Warped.

- allies could suffer Backlash.
- onlookers could be Horrified.
- a bystander could be Hooked.

See the Ref's section for more details.

Taint is what happens to Backgrounds when at least one of the Decans in that segment is infected with a Demon. The Background still functions as always but gains a dark side which should be brought out in play. Leverage the world-building opportunities of Backgrounds to work this out: if it's Family, then there's something unresolved in the character's past. If it's Company, it's about something the character did with those people, or maybe a debt owed, or something else that causes them to reconnect. If it's Legacy, bring the mystery into play. Work this out between the player and the Ref.

5.3 Realms

There are six Demon Realms:

REALM	POWERS	SCORE
Puissance	demon weapons, fighters, raw energy and destruction	Str
Durance	demon armour, guardians, wards	Con
Conveyance	demon gates, transporters, doors	Dex
Voyance	demons of knowledge, scrying	Int
Temperance	demons of desire, illusion, procurement	Wis
Obeisance	demons of seduction, commanding, terrorizing	Cha

Here's how you can spend Demon Dice in Invocations. The Spend column is the number of dice for each degree of freedom; the columns after are the degrees of freedom (how much damage, how far, how many people, and so on).

Puissance

Call these Weapons, Slayers, Bloodletters, Demon Fighters etc.

SPEND	DAMAGE	RANGE	EXTRA EFFECT	INDEPENDENCE
0	-	close	-	-
1	1d10	ranged	venom, stun, etc.	Independent fighter
2	2d10	far	long term effect e.g. curse	Complex instructions
More	+1d10	+	+	+

Damage is extra d10 damage dice you add on top of your weapon die. *Range* is how much further the weapon can strike over its normal range. *Effect* is any kind of bonus damage (immediate damage caused by venom; long term effects caused by curses, deep wounds, etc.). *Independence* is whether the weapon can act independently of the master (line of sight, or given complex instructions for assassination missions).

Durance

These are Demons of Protection, Demon Armour and Shields, Guardians and Wards.

SPEND	ARMOUR	RANGE	RESISTANCE	PERMISSION (WARDS)
0	-	anchored	no special resistance	0
1	1d10	nearby area	Simple hazards (fire, acid, etc.)	1
2	2d10	moves as directed	Significant dangers (deadly venom, etc.)	2
More	+1d10	+	+	+

Note that by default this demon is anchored to a place (as a Ward) or person (the master usually). If *Range* goes up, the area of protection either goes up or can move to protect more people.

Armour is d10 armour Dice in play. Roll these on the table; the Monsters have to overcome these Dice in combat before they can hit you. *Resistance* is some special kind of resistance. This will normally put aside lesser examples of the threat, and

give Advantage on saving throws against greater threats. *Permission* is something that only really applies to Wards. Roll these like other Dice; when the Ward is interfered with by the thing that's trying to come through, the master will know. Mundane things don't know how to traverse Wards but someone with Demonic power (like a Demon Weapon) might attack them.

Conveyance

These are the Demons of Travel, Teleportation, Gates, etc.

SPEND	RANGE	CAPACITY	SPEED
0	Very short	Personal	Slow
1	Medium	Group	Fast
2	Far	Company	Very Fast
More	+	+	(Instantaneous)

Range is how far the thing can take you before it has to rest. *Capacity* is how much the thing can carry. *Speed* is how fast.

To actually move instantly from one place to another speed needs to be 3+, at which point you can probably travel through solid objects (but you're not protected from landing somewhere fatal on the other end of the hop).

Voyance

Demons of Knowledge, Fortune-Tellers, Scrying Demons and Advisors.

SPEND	RANGE	TIME	DIMENSION	QUESIONS	SENSES
0	Close	Now	Here	1	1
1	Nearby	Recent/Soon	Liminal	2	2
2	Distant	Past/Future	Sidereal	3	3
More	+	+	+	+	+

Like the other Demons, *Range* is about how distant the Demon's vision projects in the now, but there's also *Time* and *Dimension* aspects to how far the Demon can see.

Other degrees of freedom include how many *Questions* may be asked, and how many *Senses* are available to the master. These will still be dependent on the Range of the Demon's vision.

Temperance

Demons of Desire, the wish-granters and illusionists.

SPEND	SIZE	QUALITY	INTRICACY
0	Small	Ethereal	Simple
1	Medium	Convincing	Shaped or Faceted
2	Large	Almost Real	Complex
More	+	Real	Masterwork

These Demons conjure objects and sensations. They can heal, but they are unable to harm. *Size* will be how much of a thing, *Quality* will be how stable or real it feels, *Intricacy* is how complex.

Obeisance

Conniving Demons, Enchanters and other names for Demons operating in the human social sphere.

SCORE	MINDS	NUMBER	EFFECT	DURATION
0	Weak, Suggestible, Animal	One Person	Nudge, Impulse	Brief
1	Critical, Human	Gathering	Feeling, Instinct	Scene
2	Alien, Demon	Crowd	Thought, Reasoning	Longer
More	+	+	+	Indefinite

Minds are about intelligence but also resistance to thoughts, and more complex minds are harder simply because they're less human so harder to know what motivates them. *Number* is just the number to be affected, *Effect* is the kind of change, and *Duration* is obviously how long it lasts (note: "Indefinite" means until something significant happens to change the person's mind).

6.0 Reffing

This is a miscellaneous section with notes on running the game.

6.1 Principles

You don't need me to tell you how to run a RPG *but* here are some things I try to keep in mind:

1. The Ref is a leader, not a manager i.e. they're presenting situations not telling the players how to deal with them
2. Players play Protagonists, Ref plays the World
3. I designed this system so the PCs can be punished and pressured. They can take it, so dish it out. That's what the damage system is all about, that's what Angst and Markers are for. Push Consequences on the PCs, demand Saving Throws.
4. Up to you whether you allow second tries after failures. Two schools of thought, equally valid are (a) no, there's no way back, keep moving forward and make the Consequences change the situation, *or* (b) sure, but you'll make the situation worse (raise Angst, give up a Marker, etc.).
5. Demons are part of protagonists, and their own thing, too. They have personality and they can be played if you want. If your demons are actual intelligent and articulate beings (like fairies) then consider having the player to the left of a protagonist play their demon from time to time.
6. There is no rule about what a Demon is, other than the Demon rules for the powers it give the protagonist.
7. I like emergent settings and I don't like heaps of background, although sometimes it matters. The game is **here** and **now**, *not* somewhere else in another time. Bring the history and backstory and geography into the game at the time when it matters, when it fits the narrative.

6.2 Consequences

When a PC fails a roll, most of the time they just don't get what they want. Examples would be failing to investigate something, failing to gain entry to a place, etc. Whether you should be rolling dice for that is up to you.

Sometimes you set stakes before the roll and say that if the PC takes action and fails, there will be consequences. Some examples:

- Draw unwanted attention (blown cover, new people complicate the situation)
- Piss someone off (debt, revenge)
- Get separated, delayed or sidetracked by a bad situation (arrest, mugging, etc.)
- Lose something valuable (broken, dropped, stolen)

- Cause unintentional damage or harm or fatigue (yourself or someone else)
- Reverse advantage (e.g. the quarry turns around, backed up by friends)
- Raise Angst (individual or global) and describe how this manifests (foreshadowing, etc.)

Adding "hard consequences" to a failure is common for indie games (specifically PbtA) but if you're in the habit of rolling dice a lot, adding a consequence (other than "you don't succeed") can be exhausting. Not every die roll carries the same weight for the player. The Ref should telegraph the stakes if there are consequences.

Another approach is to only impose consequences when the situation is not "controlled" (per FitD). If the situation is Risky or Desperate then applying Consequences is reasonable.

Finally, when you're talking about a Tradeoff (i.e. a hit with 1-4) maybe soften the Consequence; but again that's going to depend on the stakes of the action.

6.3 Combat: Monsters

"Monsters" are anything that's a threat, that will hurt the Party if it gets close. Monsters have a brief stat block which includes AC, Hit Dice, Damage Dice and any special details written in a freeform description. Some examples:

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Goblin: AC2, HD1d6, Damage: knife(1d6), Overwhelm
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Goblins are rubbish on their own but they turn up in mobs of 10 or more. The Ref should just dump a load of hit dice on the table and let the PCs hack away. "Overwhelm" means that normally any one person will be dealing with just one or two, but someone who charges in might get mobbed on all sides and have to defend against 4 different goblins at the same time.

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Cockatrice: AC5, HD5d6, Damage: beak(1d10+Petrification)
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The Cockatrice has a lot of hit dice and a nasty attack. As well as damage, anyone hit needs to save against being turned to stone.

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Ghoul: AC6, HD2d8, Damage: claws(1d6/1d6),bite(1d8*Disease), Unpredictable &
Fast
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Ghouls spread disease through their mouths, but only if they inflict a Wound (Fatigue doesn't count). They're also Unpredictable and Fast so they don't obey normal rules about priority and can cross the arena very quickly.

I'm not going to write a bestiary because you already have one, but here are some general observations:

- increasing AC will make removing all dice harder, especially for non-fighter types. If the AC is lower all the party members have a good chance of removing some dice.
- increasing HD size will make the fight more swingy
- increasing the number of HD (either for 1 monster or several monsters) will make the fight take longer
- bigger damage dice will cause wounds, but small dice will wear down the party with Fatigue
- adding extra effects can massively change the combat; if a PC is taken out of the action (e.g. by petrification) this could be a burden on the party in the rest of the session
- on the other hand, adding effects that only take place after the combat is done won't change the pace, but may add complications later (e.g. disease)
- it's fine if the party blow through all the monsters quickly. Add more waves. Tell the party that in 5 rounds another 10 guards are turning up which will affect the chances of fighting through to the next area. Also let them have some easy victories

6.4 Combat: the Environment

If you want to pay attention to weapon lengths and the environment you're fighting in, here are some suggestions:

1. If everyone's free to move (like on a battlefield) then the side with longer weapons has a better chance. If one side has much longer weapons than the other (say a bunch of people are attacking a pike block) you might apply Disadvantage to the ones with the shorter weapons, until they successfully get in and make a hit. At that point, things could change as the skirmish gets close in...
2. ...and if everything is really close up and in your face, the person with the shorter weapon may have an advantage. Pikes will probably be dropped in favour of hangers and knives at that point.
3. If the physical space is constrained then trying to use a weapon too big puts you at a disadvantage (or advantage to dodge against that weapon). "Constrained"

could be the room itself, or it could be a crowd. "Too big" might be a halberd in a cloister, a sword in a wine cellar, or anything bigger than a knife in a sauna.

6.5 Demons: Fallout

Here are some suggestions for Fallout following Metamorphosis:

FALLOUT	EFFECT	NOTES
Warped	Physical and Perceptual	The surroundings are warped into strange forms. Distances change, new pathways to other spaces are opened up, people get lost in the area easily or see frightening sights, people sicken, animals mutate, foods taste different, colours are wrong, the sunrise is in the wrong place.
Backlash	Physical	Other party members make a Saving Throw or suffer injury.
Horror	Social	The community where this happened is horrified. They tell tales of the person who came through, and hunters go after the protagonist (someone from the community, or another person).
Hooked	Social	A bystander is somehow affected by the Demon. Perhaps a fragment lodges into their soul as the Metamorphosis happens. They are now ethereally connected to the Protagonist.
Marker	Special	If none of the above appeal, consider taking a Marker for later use. This represents bad luck or a price not yet paid.

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HUMAN	WARRIOR	SORCEROR
Strength	Charge	Puissance
Constitution	Guard	Durance

Dexterity	Flank	Conveyance
Intelligence	Spot	Voyance
Wisdom	Cast	Temperance
Charisma	Talk	Obeisance

6.7 World-Building

Eminence is the tool in character creation that announced a Protagonist to the rest of the table. Going one step beyond Eminence, consider using Backgrounds to build the world around you (whether it's an established setting or your own). Family implies tribes, homelands, culture. Company points to factions and rivalries. Legacy is about mysteries of the world, dynasties, beliefs and other curiosities.

If you like Session Zero approaches for generating characters, consider going around the table and have each player announce something about the world that is relevant to the character and that the rest of the party will know as well. As Ref, build these up and maybe bring them out in later sessions.

Throughout play ask players about their Backgrounds. Anchor plot ideas to their Backgrounds in preference to inventing your own, if you can.

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