

SON OF RISUS (Version 1.1)

by J. Scott Pittman

The Basic System is a complete Role Playing Game meant to be as simple as possible, while allowing for any type of Setting with only minimal work. It is a modified version of RISUS: The Anything RPG, by S. John Ross. Much of the writing here comes straight from that work.

CHARACTER CREATION!

Characters are defined by Clichés (sometimes several of them). Clichés are a shorthand which describe what a character knows how to do. The ``character classes" of the Neolithic Period of RPGs were Clichés: Fighter and Magic-User, Space Marine and Star Merchant. You can take Clichés like that, or choose a more contemporary one, such as Biker, Spy, Computer Nerd, Supermodel, or William Shatner (formerly an actor - now just a Cliché). Which Clichés are permitted are up to the GM.

Clichés are defined in terms of Dice (by which we mean the ordinary six-sided kind you can scavenge from your old Yahtzee set). This is the number of dice that you roll whenever your skill as a Fighter, Supermodel, or William Shatner (for instance) is challenged. See ``Game System," below. Three dice is professional. Six dice is mastery. One die is a beginner.

Characters are created by naming and describing them, and listing their Clichés. When designing your character, you have 10 dice with which to define his Clichés [60 points, each dice having a cost of 6 points] (a Normal Schmoe would be built on anywhere from 3 to 5 dice). A straightforward medieval fighter character might look like Grofnar (see below).

A player can earn extra dice if he comes up with a Hook or Tale (1 dice for each). A Hook is a disadvantage of some type that the GM can use to make life tough for the character. A Tale is a good write-up of the character's background and general perspective.

Sometimes, such as when the GM is converting characters from other systems, or when the GM is running a superhero campaign, he may allow characters to begin with more dice than 10. It's up to the GM.

Grolfnar Vainsson the Viking

Description: Tall, blond, and grinning. Likes to drink and fight and drink and chase Viking women and fight and sail the high seas and raid. Wants to write great sagas about himself.

Clichés: Viking (4), Womanizer (2), Gambler (3), Poet (1)

Hook: Grolfnar is afraid of sorcerers and magical spells.

A character may have any number or combination of Clichés. Characters sometimes shouldn't begin their career with more than 4 dice in anything, but just because you're creating a character today doesn't mean that he's beginning his career! The GM will tell you if he's requiring ``beginners" for the game. It's not our business.

Optional Rule: Clichés are categorized into three types: Combat, Useful and Background. A character cannot have (at character creation) more than half of his Clichés combat-related.

For example, a Knight may pick Knight (4), Patron [the king] (4), Riches (1), Noble (1).

SOME SAMPLE CLICHÉS

(AND WHAT THEY'RE GOOD FOR)

Physical Combat

Soldier, Military Officer, Guard, Cop, Bouncer, Government Agent, etc.; these types of "warrior" clichés include one of the following fighting skills as they are more interesting than just the skill, but a player can choose just to pick a "combat skill" if he likes. Note that this does not include Multi-attack, Locked, Heavy Weapons or Heavy Armor - these have to be picked separately.

Martial Artist

Brawler

Sword-Swinger

Knives (includes throwing)

Exotic Weapons (nunchucks, throwing stars, and yes, knives)

Gunslinger (fast-drawing, aim)

Multi-Attack

Locked (18 points for 1 dice)

Heavy Weapons

Heavy Armor

Mystical Combat

Magic (see magical tables); these magical abilities always have a Power Supply

Limited Magic (one type of magical ability without a need for a Power Supply)

Mental Combat

Psionics (Mind Control, Mind Reading, Mind Altering, resisting mental attacks)

Strong Willpower (Basically Psionics with a very precise specialty - may re-roll any rolled 1. This "power" is common for normal humans)

Useful Clichés

Astronaut

Computer Expert, Hacker or Geek

Fighter Pilot

Hot-Rodder

Gadgeteer (see Gimmick Power notes)

Mad Scientist or Genius

Olympic Athlete

Outdoorsman

Vampire

Rich

Politician (speaking, working the system)

Diplomat (making deals, bartering for peace)

Historian

Occult Investigator
Psychiatrist or Criminologist
Professor (pick type)
Lawyer
Doctor
Technician
Mechanic
Genetic Research Scientist
Forensics Expert
Writer
Rescue Worker
Language Expert
Businessman
Master of Disguise
Thief (breaking and entering, pickpocket)
Assassin or Spy (poisons, traps, lip reading)
Escape Artist
Scout

Special Clichés
Luck/Auto-Defenses
Power Reserve
Heavy Weapons
Heavy Armor

Background and Personality Clichés
Leader (share your dice!)
Bimbo (seducing men)
Con Artist (fooling people)
Gambler (bluffing, gaming)
Geezer (lots of experience)
Kid (use as Luck)
Smooth Operator (seducing women)
Magician (sleight of hand)
Really, Really Good Looking
Really, Really Cultured (better than you, anyway)
Idol of Millions (having fans)
Contacts (finding out stuff)
Reputation (add to other rolls, such as politician, diplomat, etc)

Super-Powers
Animal Controlling
Armored
Beastly
Brick
Climbing
Clone-Making
Cosmically-Aware
Costume Powers

Danger-Sensing
Detection and Sensing Powers
Dimension-Traveling
Disease-Causing
Energy Blasting
Escape Planning
Fire-Covered
Flying
Force-Field Wielding
Freak, Monster or Thing
Gadgets
Giant
Great Willpower
Growing
Gun-Slinging
Immortal
Insect-Controlling
Immortal
Intangible
Invent Anything
Invisible
Invulnerable
Leaping
Mental-Power Wielding
Plant-Controlling
Power-Stealing
Reflecting Power
Regenerating
Robot, Android or Cyborg
Shape-Changing
Shape of Energy
Shape of Gas
Shape of Fire
Shape of Stone or Earth
Shape of Water
Shrinking
Sticking/Trapping
Stretching
Super-Equipment
Super-Running
Super-Sight
Super-Speed
Super-Stealthy
Swimming
Telekinesis
Teleporting
Time-Traveling
Undead
Weather-Controlling

Web-Firing
X-Resistant
X-Controlling and Creating
X-Speaking

Magical Powers (see Appendix 3)

These are just examples to get you started - players should feel free to make up their own Clichés (subject to GM approval). In particular, Note that the GM will require the "fine tuning" of any Cliché that he considers too broad. If the game is about sorcerers (for example), then "sorcerer" becomes too all-encompassing for the game, and Clichés like necromancer, mentalist, fire-wizard and wise woman are more the order of the day.

THE GAME SYSTEM

Whenever anybody wants to do something, and nobody is actively trying to stop him, AND the GM doesn't think that success would be automatic, the player rolls dice. If the total rolled beats (equals or exceeds) the Target Number the GM sets, success! If not, failure!

Target numbers follow this scale:

3-5: A snap. A challenge for a Schmuck. Routine for a pro.

6-10: A challenge for a Professional.

11-15: An Heroic challenge. For really inventive or tricky stunts.

18-20: A challenge for a Master. Nearly superhuman difficulty.

21-30: You've GOT to be Kidding. Actual superhuman difficulty.

This can be subjective, and anybody can try anything: Crossing a chasm by swinging on a rope, vine or something similar would be child's play (automatic success!) for a Swashbuckler or a Lord of the Jungle, easy (Difficulty 5) for a Pulp Archaeologist, and challenging but definitely doable (Difficulty 10) for a Gymnast, Barbarian, or Thief. Even a Wheelchair-Bound Eccentric Occultist could try it (Difficulty 15, but the wheelchair is lost unless the roll beats a 30)!

The Rule of Six (Maximum Roll Bonus Dice)

If all of the dice a player rolls come up as 6 (he rolls the maximum he could have with his dice), he may roll another dice. If this dice also rolls a six, he may roll another die, and so on. If using Funky Dice, the player must roll the highest number on that type of dice, with all of his dice, to roll another die of his Clichés type. This is harder to do, of course, but these characters are rolling dice that can land big numbers anyway - what are they complaining about?

This rule allows characters with feeble dice totals to have a chance, no matter how slim, to succeed at tasks and compete (by sheer luck) with their foes. Combat can be a tricky and unpredictable thing.

Proper Tools

Every character is assumed to be equipped with the Tools of His Trade (at least the portable ones). Warriors are wearing armor and wielding good weapons. Cowboys have leather chaps, lasoo, a couple of pearl-handled six-guns and some chaw. Netrunners have an expensive jack-in laptop and funny clothes.

If a character LOSES any of these vital totems, his Cliché operates on half the normal number of dice (or not at all, if the GM rules that the equipment was REQUIRED) until they are replaced. A Barbarian(5), for instance, can fight without his sword as a Barbarian(3), but a Netrunner can't run the net without his cyberdeck. If the Netrunner manages to find another computer to play with besides the kind he's used to, he can operate at half-dice.

In addition, characters can buy/find/build Special Equipment as well. See Special Equipment.

THE COMBAT SYSTEM

``Combat" in this game is defined as any contest in which opponents jockey for position, utilize attacks, bring defenses to bear, and try to wear down their foes to achieve victory. Either literally or metaphorically! Some examples of combat include:

ARGUMENTS: People using whatever verbal weapons they have at hand to make their points. Truth is the first casualty.

HORSE-RACING: People on horses running around and around a dirty track, trying to get nowhere first.

DOGFIGHTS: People in airplanes or spaceships flying around and trying to blow each other out of the sky.

ASTRAL/PSYCHIC DUELS: Mystics/psionics looking bored or asleep, but trying to rip one another's egos apart in the Otherworld.

WIZARD'S DUELS: Sorcerers using strange magics and trying to outdo the other.

DUELING BANJOS: Banjo players using strange melodies and trying to outdo the other.

SEDUCTION ATTEMPTS: One (or more) characters trying to score with one (or more) other character(s) who is(are) trying to resist.

COURTROOM ANTICS: Prosecution vs. Defense. The goal is victory. Justice is incidental.

ACTUAL PHYSICAL COMBAT: People trying to injure or kill each other.

The GM decides when a combat has begun. At that point, go around the table in rounds, and let each combatant make an attack in turn. What constitutes an ``attack" depends on the sort of combat, but it should ALWAYS be roleplayed (if dialogue is involved) or described in entertaining detail (if it's physical and/or dangerous and/or normally requires contraceptives).

Attacks require rolls against character Clichés. The GM must, at the outset of combat, determine what TYPE of Clichés are appropriate for the fight. In a physical fight, Clichés like Viking, Barbarian, Soldier, Swashbuckler, and Novelist are appropriate. Clichés like Hairdresser and Latin Lover are not (but may still be used; see next section).

First Actions

Each turn, the players and the GM choose what Clichés they are going to use to attack. Each player rolls this Cliché. The highest roll goes first, and then turns rotate around the table to the right, until all players and the GM have taken their actions.

Optional Rule: Players and the GM go in order of highest to lowest roll. This takes longer, but most players prefer this type of system.

Attacks and Defenses

An attack must be directed at a foe. The attacker rolls his chosen Cliché. The defender chooses a Cliché to defend with (the GM has to agree that the Cliché can be used to defend). If the defender rolls lower, he loses and receives damage (see Effects of Combat). You needn't use the same Cliché every round. If a Viking/Swashbuckler wants to lop heads one round, and swing on chandeliers the next, that's groovy, too. You can choose to attack with one Cliché and defend with another.

PUSH POINTS

Push Points can be used to make extra dice rolls (or more exp at the end of the game). Each Push Point spent equals 1 more dice to roll on a defensive action. These dice must be spent by the end of the game, even if used for experience (see Character Advancement).

Push points used must be declared before rolling, but more than one dice can be used.

A typical NPC will have Push points equal to his highest Cliché rating.

Push Points are only gained by role-playing well, and are awarded by the GM for exceptional acting on the player's part or coming up with good ideas. In general, they should be hard to earn.

Effects of Combat

The low roller loses one of his Cliché dice for the remainder of the fight for each 5 points he loses the roll by - he's been weakened, worn down, or otherwise pushed towards defeat. In future rounds, he'll be rolling lower numbers.

Eventually, one side will be left standing, and another will be left without dice. At this point, the winners usually decide the fate of the losers. In a physical fight or magical duel, the losers might be killed (or mercifully spared). In Courtroom Antics, the loser gets sentenced by the judge, or fails to prosecute. In a Seduction, the loser gets either a cold shower or a warm evening, depending on who wins.

However, anytime a character has a Cliché worn down to zero dice in combat, he has lost, even if he has other appropriate Clichés left to play with.

Dice lost in combat are regained when the combat ends, at a "healing" rate determined by the GM. If the combat was in vehicles (space fighters, mecha, wooden sailing ships) then the vehicles themselves are likely damaged, too, and must be repaired.

Note on Magic Clichés: A sword-slinger might be able to defend himself against some types of magic, and not against others, depending on how the mage attacks, for example. Why attack with a sword of light you create when you can just throw a bolt of lightning?

The answer is that if a character uses magic to simulate physical combat (a magic shield and spear made of fire, for example), he may use the Cliché to defend against physical attacks. If he uses the Cliché to attack in a way that a physical combatant cannot defend against, he loses this bonus when attacked himself the same turn, and must use another Cliché to defend.

TEAMING UP

Two or more characters may decide to form a TEAM in combat. For the duration of the team (usually the entire combat), they fight as a single unit, and are attacked as a single foe. There are two kinds of teams: Player-Character teams and NPC teams ("Grunt Squads.")

Grunt-Squads: This is just special effects. When you want the heroes to be attacked by a horde of 700 rat-skeletons inside the lair of the Wicked Necromancer(5), but don't feel like keeping track of 700 little skeletal sets of dice, just declare that they're a team, fighting as Skeletal Rat-Horde(7). Mechanically, the Rat-Horde is the same as any other single foe - except it has more dice! Grunt-Squads can have any level of cliché the GM feels is appropriate. Grunt-Squads stick together as a team until they're defeated, at which point many survivors will scatter (though at least one will always remain to suffer whatever fate the victor decides).

Player-Character Teams: When PCs (or PCs and their NPC allies) form a team, the Team Leader is defined by the highest-ranking Cliché in the team (a title that must be designated if there is a tie). Everybody rolls dice, but the Team Leaders dice all count. Other Team Members contribute only their sixes (if the Funky Dice option is used, Team Members may contribute their single highest die-roll above six, or their sixes, their choice). Team members who roll nothing above five don't contribute anything to the Team Leaders total for that roll.

Clichés joined in a team need not be identical, but they all must be equally appropriate. This means five Vikings could band together in physical fight with no problem. It also means that a Hairdresser, a Parakeet Trainer, and a Career Counselor could team up in a physical fight if they have a REALLY good description of how they'll use their skills in concert to take out the Vikings!

CONFLICTS THAT AREN'T COMBAT

Many conflicts that arise in the game cannot be defined as "combat;" they're over too quickly, defined by a single action. A classic pistol-duel isn't combat - the two duelists simply turn and fire, and then it's all over. Two characters diving to grab the same gun from the floor isn't combat. Two cooks preparing chili for a cookoff isn't combat; there's no "wearing down of the foe" and no jockeying for position.

Such "single-action conflicts" are settled with a single roll against appropriate Clichés (or inappropriate Clichés, with good roleplaying). High roll wins.

WHEN SOMEBODY CAN'T PARTICIPATE

It will often occur that characters will find themselves involved in a Combat or quicker conflict where they simply have no applicable Clichés, even by stretching the imagination. Or maybe ONE character will have an appropriate Cliché, while the others feel left out. An example might be a pie-eating contest. One character was wise (or foolish) enough to take "Disgusting Glutton(2)" as a Cliché. The other characters are astronauts or accountants, neither of which traditionally engorge themselves on pie.

In situations like this, give everybody two free dice to play with, for the duration of the conflict. This INCLUDES characters who already HAVE appropriate Clichés. In the example above, the astronauts and accountants would get Pie-Eating(2), while the Disgusting Glutton would be temporarily increased to Disgusting Glutton(4). The Glutton, naturally, still has the winning edge, but anyone can TRY to eat lots of pie. This "temporary promotion" applies only in opposed conflicts, not in challenges based on Target Numbers.

AREA EFFECTS

Sometimes a character wants to attack multiple foes at the same time, such as when a character uses a grenade or a magical fireball. In this case, the character must have a Heavy Weapon Cliché (see Heavy Weapon Clichés).

If the player figures out a nifty way to avoid having the proper Cliche (such as finding a grenade or stick of dynamite) he can operate as if he had a Heavy Weapon, with the usual "when someone can't participate" 2 dice.

MULTIPLE ATTACKS

Characters can attack more than one opponent by dividing their dice up as they see fit. A Martial Artist (5) could attack 2 characters with Martial Artist (3) and Martial Artist (2), for example.

A WORD OR TWO ABOUT SCALE

No standard time or distance scale is provided for Risus; it really depends on what kind of action is happening. However, the GM should try to stay consistent within a single conflict. In a physical fight, each round represents a few seconds. In a long-term fight between a married couple, each round might

represent an entire Day (Day one: Husband ``accidentally" burns wife's favorite dress in the oven, Wife ``accidentally" feeds Drano to Husband's prize goldfish, and so on until there is a victor).

USING MINIATURES

Sooner or later someone is going to want to know where everyone is and how far everyone can move. Miniatures are a cool way to do this.

If you want to use miniatures, each charcter can move up to 6 "steps" (inches, squares, or whatever you are using to detirmine one "step" of movement) and then attack. Once you decide to attack, you can no longer move. This might be more if the character has a super-power. Note that characters with a Multiple Attack Cliche that applies to some type of physical combat (Sword-Slinger, Martial Artist) can attack as many times as allowed, but once they stop movement must attack characters adjacent to them, unless throwing items as well.

Characters that are firing weapon (with Multi-Attacks or not) can fire while on the move, but operate at -1 dice per attack.

There are no rules for "facing". Characters are assumed to be aware of their surroundings unless someone sneaks up on them. The GM decides when it is realistic to be able to sneak up on someone.

Characters that are encumbered (carrying up to 50% more items than normally allowed, round down) are at -1 movement. Those that are 51-100% over are at 1/2 normal movement.

For example, a character with Big Strong Guy (2) can normally carry 12 items and move 6 paces. If he carries 13-18 items, he moves at 5 paces. If he carries 19-24 items, he moves 3 paces.

Each space, square, step or whatever represents about a yard (that's 3 feet, folks).

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

At the end of each adventure, each player add 1 experience to each Cliché that he used. When he has as many experience points as the Cliché's maximum roll, he can add another dice to the total. His experience total for that Cliché then drops to zero again, and the process starts again.

For example, if a Cliché has 1 dice, 6 experience points will raise it by 1 dice. Then it becomes a 2 dice Cliché, and the player must earn 12 new experience points to raise it to a third dice. Any leftover Push Points can be used to add 1 additional experience to a Cliché (1 Push Point bonus maximum for each Cliché per adventure).

Adding New Clichés and Specialties: A player may add a new Cliché to his sheet, at 0 dice, if he likes. He may then begin adding experience into that Cliché. Once he has as many experience points in the new Cliché as he has in Clichés with dice, he can add 1 dice to the new Cliché. Only Push Points can be used to add experience to a "0 Cliché" until the Cliché gains a dice.

For example, a character has 4 Clichés. The player can add a new Cliché at (0). When he earns 4 experience from Push Points in the Cliche, he gains a dice in the Cliché and can earn normal experience in it thereafter. His next Cliché at (0) would require 5 experience earned with leftover Push Points, and so on.

EQUIPMENT RULES

GENERAL EQUIPMENT LIMITS

Players can carry 10 items. The GM can rule that the character is required to have certain items to perform his Clichés.

Five items that don't weigh a lot and are quite small can be grouped into 1 item. For example, a character could have a watch, communicator and ring as 1 item.

Characters with Clichés that represent strength in general (Big Strong Guy, for example) allow a character to carry more items before being encumbered. In general, characters can carry 1 more item per each 6 points of dice. A character with Big Strong Guy (1d6) could carry 1 more item. A character with Big Strong Guy (2d20) could carry 6 more items.

Characters who carry more than their maximum amount of equipment are at half their normal dice (when rolling dice is necessary) when attempting to do things that a weighted-down character would have a problem doing. Running, jumping over things, climbing and other rolls will be more difficult. This does not affect Who Goes First rolls and normal attacks.

The GM decides when a character could simply not carry anything else. In general, this should be double his normal amount of items (normal characters could carry up to 20 items, for example, but would be encumbered). However, there will be exceptions, of course.

POWERFUL EQUIPMENT

Powerful items that allow a character to perform a combat-related Cliché even better than normal (magic swords, automatic weapons, etc.) are not Clichés, but can allow a player to re-roll as many dice as the weapon's bonus. The player always has the option of not re-rolling or stopping at any time he wants before he re-rolls his maximum times. He can even re-roll the same die over and over again if he likes (for example, if he has only two dice to roll but has a +3 weapon). The player must use the new roll, even if it is lower than what he rolled before.

For example, a Throm the Sailor (4) might have a magic sword +2. He still rolls 4 dice, but can re-roll two dice. He rolls, and gets a 1,3,5,6 (total 15). He re-rolls the 1 and 3 and rolls a 4 and a 1. His new roll is 1,4,5,6 (total 16).

If players decide that the special equipment has become part of the very definition of their character (think Thor and his hammer, or King Anther and his sword), they can take Unique Equipment Clichés. For example, a character might have Smuggler (5) and Magic Sword (3), simulating the magic sword. The sword is now a Unique Equipment Cliché.

As a normal Cliché, it now has its own dice total. Not only does it allow the normal "re-roll bonus", but it also has a dice total that the character can fall back on, like a Luck Cliché.

The limitations to Special Item Clichés are that the items can be used for defense only (if designed for combat, such as swords and shields) - attacking with an item must be done with another Cliché (but remember, because they have the item they can re-roll dice). In addition, if the item is being used for defense and the total dice reaches 0, the item is destroyed, and the character loses the Cliché. However, they are not defeated until another Cliché reaches 0. Of course, another obvious limitation is the Cliché cannot be used without the Special Equipment itself!

A character with Heavy Armor rolls his dice to reduce his opponent's roll (instead of increasing his own). For each dice he has, he can choose to re-roll an opponent's dice, attempting to make the result lower. He must take the new roll (unless he has enough dice to re-roll that die again!). Like Heavy Weapons, the GM can require players to take this Cliché. Typical suits of Heavy Armor range from +1 to +4 levels.

Note that if both the attacker and defender both can change the rolls of a single pool of dice, the attacker re-rolls dice first, then the defender second.

+1: Minor Magical Item, Big Pistol, Standard Sci-Fi Blaster
Chain Mail, Bulletproof Vest

- +2: Sci-fi Heavy Blaster
Plate Mail, Riot Gear
 - +3: Heavy Repeating Blaster, Machine Gun, Shotgun
Full Plate, Heavy Space Marine Armor
 - +4: Unique Magical Weapon, Lightsaber, Grenades, Bazooka
Power Armor
-

APPENDIX 1: SPECIAL CLICHES

BURNABLE CLICHÉS

A Burnable Cliché is one that can be lowered (also known as 'burning'), usually to provide bonuses to the character or as "fuel" for powers. Expendable Clichés cannot be Specialized, but are instead defined when the Cliché is chosen. For example, a vampire could have a Blood Cliché that could be used to power his vampiric powers or to raise his physical attacks/defenses for a single turn.

Auto-Loss Clichés

An Auto-Loss Cliché is one that decreases automatically every time it is used. For example, the Minor Gadgets Cliché loses one die each time it is used. Once the Cliché is used up, the character is "out" until it is refueled in some fashion (in this case, the character has to "load up" again at the Batcave or whatever).

Often, the Auto-Loss Cliché is a Locked Cliché as well, but not always.

Luck Clichés

Luck allows a character to take dice caused to a Cliché off of the Luck Cliché instead. Luck, unlike many Clichés, may reach 0 without the character being defeated. Luck, however, cannot be used to attack, so it has its limitations. Luck can never exceed 6 dice for normal characters.

Power Supply Clichés

Power Supply Clichés indicate a Cliché that might run out of energy when using it. Magic and Psionics are the most common examples. When the Cliché is used, the wizard or psychic loses one die (and only one die) from the pool if a 6 (or more than one 6) is rolled. Thus, a wizard can use a few dice of the Cliché and may not lose levels, but if he uses all of his dice is using his energies very quickly. Thus, it is good for mages to have more than one type of magical Cliché than to just have "magic".

Heavy Weapon Clichés

Heavy weapons are often carried by the over-equipped character. They do provide a heavier punch than normal, but are expended quickly (i.e., missile launchers and grenades). The Clichés actually double their dice level when rolled. The Cliché can only be used a number of times equal to half the Cliché rating (round up). Almost always in the case of non-player characters or purchased equipment, this is a 2d6 Cliché (4d6, can be used once), and makes a medium explosion (if not using miniatures, it catches as many characters as the Cliché has rolled dice, or four opponents). Characters can go as high as 6d6 (12 dice, can be used 3 times, affects 12 opponents!). If being attacked with explosives, it might be a good time to use some Push Points for defense...

Other characters can borrow some of the Cliché from the character that has it, but he loses one use. if the character that borrowed a grenade, mine, bazooka or the like does not have a Heavy Weapon Cliché, he rolls 2 dice (4d6, can be used once), as per the normal When Someone Can't Participate rules.

The drawback is that the Cliché has a limited number of uses, and cannot be used for defense. If characters are constantly trying to get an advantage by making themselves uber-powerful using grenades and missile launchers, the GM can require them to purchase the Cliché with experience. This includes characters that keep borrowing grenades! Once they have purchased a 4d6 Cliché they can continue adding experience points to the Cliché. If being forced to purchase the Cliché, the GM can keep 1 Push Point per game session to add to the Cliché until it reaches 4d6 (which will equal a LOT of Push Points over time!).

Characters that use Heavy Weapons only in special cases (i.e., VERY rarely) or that are in the process of being forced to purchase the Cliché roll as if they had a 4d6 Heavy Weapon.

Note that this is a Locked Cliché, meaning that for each use the player still rolls the normal maximum for the Cliché.

Characters that borrow

Heavy Armor Clichés (Special Equipment)

A character with Heavy Armor rolls his dice to reduce his opponent's roll. For each die he has, he can choose to re-roll an opponent's dice, attempting to make the result lower. He must take the new roll (unless he has enough dice to re-roll that die again!). Typical suits of Heavy Armor range from +1 to +4 levels.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT CLICHÉS

See Equipment Rules

DEPLETING CLICHÉS

Depleting Clichés start at a certain level and go down by one die if a roll is ever failed when they must be checked. If the Cliché goes to zero dice, then something calamitous happens to the character (he dies / goes insane / vanishes- leaves the game, basically). Depleting Clichés do not 'heal' the same way as ordinary Clichés; the reduction is (more or less) permanent, and may only be restorable through Character Advancement or other means (like an epic quest of some sort).

An example of a Depleting Cliché would be Sanity in a horror game. Sanity must be checked whenever a character sees something horrible or mind-shatteringly incomprehensible; failure would mean his Sanity drops by one die (or even more, for something particularly horrifying or bizarre) until the character goes completely insane.

SPECIALTIES

Players can gain a Specialty to a Cliché if they like (this requires the loss of 1 die at character creation, but can be purchased later with experience). A Specialty allows a player to re-roll any "1" when performing a very specialized action with a Cliché. If the player is not using that Cliché, he cannot use the Specialty. Specialties have to be described in at least two ways.

For example, a character might have the Cowboy Cliché. He might have a Specialty of firing two silver pistols. The cowboy must fire two pistols and they have to be silver as well. This must be interesting and add flavor to the character, and the Game Master is free to not allow any Cliché that seems to just be an abuse of the rule.

If a character is Specialized and can re-roll dice, he re-rolls his 1s first then re-rolls using special equipment, if he desires.

CAPTURE, STUN AND KNOCKOUT CLICHÉS

Once in a while, players will want to have a cliché that specializes in, or use a normal one, to create an effect that instantly defeats an opponent. Of course, any combat roll will hopefully defeat your enemy instead of wounding him, but these attacks are meant to be one-roll defeats. Examples include mind control, gas grenades, throwing nets to entangle an opponent, and the like.

The obvious bonus to such attacks is that they defeat in a single roll. The large drawback, in RISUS terms, is that such a roll, if it fails, does nothing to decrease the opponent's die total. Many Clichés are possible to defend against such attacks - gas masks for Soldiers against gas attacks, Strong Willpower clichés against mental attacks, Acrobatics against nets and grenades, Magic Resistance against magical attacks, and the like.

NOTE: Capture, Stun and Knockout Clichés in a Cinematic Campaign:

If a player or a "main character" (one that the GM decides is important to the overall story) comes up with a good way to defend himself, even without a Cliché, the defender may roll an amount of dice equal to the Capture, Stun or Knockout attack.

MULTI-ATTACK CLICHÉS

Some player-designed characters and non-player characters are meant to make multiple attacks. They wield two pistols, two swords, are master martial artists, or whatever. Normally in the game, if a character wants to do this, they can split their dice into separate attacks. A Barbarian (5) could split his dice into two attacks in one turn, each being 3 and 2, for example.

Some characters are known for their multiple attack abilities, so much as it is part of their normal routine. This is simulated by the Multi-attack Cliché.

A multi-attack Cliché is not useful in itself. It cannot be used to attack by itself or used to defend against attacks. However, it can be combined with another Cliché when the character makes more than one attack and must split his dice pool. Note that the Multi-Attack Cliché cannot be used unless the character is actually aiming attacks at multiple characters. Once combined and split, the attack cannot exceed the Cliché it was combined with.

Multi-Attack Clichés must be associated with a particular type of attack. These are normally Brawling, Martial Artist, Sharpshooter, Swordslinger, etc. The GM can allow other types if he wishes.

Multi-Attacks cannot be combined with Heavy Weapons (these are already explosive-type attacks that attack more than one character). It can be combined with other types of attacks, including those that are Specialized.

For example, a Pete the Pirate has Pirate (3) and Multi-Attack (4). When facing a single opponent, he rolls 3 dice, as usual. When facing 2 opponents he could combine the Clichés together and split them, making two attacks at 3 dice and 3 dice (the total was seven, but remember that the combined and split dice can't exceed the Cliché that Multi-Attack was combined with). When facing three opponents, he could combine and split his attacks into dice equaling 3, 2, and 2.

LOCKED CLICHÉS

Locked Clichés don't change even if the character loses dice. He can still lose dice in the Cliché and be defeated, but always rolls the normal maximum amount of dice.

These Clichés can be used to simulate very powerful characters, and should be rare. If the GM decides that a player-character can purchase a Locked Cliché, the Cliché costs 3 dice for 1 dice of the Cliché (or 18 points per dice, if you are using creation points).

For example, Jackie Mann is one of the best martial artists in the world. He has Martial Artist (6, locked). He takes 2 dice of damage. He is closer to being defeated (his true total now is 4 dice), but keeps rolling 6 dice. If his true dice total reaches 0, he will still be defeated.

Characters still roll lower amount of dice if they choose to make multiple attacks.

If declaring a Locked Cliché at character creation, the player must pay double the normal point total for the Cliché.

REGENERATION CLICHÉS

Regeneration is a special Cliché that allows other Clichés to gain back dice. If a character is still missing dice at the end of the turn, he can roll his Regeneration Cliché. For each 6 he rolls, he may add 1 dice back to the lowest Cliché that has lost dice. Regeneration itself cannot be used to attack or defend a character, but instead allows other Clichés to be more effective.

Note that Regeneration can only be used to give dice back to physical-based Clichés, not Clichés such as Psychic or Politician.

APPENDIX 2: SUPER CLICHES

Animal-Controlling

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: With summoned animals

Physical Defense?: With summoned animals

Good For: Calling animals to do your bidding, getting nearby animals to do what you want, making PETA really, really mad.

The summoned creatures have generic Clichés appropriate to their type. A rhinoceros summoned with 4 dice can attack and defend only, while a snake has poison venom as well.

Armored (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Smacking your foes around, taking a hit, making it hard on yourself to go to the bathroom.

This is the standard super-suit of armor. For a bigger, tougher suit, the character might also have Heavy Armor and Heavy Weapon Clichés.

Beastly (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Locked Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Going by instinct, seeing through disguises by smell alone, tracking.

This Cliché is assumed to be included with such Clichés like Wolf, Blood Hound, Shark, and the like. However, sometimes super-hero characters have this Clichés as well. Most of the time such characters also have small signs that give this away, such as too much hair or sharper teeth than normal.

Brick

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Lifting, throwing, causing earthquakes by punching the ground, ripping through walls, bending steel, shrugging off getting hit by cars, carrying more junk.

Sometimes the Brick changes from a weaker form. If this is a controlled change, there is no bonus to this Cliché. If the Cliché has a limitation of some kind (it is also an Energy Reserve Cliché or cannot be controlled), the Cliché is considered to be Specialized, making the Brick even tougher!

Climbing (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Climbing up walls and stuff, grabbing onto something while falling, hiding on the ceiling. Slippery surfaces might increase the difficulty.

Clone-Making (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Special

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Making copies of yourself, playing chess when there's no one else around, being a one-man basketball team.

Each dice in this Cliché allows the character to make more copies of himself. The maximum copies equal the maximum total of the dice (one dice equals 6 clones, 2 dice equals 12 clones, etc.). A character could have this Cliché specialized in creating only one clone, if he liked.

When one clone is defeated, the original character takes a die of damage to this Cliché. If the Cliché reaches 0, he passes out and all of the clones disappear. If the character is specialized in making only one clone, that clone does not affect the original if defeated.

Cosmically-Aware

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Sensing when the universe is in danger. The less dangerous for the universe, the higher the difficulty to detect.

Costume Powers

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Flashy effects, using flame powers without becoming naked, winning fashion awards.

This Cliché gives you the ability to have the costume do something out of the ordinary for each die placed into it. Possibilities include being immune to the hero's powers, instantly changing back and forth to normal clothing to the hero's suit, being 1-dice resistant to certain attacks, and the like.

Danger-Sensing (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No (see below)

Good For: Rolling so the character won't be surprised, getting out of the way before a car hits you, getting out of the room before the bomb goes off

Detection and Sense Powers

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Detecting something. Your choice. Common Detection powers include detecting magic and life.

Dimension-Traveling

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes (blinking out of existence and back again)

Good For: Traveling to other dimensions, seeking out the gods, discovering where lost socks go.

If you want an attack to instantly defeat your opponent (i.e., zapping him into another dimension), you must take this Cliché as a Capture/Stun/Knockout Cliché. However, if you do this, you cannot use the power as a defensive power (you'll have to buy it again!)

Disease-Causing (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Special

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Giving people diseases, making people sick, making people go to the hospital - you get the idea.

This special Cliché allows you to roll to hit your opponent with a disease - spores and the like spread out and cover your foe. Like capture/stun/knockout Clichés, if you roll higher you win, and the opponent has a disease unless he has some way to counter the sickness.

Sometimes this Cliché is a touch-only power. If so, you can attack with another Cliché. If successful with that one, you cause damage as usual and can roll your Disease-Causing Cliché to cause a illness in your opponent.

A sickness is not meant to instantly kill an opponent. In the case of this power, the opponent must re-roll any 6s until he heals (which takes about a week with rest and care) or regenerates, if he has that power.

Energy-Blasting (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Locked Cliché.

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Possible (blasting slow-moving missile attacks out of the air and the like. Normally not possible to defend against melee attacks).

Good For: Attacking at a distance, blasting peoples weapons out of their hands, blasting things thrown at you.

As a limitation the Cliché can be a Power Supply Cliché as well. If the player chooses to do this the power becomes a Locked Cliché.

The Zapping Guy Cliché cannot normally be used for defense.

Escape Planning (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Locked Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No, but allows possible escape

Good For: Always having a planned escape that's one step ahead of the heroes, getting away, being known as a reoccurring villain.

The GM sets the difficulty based on the slickness of the hero's planning, and how well they stuck to their plan. If the villain succeeds in his roll, and an escape is possible, then he gets away clean, even if the heroes chase him. This often leaves the heroes thinking the villain has died, even though he has not.

What if the heroes catch this character? He might have a planned way to escape prison, the villain was just a hologram or robot, or someone else steps in to rescue him (all planned ahead, of course).

Fire-Covered (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché (except as mentioned below).

Physical Attacks?: Yes (extra attacks, see below)

Physical Defense?: Only against fire

Good For: Being resistant to flames, catching things on fire. Roasting marshmallows. Note that the character cannot blast a foe at a distance without Energy-Blasting and cannot fly without Flying. On-Fire Guy/Gal gets to make a free attack when someone attacks him hand-to-hand.

If On-Fire guy is attacked by a cold or water attack, it is considered Specialized against him while he has this power activated.

Flying (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Possible, but can damage self as well

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Getting places quickly, getting away from those silly ground-based foes, and handy for not being killed when falling from places!

Force-Field Wielding

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Possible

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Protecting those in the field from outside damage, lifting equal to the power of the field (although attempting to fly with a field is extremely slow compared to the actual Flying power. Force fields can be used in a tricky fashion to make battering rams or capture people inside the bubbles.

There are other types of fields available as well, including those resistant to magic and psychic powers.

In general, a Force Field can surround as many people as dice in the Cliché.

Freak, Monster or Thing

Type: Standard

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Looking bizarre, scaring normal people, being dangerous when angry.

This Cliché normally comes with claws, strength, acrobatics or something else to make it dangerous enough in combat (describe when picking).

Gadgets

Type: Auto-Loss Cliché. See below.

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Possible

Good For: Pulling shark-repellent out of your belt in the desert, being glad you happened to bring device #235, having a parachute on even though you weren't going flying.

Minor, one-type use devices cause a loss of one level. Gadgets always roll 3 dice. The number of dice you have in Gadgets determine how many gadgets you have.

Giant

Type: Standard (the guy might not get smaller as he is knocked around, but he will get weaker)

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Making people look up to you, always being tall enough to ride the rides, being taller than the rides, carrying more stuff.

Great Willpower

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes, against mental powers

Good For: Fairly specific, but at the same time might not be assumed with a Cliché like Hero. Many heroes have this Cliché, however.

Great Willpower acts as a shield against mental attacks, and acts as a Specialized mental power (re-roll any 1 on a dice). Those with Mental Powers have Great Willpower "built in" to their Cliche, but it is not specialized.

Growing (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché (the guy does not get smaller until he is defeated, then he turns into normal size, depending on the description of how the power works)

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Turning into a giant, carrying more stuff, turning back to normal size again. Usually these heroes have Cool Costume that makes it immune to ripping into a billion pieces when this power is activated!

Gun-slinging (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Quick-drawing, blasting foes, looking really cool afterwards.

These characters often have the Multi-Attack Cliché as well. Allows characters to fight at a distance.

Immortal

Type: Standard

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Only against aging

Good For: Living forever, knowing history better than most people (after all, you were there), resisting the effects of age.

Really, a character only needs 1 dice in the Cliché to live forever (or a really, really long time if you prefer). More dice than this increase the resistance to aging from weird types of age-causing attacks.

This doesn't mean the character can't be killed, just that he won't die of age or suffers ill effects from age during the games you play.

Insect-Controlling

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?:

Physical Defense?:

Good For: Summoning insects, controlling insects, being really creepy.

The summoned creatures have generic Clichés appropriate to their type. A swarm of dragonflies with 4 dice can attack and defend only, while a swarm of spiders has poison venom as well.

Notes on Summoning)

Creatures summoned will last for 1 battle or scene (guard the camp for the night) and have a cliché equal to the dice spent. The character can break the dice into more than one creature.

For example, a fire-magic using wizard (5) could summon a great fire demon (5) or two fire demons (2 dice and 3 dice). The summoned creatures have a generic cliché (fire demons can fight, resist fire and spit fire with the dice they have).

Intangible (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Locked, Power Supply (requires effort)

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes (see below)

Good For: Walking through walls, having stuff pass right through you.

Note that intangible is intangible - you cannot be physically hurt while this power is on. The dice total is how quick you can activate the power. If you attack, you can't use this power.

Notes: Power Supply can be removed for ethereal bodies and ghosts and such, but the Cliché costs double in that case.

Invent Anything

Type: Special Cliché.

Physical Attacks?: possible, with gadgets created

Physical Defense?: possible, with gadgets created

Good For: Inventing cool gadgets, looking like a real geek, being the guy everyone comes to for cool stuff.

You have to pay for any equipment that doesn't do the same thing as normal equipment for the Setting with your Character Improvement. You can't have any new inventions until that one is paid off.

Difficulty equals dice of the invention x6, -6. A flight ring (4) would have a difficulty of (4x6=24, 24-6=18) 18. If the character has the proper Cliche and the device is simple (no moving parts and easy to build with normal human hands) then the difficulty is halved.

The GM decides on how long the powered equipment takes to build. Normally, this requires 7 days with the proper lab and testing facilities, for each dice or bonus of abilities. Without the necessary parts and lab, the time is x10 (include the modifiers below as well). If the device is made of complex machinery, double the time. If it is extremely complex, multiply the time by 6.

Example #1: A character wants to forge a sword (+4). This is a simple device, so it requires (7 days x 4) = 28 days.

Example #2: A character wants to build a Race Car (5). This is a complex device. He has a garage and all the necessary parts. This requires (7 days x 5 = 35; 35 x 2 = 70) 70 days.

Example #3: A character wants to build a radio (6), but is trapped on a desert island. The GM requires a roll against his Genius at 30. If successful, the character can build the radio out of coconuts and sand

in (6 [days] x 10 [no lab] = 60 days; the device is extremely complex, so multiply the result by 6 = 360) a little over a year. Too bad he didn't try to just fix the hole in the boat.

So what good is this power? Put simply, you can gain other powers before having to pay for them!

Invisible (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard (as he is wounded, he begins to bleed, make mistakes, make noise, etc. Also see below.

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Being the perfect spy, disappearing when in danger, sneaking into the girl's locker room.

If Invisible Guy rolls higher, he can then choose another Cliché to roll damage with, such as Big Goon or Martial Artist. The second roll is compared to the first (and should-be only) roll made by the opponent. If that roll is double what the opponent rolled, the Invisible character causes an additional die loss, unless the opponent has some type of resistance to damage.

Invisible characters can be spotted by observant heroes. Some types, at the GM's discretion, may roll their Clichés to sense the invisible character, such as Spy, Scout, Wolf, and the like.

Invulnerable (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Locked (see below)

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Not dying from most attacks, getting wailed on and getting back up, surviving explosions. It is assumed that this type of character is immune to other types of attacks as well, including loss of air, poisons, disease, and the like.

The character cannot be killed (unless his Hook says otherwise). He might be knocked out by enough damage, however. The character will ignore any attack that causes damage less than the total his Invulnerable dice can roll - even if using another Cliché to defend himself! For example, a character with Invulnerable (4) has to be hit with an attack for over a roll of 24 before losing a dice in the Cliché he is defending himself with.

Okay, the character can be killed if he takes damage and the roll exceeds double his Invulnerability score. To be killed, the character above would have to take damage from an attack, have the Cliché reduced to 0 dice, and the opposing roll exceed 48. Even then, the GM can allow rolls or decide that the character was just knocked unconscious, depending on the situation.

Leaping (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Possible, but might hurt self as well

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Leaping from building to building, leaping to get out of the way (also known as dodging), leaping over dangerous pits. If using miniatures, the leap has a difficulty equal to it's Basic Rating x3. So, leaping 10 feet has a difficulty of 3, while leaping 150 feet has a difficulty of 15, and leaping 1/2 a mile has a difficulty of 30!

For more about Basic Ratings, see the Conversion appendix at the end of this document.

Mental-Power Wielding

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes, (kind of)

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Reading minds, mind control, planting suggestions, erasing memories, attacking someone to make their head explode.

Note that mental attacks can be either like a capture/stun/knockout power (you either take over their minds or you don't), or like a standard attack. The thought here is that if they are physically strong, they will be more ready to deal with a mental attack, but if they are wounded the mind will likewise be weakened from fatigue and shock.

Plant-Controlling

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes, with the plants

Physical Defense?: Yes, commanding the plants to protect you

Good For: Making plants grow, placing plants under your control, hugging trees

Power-Stealing (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Capture/Stun/Knockout Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Special

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: You have to touch your opponent for this power to work, using a Cliché like Martial Artist or Brawling. After a successful attack, you can roll your Power-Stealing to see if you also steal a dice of one of your opponent's Power Clichés. Prolonged exposure can allow you to steal all of his dice (to a maximum power of your own dice level). While this is pretty cool and all, you lose 1 dice in stolen powers from each stolen Cliché per day (if you want to say that some of the powers were permanent you'll have to buy em' like everyone else).

Reflecting Power

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: If hit by an attack (your opponent rolls higher than you), you can still roll your Reflecting Power to attempt to reflect the attack back at your attacker. If you roll higher than the initial attack that hit you, the attack is deflected. If you roll 10 or more, your attack reflects where you want it as if you made an attack with that power yourself (using the same total that hit you in the first place).

Regenerating (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Regeneration Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Healing quickly, looking really tough, growing back lost limbs. This works exactly as the normal Regeneration Cliché.

ROBOT/ANDROID/CYBORG

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Fighting with your robotic body, being able to be repaired instead of taking all that time to heal, eating electricity instead of having to hunt.

Robots and androids are immune to disease and poisons, but can become confused over human emotions. Cybogs don't have immunities but can interact well with others.

Shape Changing (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard or Specialized

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Gaining abilities by morphing into something else, disguising yourself, never needing a Halloween costume.

A character with this power can Specialize by declaring that he can only turn into animals, the appearances of other people, or some other limited shape. It is entirely up to the player to determine if the character can turn into partial forms (just the animal claws, for example). The GM can require rolls for partial shapechanging.

Shape of Energy

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Being highly resistant to damage, looking really intimidating, being a walking alternative energy source, traveling down telephone lines.

You are a being made of energy, at least part of the time. Opponents using standard attacks only roll half their normal dice, but some attacks will still roll normally against you (water attacks, wind attacks).

Anyone attacking you hand-to-hand, or with a object that conducts your type of energy, is subject to a free attack from this Cliché.

Shape of Gas

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Being highly resistant to damage, looking really intimidating, being a walking alternative energy source, hovering.

You are a being made of gas, at least part of the time. Opponents using standard attacks only roll half their normal dice. However, wind attacks roll as if they were Specialized.

Shape of Fire

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Being highly resistant to damage, looking really intimidating, being a walking oven.

You are a being made of fire, at least part of the time. Opponents using standard attacks only roll half their normal dice, but some attacks will still roll normally against you (water attacks, wind attacks).

Anyone attacking you hand-to-hand is subject to a free attack from this Cliché.

Shape of Stone or Earth

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Being very strong (see Brick), Carrying more junk

Shape of Water

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Being highly resistant to damage, swimming really fast, "breathing" underwater, being invisible underwater, and being a walking aquarium.

You are a being made of water, at least part of the time. Opponents using standard attacks only roll half their normal dice. However, earth-based attacks that would be very absorbent (sand, kitty litter) roll as if they were Specialized.

Shrinking (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché (He may not get any larger, but he more beat up he becomes, the slower this guy gets)

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes (harder to hit)

Good For: Becoming smaller, being really hard to hit, getting into tiny places that others cannot.

If the character can't turn this power off, it's a limitation and the character receives a free dice in the power in return.

Sticking/Trapping

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Capture Cliché.

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Trapping your opponent in slime, ice, ropes, or something else. Like all Capture/Stun/Knockout Clichés, you get one roll. If the roll fails, nothing happens.

Opponents that are trapped can try to get free each turn by trying to roll over the number that trapped them in the first place. On the second attempt, they get +1 to the roll, and then +2, then +3, etc., until they escape.

Stretching (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Locked Cliché.

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes (against physical blows - energy attacks cannot be defended against)

Good For: Making your form long enough to grab foes at a distance or stretch across buildings, absorbing blows with your rubbery body, wrapping around foes (similar to sticking/trapping), taking strange forms.

Strong (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Like the Brick, but the character isn't necessarily all muscle and brawn. Carrying more Junk.

Super-Equipment

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Possible

Physical Defense?: Possible

Good For: This Cliché simply represents special equipment that could be a Cliché by itself. A good example might be Knight (3) that also has a magical sword (another Cliché). The Knight could choose Super-Equipment (Magical Sword) (3) as another Cliché. The GM decides what type of Cliché the

super-equipment is. For example, a huge suit of magical armor might be a Heavy Armor Cliché, while a ring with magical powers might be a type of Magic Cliché. Super-equipment is counted as Special Equipment, allowing characters to roll over dice. Each piece of equipment counts toward the amount the character can carry.

For more information see SPECIAL EQUIPMENT in the equipment rules.

Super-Running (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché.

Physical Attacks?: Possible, but can damage self as well

Physical Defense?: Yes (dodging)

Good For: Running super-fast, getting to your meeting on time, creating whirlwinds, dodging. The character adds his normal amount of steps with the super-running amount (encumberance still modifies the movement, however).

See the conversion charts at the end of this document. Match the number of dice with the added distance. These characters are very, very fast.

Super-Sight

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Looking at things far away, microscopic vision, x-ray vision, infravision and the like. For each d6 in the Cliché, the player can pick one type of special sight, or the player can pick only one type of sight and Specialize.

Super-Speed

Type: Multi-Attack Cliché

Physical Attacks?:

Physical Defense?:

Good For: Multi-Attack Cliché - must be combined with another Cliché like Brawling or Fast Hero to be really effective. Also see Super-Running. The character can also do other things faster than normal as well, at the GM discretion.

This Cliche does not allow characters to run faster, only to do normal things faster (type on a keyboard, do their taxes, and, oh yeah, beat the crud out of folks).

Super-Stealthy (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Not being seen, hiding in shadows, following people without being noticed. Certain Clichés can roll against this at full dice, such as Rouge, Spy and the like.

Swimming (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Only Underwater

Good For: Moving as easily in the water as you do on land, swimming really fast, breathing water.

Telekinesis Wielding

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes (pushing people into things)

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Lifting things at a distance, keeping large objects from falling on your friends

Teleporting (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No (see below)

Physical Defense?: Yes (blinking here and there)

Good For: Blinking from here to there with no need of travel, bringing your friends with you, teleporting bombs into space.

If you want an attack to instantly defeat your opponent (i.e., teleporting him into space or above a volcano somewhere), you must take this Cliché as a Capture/Stun/Knockout Cliché. However, if you do this, you cannot use the power as a defensive power (you'll have to buy it again!)

Time-Traveling (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes (blinking ahead, after the attack took place)

Good For: Going back in time to stop a horrible event, going forward in time, knowing how time travel works in your universe.

GM WARNING: This power is a headache!

If you want an attack to instantly defeat your opponent (i.e., zapping him into the past or distant future), you must take this Cliché as a Capture/Stun/Knockout Cliché. However, if you do this, you cannot use the power as a defensive power (you'll have to buy it again!)

Undead (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard or Specialized

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Not bleeding to death (you're already dead!), not being affected by spells that steal souls, machines that detect living beings, etc. Mindless Undead are immune to mental attacks as well, but it's not to fun role-playing one. You don't necessarily look undead, unless you want that particular Hook.

Weather-Controlling

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes (wind blasts, lightning bolts)

Physical Defense?: Possible (winds blasting back arrows and other debris, winds keeping melee opponents from getting close, blowing fire away, etc.). It would be stretching it a bit to have the power protect from lasers, radiation and the like.

Good For: Making winds where you want them, calling lightning, summoning and dispersing weather.

Web-Firing (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: No

Good For: Capturing opponents, knocking weapons out of their hands, swinging from building to building. Can just as easily be a whip, grappling hook, and the like.

X-Resistant (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Locked (see below)

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Never getting killed by a particular substance (can still get knocked down or knocked out or just knocked silly, though).

The character will ignore any attack that causes damage less than the total his Resistant dice can roll - even if using another Cliché to defend himself! For example, a character with Fire-Resistant (4) has to be hit with an attack for over a roll of 24 before losing a dice in the Cliché he is defending himself with. He can still roll another Cliche to dodge, parry and the like, but if he rolls less, he still gets to use his 24 Resistance.

Okay, the character can be killed if he takes damage and the roll exceeds double his Resistant score. To be killed, the character above would have to take damage from fire, have the Cliché reduced to 0 dice, and the opposing roll exceed 48. Even then, the GM can allow rolls or decide that the character was just knocked unconscious, depending on the situation.

Many type of Clichés already have resistances built in, but if you want to be resistant to something that doesn't really fit the Clichés you had in mind (a Big Game Hunter who is immune to radiation, for example), be our guest and pick this one.

You have to specify the Cliche when it is chosen. Common examples include Resistance to Fire, Magic, Acid, Cold, Lightning, Radiation, Pressure, Space, Mental Powers, and Kenetic Damage (things that hit you such as baseball bats, bullets and the like).

Note that this Power is not the same as having Heavy Armor, which allows you to attempt to lower your opponent's roll. Instead, the charcter is truely resistant. A character could be resistant to attacks and wear armor as well!

X-Controlling and Creating

(Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: Yes

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: Depends...

The "X" in X-Controlling stands for one type of energy or matter that you decide upon. The character might be able to control magnetic forces, electricity, cold, light, darkness, etc.

This Cliché gives the hero the ability to produce the desired energy, and then to control it. Standard "control" includes making shapes and attacks, but other effects are possible. Use your imagination!

The larger an area the character tries to affect, the higher the difficulty.

If you like, use the magic rules provided below to judge what a character can and cannot do with dice of a X-Controlling Cliche.

X-Speaking (Hero, Villain, Monster, etc)

Type: Standard Cliché

Physical Attacks?: No

Physical Defense?: Yes

Good For: You can communicate with anything! You may specialize in something strange like plants, animals, computers, etc.

Notes: How Big or Small?

Just how big or small can a character get with powers that allow him to change his size? They can add a number of feet equal to half the maximum possible roll of the character to their normal height. A character that is 6' with Growth (4) can add 12 feet to his normal height (making him 18 feet tall), and he could lift about 400 lbs without rolling. Note that characters usually can grow as strong as their Growth power (just like they are a Brick).

Characters with Shrinking are assumed to be able to shrink to half their size for each level: 3 ft for the first dice, 1 1/2 ft. for the second, 9 inches for the third, 4 1/2 inches for the fourth, 2.25" for the fifth, 1 inch for the sixth, etc.

APPENDIX 3: MAGIC

Magic Fields of Study

Each field has 1-5 levels. Note that depending on the level, a caster can cause certain effects. For example, a character with Gates (3) can locate gates, see through gates, and close gates, but can not open or create gates himself.

Arcane

- 1-Walking around without being noticed,
- 2-remove minor effect (shadow or fingerprints)
- 3-destroy all records for the last day (paperwork, pictures will come up missing, etc)
- 4-remove all evidence that the character was at a location (even people will forget he had been there)
- 5-walk around unnoticed even with others about as long as you don't attack

Beastmaster

- 1-Calming animals down,
- 2-talking with animals,
- 3-calling and
- 4-controlling animals,
- 5-possess animals

Animal

- 1-Super-senses,
- 2-growing claws,
- 3-partly become an animal,
- 4-becoming an animal
- 5-permanently become an animal

Druid

- 1-see/identify plants,
- 2-plant growth and control,
- 3-move through forest without threat from plants (thorns, tripping over vines, quicksand), hide path, speak with plants,
- 4-summon treant,
- 5-body of plant

Air

- 1-purify air,
- 2-wind jet attacks,
- 3-whirlwinds,
- 4-body of air,
- 5-summoning air elementals

Earth

- 1-shape earth,
- 2-walk through earth/stone,
- 3-complete stone control (create stone wall, swords of stone, create/hurl stones, etc.),
- 4-flesh to stone,
- 5-summon earth elemental

Electricity

- 1-resist lightning,
- 2-shocking touch,
- 3-lightning control (whip or wall of lightning, cage of lightning, etc),
- 5- body of lightning

Fire

- 1-create fire,
- 2-protection from fire,
- 3-fire control (walls of fire, fireball, flame arrows),
- 4- body of flame,
- 5-summon fire elemental

Water

- 1-create water,
- 2-breathe water,
- 3-walk on water,
- 4-body of water,
- 5-summon water elemental

Blessings

- 1-detect magic,
- 2-enchanted objects,
- 4-permanent enchantment,
- 5-destroy enchantment

Burdens (giving items names, passwords)

Fate

- 1-cause luck,
- 2-cause bad luck,
- 3-remove curse,
- 5-give curse)

Gates

- 1-locate gate,

2-see through gate,
3-close gate,
4-open gate,
5-create gate

Healing

1-lend health,
2-heal,
3-regenerate,
4-cure,
5-resurrect)

Hourglass

1-feel young,
2-reduce aging,
3-cause aging,
4-stop aging,
5-immortality

Illusion (detect illusion, dispel illusion)

Light

1-light,
2-continual light,
3-flash,
4-invisibility, see invisible,
5-sunlight, sunbolt

Mind

1-hide thoughts, sense life
2-mind-reading, sense emotion,
3-mind-search,
4-suggestion,
5-enslave mind)

Movement

1-haste,
2-telekinesis, slow fall,
3-flight, wall walker,
4-teleport,
5-ethereal body

Necromancy

1-see own death, sense spirits,
2-speak with the dead,
3-turn undead,
4-animation,
5-control undead

Protection

- 1-sense danger or foes,
- 2-armor,
- 3-counter spell or dispel magic,
- 4-magic resistance,
- 5-immunity

Senses (increased senses)

Shadow and Darkness

- 1-see in the dark,
- 2-hide in shadow, cover self with shadows,
- 3-create and shape darkness,
- 4-shadow teleportation,
- 5-body of shadow

Sound

- 1-silence,
- 2-create sounds,
- 3-increase hearing,
- 4-message,
- 5-hear what happened in the past at a particular area

Speech

- 1-sense emotion,
- 2-borrow language,
- 3-know all languages,
- 4-message,
- 5-telepathy

Spell master

- 1-hold spell,
- 2-cause and effect,
- 3-boost spell,
- 4-mutable spell,
- 5-permanent spell

Summoner (summoning creatures and things)

Sustenance

- 1-seek and test food,
- 2-purify food,
- 3-create food,
- 4-go without food,
- 5-cause good crops

Truth

- 1-sense lie,
- 2-compel truth from subject,
- 3-sense half-truth (when someone tells the truth, but only part of it),

- 4-cause the subject to tell the entire truth as he knows it,
- 5-know truth-even if the subject thinks he is telling the truth but isn't

Wards

- 1-conceal information about self or others in area,
- 2-protection from scrying or set magical alarm,
- 3-counter spell and dispel magic,
- 4-catch spell (contest to catch and save the attack of another mage),
- 5-return magic (contest to send the rolled attack back at the caster - if the contest fails, the caster rolls his defense -1 dice!)

Weather

- 1-warm or cool,
- 2-summon weather,
- 3-control weather,
- 4-lightning,
- 5-tornado

Notes on Casting Spells

Cost of Casting Spells

The mage draws from his available energy and must make a roll equal to the dice of his spell cliché. If all the dice roll even, the caster loses one dice. When he runs out of dice, he loses the ability to cast spells. Mages can restore 1 dice of power by studying, meditating or whatever for 2 hours per dice.

Cause and Effect

Some spells can be cast to be held until a future time. The spell is cast at normal rate and dice, but until the spell is used the caster is considered 1 dice less in spell casting ability.

For example, a character has Magic: Movement (5) and casts a 5 dice cause and Effect spell that will cause a Teleport spell to take him away if he ever is reduced to 0 dice in a cliché (allowing him to escape a defeat that will kill him). However, until that happens, the character has Magic: Movement (4). He can still teleport, but cannot make his body ethereal.

Cause and Effect requires at least Magic: Spell Master (2).

Body Of

Earth - good for physical combat against those resistant to magic.

Plant - each level used acts as armor

Air - you can't be hurt by normal (non-magical) attacks, but you can't use any attacks (including magic) while air. You may fly.

Electricity - enemies making physical attacks are attacked by your Electricity cliché as an extra attack you can't take dice loss from, enemies making purely physical attacks use one dice (but may still Push).

Fire - see electricity

Water- as Air, but you can't fly. However, you are invisible in water and can move at incredible speed while swimming.

Shadow- as Air, but you can't fly. However, you are invisible in shadows.

NOTES ON MAGIC AND CASTING SPELLS

Summoning)

Characters that can summon creatures summon the appropriate type (undead fro necromancers, earth elementals for earth wizards, etc).

Creatures summoned will last for 1 battle or scene (guard the camp for the night) and have a cliché equal to the wizards dice spent. The wizard can break the dice into more than one creature.

For example, a fire-magic using wizard (5) could summon a great fire demon (5) or two fire demons (2 dice and 3 dice). The summoned creatures have a generic cliché (fire demons can fight, resist (armor against) fire and spit fire with the dice they have).

Enchanting)

A character can enchant a weapon or armor if he has the proper cliché. He reduces his magic cliché by 2 dice for each +1 the weapon would then possess. The weapon or armor then becomes Special Equipment. However, the mage loses the dice from his cliché until the item is either destroyed or he wishes the enchantment away.

Permanent Spells)

Enchantments, summoning, armor spells and the like can be made permanent if the caster has the proper cliché. However, the caster must give up 2 magic dice from any of his magic clichés permanently for each dice that he uses to power the spell. For example, a wizard with spell master (6) makes a permanent +3 special weapon (wow!) - however, he loses 6 dice forever from his magical clichés (ouch).

"Contingency" Spells...

Spells that are cast that require "until something happens" are possible, but this requires an immediate loss of Cliché.

For example, a character with Protection Spells (4) decides to cast an Armor spell that will protect him against foes (Heavy Armor 4). This will last until it is used, allowing the mage to have time to cast other spells when the time comes. Because the spell is cast to be used later, the mage's Protection Spells immediately drops to 3. When the mage regains his spell dice, he loses these "saved" spells, which must be cast again.

APPENDIX 4: FUNKY DICE LEVELS

In superhero campaigns the GM might allow super-levels of dice. Instead of having hundreds of little dice, he can allow the use of Funky Dice, like 8-sided dice, 12-sided dice and the like.

Each dice above 6 has a dice total. These totals should be used in place of the normal 6-sided dice.

If the Gm is using a point-based system for character creation, the dice cost the same as their maximum roll. 5d10 costs 50 points, for example. The level must be purchased as noted here. A character could not have 3d10, for example.

1d6

2d6

3d6

4d6

5d6

6d6

5d8
6d8
5d10
6d10
7d10
6d12
8d10
7d12
9d10
8d12
10d10
9d12
11d10
10d12

APPENDIX 5: CONVERSIONS

Okay, it's a good idea to have a chart that might tell you what's what in some cases. Note that the following chart by no means should limit the GM to certain numbers.

Basic Level 1: poor, Risus 2d6, 8 seconds, 10 feet, 100 pounds, walking speed, toughness of wood, standard weapons

Basic Level 2: poor to typical, Risus 3d6, 16 seconds, 20 feet, 200 lbs., speed of an olympic swimmer, standard weapons

Basic Level 3: Typical, Risus 4d6, 32 seconds, 40 feet, 400 pounds, running speed, toughness of thick ice or soft metals, maximum dice of standard weapons

Basic Level 4: Good, Risus 5d6, 1 minute, 80 feet, 750 lbs., speed of a bicycle, toughness of brick, heavy weapons

Basic Level 5: Risus 6d6, 2 minutes, 150 feet, 1500 lbs (maximum ideal human strength), Speed of a horse, heavy weapons

Basic Level 6: Excellent, Risus 5d8, 4 minutes, 100 yards, 1.5 tons, capable of bending steel, speed of a Jeep, toughness of concrete and bulletproof glass, assault rifles and blaster rifles

Basic Level 7: Risus 6d8, 8 minutes, 200 yards, 3.25 tons, speed of a sports car, light powered armor, normally the maximum damage for very good heavy weapons

Basic Level 8: Risus 5d10, 16 minutes, 1/8 of a mile, 6.5 tons, fastest boat

Basic Level 9: Remarkable, Risus 6d10, 32 minutes, 1/4 mile, 13 tons (strength capable of smashing concrete), airline speed, toughness of steel, heavy powered armor

Basic Level 10: Risus 7d10, 1 hour, 1/2 mile, 26 tons

Basic Level 11: Incredible/Amazing, 6d12, 2 hours, 1 mile, 52 tons (strength capable of ripping through steel), speed of jet plane or bullet, strength of solid stone. maximum dice of flamethrowers or LAW rockets

Basic Level 12: Monstrous! Risus 8d10, 4 hours, 2 miles, 104 tons, toughness of diamond, maximum dice for heavy artillery

Basic Level 13: Unearthly! Risus 7d12, 8 hours, 4 miles, 208 tons. Strength of Adamantium, Maximum dice for super artillery

Basic Level 14: 9d10, 16 hours, 8 miles, 375 tons, able to throw a car 1/2 mile, speed of the space shuttle

Basic Level 15: 8d12, 1 day, 16 miles, 750 tons, speed of a comet

Basic Level 16: 10d10, 2 days, 30 miles, 1500 tons

Basic Level 17: 9d12, 4 days, 60 miles, 3125 tons (not really stoppable at this point)

Basic Level 18: 11d10, 1 week, 125 miles, 12,500 tons

Basic level 19: 10d12, 2 weeks, 250 miles, 25,000 tons

Basic Level 29: Light Speed