NESTS & INSECTS

A Roguelike Tabletop Roleplaying Game
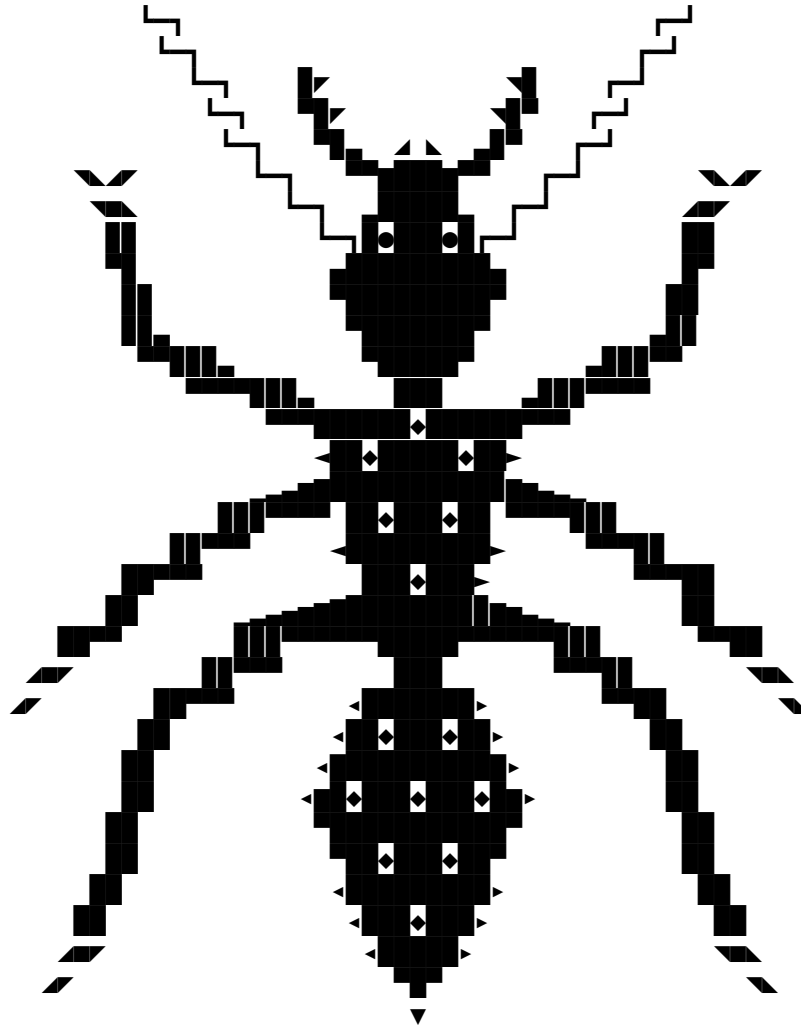
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The Setting

Nests & Insects is a tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG) for 1 to 7 players. One player
assumes the role of the Game Queen and describes the game world to the other players. The
other players control characters who explore, and interact with, the game world.

Players' characters are arthropods that belong to one of six classes: Spider, Wasp,
Scorpion, Ladybug, Beetle and Ants (plural). The characters are mercenaries: assassins
and thugs, hired to invade a Nest and carry out a Job on behalf of some arthropod client.
Nests are the homes of eusocial insects: the nests of Bees, Ants and Termites. Common
Jobs are to assasinate the Queen, or the King; steal nectar, honey, honeydew, aphids
(farmed by ants) or fungi (cultivated by termites); steal, or kill, nymphs; or sabotage
the Nest.

At the beginning of a new game the players' characters enter a Nest to carry out their
Job armed with their natural weapons and armour: mandibles, pincers, stingers, carapaces,
wings, venom, webs. During a Job characters must survive combat with the soldier castes
guarding the Nests. They must also hunt or forage for food to avoid weakening and
starving to death. While foraging, characters may find food items, such as nectar and
fungi, that can be consumed to provide not only sustenance but also healing, enhanced
physical and mental abilities and other benefits.

The Game

Nests & Insects is a Roguelike TTRPG. It is "Roguelike" because it is inspired by
computer roleplaying games (CRPGs) of the Roguelike genre, like Nethack, Angband, Moria
and Ancient Domains of Darkness.

A "Roguelike TTRPG" is a case of board games imitating computer games, imitating board
games: most roguelike CRPGs are inspired by TTRPGs, particularly Dungeons & Dragons, the
grandaddy of all TTRPGs (and all CRPGs to boot). Roguelikes borrow from TTRPGs the
hack-and-slash, dungeon-crawl style of gameplay and common themes of fantasy and science
fiction. Nests & Insects borrows from Roguelike CRPGs game elements like: procedural
generation; a focus on hack-and-slash gameplay; lethal combat; freedom to tackle
challenges in different ways; a focus on exploration of, and experimentation in the game
world; and the need for characters to find sustenance or die.

While Nests & Insects is a roleplaying game, it is not focused on roleplaying, because it
is very difficult for humans to roleplay arthropods (and vice-versa). As in Roguelike
CRPGs, Nests & Insects does not come with a built-in, pre-scripted story, and it is
instead designed to encourage a story to emerge naturally from the interaction of the
players' characters with the rules of the game and the procedurally generated elements of
the game world (including Jobs, Nests and Nests' inhabitants).

Nests & Insects is desigend to be played with no preparation other than reading some of
the rules. At the start of a new game players select a class that determines all of a
character's beginning stats (collectively called Features). The Game Queen then rolls to
procedurally generate the first Room in the entrance to the first Level of the Nest, and
the characters enter and begin their Job. After visiting a Room and defeating its
challenges characters get a chance to rest and recoup their strength, and players can use
experience gained to improve their characters. The game ends when the characters fulfill
the terms of the Job, or give up, or run away, or die.

Everything encountered by characters during a Job is procedurally generated. If the Game
Queen wishes, she can create hand-crafted Rooms, Levels, enemies, items, etc, and include
them in the game; but that is not strictly necessary.

The System

Nests & Insects' roleplaying system is called Fuzzy d100 (fd100). fd100 is a percentile
system where characters are defined by Features rated on a scale from 1 to 100, and a
percentile die (d100) is rolled to determine the outcome of their actions.

Decile dice, combinations of common TTRPG polyhedral dice and a ten-sided die (d10) are used to quantify the effects of actions on a percentile scale: the d20, d40, d60, d80 and the d100 itself. Table 1 illustrates the composition of the decile dice used in fd100.

Decile die	Tens die	Ones die	Range
d20	Not any!	d20	1 to 20
d40	d4	d10	1 to 40
d60	d6	d10	1 to 60
d80	d8	d10	1 to 80
d100	d10	d10	1 to 100

Table 1: Decile dice, used for quantification of percentile effects.

fd100 is designed to eliminate mental arithmetic during combat and other "minigames"; and to encourage creative descriptions of characters' intents and actions. Minigames are special rules for formulaic gaming situations, like Combat, Foraging or Hunting.

To determine the outcome of characters' actions in a minigame, players roll a d100 and compare it simultaneously to two target numbers: a character's Effort, and the Resistance of opponents or the environment. The value of the d100 roll relative to Effort and Resistance determines the Degree of Success or Failure (DoS) of an action. Table 1 outlines the four DoS attainable by comparing a d100 roll to Effort and Resistance.

Roll vs Effort	Roll vs Resistance	Degree of Success
Lower than or equal	Higher	Complete Succes
Lower than or equal	Lower than or equal	Partial Success
Higher	Higher	Partial Failure
Higher	Lower than or equal	Complete Failure

Table 1: Effort, Resistance and Degree of Success.

Two additional DoS, Critical Failure and Critical Success are attainable by the use of modifiers. Static modifiers are compared to the same d100 roll as Effort and Resistance. Dramatic modifiers are compared to one or two new d100 rolls. Characters' intents and actions that grant dramatic modifiers must be described in more detail than static modifiers, to encourage players to use their imagination to help their characters. Table 2 illustrates the use of modifiers to change the DoS of a minigame action.

Roll vs Modifier	Modifier Sign	Degree of Success
Lower than or Equal	Positive	Improves
Higher	Positive	No change
Lower than or Equal	Negative	Worsens
Higher	Negative	No change

Table 2: Modifiers and change to Degree of Success. DoS can improve beyond Complete Success to Critical Success; or worsen beyond Complete Failure to Critical Failure.

In the Combat minigame, characters have two Attack actions: a Base Attack and a Special Attack. The DoS of a character's Attack action determines which Attack hits, or misses. When an Attack hits, it causes injury to the target, and may bestow detrimental effects on enemies, or beneficial effects on allies. When an Attack misses, the attacker suffers detrimental effects. Injury causes the DoS of subsequent actions to worsen. The Combat minigame also tracks characters' Disposition, representing their position in battle and their morale. Better disposition improves the DoS of subsequent Combat actions and worse disposition worsens it. Table 3 illustrates the outcomes associated with different DoS in the context of the Combat minigame.

Degree of Success	Outcome
Critical Success	Both Attacks Hit
Complete Success	Special Attack Hits
Partial Success	Base Attack Hits
Partial Failure	Base Attack Misses
Complete Failure	Special Attack Misses
Critical Failure	Both Attacks Miss

Table 3: Combat minigame outcomes.