Final Fantasy RPG 4e Revised Edition - Core Rulebook

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Forward

Before presenting this product, I would like to introduce myself. I am an RPG player and Game Master since 1994, and one of the people who were part of the Returners group of since the creation of FFRPG's first edition. I followed and helped to carry out the playtest of all "official" editions of the game, through the internet relay chat (IRC) campaigns or playing offline. The group stayed together until the end of second edition's development, around July 2001.

When the development of the famous third edition started, there began to be disagreements among the team, leading to the creation of the first FFRPG "spin-off", called ZODIAC, created by S Ferguson, which, from 2001 until today (the last version is dated 2013), has gone through three editions. The FFRPG (or Returners' FFRPG, as it became known to differentiate the ZODIAC FFRPG) took 8 years to complete the development of its 3rd edition, being officially launched in 2009. But even after such a long development time, it was released with various problems that generated other versions.

There were the works of Fernanda Parker in Brazil, who translated the game to Portuguese; the SeeD group, formed by many of the original members of the Returners, but already without the leadership of Samuel Banner, who was project leader at the time of the 3rd edition, created another version, the FFRPG SeeD, more focused on online gaming via IRC: according to the authors, the game is "impossible" to be played on a real table without computer assistance; Alan Wiling and his team created the FFRPG d20, based on Pathfinder; Scott Tengelin and his team also started another version, which was finalized by Dust, who published, in 2010, the third edition of FFd6 system. Another game published was Chikago's Academia Bahamut, a Brazilian cross between ZODIAC and the original 3rd edition.

Thus, when creating this game, I try to stand on the shoulders of giants. All creators and games mentioned above were sources of inspiration when I build this version. Still, I do not consider myself writing the final or definitive version of FFRPG; as well as electronic games, pen and paper RPG continues to evolve and incorporate different concepts and reach different audiences. I hope that this work is just the kickoff to the fifth edition, sixth edition, and many others, created by fans of this ageless masterpiece: Final Fantasy.

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Acknowledgements

What is Final Fantasy, Anyway?

Final Fantasy is a series of more than thirty console RPGs and two MMORPGs. Though each story in the series is independent, there are numerous recurring themes and elements such as airships and bright yellow avians, well-known monsters and heroic save-the-world storylines.

Originally inspired by Dungeons and Dragons, the Final Fantasy series has grown to take on a flavor all its own. It has become a setting in which the fundamental well-known limits of human capability are casually ignored, where a villain's strength can be measured by their androgyny and size of their hair, and where only a ragtag team of heroes usually under the age of thirty are competent (or incompetent) enough to make a difference. These are stories about good versus evil, twisted technology and heroic perseverance, duality, self-sacrifice, camaraderie and love, and taking on truly legendary enemies with your eight-foot sword and magical umbrella.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1   Play Basics

This PDF contains the entirely of the rules you'll need to know. Like most pen-and-paper RPGs, you'll also need dice – in this case, ten-sided dice. Most rolls in this system are referred as a "d100" roll. To do that, roll two ten-sided dice, usually in two different colors or by rolling one after another. One die will represent the unit digit, and the other die will represent ten's digit. Name what die will be each digit before you roll! A result of "00" is read as 100. You'll usually want two per player but having extras is a good idea.

Setting

The Final Fantasy series has spanned dozens of worlds – from Ivalice, the multiracial land of mercenaries and adventure, to Cocoon, the artificial planet nurtured by psychopathic ancient constructs – and rarely do any two of these worlds operate under the same laws. Some feature magic that slowly chips away at the minds of those who use it, and in others death is little more than a minor inconvenience.

As you can imagine, this means that creating an universal set of rules, one that covers everything from the entire Final Fantasy series, is simply impossible – and ignoring this fact would be irresponsible and downright chaotic at best. Details about each specific game setting may be found on the Worldbooks series, each describing one specific world. At the time of this book, the Worldbooks for Final Fantasy IV, VI and Tactics are already published, and many more are coming.

That said, this book was designed to give you and your friends a chance to explore your own stories, with your own heroes, and very often, in your own unique Final Fantasy world. Whether your campaign will be set a familiar place or whether it will be set in a post-apocalyptic city where the last memories of the deceased are immortalized as whispering magical crystals... well, that's all up to you. Are the heroes tied together by ancient prophecy or are they childhood friends? Are they a crew of gentlemen airship thieves or forced into an uneasy alliance by the outbreak of war? This is a chance to let your creativity shine.

The Game Master

In the video games, Final Fantasy may be accessed with a cartridge, CD-ROM or DVD. In FFRPG, however, it is the Game Master (GM) who

unspools the epic saga, acting as both referee and storyteller. As a storyteller it is their responsibility to create the quests and storylines the players become embroiled in, take on the roles of Non- Player Characters (NPCs), the people and monsters the heroes encounter in their travels, and act as the players' eyes and ears within the game, describing the scenery and situations. As a referee, the GM enforces the rules, set outs the challenges, and keeps the players on task to ensure each session runs as smoothly as possible. It might seem daunting to tackle these challenges with the patience and dedication they deserve, but it is very rewarding.

The Players

Players in the FFRPG step into the shoes of a character with a unique background, personality, skills and powers. These protagonists are known as the Player Characters (PCs), and ultimately shape the story by virtues of their actions and decisions. There are some crucial differences between videogame and tabletop play, however; each player generally only control one character, rather than an entire party. As result, most adventures will see several players cooperating with each other under the GM's guidance, working along to create the story. This game is not a competitive exercise: the players work together to overcome the challenges they create and/or the GM presents, but the collective goal is to have fun together, not to "win". As much as the PC and some NPC may be enemies, players and the GM have the same purpose: to collectively have fun while creating a memorable story.

Kupo! I'm Mog, the moogle, and I'll be your guide through this book. I'll be presenting you some examples, hints, and other assorted help so you can understand more easily the terms and how the game works. I hope you have fun playing this edition of the FFRPG!

Quark! I'm Boco, the chocobo. During the book, I'll bring mechanical advice and optional rules. There are plenty of ways to use this system, and you can change it to better suit your playstyle and your playgroup. So, count with me to bring alternate ways to use this ruleset to your liking!

1.2 Design Principles and Decisions

The game's core concept is "nostalgia". As such, the game must be flexible and customizable enough, so each group can emphasize the aspects they find most relevant to the gaming experience. Final Fantasy have over 25 years of history and different gamers had lots of different experiences.

The gaming unit is the group. Use mechanical rules for the group of adventurers as design decision. This "group" should consider not only the players 'opinion, but also the Game Master's.

Avoid Downtime

Downtime is the time that the player spends "not-playing" during the game. It is basically caused by the fact that not all players can effectively act at the same time, due to the Game Master's inability to hear everyone at the same time. During the gaming experience, all players must be involved in the action as much as possible.

Quick Production

Translating Final Fantasy to tabletop is a huge endeavor. It is best to deliver a small product that can be played with few options than try to describe all the possible options before publishing the game. The game should be modular, with space for "expansions", to allow quicker production. The specific rules for specific game settings should be published into each game module, and the game should be easily "moddable". Also, this means this game can and will be subject to errata, supplements, and needs to be able to evolve with time.

Create Two Games

Yes. The idea is to two games. If you stop to coldly analyze what were the JRPGs of the golden era (8, 16 and 32 bit), you will see that basically the "RPG" is a strategy game and an exploration game (I'm talking of pure RPGs, not Action RPGs or Tactical RPGs). The moment of transition between the two games is the moment of combat. Thus, to emulate this spirit, I am divorcing the combat system from the "non-combat" system to clearly characterize the two moments. Actions out of combat will have another mechanics and will function differently from actions in combat.

Tabletop, But Not Only Tabletop

This is a tabletop game and should be written as such. The rules should be as tabletop- friendly as possible and should be able to play with only pencils, paper and dice. However, RPG evolved with its medium over the time. The rules must be able to work in other environments, like computer assisted, chat-based games and the slower Play-by-Post games.

Chapter 2

Game Setup

2.1   Group Creation

An FFRPG 4e Adventure or Campaign is centered around the Group: the organization or party which the player characters are a part of, whose ideals or structure brings the players much of their general goals or objectives. Group creation is a joint activity between the players and GM and will serve to guide subsequent creation of individual player characters. This activity is very important because it defines what kind of stories will be played. To create the group, follow the 5 steps below.

1. **Choose Traits**

   These special features are the mechanical elements that will influence the way the game is played. Each group has three Traits, chosen from the list below. Traits strongly influence how the game will unfold and should be chosen very well by the GM and the players.

2. **Choose a Name**

   Self-explanatory. The Group may have a name like Returners, Knights of Ivalice, Heroes of Light, Shin-Ra Inc., SOLDIER, or any other name.

3. **Create the Roots**

   What links the group? Why was it founded? What is its reason for existence? Are they the underground resistance to an oppressive empire? Are they members of a kingdom or a corporation? Are they young people from a village in the countryside?

4. **Create the Evil**

   Who is the main antagonist? Who threatens the Group's existence? Remember that this antagonist may (and probably will) change during the course of a campaign.

5. **Write the starting Destiny Points**

   Destiny Points is a Group feature that can be used by players to influence the story. Starting Groups begin with 4 Destiny Points.

Traits

Monster Hunter

This group was founded to kill monsters. You gain experience points (XP) by winning battles against beasts and other creatures.

The Good: You may spend Destiny Points to discover things about monsters.

The Bad: Monsters are always hostile to you. You need to spend Destiny Points to prevent a monster from being automatically hostile.

Sense of Duty

This group was founded to follow an organization. Define what is the specific organization, which may be a church, a kingdom, the army, a corporation, or something else. This Trait can be selected more than once, each time representing an affiliation to a different organization. You gain experience points (XP) by performing missions for the organization.

The Good: You may spend Destiny Points to receive help from the organization. This special aid will depend on the chosen organization.

The Bad: You can't refuse missions from that organization, even if it goes against your character's beliefs, unless you spend Destiny Points.

People's Hero

This group was founded to liberate people from tyranny. You gain experience points (XP) by removing corrupt officials, protecting the public and doing good deeds.

The Good: You may spend Destiny Points to call for assistance of the population. This help may involve shelter, food, hiding, and other support within the reach of the common man.

The Bad: You can't refuse a request for help from a humble man, unless you spend Destiny Points.

Relics from the Past

This group was founded to investigate the secrets of the past, either arcane or technological (depending on the campaign). You gain experience points (XP) by investigating ruins, discovering elder tomes or other ancient artifacts.

The Good: You may spend Destiny Points to find out stories about artifacts and other ancient legends.

The Bad: Many of the ancient things have profound and dire stories, carrying curses. You may suffer the curse that was upon something found, unless you spend Destiny Points.

Mercenary

This group was founded to acquire wealth and power. You gain experience points (XP) by earning Gil or other material possessions.

The Good: You have contacts that appear in the most improbable moments. By spending Destiny Points in any situation, you can find someone interested in buying or selling you things, except if this imply risk of life. However, they may not always charge fair prices, even if this merchant is a cat-man in the middle of an inhospitable mountain.

The Bad: People tend not to rely on mercenaries and will doubt your intentions when they know your motivations, unless you spend Destiny Points.

Nemesis

This group was founded to fight something or someone of great power. This enemy can be a person or organization. This Trait can be selected more than once, each time representing a different enemy. You gain experience (XP) preventing the plans of your Nemesis or defeating him or his lackeys.

The Good: As much as your Nemesis hate you, it always seems to leave a hole in his plans. Whenever you are in a situation of imminent defeat to your Nemesis, you may spend Destiny Points to figure out a way to escape, in order to face it again later. This does not count as defeating or preventing the nemesis's plan in any way: you only save yourself.

The Bad: Your Nemesis know your plans better than anyone. Whenever you try to spend Destiny Points to get any advantage over your Nemesis, you will need to spend twice as many Destiny Points.

Protégé

This group was founded to protect something or someone from harm. Although it is very important for several reasons, this protégé is unable to defend itself from harm, which can be physical or not. This Trait can be selected more than once, each time representing a different entity to be protected. You gain experience points (XP) by avoiding harm for the entity or by restoring it.

The Good: If your protégé is in danger, you may spend Destiny Points to gain a second chance on any Challenge that can save it.

The Bad: If the protégé is destroyed or killed, even if is possible to reconstruct, resurrect or any other way restore it, you lose Destiny Points.

Reputation

This group was founded to earn fame and success. You gain experience points (XP) when you can spread your reputation and become better known and loved. Alternatively, you may decide that your desired reputation is bad reputation and your goal is to become feared and hated.

The Good: Your reputation precedes you. You may spend Destiny Points to impress or even influence people based on your reputation.

The Bad: It's hard to go incognito. When you really need to be undercover, you need to spend Destiny Points, or else you will be recognized or otherwise affected by your reputation.

Group creation is really a huge part of campaign creation. When planning the campaign, you may create the Group (and its Traits) ahead of time and simply present it to the players. However, if you can, just present the setting and try to create the Group along with your players. Below I'll present two different Group examples, all within the same setting.

Setting: Wars of Mana. Taken straight from Seiken Densetsu III (or Secret of Mana 2) storyline, Wars of Mana takes place on a high fantasy medieval world, where six great nations fight over control for the Mana, the magical energy that permeates the world.

1st Group's Traits: Relics from the Past, Nemesis (Ganelon) & Monster Hunter. This group was created to find a way to stop Ganelon, an evil shapeshifter who is using political connections, doppelganger minions and his cunning to force the world into widespread chaos and war. They believe the key to stop them is solving the enigma of the finite Mana, discovering a way to please all the kingdoms. This campaign went with a political undertone, with the PCs struggling to uncover Ganelon's emissaries and stop his machinations.

2nd Group's Traits: Relics from the Past, Reputation & Nemesis (The One without a Name). The players decided they would face a timeless being from another dimension. A creature so terrible and alien that no mortal could even speak his name without delving into the pits of madness. This was even stronger due to one of the PCs being half-mad due to an encounter with it. And what's worse, it seems that no one believed them. This campaign had a very dark horror tone, as the PCs struggled to earn a Reputation and prove to the world that an unseen threat exists. The only ones who listened were the already- corrupted cultists of this Evil God.

2.2   Character Creation

Each player character has its own characteristics. They are individually assigned by the player to his character, based on the concept the player wants to roleplay. To create a player character, do the following steps:

1. **Choose a Name**

   Again self-explanatory. Choose a name that suits the character you want to play.

2. **Choose your Traits and Quirks**

   Each character has a total of 3 Traits and 3 Quirks. 2 of his Traits must be chosen from his Group's Traits, and the last one is chosen from the Trait list, and don't need to be one of the Group's Traits. The 3 Quirks must be chosen from the list in the Character Options chapter, pages 21 to 24. Traits define how the character will earn experience points (XP) and evolve during the game, while the Quirks indicate how it can earn Destiny Points. Remember that the Destiny Points are shared by the Group, hence all Destiny Points income and expenses will come from the Group's total Destiny, rather than being individual characters' values. In addition, all Traits grant ways in which the characters may spend Destiny points.

3. **Choose your Jobs**

   Each player character has two Jobs, chosen from two different lists. The combination of Main and Secondary jobs can allow for a great variety of characters, each with several unique ways of contributing in battle, by wielding unique Abilities against their foes. The jobs are the following: Main Jobs: Adept, Archer, Artist, Black Mage, Druid, Freelancer, Monk, Time Mage, Rogue, Warrior, White Mage Secondary Jobs: Alchemist, Berserker, Defender, Dervish, Fencer, Rune Knight, Phalanx, Squire, Wizard. More details on Jobs and its Abilities are in the Character Options chapter, starting at page 26.

4. **Spend XP to increase your Stats**

   In FFRPG 4e, each character has four Stats, each related to a crystal: Earth, Air, Fire and Water. More details on these Stats are in the fourth chapter, in page 24. A starting character has a total of 200 (two hundred) experience points (XP) to spend on their Stats.

5. **Assign your Skills**

   A character earns 1 Skill point for each 3 Levels he earns. Remember
   that the total Character Level is the sum of his Stat Levels. These
   skill points may be spent as the player wish between the skills, but
   the Stat Level is the maximum amount of skill points that may be
   spent in all skills linked to that Stat. The skills are: Earth Skills:
   Strength, Climbing, Swimming, Intimidation, Tolerance, Jumping.
   Air Skills: Running, Stealth, Piloting, Riding, Thievery, Acrobatics.
   Fire Skills: Infiltration, Perception, Medicine, Survival, Technology,
   Wisdom. Water Skills: Willpower, Bluff, Handle Animal, Charisma,
   Performance, Magic. The Skill details are in pages 24 and 25.

6. **Acquire your Abilities**

   Each Job offers Core Abilities and Specialties. A character acquires all
   Core Abilities he qualifies for and may select one Specialty for each of
   his Core Abilities, if he met the required Stat levels. For more details
   on Abilities, check the fourth chapter, starting at page 26.

7. **Buy your Starting Equipment**

   During character creation, each player can spend 200 Gil in equipment
   and items. It is recommended that you buy at least one weapon for
   your starting character. More details on wealth and equipment may
   be found on the Wealth and Items section, starting at page 88.

8. **Finishing Touches**

   Calculate your HP by adding your Earth value to your Job HP bonus
   and your MP by adding your Water value to your Job MP bonus using
   your Job's guidelines. Don't forget to flesh out the character concept
   using all the cues you've been collecting thus far (Traits, Quirks, Jobs,
   Skills, etc.). Take notes on your character backstory, motivations, per-
   sonality and appearance, as that may help you roleplay your character
   to its fullest potential.

JB wants to create a cute-but-dangerous Geodancer moogle. He begins
with his name, of course JBMog, and looks at his Group's Traits. The
Returners, as his group calls itself, have the Nemesis (Empire), People's
Hero and Sense of Duty (Banon) traits. JBMog doesn't like that Banon guy,
so he decides to have the Nemesis (The Empire) and People's Hero Traits.
To round it up, he fetches one last trait: Protégé (Narshe Mines): He'll fight
to protect his people at the Narshe mines. Looking at the Quirks, he quickly

comes with a good idea of his character: The Moogle is mandatory for him, but the Feral and Fast Quirks also round up his character. All in all, he's a quick moogle who loves animal company, but he's a tad shy in human lands. Then, he notes his jobs. Druid is a quick choice, for a Geomancer character, but he takes a minute to ponder about Secondary Jobs. After some debate, he ends up choosing Fencer to focus on the defense. Next, the Stats. With his 200 XP, and looking at the stats, he decides to make Fire his primary stat, spending 90 XP on that one. This nets him Fire 30, as shown in the experience table. Then, he proceeds to put 10 XP in Water and 40 XP in Earth - bringing these Stats to 10 and 20, respectively. The last 60 XP he proceeds to put in Air, granting him Air 24. His levels are Earth 2, Air 2, Fire 3 and Water 1. With these scores, his character level is 8 (2+2+3+1). For Skills, he decides to grab Perception and Performance. As for Abilities, he notes down the first level Core Abilities: Nature's Path and Awakened (Geomancer) from the Druid, and Block Projectiles from the Fencer. Due to his Stats, he also chooses a Specialty: Nature Warrior

(Polearms & Bows), because what's better than a Polearm- wielder Moogle? He hasn't leveled up enough to get other

Specialties, so he goes to Equipment. Being a Nature Warrior, he proceeds to get the heaviest armor around - a Leather Plate (99 Gil) – and an Iron Spear (63 Gil). With the remaining Gil he buys a Tonic (25 Gil) and pockets the remaining money (13 Gil). Finally, he does his HP (level x4 = 8x4 = 32 + earth (20) totals 52 HP) and MP (level x1 = 8x1 = 8 + water (10) totals 18) calculations. So, his character sheet is done! Let's see how it is: JBMog, 8th level Druid/Fencer Stat Level Value XP Spent Earth 2 20 40 Air 2 24 60 Fire 3 30 90 Water 1 10 10

Skills: Perception 1 and Performance 1. Traits & Quirks: Nemesis (The Empire), People's Hero, Protégé (Narshe Mines); Moogle, Feral and Fast. HP 52/52; MP 18/18; ARM 3; MARM 0 Equipment: Iron Spear (Air vs Earth, 6 damage), Leather Plate Abilities: Nature's Path [Nature Warrior]; Awakened (Geomancer); Block Projectiles Actions: !Geomancy, !Arrow Guard

Chapter 3

Game Engine

3.1   Game Engine

Challenges

During a FFRPG 4th Edition adventure, the characters will face challenges created by the GM to succeed in their goals. A Challenge is a situation within the game, which has, necessarily, the following three characteristics:

a Failure and success chance.

   A Challenge must have a chance to fail and a chance to succeed. Walking on the flat and solid ground is not a Challenge, as it does not have chance of failure; walking in the air is also not a Challenge, because it has no chance of success. Walking on a rope in a cliff may be a challenge because it has chance of failure and success.

b Punishment for failure

   A Challenge must have a punishment for the failure, although it may be retried. This punishment for the failure may simply deny the characters the success' reward. An attempt to open a locked door, using picks and thief's tools is not a challenge if the character can keep trying again any number of times to get the door open, but may be a challenge if the room is filling with acid or if the lock breaks after the first attempt.

c Storytelling impact

   A Challenge must have a significant impact on the story. Riding a chocobo has chance of failure and success and has a punishment for failing (the fall). But in a 10-day trip riding a chocobo to journey between two cities, the way the character will ride does not have a significant enough impact on the story to become a Challenge. However, if the character runs away from a desert castle on fire being chased by bad guys in giant robots, the way he rides can indeed be a Challenge.

To create a Challenge, the Game Master should indicate what is the Challenge's Skill and what is its difficulty. The Challenge's difficulty is its failure chance. Thus, the GM decides what is the Challenge's failure chance, indicated by a number between 1 (one) and 99 (ninety-nine). For a character succeed in this Challenge, his player must roll 1d100 (a 100-sided dice or two 10-sided die, one representing the tens and the other the singles) and the die roll should be greater than the established difficulty. For example,

if the GM establishes as 30 the difficulty of a challenge, the player must understand that he has 30% chance of failing, and consequently 70% chance of success. When you fail in a Challenge, if you have the appropriate Skill, you may re-roll it. For each level in that Skill, you may re-roll the d100 once. Use the best result as your challenge roll. A player may always forfeit a Challenge. If he does, his character automatically fails. Notice that this does NOT means the character wants to fail. A character may still try very hard to achieve a forfeited Challenge but will fail nonetheless. When a player chooses to forfeit a Challenge, he may describe how his character fails.

Optional Rule: **General Acumen** The game assumes that Stats have no direct relation with the character's capabilities, so a character with high Earth and no Strength Skill is not strong. Some groups prefer Stats with a greater impact on challenge. If you use this optional rule, add the Stat Level to the result of all Challenge rolls linked to that Stat's Skills.

3.2 Destiny

Destiny is what distinguishes true heroes and villains from ordinary people. They are a representation of heroism and a tool for sharing the game's narrative. The Destiny Points are a Group shared currency; so, when a player earns Destiny Points, they add it to the Group's Destiny Points; when he spends Destiny Points, these points are deducted from the Group's total.

Earning Destiny Points

There are many ways a character may earn Destiny Points. The main one is through the character's Quirks. In all Quirks, there are ways in which they create problems and force Challenges, hindering the character's ability to achieve its goals.

The GM should provide one Destiny Point for the Group when problems arising from the Quirk create a Challenge that the characters have to overcome in order to avoid serious consequences; two Destiny Points if the problems causing is three or more concurrent or sequential Challenges that have to be overcome to prevent serious problems; or three Destiny Points if the characters cannot avoid the disastrous consequences of the problem caused by Quirk.

In addition, the Game Master may grant Destiny Points whenever the Group achieves a significant goal or according to the story. Also, the Game

Master may give a Destiny Point to force a player to re-roll a Challenge, even against his will.

Lastly, whenever a player chooses to forfeit a Challenge related to one of his Quirks and the forfeited Challenge creates significant problems for the group, give him a Destiny Point. Do not give a Destiny Point if the forfeited Challenge has none or little significative story impact.

Spending Destiny Points

Destiny Points can be spent in various ways. The list below summarizes these forms.

With Quirks

There are two ways of spending Destiny Points with Quirks. By spending one point, the player can add 20 to a Challenge's d100 result if it is related to the Quirk, or the player may add 40 by spending two points.

The player may also wish to spend three points. If he does, the player can declare automatic success on any Challenge related with its Quirk.

Thus, a character with the Brute Quirk can use Destiny Points to add 20 or 40 to the d100 result, or even to automatically succeed in most Strength Challenges, but is unlikely to do the same in a Running Challenge. These points must be spent after rolling the die.

This rule only affects Challenges and may not be used in attack or reaction rolls during combat.

Feat of Heroism

A character may spend four Destiny points to perform feats of heroism that exceed the normal limits of human capacity. The key word here is heroism: Holding a house that would collapse on helpless children with the power of your muscles, disarming a bomb that would explode the city in the last minute, jumping from a height of twenty meters to hold on to a rope and climb to the villain's helicopter, and so on.

A feat of heroism is always successful, even if the character does not have any applicable Quirk. After a feat of heroism, the master can't continue the narrative with a "no", but at most with a "yes, but ...". "Yes, you hold the house and prevent it from falling on the orphans, but you can't hold it more than five minutes and someone will have to get them out of there!" is a good answer to a feat of heroism.

Getting Clues

For one Destiny Point, the players can get a clue or a hint from the GM on a problem. The easiest way to do this is to have a nondescript citizen say a one-liner like "Don Tonberry hate smoke!" or "You can't cross the Lethe river swimming" and then immediately disappear to where it came from. Characters with relevant Traits may also spend a Destiny Point to acquire relevant clues about their field of expertise.

Divine Intervention

By spending 7 Destiny Points, a character can dictate the outcome of an event or include things in the world. This divine intervention can only be invoked to save character(s) from an extremely dangerous situation or to increase the scene's drama, but never to generate an anticlimax. Dictating that "The Shadow Lord is overcome with grief and decides to kill himself" is not an acceptable intervention but saying that "When the group is surrounded, and everyone is about to fall into the abyss, a group of giant eagles comes and grabs the characters, flying them away" is a possible intervention.

If you use divine intervention when your character is dying, in a way that the character does not avoid his death, costs 4 Destiny Points instead of 7. Remember that using divine intervention by 4 points means the character will surely die at the end of intervention, and nothing that the characters can do will avoid this (except Cheat Death, below).

Cheat Death

For 10 Destiny Points, a player can restore a dead character to life or otherwise escape from something that surely would kill him. This "resurrection" is never immediate; the character will always come back only after everyone has already given up. Remember also that Cheat Death does not mean that the character will not have consequences; he may have broken bones, health problems and mental disorders that can leave him at least temporarily incapacitated. The player must decide how, exactly, the character survived (or even came back from hell itself).

With Traits

Each trait has a particular way to benefit from Destiny Point expenditure. They may be activated by spending one Destiny Point. Check the Trait list, on page 8, for its description. For example, a character may spend a Destiny

Point to activate his Protégé Trait and re-roll a Challenge related to saving his Protégé.

Avoiding Disadvantages

Traits mention ways in which the character can receive penalties. If this happens, he must spend Destiny Points to avoid them. One point expenditure avoid the creation of a Challenge that the characters have to overcome in order to avoid serious consequences; two Destiny Points avoid problems causing three or more concurrent or sequential Challenges that the characters have to overcome to prevent serious problems; three Destiny Points must be spent to avoid it if the consequences of the problem caused by Trait does not need a Challenge to happen.

Optional Rule: Solving Controversy When two players cannot agree on something, just have the two spend any number of Destiny Points. Whoever spends more points is right, and the other player is forced to accept his argument.

3.3   Combat

Combat is the raison d'etre of many rules through this book. All rules regarding Jobs, Spells and Equipment are only tools to be used during tactical combat. The rules described below turn combative moments in a simulation that uses all the concepts discussed so far to present tactical challenges to the group. Each fight consists of rounds that follow until one side has fled, surrendered or been defeated.

Initiative

At the beginning of each round, each character involved in the fight will roll 3d10 and record the values. The die roll total is his initiative and the result of each dice means the character's actions. After the initiative roll, the round will continue for 10 phases, starting from phase 1 and ending in phase 10. The phases happen sequentially, in ascending order. In phase 1, all characters who had at least one result "1" in one of the initiative dice may take an action.

If more than one character acts the same phase, the one with the highest total initiative acts first. If the characters have the same total initiative, the one with the greater Air Stat will act first. After acting, the character discards the current phase initiative die, reducing his initiative total. When

there are no more characters able to act in phase 1, the round will move to phase 2 and so on. After phase 10 ends, the round ends and a new round begins.

Action Types

Standard Action

A standard action takes place along the lines described above. The player uses an initiative die with value equal to the current phase to act.

Interrupt Action

This action occurs when the character does not have any initiative dice representing the current phase. The player may discard any TWO initiative die to act.

Action

In this case, the character chooses not to act at this phase even having an initiative die with the correct value. He may then postpone the action to a later phase. The delayed die's result is counted for the initiative total at its original value. A character may not delay more than one action at the same time.

Free Action

The free action occurs without the character spending an initiative dice. It occurs at specific times determined by the rule that creates it. An example of free action is talking.

Speeds

Quick Action

A Quick action occurs when the character acts. The character discards the initiative dice and its effects are immediate.

Slow Action

A Slow (X) action implies that the character must prepare it before performing. He declares the action as usual, and then spends (X) phases preparing

their action. Only after this time has elapsed, the action's effects will happen. During this preparation time, he may not react or do any other actions, but may delay their actions. If he needs to delay more than one action, as he may not delay more than one action, the extra actions are lost.

In addition, if the Slow action require you to prepare your action beyond phase 10, you lose all initiative die this round and, in the next round, roll one fewer initiative dice. At the phase when you finish the preparation, the action's effects happen as usual. For example, a character initiates a Slow (7) action in phase 6. In the next round, he rolls one fewer initiative dice and in Phase 3, the action's effects happen.

Reaction

Reactions occur when the character uses specific abilities. They interrupt other actions and must be resolved before the first action's effects are applied. In response, the character can spend an initiative dice with the current phase's value, use a delayed action or even perform an interruption. Some reactions are free actions. A character may wait to see if an action is successful or not before declaring his reaction.

Attacks and Rolls in Combat

All rolls in combat (attack rolls, reactions, Spells, etc.) have the following characteristics: One Offensive Stat, one Defensive Stat and a difficulty. For example, the !Attack action using a Bow is an Air(Offensive stat) vs Air (Defensive stat) attack, difficulty 40. The roll is as follows: The player will roll 1d100 and add his Offensive Stat's value. He will be successful if the result is higher than difficulty + the target's Defensive Stat's value. If target choose to not resist the action, it is always successful, unless the action says otherwise.

If the attack is against a group (be it ally's or enemy's), the player must perform only one roll. After adding the d100 roll to Offensive Stat's value, it should compare it separately with the sum of difficulty + Defensive Stat's value of each target and may be successful against only part of the opponents.

If the attack deals damage or recover HP or MP, the d100's unit digit will be added to the damage dealt or value healed, unless the attack says otherwise. Finally, if a character re-rolls an attack, either because he can re-roll one of his attacks, or because the target can force his opponent to re-roll his attacks, this character can wait until knowing whether the attack

would be successful or not before choosing to re-roll or not. If a character re-rolls an attack, always use the second roll, even if worse than the first.

Each attack, except Spells, may be Ranged or Melee. All Ranged attacks are noted as such; every non-Ranged attack is Melee. Flying enemies may not be hit by Melee attacks, unless the attacker is also Flying. Spells and Reactions aren't neither Ranged nor Melee and may target Flying enemies normally.

Basic Actions and Reactions

All characters can perform the following actions, regardless of equipment, Job or Abilities.

!Attack

Quick action. If the character is unarmed, perform an Earth vs Earth attack, difficulty 70. The damage is physical, Crush-elemental, equal to Earth level. If it is equipped with a weapon, use the weapon's Offensive and Defensive Stats, difficulty 40, and deal weapon damage. The Wealth and Items section, below, has more details about the weapons between pages 94 to 107. This action may score critical hits, dealing twice damage.

!Dodge

Reaction. Use when suffering a physical attack. Roll Air vs Earth, difficulty 70. If successful, you don't suffer the attack's effects.

!Draw

Quick action. No roll needed. You draw and ready a weapon or inventory item to use it.

!Item

Quick action. No roll needed. You use a drawn item or replace the equipped weapon with a drawn weapon. In this case, the exchanged weapon is stored in your inventory as a free action.

!Flee

Quick action. Roll Air vs Air, difficulty 40. If successful, you run away from combat. Use the opponent with the highest Air Stat as the target of this action.

Critical Hits

Various actions can score critical hits. Unless the equipped weapon or the Ability says otherwise, critical hits double the damage. To score a critical hit, the roll result should be two identical numbers (100, 99, 88, 77, 66, 55, etc.) and the attack must be successful. If an action does not state that it might achieve critical hits, rolling identical numbers does no extra effect.

Elements and Damage

All damage has one element. However, by itself, the element does not influence the damage, unless the character who receives the damage absorbs, or is resistant, immune or vulnerable to elemental damage. The element list is: CRUSH, PUNCTURE, CUT, FIRE, ICE, LIGHTNING, AIR, EARTH, WATER, BIO, LIGHT and SHADOW.

Regardless of the damage dealt, the attack roll's d100's singles digit adds to damage, assuming 0 as 10. If, for example, a character uses an attack that deals 20 damage and rolls 63 on the attack, hitting its target, it will deal 23 damage.

Unless the attack says otherwise, all damage is reduced by the target's Armor, if the attack is physical, or the target's Magic Armor, if the attack is magical. The damage suffered after reducing by Armor or Magic Armor, if any, is deducted from the target's current HP. There is no penalty for having current HP lower than max HP, unless current HP is 0. In this case, the character falls unconscious and may not perform actions while his HP is lower than 1. Lastly, remember to always round down.

Various effects may change the damage dealt. When in doubt, follow the sequence below:

1. **Calculate Base Damage**

   Base damage is calculated by multiplying the damage factor by the relevant Stat Level.

2. **Apply Action Modifiers**

Some actions do 150%, 200%, 75% or any other modifier to the Base damage. Multiply this modifier to the Base Damage.

3. **Account for Strengthen and Weaken**

   Strengthen (Physical or Magic) may increase the damage by 25%. Weaken (Physical or Magic) may decrease the damage by 25%.

4. **Add the roll's singles digit**

   Add the roll's singles digit to the damage, assuming 0 as 10.

5. **Reduce by target's ARM or MARM**

   Reduce the damage dealt by the enemy's Armor, if physical, or Magic Armor, if magical.

6. **Apply target's Modifiers**

   Critical Hits and modifiers like the Shell and Protect status, any elemental weakness or resistance, or even some Action modifiers must be applied after accounting the enemy's defense.

Dealing damage is the most time- consuming part of combat. If a group does not address this problem, it may turn combat into a tedious math exercise. Some tips to speed it:

First, do steps 1 to 3 before you even land a blow. Having your damage pre-calculated works wonders to speed up combat. Instead of writing your damage as !Jump, (200%) 5x Earth, note it as !Jump, 80 damage. Also, account for Strengthen and Weaken as soon as you receive the status, not when you decide to attack. Try to do your math while the other players are describing their actions.

Second, remember that 50% is one half, and 25% is half of a half. 10% is the number, ignoring the unit digit. Round down your calculations to speed them. To find a quarter of 138, for example, halve it first (69) then halve it again (34). 150% is one plus half; 125% is one plus a quarter; and 75% is one minus a quarter.

Lastly, try to cancel opposite modifiers, even if the numbers aren't exactly equal. A !Mighty Blow or Critical Hit against an enemy with Protect deals normal weapon damage; If you use !Kick on a Vulnerable enemy, it also deals normal weapon damage; and so on. Keep in mind that speed trumps math accuracy.

After an undisturbed night's sleep, restore your current HP and MP values to max value. This happens even to unconscious characters. In other

moments, healing provided by any effects doesn't affect unconscious characters, unless its description specifically says that the effect affects targets with zero HP. Similarly, an effect that specifically targets zero HP characters doesn't have any effects on a character with current HP equal to 1 or more.

Optional Rule: **Quick Combat Variant** Tactical Combat, as presented in this chapter, is a deep strategical endeavor that tries to mimic the video game's combat systems. However, there are lots of examples where the group does not want to spend so much time and effort to use these rules. Maybe the game is not focused on combat, or maybe there will be so much combat that using the full rules will grind things to a halt. Maybe the game will be played on a slower medium, like Play-by-Post, where even the simplest tactical combats might take weeks to happen.

In this case, you might want to use this variant rule. If you wish to use it, ignore most of the Character Options chapter: you'll have no need for Jobs, Abilities, Spells, Equipment or Status Effects. Your characters might have a Job or two, but only for flavor.

First, add the following Skills to the Skill list: **Fencing (Earth)**: Melee fighting ability. Including both attacking with melee weapons and defending against them. May be used in situations where you must attack with a melee weapon or defend yourself from enemies attacking in close range.

Marksmanship (Air): Ranged fighting ability. Including both attacking with ranged weapons and defending against them. May be used in situations where you must attack with a ranged weapon or defend yourself from enemies attacking with missiles.

Spellcraft (Fire): Magical prowess. Ability to use magic to enforce your will. May be used in situations where you want to cast spells and use your magical power to harm or heal.

Spell Resistance (Water): Magical defense. Ability to overcome enemy magic. May be used in situations where you want to dispel enemy magic or simply resist its effects. Also used to counterspell.

Second, instead of gaining one Skill point per three character levels, you earn one Skill point for each character level. You still may not spend more Skill points in all Skills related to a Stat than levels you have in that Stat.

Third, each time you re-roll a Challenge due to using a Skill, you "spend" that Skill level. This represent physical, mental and emotional fatigue. Your "spent" Skill levels return once you have the time to rest 8 hours.

Lastly, there are no specific Combat rules. To resolve combats, use Challenges appropriate to the action at hand, using these new Skills or the core Skills, as situation demands. Unlike the tactical combat rules, Destiny Points and Quirks may be used during combat in this variant, as it is handled

by normal Challenge rules.

Later in his adventures, JBMog, now a 30th level character, was in a dungeon with his friends Rob, a 28th level Warrior/Rune Knight and Nyarly, a 31th level Adept/Wizard. After an unfortunate failed Challenge roll, they fell into a trap, activating an iron Golem guardian. GM: "Start of Round 1. The creature rolls 1, 3 and 6 as initiative. Roll your initiative!" JB: "5, 7 and 9. I use my Preemptive Strike to change the 9 to 1. My initiatives are 1, 5 and 7"! Rob: "3, 3, and 8. And Nyarly rolled 4, 5, and 10" GM: "Phase 1. You're first JB, then Golem acts." JB: "I'll strike the golem with my lance. I rolled a 61, plus my Air is 148 total. It hits?" GM: "You try to attack him with your polearm, but the heavy armor of the golem deflects it (The attack targets Earth plus dif 40. His value is 112, so he needed to overcome 152 to hit). He ignores your attacks while he prepares his own. He starts charging a Slow axe attack against Nyarly. We begin Phase 2, and his attack is finished. I roll a 34 (plus his 112 Earth totals 145) for a total 114 damage (110 damage plus 34's singles digit)." Nyarly: "Yikes! I will use an interrupt action and react to use !Will Shield. I spend the 4 and 10 dice. I rolled a 69, for a total of 149. I made it? (The GM nods, as !Will Shield have a 10 difficulty and the Golem's Earth value is only 112.) Nyarly creates a magical shield that blocks the blow and spends 35 MP (114 minus her 44 Armor is 70 damage. She spends half that MP)." Rob: "Seems no one got actions in Phase 2, so I'm acting at phase 3. Seems that his weak spot is Air, so my first action is to draw my Meteo Knuckle. My second action (Rob can act before the golem since his initiative total is 11 and the Golem's is 9) is to use !Item to stash my Old Axe and equip the gloves." GM: "The Golem starts to leak out a strange gas. It attacks all characters, rusting your equipment! Who got

Water lower than 43 is hit with the Weaken (Armor) status until the end of the next round." (The GM rolled a 31. 31 plus the Golem's Fire value is 113, and the attack targeted the group and had dif 70) JB: "I think the only one hit was Rob (Rob nods). My turn now, right? (Nyarly's initiative total is 5, while JB's is 12) I'll use !Advice on Rob. I want him to crit with that knuckle!" Nyarly: " So, now it is my turn. I'll spend 61 HP to unleash a !Fury Brand. Rolled 90 for a total of 181 vs Water+40. If it hits, that's 131 Fire damage and Berserk." GM: "Yeah, that hits. Your staff burns with your magical fire when you sacrifice your lifeforce to summon a cleansing flame. Your strike hits true, dealing 101 damage (that's 121 minus the 30 MARM), but the creature seems to be immune to your mental effect. In the golem's turn at phase 6, he delays his action." JB "I'll keep attacking at phase 7. Let me roll for Geomancy! Hm... 75? What's the Major effect for

Underground? Ah, Cave In. I'll spend the 35 MP to increase the damage. (JB rolls a 51 and hits) That's 101 damage (100 damage plus 51's singles digit)! Take that!" GM: "Rocks falls, and the Golem receives 71 damage from the cave in, but he's still rocking!" Rob: "Phase 8? At last! I'll attack him... Oh, only 11... I miss... No, wait, I crit due to JB! Thanks! I'll do-" GM: "Actually the Golem reacts with his delayed action. He rolls a 17 to block and... (checks Rob's Earth value of 111) fails. Your critical does only 19 damage due to the golem's heavy armor but roll for Meteorite!" Rob: "08 and 66. That's two hits? Nice! The meteors fall dealing 48 and 46 damage, ignoring his MARM. That was a nice crit! I did what, 130 damage?" GM: "113. (The Golem still have 115 HP) So the round ends. Roll your initiative for the second round!"

Optional Rule: **Scaling down the Numbers**

The FFRPG 4th edition kept the d100 mechanic from earlier iterations of the Returner's games. However, the dice used increases the burden of an already-crunchy game. This optional rule revamps the whole game engine with lower numbers, and generally speeds up play, easing the math burden.

To use it, remove all references to Stat Values, keeping only Stat Levels. Anything in the book that references Stat Values uses Stat Levels instead. At creation you have 20 XP. A Stat level of 1 costs 1, 2 costs 4, 3 costs 9, 4 costs 16, 5 costs 25, and so on. You just keep any XP you don't spend (so a 3 2 2 1 character starts with 2 XP leftover).

Character's HP and MP are calculated by adding the Job bonuses to either 10 times your Earth Level (HP) or 10 times your Water Level (MP).

Challenges use a d10 instead of a d100, with difficulties ranging from 1 to 9. Skills works as usual, and Destiny Points adds 2 or 4 to a dice, instead of 20 or 40. When rolling Challenges, you can just roll all die at once and pick the best result.

Combat also uses a d10 instead of d100. Divide all difficulties by ten, rounding down if necessary. !Attack Actions, for example are Stat vs. Stat, difficulty 4. When calculating damage, instead of adding the 1's digit die, you just add 5 damage.

When you roll a natural 10, on an attack able to critical hit, roll again. If the second roll is a hit, the attack is a crit.

Abilities like Time Mage's Wild Magic also just roll a d10. Dervish's Deadly Accuracy is essentially tripling your critical hit rate, so they can threaten a critical on an 8, 9, or 10, and then resolve the confirmation roll as other classes would. The Rogue's Dice deals damage equal to 10 times the d10 results. The Berserker's Unwavering Fury Ability can increase or decrease by 1 the confirmation roll's value.

This option swaps granularity for speed, reducing the mental load on the GM and the players. It is recommended to use it if you don't mind losing the granularity of the d100 and/or the nostalgic experience of using d100, especially if you do not have access or do not want to use computer aid during the game.

Chapter 4

Character Options

Chapter 5

Game Master's Strategy Guide