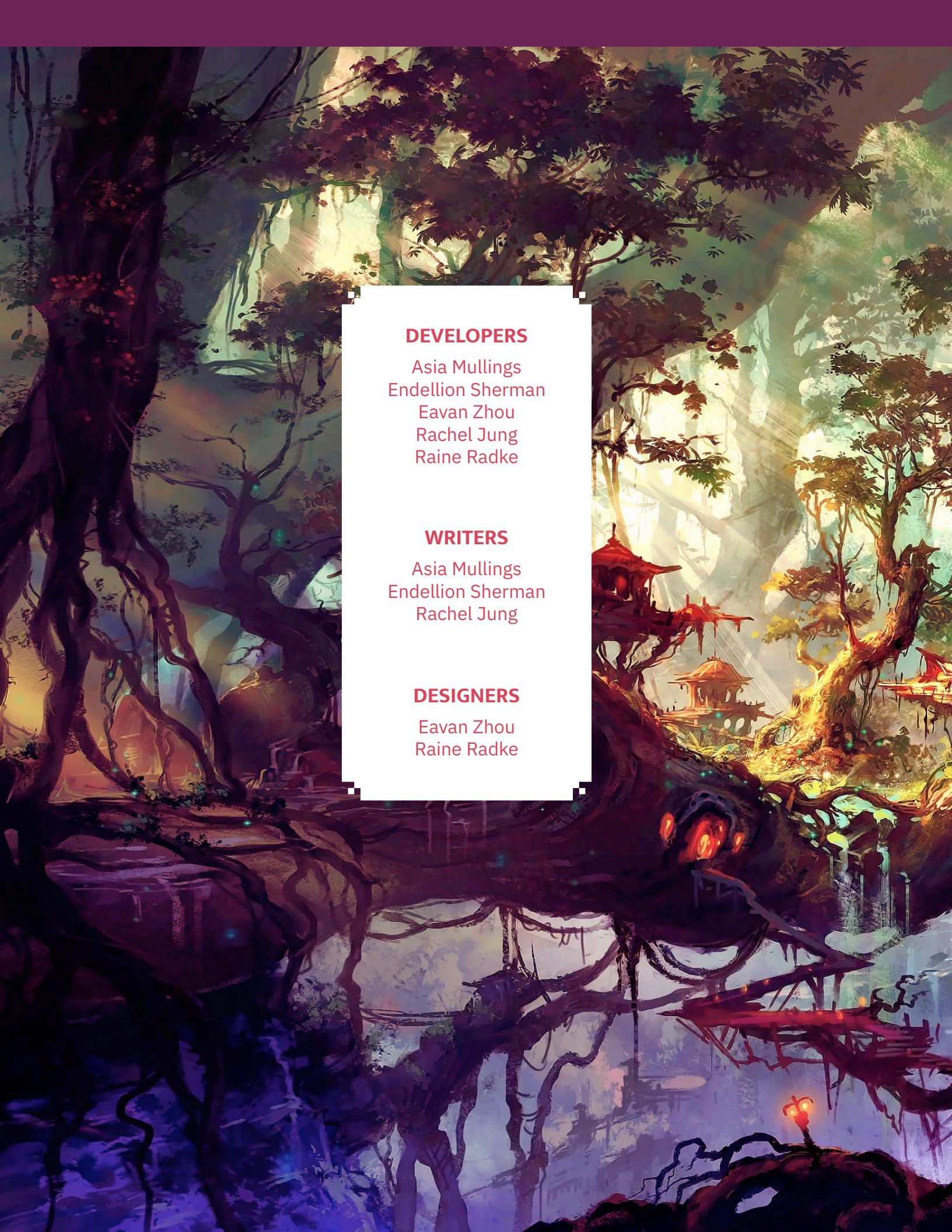




**TOGETHER
BE DIFFERENT**



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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS TOGETHER BE DIFFERENT?

Together be Different (*TBD*) is a loud and social tabletop role-playing game system that centers around teamwork. Its adventures spark moments of togetherness, whether it be through collaborative successes or the resolution of interpersonal conflict. *TBD* invites all to gather around and consider what it means to belong to a family in a setting-neutral system.

One person will play the role of Game Master (GM). The rest of the group will each embody a Player Character (PC). The GM presents the adventure and elaborates on the results and consequences of PC actions. PCs take various actions in response to the scenario set out by the GM and the adventure. This rulebook outlines *TBD*'s core mechanics to prepare GMs and PCs to navigate their own games.

1.1 SAFETY MECHANICS

Tabletop role-playing games can elicit deep and impactful feelings. It is important that all players feel safe during these experiences. *TBD* encourages the use of safety mechanics, like **X-Card** and **Script Changes**, to facilitate gameplay. Establishing safety mechanics should happen before play.

X-Card

The X-Card is a tool that allows any player to edit out any content anyone is uncomfortable with during play. To use the X-Card, at the start of your game, simply say:

"I'd like your help. Your help to make this game fun for everyone. If anything makes anyone uncomfortable in any way... [draw X on an index card] ...just lift this card up, or simply tap it [place card at the center of the table]. You don't have to explain why. It doesn't matter why. When we lift or tap this card, we simply edit out anything X-Carded. And if there is ever an issue, anyone can call for a break and we can talk privately. [...] [This] will help us play amazing games together and usually, I'm the one who uses the X-card to help take care of myself. [pause] Does everyone consent to using the X-Card? [pause] Or is there another tool you would rather use? [pause] Either way, the people playing here are more important than the game we're playing. Thank you for helping make this game fun for everyone!"

X Card was developed by John Stavropoulos. For more information, visit
<http://tinyurl.com/x-ca>

Script Change

When a player or GM finds that they are uncomfortable with the subject matter or actions happening in the game, they can use a Script Change tool. The Script Change tools include Rewind, Fast Forward, Pause, and Resume. At any point during play, a Script Change tool can be used by saying its name out loud, tapping its physical card, or typing its name into a chat.

Rewind (<<) can be used when something has happened in-game that makes a player uncomfortable. The game rewinds to a point before it happened, and play starts again.

Fast Forward (>>) can be used when a player would like to skip past uncomfortable content. The game skips forward to a new spot in the scene.

Pause (||) can be used when a player finds a scene too intense, but still wants to continue playing the scene. A break is initiated and/or the scene is discussed as needed.

Resume (>) can be used when all players are ready to continue play, typically after adjusting or discussing content. Play continues.

Script Change was developed by Beau Jágr. Sheldon. For more information, visit
<https://briebeau.com/thoughty/script-change/>.

1.2 REQUIRED MATERIALS

Before play, gather the following materials for a smooth experience!

Required

1. TBD Rulebook
2. Four to eight six-sided dice (physical or digital)
3. Character sheets (physical or digital)
4. Pencils & erasers
5. Items to represent Moirai tokens (this can be anything that helps you keep count, such as poker chips)

Optional

1. A whiteboard for maps or any visuals
2. Dry erase markers
3. Spare paper
4. Stickers or cue cards with safety pins to use as name tags
5. An adventure campaign (if the GM is not comfortable with improvising)

Abstract

1. Imagination! Immerse yourself in order to enhance your creativity and problem-solving.
2. Time! A single session of TBD can last anywhere between two to four hours, or maybe even longer.
3. Teamwork! A desire and readiness to work collaboratively with other players.

1.3 GAME START GUIDE

1. **Establish safety mechanics.** Whether you're using an X-Card, Script Changes, or a tool of your own, discuss the safety mechanics your group will use. Each player should have a clear understanding of when and how to use them. (See [1.1 Safety Mechanics](#))
2. **Decide on a setting.** Outline the genre, time, and place that you will be exploring in your game. The GM may come up with suggestions. Alternatively, players may propose ideas.
3. **Outline session goal(s).** Define the goal(s) that the players will work towards during the session, such as discovering treasure, taking down a foe, or making an escape.
4. **Create characters.** Follow the steps of Character Creation to develop your PCs. (See [1.5 Character Creation](#))
5. **Start playing.** When everyone is ready, gather your dice and follow your GM!

1.4 STATS

To accomplish tasks in the game, PCs take actions in line with one of four stats: Force, Logic, Wisdom, or Charm.

- **Force** represents a PC's physical prowess. Actions that use strength, agility, coordination, or intimidation are made with Force.
- **Logic** represents a PC's intellect. Actions that use wittiness, idea-generation, learning, or knowledge recollection are made with Logic.
- **Wisdom** represents a PC's intuition. Actions that use perception, empathy, survival, or insight are made with Wisdom.
- **Charm** represents a PC's communication skills. Actions that use persuasion, encouragement, deception, and/or negotiation are made with Charm.

Different Character Roles have different stats.

Certain PCs will be more adept in a skill than others. This encourages a broad range of play styles and approaches to solving problems.

Example: *Players encounter a locked gate that blocks their progress. Player A chooses to scale it using Force, while Player B attempts to pick the lock using Logic.*

However, specific actions will require specific stats (*refer to Action/Stat table*). Players should keep this in mind when creating PCs and deciding on actions during gameplay.

ACTION/STAT TABLE

ACTION	RELEVANT STAT
Skill	Any
Combat	Force or Logic
Social	Wisdom or Charm
Healing	Logic or Wisdom



1.5 CHARACTER CREATION

Player Characters (PCs) are central to each adventure and story *TBD* puts forth. They are bold action makers, creative problem solvers, and irreplaceable teammates. PCs are complicated, bound to both their duties to their team and their personal desires. In spite of this friction, PCs often find beauty in being a part of something greater.

PCs are composed of two parts: their **Character Role** and their **Narrative Option**. Character Roles describe their nature and special abilities, while Narrative Options describe their position on the team.

Note! *Each player should choose distinct character roles and narrative options from each other.*

PC creation follows seven steps:

1. **Choose a Character Role** whose skills and moves suit your interests. Character Roles can be found in Chapter 4.
2. **Choose a Narrative Option** that explores a team member dynamic you find compelling. Narrative Options can be found in Chapter 4.
3. **Decide on the details, such as names, pronouns, appearance, and backstory.** There are no limits to who your character can be.

Backstory Prompt Options:

- Where was your character born? Where were they raised? By whom?
- How did you join the group?
- What led you to join the group?
- Why is the group important to you?
- Consider your character's weapons and tools. Where did they learn to use each of them, and why?
- How did you gain your Role Abilities?
- Does your character have any distinguishing marks (birthmarks, scars)? How did they get them?
- What's one of your character's interests or hobbies?
- What are some of your character's traits that a stranger would remember after encountering them?

Stumped? Bounce ideas off your fellow players to help you define your PC! Take inspiration from the backstories of your teammates.



4. **Decide on two weapons, either melee or ranged.** A weapon that is both melee and ranged, such as a bayonet, counts as two weapons. This helps visualize what attacks may look like. Example - If a player chooses a dagger and a sword, they likely visualize their PC engaging in close combat attacks. As a result, their PC's ability to perform ranged attacks is restricted (beyond throwing their weapons).
5. **Decide on a trinket.** A trinket is a special keepsake that you made, found, were gifted, and so on. Trinkets are also stored in a PC's inventory, accessible whenever needed during gameplay.
6. **Introduce your character.** Share details about your character, including your Character Role, role abilities, and Narrative option.
7. **Forge connections.** After all PCs are introduced, each player selects and answers one prompt from the list below and suggests an answer for it to another PC. The second PC may then accept the prompt and add to it, or offer to modify it to better fit their character. It is highly encouraged that PCs build on prompts to strengthen connections, meaning that if a PC has accepted a prompt, they should explain how they perceive the relationship with the prompt offerer.

Connections Prompt Options:

- The PC that reminds me of my own character is...
- The PC that I want to learn more about is...
- The PC that reminds me of family is...
- The PC who's the most fun to be around is...
- The PC who gives me hope and inspiration is...
- The PC who I feel like I could confide in is...
- The PC who has earned my loyalty is...

Example: *Player A suggests to Player B, “Your character reminds me the most about my own character since we both tragically lost our families and have found love and solace with this new group.”*

Player B may reject the suggestion: “I’m not sure that works. My character resented her family and, rather than finding solace with this new group, she is uncomfortable and unsure how to behave around them.”

Or, Player B may accept and build upon the suggestion: “That sounds great! Maybe our characters spend time comforting each other since we have a shared grief, so we are more comfortable sharing our feelings with each other.”

Note: Notice how Player B has built on the prompt by explaining how they perceive the relationship with Player A as one of comfort where feelings can be shared. Try it yourself!

Players should avoid repeating prompts. Feel free to ask other players for help coming up with prompts or add-ons.

1.6 PLAYING THE GAME

The game begins once a setting has been agreed upon, characters are created, and everyone is ready to bring an imaginary world to life. Games are meant to have self-contained stories told over two to four hours, as this system is built for one shots due to the absence of features typically found in multiple session systems, such as levelling up. However, multi-session one shots are encouraged! They will allow for more play as everyone starts to grasp certain mechanics, such as better foible use, and will let players really get into the groove of the game. After all, the primary goal of the game is for everyone at the table to have fun.

The story created through gameplay is built collaboratively by the players and the game master (GM). All are responsible for creating a fun and safe atmosphere.

- The GM plays the world, explaining the settings PCs find themselves in and playing all the non-player characters (NPCs). They design the overall shape of the story the players move through and what kinds of themes and obstacles players encounter. (*See Chapter 3 for more information about the GM role and running the game*)
- Players are in charge of their respective PC and explain how the PC responds to the world. They declare which actions they would like their PC to take and make dice rolls to determine whether those actions are successful.



THE PLAYER'S ROLE

TBD is designed around collaboration. This requires communication and planning. Explain your goals to your team members and ask them to support you. Suggest ways your character can help another team member when they want to attempt a task.

By relying on team members to overcome challenges, you can experience the power of friendship. Through trust and planning, your talents will increase far past the bounds of what you can accomplish alone.

However, groups are not always perfectly functional. Your character's Foible may sow create friction between you and the group. Engage with your character's flaws, but leave the focus on growing to overcome or cope with your Foible. It should not be a constant fight to get your character to participate in plans. Remember, this is not a game where players fight, even when their characters may be in conflict.

Your character may be a badass, but so are your group members. (Why else would they be on your team?) Make space for other players to shine and make their own decisions in the stories. Also, feel excitement for their stories! Think about how you can create connections and relationships with other PCs.

When group members are hurt, connect with characters emotionally. Healing requires emotional connections. Call upon your character's relationship to another and the bonds between them. Consider your character's inner feelings and those of the character with whom you're speaking. Foster an environment where you and your fellow players feel comfortable exploring intense feelings and potentially difficult topics.

ROLEPLAY 101

Generally, roleplay follows a cyclical structure along the following lines:

1. The GM sets the scene by explaining the current scenario
2. A player takes a turn by describing the actions they'd like their characters to take. If the result of the action is disputable, the GM may ask the player to roll to determine the action's result.
3. The GM interprets the roll and explains how the scenario is changed by the player's action. This usually involves describing the action and its repercussions and sets the scene for the next player's action.

Whenever an odd number is halved, round down.



CHAPTER 2: GAME MECHANICS



2.1 TAKING AN ACTION

Throughout an adventure, players will be given the opportunity to take actions. When an action's resolution is in dispute, players roll dice to attempt the action.

ROLLING DICE

When dice are rolled, the values on their faces are summed and then the rolling PC's relevant skill modifier is added. The result is then compared to the Action Difficulty Table. The roll must be greater or equal to the difficulty in order to succeed.

During TBD sessions, only players roll dice to determine the outcome of actions. After each roll, the GM describes the outcome of the player's action and how the world reacts to it. When players fail rolls, they are put at a disadvantage. Players may lose progress towards their goals or their enemies may make progress against them.

More difficult actions require more dice in order to succeed. Adding or removing dice from rolls can thus greatly impact gameplay (see Help Actions). If a player's dice pool is ever reduced to zero, they automatically fail the action or cannot take it at all.

Players may reroll the ones and twos on their dice in exchange for taking strain. Each one or two that is rerolled gives the player two (2) strain.

HELP ACTIONS

One player's success benefits the entire team. When a player acts to directly help another PC accomplish their goal or give them an advantage, they are taking a help action. Successful help actions grant the PC being helped one (1) additional d6 to their dice pool. Players can add one (1) die to their pool for each successful help action taken before their roll.

Example: *Player A and Player B must overcome a pair of guards. Player A successfully distracts the guards, giving Player B an opportunity to strike. Player B points this out to the GM and gains 1d6 to their roll when attempting to knock the guards out.*

Advantages that create lasting effects in the story can create ongoing additional dice to rolls interacting with that element. This should only be rewarded for advantages that were difficult to achieve or used a lot of creativity. It is up to the GM to decide if dice bonuses are within reason.

Example: *Players have spent three actions intimidating a Dangerous NPC and have rolled a Flourish. The GM explains that this NPC is entirely cowed and will do as the players ask. For the remainder of the session, players are granted one (1) additional die when making social checks against the NPC.*

BUILDING DICE POOLS

1. Determine what action the PC is taking, what stat they are using, and what outcome they intend from taking the action
2. The GM lets the player know the action difficulty (based on the action complexity and number of players)
3. The player constructs the dice pool

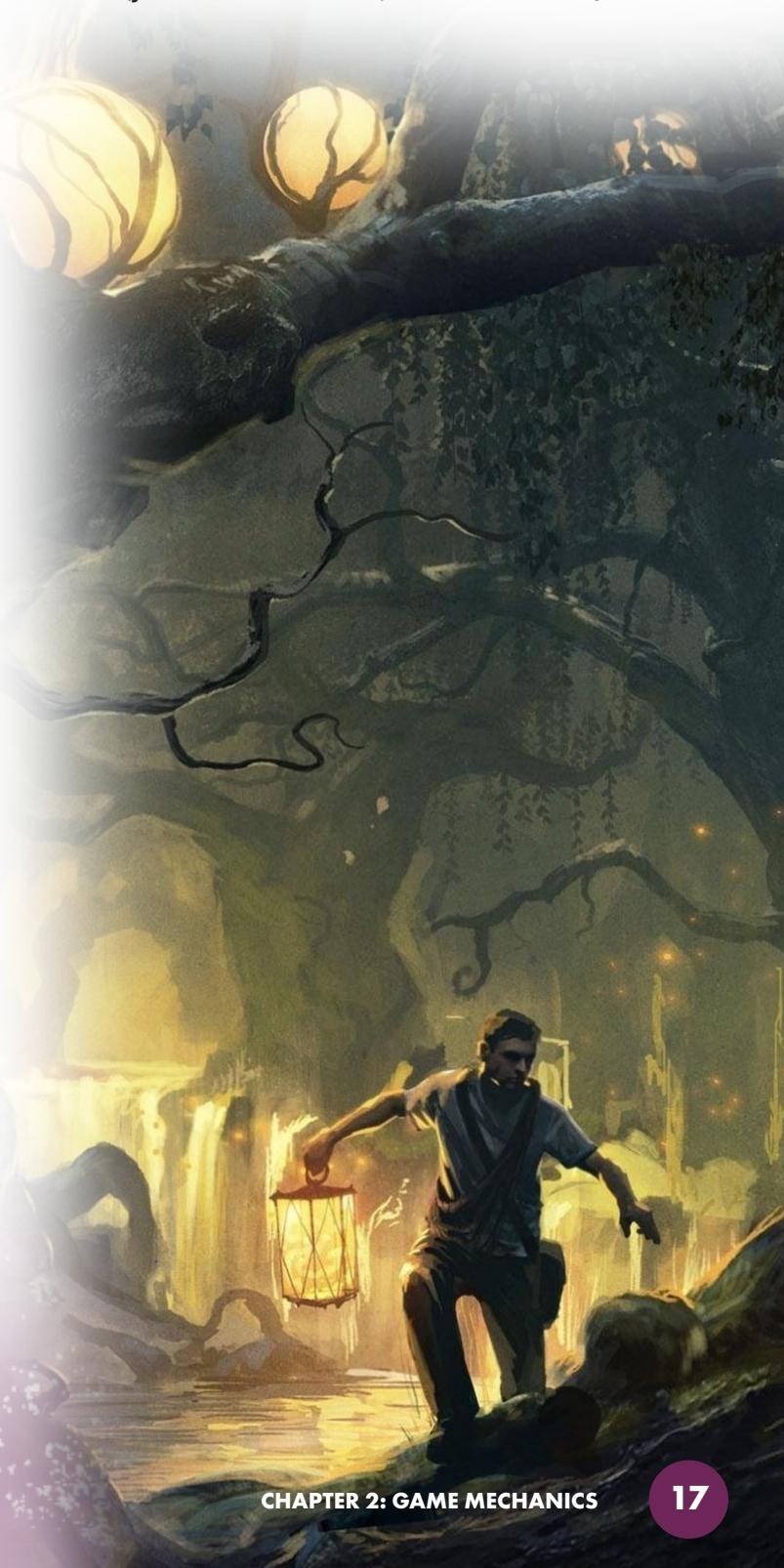
- Start with 1d6
- Determine if any Role Abilities are relevant to the roll. If so, declare which you are using and add any relevant dice.
- Determine how many prior player actions have helped the PC rolling with their action or given them an advantage with this action. Add 1d6 for each relevant prior action.

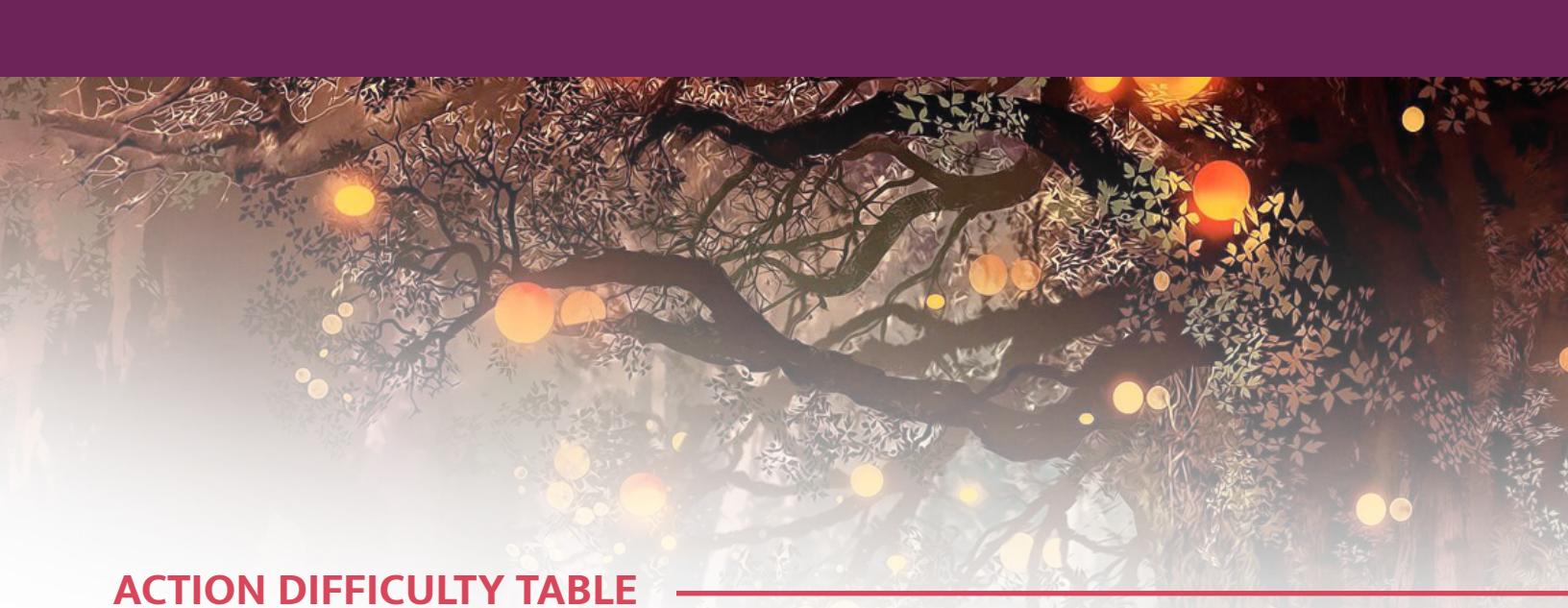
4. The player picks an option for modifying their dice pool. Choosing any of these should always be the player's decision. Only one option may be chosen per action roll.

- Option A: Spend Moirai to add dice to the pool. Each Moirai spent adds 1d6.
- Option B: Engage with their character's Narrative Foible. The player explains how the foible hinders their action and removes 1d6 from their roll. The GM grants the group one (1) Moira.
- Option C: None of the above. The dice pool is not altered.

5. Roll all the dice and total the value of each die.
6. Add the relevant stat modifier, as determined in Step 1

7. Compare the value rolled with the action difficulty. If the roll meets or exceeds the value, it succeeds. Otherwise, it fails.
8. In desperate situations, players may spend strain to reroll the dice which resulted in ones or twos. Each rerolled die gives two (2) strain to the rolling PC (*for more on strain, see 2.5 Health*).





ACTION DIFFICULTY TABLE

ACTION COMPLEXITY	3 PLAYERS	4 PLAYERS	5 PLAYERS
Easy	4	4	4
Average	7	8	9
Hard	10	12	14
Daunting	14	18	22
Overwhelming	18	22	26

Actions vary in complexity. Easy actions may only need a 1d6 roll from a single player to succeed. More difficult actions require players to work together to build a sizable dice pool. Action complexity is determined by the GM.

The number of players in a group alters how players approach their actions. The Action Difficulty Table provides a framework for the GM and players to determine the difficulty of actions relative to their party size. The framework encourages all players to participate in play and strategizing while preventing large groups from finding challenges too easy.

Players should familiarize themselves with the table so that they know what value their roll needs to meet or exceed. They should weigh this number against how many dice they're rolling and their modifiers.

Example: *If players feel like an action is too risky, they can try breaking it into smaller steps to create advantages for a later roll. Or, they can ask for help from other players to try to increase their dice pool.*

Easy actions are the only ones players can and should consistently try to accomplish on their own. Often easy actions are taken to try to help another player, such as causing minor distractions, tying a character's rope before they attempt a climb, or lifting someone so they have a better vantage point.



MATH ASIDE (For Real Nerds)

When rolled with only 1d6, easy actions have a 50% chance of succeeding with no relevant stat modifiers. With a +1 stat modifier, this improves to about 67%, and with a +2, it's about 83%.

GM Note: *As can be seen, there is always a chance of failure. If it doesn't make sense for an action to possibly fail, the players should not need to roll to determine the outcome.*

As a quick reference (IE, we did the math so you don't have to)

Number roll must meet / exceed	4	7	8-9	10	12	14	18	20	22	26
Recommended min number of dice (+0 stat)	1-2	2-3	3	3-4	4	4-5	5-6	6	6-7	7-8
Recommended min number of dice (+1 stat)	1	2	2-3	3	3-4	4	5-6	6	6-7	7-8
Recommended min number of dice (+2 stat)	1	2	2-3	2-3	3	3-4	5	5-6	6	7-8

The table above errs to be slightly more risk averse. If two numbers are listed, it indicates that you could maybe get away with the first, but a safer bet is the second.

Players are always welcome to try any roll with less than the recommended number of dice. (However rolling with an amount of dice whose total maximum roll will not meet or exceed the action difficulty is not recommended!)

GM Note: *If players are struggling with assessing risk and how many dice to roll, try to remind them of the recommended minimums.*

2.2 MOIRAI

Moirai is a group resource, shared between players. Moirai can be spent to add one (1) die to a roll, or to introduce a new advantage to a scene. Players start each session with three (3) Moirai. Multiple Moirai can be spent per turn.

Example: *Players decide to spend a Moirai to introduce an advantage to the scene and choose one together. Example advantages include a chandelier that dangles above an enemy horde, or a valuable resource knocked out of a nearby crate.*

Players can gain Moirai:

- As a reward for good roleplay
- In exchange for removing one (1) die from a roll to indicate a character's Foible is hindering them at that moment
- In exchange for an Outburst
- If players roll a Flourish (half or more of the dice rolled are sixes (6))

(For information on Foibles and Outbursts, see 4.2 Narrative Options)

2.3 FLOURISHES AND FUMBLES

FLOURISH: occurs when half or more of the dice rolled are sixes (6). Flourishes grant players one (1) Moirai and a large advantage. They do not affect whether or not the action succeeds

Example: *Large advantages include finding a useful resource, learning a helpful NPC is nearby, or uncovering valuable information*

FUMBLE: occurs when half or more of the dice rolled are ones (1). Fumbles grant players a large disadvantage. This does not affect whether or not the action succeeds.

Example: *Large disadvantages include losing a valuable resource, discovering an enemy thought dealt with has returned, or an unexpected ambush*

FUMBLE-FLOURISH: occurs when half the dice rolled are ones (1) and the other half are sixes (6). Players are presented with a large and unexpected event. This does not affect whether or not the action succeeds.

Example: *Large, unexpected events include being put at an immediate disadvantage that can be turned into a large opportunity or being offered a large opportunity that may develop into a huge problem. Players may break into a room and discovering its the monarch's bed-chambers, stealing fruit crates and realizing they're filled with gold that belongs to a vengeful pirates, or being robbed of incriminating evidence right before the guards show up.*

2.4 ENCOUNTERS

Players will face challenges imposed by their environment. They will also meet benevolent acquaintances and villainous foes, collectively referred to as Non-playable Characters (NPCs). These are known as **encounters**. Encounters fall into one of three categories: skill, combat, and social. Each encounter type introduces a different mode of gameplay and enacts additional guidelines.

Skill encounters are tests of skill, encompassing more simple challenges. A skill encounter is often the most basic form of roleplay. During this encounter, PCs can take skill actions.

Combat encounters are encounters where players want to render an NPC physically or emotionally immobile. These encounters are physical conflicts, differing in danger and difficulty. During this encounter, PCs can take several dinky moves, one maneuver, and one action.

Social encounters are encounters where players engage in significant and meaningful conversations with NPCs to try and gain information, bargain, or increase likeability. Social encounters may be held with either friendly or hostile NPCs depending on the situation. During this encounter, PCs can take one maneuver and one action.

TURN ORDER

TBD's turn order follows a few principles:

- Turn order is not predetermined. Instead, players take action when they have ideas
- Before taking a second turn, a player should give others the opportunity to take a turn
- When every player has had a turn to act, one round has passed

SKILL ENCOUNTERS

Anytime players are going up against their environment or dealing with encounters that are not with individuals or small groups, it should be treated as a skill encounter. Skill encounters cover short or less important social actions.

Examples of skill encounters include:

- Gathering or recovering resources (hunting for food, healing)
- Moving through spaces (sneaking around, crossing a fast moving river, climbing a cliffside)
- Looking for information (scouting an area, searching a room)
- Fighting environmental dangers (saving people from a burning building, repairing a leaking boat)

During skill encounters, player turns are spent taking skill actions. There are no additional mechanics outside of those granted by Role Abilities.

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Players are engaged in combat when they seek to physically or emotionally incapacitate an NPC. During combat encounters, a PC's turn consists of several dinky moves, one maneuver, and one action.

DINKY: minor moves that can be taken in any number at any time.

- Speak to another character
- Drop a held item
- Release a held character
- Small movements (shift position, peek around a corner, or look behind yourself)

MANEUVERS: moves that enhance and support your Actions or another's PC. Taken once per turn before an Action.

Note: “next combat action” refers to your action on the turn you took the maneuver or a later turn

- **Aim.** Add one (1) die to your next combat action. Add two (2) dice if you take this maneuver twice
- **Called Shot.** Target a specific area, such as a carried item, weapon, or tied rope. Remove one (1) die from your next combat action unless you take this maneuver twice
- **Assist/Distract.** Add one (1) die to another character's next action
- **Flank.** When two players who are engaged with the same opponent both choose this maneuver, they may attack jointly. Each player adds one (1) die to their combat action and one (1) die to their damage. They cannot take a second maneuver this turn.
- **Move.** Engage/disengage an opponent, or move up to several meters.
- **Guarded Stance.** Halve the wounds taken if you are hit by an attack before your next turn. Remove one (1) die from your combat actions.
- **Take Cover.** While behind cover, you cannot be targeted by ranged enemies, nor can you make ranged attacks.
- **Take the High Ground.** While in this place, halve the wounds taken if you are hit by a melee attack but double the wounds taken if you are hit by a ranged attack.
- **Go Prone/Stand Up.** While prone, halve the wounds taken if you are hit by a ranged attack but double the wounds taken if you are hit by a melee attack. Remove one (1) die from your melee attacks.
- **Manage Gear.** Draw, holster, ready, or load a weapon. Retrieve a stored item in a bag, pouch, or backpack.

You may suffer two (2) strain to perform a second maneuver. You can perform at most two (2) maneuvers each turn.

ACTIONS: major moves taken once per turn following a Maneuver.

- Take a skill action or use a Role Ability
- Take a combat action (see combat action below)
- Take a social action (see Social Encounters)
- Take medicine
- Perform an additional maneuver without spending strain. You cannot take this option if you have already performed a second maneuver.

Combat actions are taken to attack. Combat actions determine if a PC's attack hits, and the damage it deals if it does. Combat actions must be made with Force or Logic.

- Force actions attack with strength or agility
- Logic actions attack with strategy, seeking out weak points or using the environment to your advantage

To take a combat action:

1. Determine how many die you're rolling based on your stats, what maneuvers you've taken, and what help you've received from other players.
2. Determine the difficulty of your action based on the nature of the attack. Melee attacks are close combat and use weapons like swords, while ranged attacks strike opponents at a distance with weapons like crossbows.
 - Melee attacks: Average difficulty
 - Ranged attacks: Difficulty depends on distance:

DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
Engaged	Average
Several Meters Away	Easy
Several Dozen Meters Away	Average
Within Shouting Distance	Hard
Further Than That	Daunting

3. Reference the Action Difficulty Table against the attack difficulty and roll to see if the attack successfully hits
 - If the attack hits, players roll for damage. Players use half the dice they used on their hit roll, rounded down if needed (minimum of 1d6). Damage is added to the target's wounds.
 - If the attack does not hit, enemy NPCs are given a chance to attack and inflict damage upon PCs (see 3.3 Running Encounters).

Note: *Melee attacks put characters in more vulnerable positions since they must be engaged with the character they are attacking. However, it also offers more maneuverability options, including the powerful Flank maneuver.*

On the other hand, ranged attacks can be made from a safe distance, but offer fewer maneuverability options and may leave players exposed to returning ranged attacks.



SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Social encounters are not small interactions, but rather important moments of interpersonal conflict. Social encounters are enacted when a conversation has the tension and stakes of combat. It is important that players enter social encounters with a core agenda or goal.

Before beginning a social encounter, players are encouraged to collect resources and secrets.

- **Resources** represent anything that can offer leverage during an encounter. They can include funds, favours, and items. Resources also encompass pre-set up plans, such as using makeup to mimic crying or injury, distractions, or calling on other NPCs. Moirai may be used to gain resources.
- **Secrets** are pieces of information that can give you leverage during the encounter.

During social encounters, a PC's turn consists of one maneuver and one action. Maneuvers grant PCs leverage against their opponents, represented by additional die to boost their action.

MANEUVERS: moves that enhance and support your Actions or another's PC. Taken once per turn before an Action.

Note: “*next social action*” refers to your action on the turn you took the maneuver or a later turn

- **Spend a Resource.** Add one (1) die to your next social action OR that of another character. The resource is lost if it must be spent, such as a distraction or effect that is one-time use. It is also lost if the NPC accepts it, such as for a bribe or gift.
- **Capitalize on a Secret.** Add one (1) die to your next social action OR that of another character. A secret can only be used this way once per encounter.
- **Lose Composure.** Add one (1) die to your next social action and take two (2) strain as you give into emotion and make a scene. Scream, cry, and let your opponent know how you really feel.
- **Make it Personal.** Remove one (1) die from your next social action, but add one (1) die to the damage if it succeeds.
- **Flatter.** Add one (1) die to your next social action OR that of another character. Add one (1) die to the damage of the opponent’s next action.

ACTIONS: major moves taken once per turn following a Maneuver.

- Take a skill action or use a Role Ability
- Take a combat action (see combat actions above). **Note:** the GM may rule this moves the encounter from a social encounter to a combat encounter
- Take a social action (see social actions below)
- Perform an additional maneuver. You cannot take the same maneuver twice in one turn.

Social actions are taken to convince, sway, and verbally retaliate. Social actions must be made with Charm or Wisdom.

- *Charisma* actions use slick words and savvy connections
- *Wisdom* actions leverage insights about the opponent, reference social norms, and appeal to emotional connections

To take a social action:

1. Determine how many die you’re rolling from your own skills, other players’ help, and what has happened thus far in the encounter
2. Difficulty is based on the character you’re rolling against. The GM will let you know the action difficulty.
3. Reference the Action Difficulty Table against the attack difficulty and roll to see if the attack successfully hits
 - If a social action succeeds, players roll half the dice they used to roll to succeed, rounded down (minimum of 1d6). Damage is added to the target’s strain.
 - If the action fails, enemy NPCs attack PCs. NPCs inflict damage as described in running encounters.

2.5 HEALTH

Players track their character's health as two sets of attributes: **Wounds** and **Strain**

- **Wounds** represent physical health
- **Strain** represents mental health

Players start with no Wounds or Strain and count up to a threshold of nine (9) as they take damage

TAKING DAMAGE

- Every three (3) wound or strain points of damage, the PC takes a condition. When they are healed, PCs lose their conditions from newest to oldest.
- Upon surpassing a wound or strain threshold (i.e. taking a tenth (10) damage point), players are incapacitated and cannot continue until they receive *Healing* or rest for a full night

Physical Conditions (wounds)

- **Immobilized**. Cannot take maneuvers
- **Staggered**. Cannot take actions
- **Disoriented**. Remove one (1) die from Logic and Force actions

Mental Conditions (strain)

- **Frightened**. Remove one (1) die from Force actions
- **Angry**. Remove one (1) die from Wisdom actions
- **Hopeless**. Remove one (1) die from Charm actions

MEDICINE AND HEALING

- **Rest.** Each full night of rest (eight (8) hours of sleep or minimal activity) heals all strain and two (2) wounds.
- **Medicine.** Can be taken a maximum of three (3) times per day. Heals two (2) wounds.
- **Healing.** To heal another character, players must offer them emotional support in a way that is meaningful to the character. They can roll +Logic or +Wisdom. If the healing PC and the PC receiving the healing have a strong emotional bond, they can add one (1) die to the roll.

CHARACTER'S STATE	DIFFICULTY
Current wounds $\leq \frac{1}{2}$ wounds threshold	Average
Current wounds $> \frac{1}{2}$ wounds threshold	Hard
Current wounds $>$ wounds threshold	Daunting
Working without equipment	+1 difficulty level

If the roll is successful and the character chooses to open up to the rolling player, the character can regain two (2) wounds and four (4) strains. Players can only receive Healing once per encounter.

Upon a successful *Healing*, players can spend one (1) Moirai to have a **Heart to Heart**. The characters should discuss their feelings in a short scene. After, the player who rolled the initial *Healing* can also gain its benefits.





CHAPTER 3:

RUNNING THE GAME



2.1 THE GAME MASTER'S ROLE

The GM has a large role in the game, but it should be very rewarding and fun.

As the GM, you should introduce dramatic situations and tell compelling stories. Running a session is a collaborative effort with the players. You're working together to move the narrative forward and learn new things about the world the characters are inhabiting. You're on the same side as the players, even while you play their

obstacles and enemies. Feel free to make things hard, but your main goal should be challenging players, not demolishing their characters.

You are also the final arbiter of the rules. While it is fine (and encouraged!) to tweak rules on the fly to facilitate cool actions and creative player decisions, moving too far away from the rules may break some of the game's balance. It's okay to learn as you go. In the end, the most important thing is that everyone at the table (including you) is having fun.

An easy way to better engage players is to be excited about PCs and their stories. Ask questions often to flesh out characters and their relationships. Reward creativity with advantages or reduced difficulty. Similarly, when players overcome a large challenge or milestone, grant them advantages that carry forward and benefit them for several encounters or till the end of the game. When PCs act, move the story forward, show how NPCs react, and ensure players are active participants in what's happening.

Players should feel powerful. They are the main characters of this story. If players are struggling to succeed or don't feel equipped to handle challenges, encourage them to work together. Remind players of the synergies they can gain from working together. Remember: when PCs succeed it's because of their efforts, but when they fail it's because of their enemies or environment.

You should also work to create space for PCs to explore their feelings. Prompt them to try *Healing* to mend relationships instead of wounds. Ask PCs how their actions may engage with their Foibles. Give them strain when they express emotional pain or struggle to overcome or deal with their feelings. When events happen, ask players what these things make them feel.

The world players move through should be action-packed and perilous. This can mean anything from life-or-death stakes as PCs battle against foes on a clifftop or being rejected, disappointing someone, or having an important alliance fall through. As long as the consequences feel important and possible, you can create tension and risk. Try to match the kind of

challenges you present your players with to what kinds of things they're excited to engage with. Try to ensure players always have at least two possible actions to pursue.

Maintaining story momentum can be challenging at times, especially when players fail several rolls in a row. To maintain forward progression, you can let players fail forward. This means that players may succeed at an action when their roll fails, but they will gain a large disadvantage.

Example: *a player fails to unlock a door. The GM explains that they broke the lock and the door swings open with a large rattle and crash. Inside, players can see five guards turn to face them.*

Another helpful way to retain momentum is by adding new obstacles or advantages when describing roll results. This can generally be done by adding "and" or "but" to the end of a description. Resources are great if you're having trouble thinking of what to add. PCs could gain or lose additional resources or require fewer resources than they had expected.



Example:

*A player fails to convince guards they have the prince held hostage. **But**, they manage to successfully emulate the prince's voice, which creates an advantage.*

*A player succeeds in convincing an NPC they are on the run and need help hiding. **But**, now the NPC wants to continue helping the player and won't let them leave, creating an obstacle.*

*A player fails to come across as upper class at a party and displays terrible dining manners. **And**, the party members figure out the PC is not who they said they were, creating an obstacle.*

*A player succeeds at baking an amazing cake. **And**, they have enough batter left to make a tray of delectable cupcakes, creating an advantage.*

Don't be afraid of asking for help if you need it. Being a GM can be a lot of work. You can ask players to play more minor NPCs in scenes or combat. You can also ask a player to help with tracking turns or what maneuvers are in effect in an encounter.



3.2 NPC's

To inhabit your dangerous world, you can include a variety of NPCs. They can be hostile, neutral, or friendly to PCs. Through interacting with NPCs, players can also change how the NPCs perceive their characters. NPCs can act as obstacles between players and their goals or as helpful resources aiding players in accomplishing them. NPCs can provide tangible resources (such as tools or a place to stay) or intangible ones (such as emotional support or information). NPCs can also be obstacles without being hostile, simply by being in the way or unwilling to take risks.

Example: *an NPC proposing to their lover right in front of the door PCs want to sneak into is an obstacle but is in no way hostile. Additionally, a friendly NPC may be unwilling to help players steal or kill, but this doesn't make them hostile.*

As is explained in more detail in the [running combat encounters section](#), the GM doesn't roll when NPCs attack. Instead, their attacks only hit when PCs fail their rolls. However, NPCs can take maneuvers in encounters to make things more difficult for the PCs.

NPCs only have wound points. Thus, when NPCs incur strain damage, it is treated as wound damage.

NPC DIFFICULTY TABLE

NPC DANGER LEVEL	SOCIAL ACTION DIFFICULTY	DAMAGE DICE	HEALTH
Trivial	Easy	1d6-2 (minimum 1)	5
Moderate	Average	1d6	7
Dangerous	Hard	2d6	11
Deadly	Daunting	3d6	14

ADVANCED NPC ACTIONS

Making more challenging NPCs

- NPCs may have special abilities because of innate skills or carried equipment or armour. The abilities may increase the difficulty of PC actions by one or more levels or remove dice from a PC's roll.

Running NPCs in Groups (combat encounters)

- When in a group, NPCs take maneuvers together and combine damage dice. Groups also pool their health. When enemy groups sustain wounds, members are removed and the group's damage output decreases.
- For example, an NPC group with three (3) moderate enemies will drop to two (2) enemies once it has sustained seven (7) wound points. It will drop to one enemy on its fourteenth (14) wound point. And it will be taken out once it reaches twenty-one (21) wound points.
- Groups should only be made with NPCs of the same difficulty.

More Rounded NPCs (social encounters)

- Assign NPCs two different danger levels, one for Wisdom and one for Logic. High wisdom helps NPCs determine PCs' true intentions. High logic prevents NPCs from making poor decisions and means they are more informed.
- Based on what action a PC attempts, determine if it would be countered by the NPC's Logic or Wisdom. Determine what danger level is assigned to that stat, and translate it into an action difficulty as you normally would.

3.3 RUNNING ENCOUNTERS

SKILL ENCOUNTERS

Skill encounters are a great opportunity to let players flex their creative muscles. If they ask for things in the scene, give it to them or offer them a way to work towards it. Try to reward creative decisions by lowering difficulties. Also, when possible, work to ensure each roll is moving the story forward. Successes can come with bonus knowledge or resources, or additional challenges that must be overcome next. Failures may reveal new opportunities or success but at a large disadvantage to the players.

There are options available to GMs who want to raise the stakes of a skill encounter.

- **Set a time limit.** Players only have a certain amount of turns to complete an objective. If it makes sense, some of their actions may cause the amount of remaining time to increase or decrease.
- **Failure is not an option.** Tell players they can only fail a small number of actions in this encounter. A good number to choose is probably between three (3) and five (5). If they use up all their failures before completing their objective, give them a dire consequence. On the other hand, if they succeed, offer them a large reward for overcoming dire odds.

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

The GM never rolls for NPC actions. Enemy NPCs attack, hit, and cause damage when players fail their rolls. Otherwise, NPCs may make maneuvers or act in certain ways to cause players to react. You should always describe how NPCs set up attacks or target PCs.

Example:

The GM may describe how an enemy NPC grips a knife and runs for a PC. The players are then given an opportunity to react. One player decides to preemptively attack this NPC. They take their turn and succeed. The NPC is hit and cannot complete their attack.

Alternatively, the PC targeted by the attack could have taken maneuvers causing them to move out of the NPC's way. The NPC then chooses to shift targets.

NPC MANEUVERS: Following each player's turn, one (1) enemy can take one (1) maneuver. They may opt to take two (2) maneuvers if they take two (2) strain.

- **Flank.** When two NPCs who are engaged with the same opponent both choose this maneuver, they may attack jointly on the players' next failed turn. Each NPC adds one (1) die to their damage. They cannot take a second maneuver this turn.
- **Move.** Engage/disengage an opponent, or move up to several meters.
- Guarded Stance. Remove one (1) die from melee combat actions against the NPC. Halve the damage inflicted by the NPC's combat actions.
- **Take Cover.** Remove one (1) die from ranged combat actions against the NPC
- **Take the High Ground.** While in this place, remove one (1) die from melee combat actions against the NPC, but add one (1) die to ranged attacks against them.
- **Go Prone/Stand Up.** While prone, remove one (1) die from ranged attacks against the NPC, but add one (1) die to melee attacks against them. Halve the damage dealt by the NPC's melee attacks.
- **Manage Gear.** Draw, holster, ready, or load a weapon. Retrieve a stored item in a bag, pouch, or backpack.

NPC Actions: When PC actions are unsuccessful, NPC enemies are given an action. NPC attacks always land, so if they decide to attack, they only need to roll for damage. The damage output and health of NPC enemies vary depending on their difficulty (see *NPC Difficulty chart*).

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

NPC enemies behave much the same in social and combat encounters. NPC actions happen when players fail social actions. However, you should still explain how they react to players and what they say in response to them. NPCs automatically hit (as previously explained) and deal damage as detailed in the NPC difficulty chart. Otherwise, NPCs may make maneuvers or act in certain ways to cause players to react. You should always describe how NPCs set up their arguments against PCs.

NPC MANEUVERS: Following each player's turn, one (1) enemy can take one (1) maneuver. They may opt to take two (2) maneuvers if they take two (2) strain.

- **Spend a Resource.** Remove one (1) die from an opponent's next social action. The resource is lost if it must be spent or if they accept it.
- **Capitalize on a Secret.** Remove one (1) die from an opponent's next social action. A secret can only be used this way once per encounter.
- **Lose Composure.** Remove one (1) die from an opponent's next social action and take two (2) strain.
- **Make it Personal.** Add one (1) die to an opponent's next social action, but add one (1) die to the damage the next time an opponent fails.
- **Flatter.** Remove one (1) die from an opponent's next social action. Add one (1) die to the damage of the opponent's next action.

NPC Actions: Work as described in [running combat encounters](#). NPC enemies take actions when players fail an action. NPC actions always succeed. If they take a social action, they inflict strain based on how dangerous they are (*see NPC Difficulty chart*).

3.4 INCREASING DIFFICULTY AND TENSION

GM's may find it useful to amp up the tension of an action by increasing its consequences. This is an optional rule for increasing the stakes or danger of a game. It can also be helpful for games where you want to encourage more roleplay between PCs through Healing actions. When players attempt an action that should cause them damage or would hurt them if they fail, let the player know that a consequence of taking the action or failing is damage. Depending on the action, PCs may take strain or wound damage.

The action can give one (1) to three (3) points of strain or wounds depending on the risk associated with it. If players would take damage even if the action succeeded, consider reducing or eliminating the damage if they succeed by a large enough threshold.

Be sure to be transparent throughout the process. Players should not feel punished. This mechanic is meant to increase stakes, create challenging decisions, and set in-game limits to actions. When you tell players that they may take damage as part of an action, let them know if it's negotiable or definitive and how much damage they would be taking.



CHAPTER 4: CHARACTER AND NARRATIVE OPTIONS



4.1 CHARACTER ROLES



ENGINEER +1 Logic +1 Wisdom	Engineers rely on their exceptional skill with machinery and technology to overcome various obstacles and achieve their goals. Their resourcefulness and creativity allows them to design, build, and mend devices that enhance their strengths and compensate for weaknesses. An engineer's inventions can turn the tide of any dangerous situation.
ROLE ABILITIES	Rig. Once per encounter, add one (1) die to your roll to put together exactly the device you need right now with the parts available to you. Fix. When mending broken items or devices, add one (1) die to your roll.



SWEET TALKER +2 Charm	Using careful words, the sweet talker has an impressive talent for manipulating other people and twisting interactions to their advantage. Their goal consists of helping the party influence, intimidate, or deceive NPCs or others with words. They are the party's go-to when it comes to social interactions.
ROLE ABILITIES	Bargain. Once per encounter, when trying to convince an NPC to grant you something, offer them something in return and roll with one (1) additional die. If you know this is something they strongly desire, add one (1) more die. Clever Retort. Once per encounter, add one (1) die to another player's roll for a social action.



STRATEGIST +2 Logic	The strategist views combat as a puzzle. Tactical thinking is the greatest strength of the strategist, allowing them to outwit their enemies and support their allies. Through plots and ploys, strategists are capable of turning potential failures into victory through careful planning and preparation.
ROLE ABILITIES	Coordinate. Once per encounter, make a plan with a series of tasks assigned to several teammates and ensure everyone is on the same page. Each team member involved in the plan (including you) gets one (1) die added to one (1) action taken as part of this plan for the duration of the encounter.
	Know-It-All. Once per encounter, add one (1) die to a Logic action trying to learn or remember information.



BERSERKER +2 Force	The berserker is a warrior that comes alive in the chaos of combat and fights in a trance-like fury. Their unquenchable rage is what fuels their fearlessness, resilience, and feats of strength. They have an immense craving for battle and are constantly looking for a fight. Berserkers derive strength from pain and may disregard their own safety.
ROLE ABILITIES	Force of Nature. Once per encounter, activate this ability. For its duration, add one (1) die to each combat action you take. After, take half your remaining wound points and all your remaining strain points.
	Boiling Blood. Add one (1) die to attacks against opponents targeting or harming teammates.



EMPATH +2 Wisdom	Emotions are the power of an empath, as they possess a keen insight into how others think and feel. Through emotions, allies can be supported and enemies weakened. Their ability to form and manipulate the feelings of others helps them see both the best and worst in people, thus revealing the true character of those before them.
ROLE ABILITIES	<p>Figure It Out. When trying to learn something about a situation or NPC that relates to a teammate, add (1) die to your roll as you tap into emotional cues.</p> <p>Harmonize. Once per encounter, you can take a Hard Healing action outside the limits of usual Healing. If it succeeds, explain to the team what unique value you see in each teammate and how they can synergize. If all teammates open up and resolve any current differences, players gain one (1) Moirai and can add two (2) dice to one (1) action taken in this encounter that was helped by at least one other player.</p>



SPY +1 Charm +1 Force	The spy is best at secretly gathering information by being stealthy, attentive, and cunning. They infiltrate into the enemy's territory to stalk for vulnerabilities and weaknesses with quick, precise maneuvers to give them leverage on an enemy and ultimately, reduce problems their party may face.
ROLE ABILITIES	<p>Sneak. When moving around stealthily, roll with one (1) additional die if there is a contingency plan in case you're caught.</p> <p>Spill. Once per encounter, when trying to get a character to reveal useful information, roll with one (1) additional die if you have leverage on them.</p>



RANGER +1 Force +1 Wisdom	With great skill in tracking and scavenging, rangers have a blend of skills allowing them to prioritize one over the other or both simultaneously. They are trained in several combat techniques and survival skills that help them explore untamed lands, detect danger, and strike with precision.
ROLE ABILITIES	<p>Forage. When scavenging for food, water, or shelter, roll with one (1) additional die. This circumvents the need to spend Moirai or have an encounter.</p> <p>Bow and Blade. You do not need to be engaged with an opponent to use the Flank maneuver with another player.</p>

**CHARLATAN**

+1 Charm
+1 Wisdom

The charlatan excels at being connected and cunning. For them, deception is as natural as telling the truth to get what they want. Knowing the right words to say and the right people to say them to, the charlatan reflects what people want to see and believe. The charlatan is talented in reading others and how to apply that to get what they want.

ROLE ABILITIES

Entice. Once per encounter, add one (1) die to your roll to convince an NPC to take a certain course of action if you have appealed to their physical or emotional sensibilities.

Know Somebody. Once per encounter, call upon a useful NPC's help. They can be someone from your past or someone you met during the session. This NPC can help you get into an area, learn information, or acquire a valuable resource. They may ask for something in return, unless you spend one (1) Moirai.

**NINJA**

+1 Force
+1 Logic

Like spies, ninjas have mastered stealth and strive to defeat their enemies, gather information, and steal secrets. They are proficient in many martial arts skills and weapons. While the ninja may not be as strong as a barbarian, they specialize in making strong, deliberate attacks as they move through the shadows, swiftly striking down enemies, and vanish again with ease.

ROLE ABILITIES

Hide. When trying to blend into your surroundings, roll one (1) additional die if you have knowledge that would give you an advantage.

Strike. Once per encounter, when attacking enemies who are not aware of your presence or do not consider you to be a threat, add two (2) dice to your combat action.

**ARTISAN**

+1 Charm
+1 Logic

The artisan is adept at handcrafting whatever they need and possesses a vast range of artistic talents, such as dancing or forgery. Their skillful hands help them craft finished items from raw materials, whether it's clothing or food. Their expertise in various art skills makes them aware of just how helpful different tool sets can be when used correctly.

ROLE ABILITIES

Craft. Once per encounter, you may have the exact tools and materials on hand to create a helpful resource. For example, you can sew costumes, forge a letter or seal, or recreate a trinket or piece of jewelry. This circumvents the need to spend Moirai or have an encounter.

Perform. When partaking in an art with the intent of helping others, add one (1) die to your roll. Example arts include dancing, playing music, cooking, or playing a character.



4.2 NARRATIVE OPTIONS

Narrative Roles give shape to the PCs and the ways they interact with their team. They define the role that the PC has in their respective group. Each Narrative Role accentuates one strength and one weakness, or Foible, that a PC has with respect to their teamwork.

FOIBLES

Foibles are unique weaknesses that PCs must navigate. Foibles are measured on a scale from zero (0) to five (5). The greater the number, the more the PC is ensnared in their weakness. Players may adjust the scale one level up or down when they feel like the action of their PC feeds into or overcomes their foible. The GM may also suggest a player move it up or down at times (however, it is ultimately the player's decision).

Interacting with foibles helps create good role play. Whenever a player feels that their character may be hindered by a foible, they may remove one (1) die in their roll to indicate the foible's influence on that action. Doing so will grant the group one (1) Moirai (*for further explanation, see 2.1 building dice pools and 2.2 Moirai*).

OUTBURSTS

As a character reaches higher numbers on the foible scale, the player may play into the foible by taking a hurtful or destructive action towards the group in the form of an Outburst.

- If the action requires a roll, it is made with one (1) less die to indicate how the foible is influencing the character.
- Playing into foibles with an Outburst will generate one (1) Moirai. It will also move a character back to zero (0) on the scale, as their character realizes the repercussions of their actions.

ENERGIZER

Energizers carry the team forward with their sunny attitude and words of motivation. Energizers can help the team bounce back from failures, but their optimism may prevent them from confronting serious issues and conflict.

Foible: avoiding reality

Example Outbursts:

- Act recklessly at the risk of your safety, another group member's, or a valuable resource
- Put your trust in a misguided place, such as in a faulty tool or dangerous NPC
- Take risky actions without a backup plan

HARMONIZER

Harmonizers create space for differences between individuals to coexist. They are skilled in settling arguments and finding common ground with others. In the process, they tend to bury their own thoughts and feelings.

Foible: self-neglect

Example Outbursts:

- Don't accept healing and take an additional three (3) strain
- Struggle to offer healing due to being emotionally closed off
- Entirely avoid anything related an issue that is weighting on you

INITIATOR

Initiators are quick to propose ideas and actions, often coveting leadership in the team. They thrive under the admiration and approval of their teammates. However, they become insecure about failing and being criticized.

Foible: insecure about imperfections

Example Outbursts:

- Don't take risks: opt for the overly safe path, avoid taking any actions with uncertain outcomes
- Hide a dangerous mistake from the group

PROTECTOR

Protectors are loyal and caring, going to great lengths to ensure the safety of their team. Protectors are attentive to the wants and needs of teammates, but can be overbearing and stifling at times.

Foible: overly controlling

Example Outbursts:

- Berate a group member over getting hurt or taking an action that risked harming them
- Take on a dangerous enemy on your own
- Convince group members to take only safe courses of action

DOER

Doers rise to the occasion and aren't afraid to do the dirty work. They love completing tasks and solving puzzles. Their over-responsible nature leads them to shoulder a lot of work, and they hesitate to ask for help when struggling.

Foible: overworking themselves

Example Outbursts:

- Approach a task with inadequate help
- Take on too many responsibilities and take three (3) strain

EVALUATOR

Evaluators are keen observers, skilled at judging characters and spotting ruses. They do not blindly follow others, and instead are guided by their own sense of right and wrong. Their independence can get in the way of fully trusting in their teammates.

Foible: untrusting

Example Outbursts:

- Keep important information from the group
- Don't trust a helpful NPC
- Refuse help from the group

