

Moment of Truth

A Table-Top Role-Playing Game
by Stu Venable, Jr.

Introduction

Moment of Truth is designed to be an easy-to-learn and quick-to-play role-playing game designed for face-to-face at a table or over-the-internet play. It requires at least 10 six-sided dice per player, pencils and paper and this book.

The main design principles I used when creating the game came from what I wanted to see in a table-top RPG.

I wanted a game where combat is decided quickly and decisively; and game mechanics are simple to explain, easy to remember and do not interfere with or delay the story unfolding at the table.

Moment of Truth is not an exhaustive set of rules. That is, every possible situation is not covered here. Rather, these rules present a few different methods of conflict resolution the GM can use in many different situations. In situations the rules do not cover, the GM can step in and determine how the rules as stated should be applied.

It is also the GM's responsibility to call for players to make rolls when they declare actions for their PCs to make. Here is where Moment of Truth diverges from some other games. In most games, GMs can call for rolls whenever they want. In Moment of Truth, calling for players to make rolls has ramifications for the GM and the storyline unfolding in the game.

In Moment of Truth, a player can choose to not roll (when not in combat) and simply have his or her character fail, earning that player an opportunity later on to take control of the game's narrative beyond the actions of the player's character, or gain other bonuses.

This sets Moment of Truth apart from other games, as this mechanic makes required rolls rarer than in other games. You will find that you may only reach for your dice as a player a few times per session – or perhaps not at all in some sessions.

Experienced GMs will notice that their style may change as they run Moment of Truth. They may find they ask players for fewer rolls and they might often simply allow that a character can do

something, whereas in other systems they might have asked for skill rolls or ability checks.

This text is not itself a complete game, though with minimal effort it can be. It is the framework necessary to develop a game, but it contains no setting material, only a smattering of player character options, no monsters or villains, no supernatural abilities, and only a handful of weapons and other equipment.

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A Note About House-Ruling and This Book

Your game at your table belongs to you, the GM, and your players, not me. Therefore, the rules you decide to use, omit or change are entirely up to you. If you don't like the way a rule works, change it. If, when you change it, it breaks something else, try changing it in a different way. These rules are in no way sacrosanct.

If a player comes up with a Trait that breaks something, or creates an adventure-bypassing “easy button,” work with the player to revise it. If things come to an unresolvable conflict, it is up to the GM to adjudicate what the fair outcome is, keeping in mind the players' fun and reason for playing.

While you as GM are the final arbitrator of the rules, you aren't a dictator.

Chapter 0: Role-Playing Games and RPG Terms

A role-playing game (RPG) – today more commonly called a table-top RPG – is an extremely social game. Some consider RPGs exercises in collaborative improvisational storytelling. Others consider them to be chances to fight epic battles and tell epic stories. In truth, they're all correct.

In a traditional table-top RPG (of which Moment of Truth counts itself), one player is designated as the **Game Master or GM**. The GM is responsible for adjudicating the rules, playing the roles of any extras (called **non-player characters, or NPCs**), determining the actions of any foes or villains (which are also NPCs, by the way) and generally keeping track of everything that's happening in the game world that isn't controlled by the **Player Characters**.

The other players of an RPG, are called (rather coincidentally) **Players**. Each player will take on the role of a unique, individual character that exists in the **Game World** that is created by the GM (or the GM in collaboration with the players). These characters, called **Player Characters or PCs**, are the protagonists of the story the group will tell as they play the game.

A **Game Session**, which can last anywhere from an hour or so to several hours, normally begins with the GM describing the scene the PCs find themselves in. The players then describe what their PCs do as they attempt to solve mysteries, battle evil-doers, etc. Meanwhile, the GM is describing everything else: the actions of the villains and NPCs, the weather, the look and feel of the PCs' surrounds, etc.

At the moment the players and the GM come to a point where the outcome of an action by a PC or NPC is up for debate, the **Game Mechanics** of the RPG come into play. Game Mechanics are the rules of the game that determine the outcome of any action where there is uncertainty, competition or conflict. This might be a race for the exit, a sword fight, a wrestling match, a battle of wits or any other similar situation.

Like most table-top RPGs, the mechanics of Moment of Truth are informed by the PC's **Character Sheet**. The character sheet is a form that contains information about the PC: what they're good at, what they're not good at, how strong or smart they are, etc.

When it's time to use the game mechanics, you'll be asked to look up your characters skills and statistics, do a little simple addition and roll some **Dice**. Dice are the most common randomizer table-top RPGs use. In many games, there are all kinds of different polyhedral dice used for different things in the game. These dice are generally described using the nomenclature d#, where the # is a number indicating the number of sides on the dice (for example d20 for a 20-sided die, d10 for a 10-sided die, and so on).

Moment of Truth only uses d6s, or 6-sided dice – the standard cube-shaped dice that come in most typical family games. However, Moment of Truth tends to use quite a few of them. You may roll between 3-9 dice to determine the success of an action and maybe as many as twenty to determine damage from a particularly powerful weapon.

Rather than counting the numbers of the dice and adding them together, players in Moment of Truth are using these dice in a **Dice Pool**. That is, they are rolling the dice, but ignoring any that do not have a certain number or higher on them.

Chapter 1: Game Mechanics Overview

In an attempt to explain how Moment of Truth works as an RPG, we're first going to explain the basics of game mechanics. Game mechanics are what we use to determine what happens when a character

The Skill Roll

The skill roll is the basic building block of game mechanics in Moment of Truth.

As a player, you will declare what action your character is going to attempt. If this is a very easy or routine task, and you possess the appropriate skill, the GM may simply state that you have completed the task successfully.

If the task is more difficult, or if there are extenuating circumstances, like a time-crunch or working under fire, the GM may require a **Skill Roll** to determine your character's success or failure.

This game uses six-sided dice (hereafter referred to as d6) in what it called a dice pool mechanic. This means that you are looking at the result of each die, rather than adding them up to some sort of total.

To do something, you will add your character's **relevant statistic** and **relevant skill** together and roll that many dice. This is your dice pool.

If your character does indeed possess a **relevant skill**, this is considered a **skilled roll**. **Each die showing a 5 or a 6 as a result is considered a success.**

If your character **does not possess the relevant skill**, this is considered an **unskilled roll**. For unskilled rolls you only roll a number of d6s equal to the **relevant statistic** (since there is no relevant skill), **and you only count 6s as successes.**

In rare cases, the GM may allow you to add dice equal to a skill that is, while not relevant, arguable applicable to the task at hand. In

these situations, this is still an unskilled roll, so only 6s are counted as successes. No dice pool can be made of more than one statistic or more than one skill.

The GM will set a “**target number**,” which is how many successes you need to roll with your dice pool to get the desired result from your character’s action. For a cinematic or “pulpy” style game, the default target number should be set to 1 (or TN:1). This means that with a dice pool, the player must roll one success to do the action as intended. For a more gritty or realistic game, the target number should be set to 2 (or TN:2).

While TN:1 makes success more assured, it also makes it more likely that players will take chances and risk extra successes for more difficult actions. This can make for a more wild and heroic game. TN:2 on the other hand can cause players to play more conservatively, minimizing chances for increased failure.

The GM can increase this default under specific circumstances. For a particularly difficult task, or a normal task under extremely difficult circumstances, the GM can add one or two required successes to the TN.

The Impossibility Exception

When the dice pool is below the required TN, making success impossible, the dice pool size increases to match the TN, but you must roll 6s to succeed, rather than 5s and 6s. If your roll was unskilled (so you only count 6s as successes anyway, add 1 die to your dice pool, (so it is one higher than the TN). You must roll all 6s to succeed. In other words, you must roll all 6s to succeed.

For example, if you are trying to roll two successes, and your dice pool is one die, increase your dice pool to two, but only count 6s as successes. If this is an unskilled roll, roll three dice, but you must roll three 6s to succeed.

Contested Skill Check

If two characters are attempting the same action in competition or opposition to each other, or one character is trying to resist the

actions of another, the GM may call for a contested roll. Each player (or the GM for NPCs) rolls a dice pool equal to relevant stat plus relevant skill. The character with the most successes wins.

If the number of successes is the same (or there aren't any) the contested roll is considered a deadlock. It is up to the GM to determine the results of a deadlocked roll. It may be a stalemate, a tie or some other result that better fits the situation. If the deadlock roll is the result of an attempt to resist the actions of another character, the resisting character wins.

In situations where a deadlock doesn't make sense, the tie should go to the player character. If the contest is between two player characters, have each player make an immediate re-roll to determine who wins. Repeat this until someone wins.

The Statistic Roll

In some situations, the GM may ask you to make a roll against one of your statistics that does not involve a skill at all. These rolls are called **statistic rolls**. The most common statistics roll is a perception roll, but others may come up from time to time.

When your GM asks you to roll your perception to notice something hidden, your strength to shove something heavy, or perhaps your agility to walk across a narrow beam, you will roll a number of dice equal to the indicated statistic.

Even though there is not an associated skill, when making a statistic roll, you will count 5s and 6s as successes.

As a general rule, **dice pool penalties never affect statistic roll dice pools.**

Helping

If the GM determines that the situation would allow for another character to help you do something, another player can add 1 die to your dice pool. For instance, if you are lifting something heavy and it's large enough for someone else to help, another player may add 1 die to help.

If the GM determines that a specific skill must be used, the helping character must possess that skill. If your character is trying to conduct research about an ancient culture, another character can add a die to your dice pool if the helping character possesses the research skill.

The Golden Rule of When to Roll

Moment of Truth contains a powerful narrative reward for players which they have the opportunity to earn when they are asked to make a roll (this is discussed later in this book). As such, GMs should use the following guidelines when asking for any roll.

For routine or simple tasks, the GM should not require a roll at all. If the player possesses the relevant skill, and the task is routine for a skilled character, the GM should simply narrate success.

Furthermore, the GM should only require skill rolls when the outcome is **uncertain and relevant** to the story. **If a failed roll will have no effect on the story, don't make the players roll.**

What to Roll

You may notice in the Skills section that skills have no associations with the six Statistics. This is intentional. It is at the GM's discretion (with input and suggestions from the player) as to which Statistic should be added to the relevant skill.

In most cases the GM should use the statistic for the **most relevant** aspect of the task at hand. In a situation where a character with the Mechanic skill is trying to fix a car that won't start, the GM may determine that the relevant statistic is perception (if a starter wire is loose, for instance). The GM may determine the relevant stat to be strength if something is lodged in the brake calipers and is difficult to remove.

If your character has the medicine skill, you may be required to roll your skill with agility to close a wound properly. You may be required to roll perception to determine (by visual inspection) how someone died. You may roll your skill with education if you're trying to identify a disease or recall the proper medication for a

certain obscure illness. An archaeologist might use education when trying to remember facts about a specific civilization, and he might use agility when attempting to extricate a delicate object from the ground. A thief might use climbing with strength to scale a wall, and an investigator might use climbing with education to determine the path the thief used to get to the third-story window.

You can think of it this way: each skill listed may very well represent an entire set of skills used by someone in that line of work, each using a different statistic to determine the dice pool.

Determining Target Number (TN)

When you are required to make a skilled roll, an unskilled roll or a statistic roll, the GM will supply you with a **target number**. The target number represents the number of successes you need to roll with your dice pool to successfully complete the task at hand. When determining the number of successes, the GM considers the task at hand and its difficulty for someone with the relevant skill. The GM should NOT take into account whether or not your character possesses the skill. There is already a dice mechanic to account for this.

The GM can adjust the default TN to change the tone of a game. In gritty or realistic settings, the TN of 2 (which is the default for Moment of Truth) will reflect that challenging tasks remain challenging, success isn't guaranteed and requires effort. Lowering the TN to 1 allows for a more cinematic or adventurous game — success is easier for heroic characters and more difficult feats become easier.

Sidebar: Target Number as a Dial

Welcome to the first of several dials in Moment of Truth. Dials are ways we “tweak” the rules of the game to change the flavor of the game world and dial in how heroic or carefully the PCs will go about their business.

The first and most influential dial of Moment of Truth is the default target number or TN. The default TN is the number of successes a character must roll to perform a task of “standard

difficulty.” “Standard difficulty” usually means a difficult task under low-stress circumstances, or a task of ordinary difficulty under high-stress circumstances. It is, above all else, the most common type of action for which the GM would call for a roll.

Unfortunately, the term “dial” here is a misnomer, as the default target number is really a switch: it should be either 1 or 2. A TN:1 means that successes happen often. It also means that very difficult tasks, like called shots, suddenly become easier. In a TN:1 game, players are more willing to try crazy things as they know they have a better chance of success.

A TN:2 game, on the other hand, is very different. Requiring that second success by default means that success is more scarce, and difficult actions that require additional successes may even trigger the Impossibility Exception.

As you read through the book, you'll find several other sidebars describing dials for other mechanics in the system. Used together, these dials can provide you with anything from a survival horror game to a high-flying pulp-era epic.

Critical Success

Whenever your roll two successes more than required, you have rolled a critical success.

When a critical success happens, you succeed at your task in some spectacular way that is a boon to you or the party. The GM can determine what this is or can solicit suggestions from the roller or other players.

In combat, it is suggested that the player drop the damage numbers for the damage dice pool by one (this is explained later).

Critical Failure

When you roll no successes and two ones with your dice pool, you have failed in a rather monumental way.

The GM should determine exactly what terrible thing happens as a result of the critical failure, taking into account the situation where

the failure occurred and the nature of what the PC was attempting. Some GMs like to ask the player who made the roll determine the result, as sometimes players will come up with more interesting (and sometimes worse) results than the GM would.

Chapter One Tables



Chapter 2: Character Creation: Statistics

Basic Statistics

Characters are described with six basic statistics and several derived statistics. Basic statistics can be between 1 and 6. The basic stats are: **Endurance, Strength, Agility, Will, Perception and Education**.

Endurance is your character's physical well-being, conditioning and stamina. A character with a high endurance can do strenuous work longer, take more physical punishment and withstand more pain and discomfort than the average person. endurance is also used to calculate your character's hit points (see the Damage section).

Strength is your character's strength and stature. It is your ability to lift or shove things, carry things and deal damage in melee (hand-to-hand) combat. Your strength score is your base damage with melee weapons. It can be used in conjunction with skills in situations that rely on physical strength.

Agility is your character's physical coordination and speed. Agile characters are better skilled in hand to hand combat, better with ranged weapons and excel at any skill requiring manual dexterity or coordination. Agility is used in conjunction with skills that require coordination, physical accuracy or grace.

Will is your character's mental well being. It represents your ability to apply yourself mentally to difficult, tedious tasks, your ability to handle stressful situations and psychologically deal with horrific events. It is also your protection against supernatural attempts to control your mind.

Perception is your character's ability to notice things, small details, large patterns, odd occurrences. It is also your ability to process and collate this information into useful theories and explanations. You use perception with skills when you are trying to notice things, make correlations, determine a sequence of events with available evidence, and the like.

Education represents your character's formal education and real-life experience. This is the pool of things you know. You use education with skills when you need to see if your character knows either a fact or something about a particular subject. Additionally your number of skill points is determined by your education.

Buying Statistics

Your character starts a level of 2, or poor, in all six statistics. You have **six statistics points** to spend to raise your stats. You may spend a point to raise any one stat by one point. Spend two to raise it by two, and so on. The maximum stat for a normal human is 5.

Derived Statistics

In addition to the six basic statistics, there are several **derived statistics**. Derived statistics use one or more statistic and some mathematical operation to create a new statistic.

The basic game has five of these derived statistics. GMs may include additional derived stats in their games, and some settings include others as well.

When calculating derived stats, **always round down or drop fractions**.

Hit Points reflect the amount of physical punishment your character can suffer before collapsing. Hit points (or HP) equal twice your endurance plus six. **$(2 \times \text{endurance}) + 6$** .

Melee Attack reflects your ability to fight with a hand weapon (as opposed to a range weapon). It is added to your melee weapons skill to determine the size of your dice pool. Melee attack is the average of your strength and agility (drop fractions). **$(\text{Strength} + \text{Agility}) / 2$ (drop fractions)**.

Ranged Attack reflects your ability to fight with ranged weapons, including fire arms, bows, crossbows and thrown weapons. It is added to your ranged weapon skills to determine the size of your dice pool. Ranged attack is the average of your agility and perception (drop fractions). **$(\text{Agility} + \text{Perception}) / 2$ (drop fractions)**.

Reaction Time reflects how well you react in a combat situation and whether you jump into action or freeze. Reaction time as a dice pool is used to determine combat initiative (adding up all dice in your pool). Reaction time is the average of your agility and will. **(Agility+will)/2 (drop fractions).**

Move determines how many meters you can move in a turn. Move is the average of your endurance and agility. **(Agility+endurance)/2 (drop fractions).**

Chapter 3: Character Creation: Skills

Buying Skills

Skills are purchased with **skill points**. Your character has a number of skill points equal to **(Education x 2) +12**. This is the maximum number of points you can spend on skills during character creation.

There are four levels of proficiency for skills. They are 0 (familiar) through 4 (master). Your skill level reflects the amount of training you have in that specific skill.

To purchase skills, use the table below and find your desired skill level on the column on the left and pay skill points indicated on the column on the right.

For one skill point, you can purchase a skill at “zero level.” This allows you to make a skilled roll (counting 5s and 6s as successes), but you get no extra dice to your pool from your skill level (ie, you're rolling a dice pool made up of the relevant statistic only).

Physical

Archery – This is the ability to use bows and crossbows.

Athletics – This skill represents the ability to perform athletic feats: jumping great distances, climbing to great heights, run quickly, etc. It can also be used to perform acrobatic feats.

Brawling – You can fight unarmed, with fists, feet, knees, elbows and teeth. Most improvised weapons (if they don't have another skill that is more analogous) would use this skill.

Driving – This skill is used to operate a motor vehicle.

Gunnery – Use this skill to fire any vehicle mounted weapons.

Lockpicking – Along with a set of lockpicks, this skill allows you to open locks without a key.

Long Arms – This skill is used to accurately fire rifles and shotguns, and any firearms operated with two hands.

Martial Arts – You know one of various martial arts disciplines, and as such, your unarmed attacks do better damage (see the equipment chapter).

Melee, one-handed – Use this skill to wield swords, knives, axes, maces, morning stars, clubs, etc.

Melee, two-handed – Use this skill to wield great swords, pole-arms, two-handed maces, chairs, etc.

Pickpocket – This is the ability to lift something off of someone's person without their knowledge. By default, this is an opposed roll versus perception statistic roll. If the target being cautious, ties indicate the target is aware of the failed attempt.

Piloting – Use this skill to fly any kind of flying vehicle: helicopter, aircraft, dirigible, etc.

Pistol – This skill is used to accurately fire any sort of pistols, from revolvers and automatic pistols to laser pistols and electrobeamer pistols.

Stealth – Allows you to move quietly, evade detection or hide. Also allows you to follow another character on foot without detection. This is also the skill used to follow someone undetected (shadowing). Shadowing is normally an opposed roll versus a perception statistic roll. If the target is being cautious, ties indicated that the target is aware they are being followed.

Throwing – Use this skill to accurately throw something. This is also the skill used with thrown weapons.

Academic

Anthropology – You understand human societies, their ecologies and evolution. You likely have a broad knowledge of different human societies and can infer things about unfamiliar ones with your broad knowledge.

Archaeology – This is the study of ancient civilizations through the study of the physical clues they left behind. Archaeology is used to recover ancient artifacts, recognize them and know something about their history.

Astrogation – This is the skilled used to navigate about the solar system. A successful roll will allow the PC to plot a course for a planet or other heavenly body, estimate travel time, etc. This skill can also be used to guess another ship's destination from its trajectory (TN:2).

Botany – You have a broad understanding of plant life, including their biology, life cycle, suitability for food, etc.

Chemistry - You understand the basic chemical interactions. You know the procedures to safely handle and mix dangerous chemicals. You can create compounds and various chemical reactions.

History – This skill represents the knowledge of bygone eras. History can be used to identify a historical figure, event or place.

Psychology - You understand human nature and the mind on an individual level. You can diagnose and treat various mental ailments. Conversely, you can using your knowledge to trigger those with mental issues.

Research - This is the ability to find publicly available information via computer databases, networks, the internet or a library. A successful roll allows the character to assess the credibility of the source, find leads to other useful sources of information and answer questions.

Zoology - You have a broad understand of animal life, including, biology, feeding and mating behaviors, hunting habits, habitats, etc.

Knowledge

Communications – You understand the basics of transmitters and receivers. You know how to tune multiband transceivers, how to maximize range, and can perform basic repairs.

Computers – You understand the basic functions of a computer. Given proper access, you can operate programs, figure out their function, search for important information, etc.

Computer Security – You understand how to secure (or breach

the security of) a computer. You understand basic coding, can write simple programs quickly, know various methods of securing sensitive data and how to defeat it.

Construction – You can build a safe and sturdy structure. A successful roll can also tell you how to take down such a structure, know its weaknesses, etc.

Electrician – Allows the PC diagnose and repair beamers and X-ray weapons. This skill can also be used to overdrive such weapons, making them more powerful, but dangerously unstable.

Mechanics – You have a basic understanding of mechanical devices, be they automobile engines or transmissions, elevators, trash compactors, etc. Basically, anything with moving parts. You can look at a device and determine its function, how to fix or disable it.

Medic – This is the skill used to “heal” damage. Every success on a Medic roll heals one point of serious damage (minor damage only heals with time). Only one Medic roll can be made for an injured character (unless the character is injured again).

Photography – Photography allows the PC to take and develop reasonably clear photographs. This skill can also be used to discern information about photographs, like when and where they might have been taken. It can also be used to spot fakes.

Religion – (Category:) This

Streetwise – Lets you determine information about an urban area, move about in criminal circles without causing suspicion, identify dangerous and relatively safe areas and behave in such a way that you don’t cause problems or get yourself in trouble.

Surveillance electronics - You understand the function and use of miniature microphones, cameras and other surveillance equipment. You also have an understanding of the proper methods of placement to avoid detection.

Survival – This skill represents the ability to survive in the wild without the comforts afforded by technology. It encompasses building shelters, tracking, hunting, trapping game, etc.

Social

Acting - Acting gives you the ability to conceal motives, moods, identity. A successful roll can allow you to pretend to be someone you are not. It can be used to act very calm when you are very nervous (or vice versa).

Conversation - The conversation skill allows you to begin conversations without causing undue suspicion. It embodies the ability to bring up conversation starters, transition between different subjects of conversation and end conversations gracefully.

Intimidate - You understand the psychology of intimidation and threats. A successful roll (contested by Acting) can allow you to determine what sorts of things might cause your subject to be more cooperative.

Lying - This is the basic ability to pass off a falsehood as true. Depending on the situation, a skill roll may not be necessary. To lie to someone about something inconsequential to them, where the details of the facts are unknown to them probably doesn't require a roll. But in situations where more is at stake, the GM may require a contested skill check. A lie that is consistent with known facts is easier to pass off as the truth, and may gain a bonus. An outlandish lie, which would cause the recipient to ignore or discount known facts, might bring a penalty. Read individual is normally the skill used for this contested skill check by the person hearing the lie.

Performance – This is a general skill that covers being a stage actor, musician, performance artist, etc.

Read individual - This skill allows you to determine the general mood of another character by body language, facial expression, mannerisms, tone of voice, etc. It can also be used to determine if someone is attempting deceit. It works better on characters with whom you are familiar, which would likely grant a bonus. Also, penalties may be required if the person is from another culture, where nonverbal cues may be different. This skill can be resisted with Acting, and may be resolved with a contested skill check. It can also be used to determine if someone is attempting to lie to you.

Read crowd - This skill allows you to determine the general mood or disposition of a group of people. A successful roll would inform you as to what a given crowd might do, whether or not it is prone to violence or civil disobedience. It can also inform you as to the crowd's disposition to certain arguments or statements.

Setting

Alienism – This is the study of human nature, behavioral pathology and insanity. This field is in its infancy, and often many cockamamie theories rise to the top of this intellectual mud pit. You'll hear lots of muttering about mothers, cigars and unspeakable envies.

Codery – (no Category) This is the skill used to break Telewave codes.

Solar Rigging – (no Category) This is the skill used to rig the sails of an airship to take maximum advantage of solar winds.

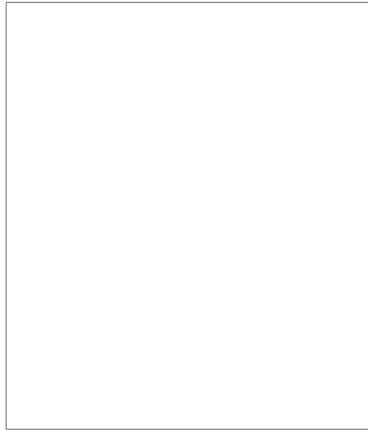
Telewave – (Category: Technology) This is the skill to maintain and repair long distance, wireless telegraphy devices. It's also the skill necessary to translate Telewave code.

Xenobiology – (Category: Life Sciences) This is the study of otherworldly fauna. A successful roll can identify an alien critter, know whether it's dangerous or not – possibly even if it's edible, when things get dire.

Xenobotony – (Category: Life Sciences) This is the study of otherworldly flora. A successful roll will identify various plants, their uses, dangers, etc.

Chapter Three Tables

Skill Level	Description	Skill Points
0	Familiarity	1
1	Trained	2
2	Skilled	3
3	Expert	6
4	Master	8



Chapter 4: Character Creation: Traits

Your character is far more than just a handful of statistics and skills. You've got strengths and weaknesses; family, friends and responsibilities; and you see the world in a unique way. Just like you, your character deserves some uniqueness.

We call these “Traits.” There are three kinds of Traits: Talents, Boons, and Problems. Problems are sort of “negative” traits give you the ability to buy Talents and Boons. You can take up to four problems and thereby “purchase” four Talents and Boons, though some esoteric Talents and Boons might cost more than a single problem.

Problems can, in addition to being used to purchase other traits (talents and boons), be exchanged for skill points (each Problem equals three skill points) or stat points (each Problem equals one stat point).

Problems

Problems are things that make your character's life difficult. They can come from within, like personal failings or weaknesses, or without, like bigotry, enemies, rivals, etc.

For every Problem you take, you may take a Talent or Boon. You can take a maximum of four Problems.

Problems should be common enough as to come up in normal game play. Being dreadfully afraid of zombies might be a perfectly good Problem in a zombie apocalypse game, but if you're in a hard science fiction setting, where zombies don't exist, such a Problem wouldn't be permissible.

Moment of Truth does not by default contain a mechanism to compel a player to have their character act in a way consistent with their problems. If, for example, your character is a Drunk and passes by a bar. There is no roll the GM can compel you to make to resist the urge to go in for “just one little drink.” Nor is there any reward the GM will give you for giving in to the character's weakness. Instead, the compulsion to have your character engage

in their problems should come from the player.

In some cases, GMs may want to employ some sort of reward mechanic to encourage this (See Dramatic Mechanics, Chapter 5), but by default, MoT assumes the players WANT to play their characters, flaws and all.

Here are some common Problems:

Anger Issues: You're short-tempered. You fly off the handle when people make you angry, causing you to do things you later regret.

Bad Reputation: You've had a "colorful" past, and word about it tends to spread. It could be about past crimes or suspected crimes, some personal failing, etc. It might not even be based in truth, but you know how rumors spread.

Bounty: You have a bounty on your head. This means that unsavory types are looking for you to kill or capture you to cash in.

Cowardly: You really don't like situations where you're at personal risk and avoid them at all costs.

Curious: You can't help but uncovering a mystery, even at your own peril.

Drunk: You drink too much, to the point of impairment. When this happens, you're at -2d6 to all rolls.

Enemy: Someone doesn't like you. He or she works to make your life miserable (or short).

Honest: You always follow the law and tell the truth

Honorable: You keep your word. Always. If you make a promise, you will go out of your way to make good.

Impulsive: You tend to do things without thinking (or planning).

Oppressed: You belong to a "suspect class." That is, a racial, cultural or religious minority that is viewed by the mainstream as inferior, worthy of suspicion or otherwise not treated as equal.

Overconfident: You have an over-inflated opinion of yourself and your abilities. You rarely think a task is beyond you.

Rival: Someone (and NPC, maybe a PC) is your rival. You are

constantly competing to out-do or embarrass each other.

Selfish: You look out for Number One. You don't like sharing, and you have difficulty thinking about other people.

Talents

Talents are the things you have a knack for, a natural ability. Maybe you're a crack shot at a distance, you can get people to talk to you at parties, you climb rain gutters like a monkey. Most talents are mundane, and tied to an existing skill, but some are extraordinary. The extraordinary ones are beyond the scope of these core rules and will be discussed in later supplements.

You can gain a talent by taking a problem, and to purchase one, pick one skill (or a stat) and the circumstances under which your talent in this skill or stat is applicable. Then come up with a short phrase that describes this talent. Don't make the phrase too specific.

Twice per session (for 3-4 hour sessions – once per session for shorter session) you can add 3d6 to a single roll for this skill or stat under the described circumstances.

If you've picked a stat, you cannot use the talent to increase the dice pool for skill rolls using this stat, only stat rolls using it.

Talents and Moments of Truth

After you have exhausted the two times you can use your talent, you can spend a Moment of Truth to add 3d6 to a single roll relevant to this talent as well. When you and the GM agree it is appropriate, you can spend a Moment of Truth to gain a bonus to a skill or circumstance that is not specified, but fits with the descriptive phrase.

Here are some examples of common talents:

Detail Acuity: Bonus to perception when it involves noticing small details.

Good Hearing: Bonus to perception when it involves hearing.

Honest Face: Bonus to lying and conversation when face-to-face.

Keen Sight: Bonus to perception when it involves long distance sight.

Natural Sniper: Bonus to firearms/rifle at 20m or farther.

Second Story Man: Bonus to climbing in urban settings. Bonus to lock picking and forced entry from heights.

Boons

Boons are things about your character that make life a little bit easier. It could be wealth, social status, an influential job, membership to an exclusive club, a noble title, friends in high places, etc. You can take a boon by taking a problem.

Here are some examples of common boons:

Ally: Someone out there has your back, and he or she will come to your aid when you are in need.

Carries a Badge: You are a police officer, federal investigator or some other government official. You have authority (and responsibilities).

Famous: When you ask, “do you know who I am?” most people say “yes!” It opens doors, gets you favors (and occasionally surrounds you with fans).

Nobility: You are a member of the noble or ruling class. You are afforded special privileges and respect from those beneath you.

Wealthy: You're a man or woman of means. (In some settings this might provide a specific amount of starting wealth or resources).

Traits and Ongoing Play

As you may have noticed, some traits can come and go during game play depending on the games story. Enemies may be slain, noble titles removed, etc. This is fine, and the GM should not feel the necessity to replace a killed ally or enemy, nor should players be expected to pay for new allies or enemies they gain during the course of play. These story-based traits represent a starting point

only.

Special Traits

While not covered in this text, there exist special traits that describe supernatural abilities, like spell casting, telepathy, psychokinesis, etc. Each of these traits come with a special rules set that describe the abilities you gain, and most special traits cost two troubles. Very often, skill points will need to be reserved to purchase specialized skills for these special traits.

Chapter 5: Dramatic Mechanics

What follows are optional rules, though the system as a whole was designed assuming these mechanics would be used. Dramatic mechanics exist to do two things: 1) create connections within the party and the game setting at-large and 2) insulate the protagonists of your story from the cold, hard reality of dice probability. GMs who are attempting to run extremely gritty games (that is, games where the player characters are no different than ordinary people, where the odds might be stacked against them) might exclude some or perhaps all of the latter mechanics.

As is true in all table-top role-playing games, the rules you decide to use at your table should be determined by the consensus of your group, not what's written in this (or any other) RPG book.

Connections (Post Character Generation)

Once a character is created, you may have a rather detailed picture of this fictitious person. You know what they're capable of, what they know, what holds them back, etc. But what you may not know is who they know, why they know them, and what has happened in their past between them. This section exists to do two things. Firstly it's an attempt to create a history between the player characters, so they will have some sort of bond that explains why they are working together (and why they'll perhaps stay together). Secondly, it's a way to help the GM populate the world with other characters, or NPCs, that already have a history with the PCs – NPCs of the players' own creation.

Connections happen in the form of open ended questions to help piece together a frame work of past events. You as a player can come up with them on your own (which is the preferred method), or if your imagination isn't helping, you can use the table below to help.

Use this table to determine the sort of event that spawned the connection. PCs should have at least four different events: two connecting them with other PCs and two connecting them with new, unique NPCs.

2d6	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	A War Story	A Sad Moment	Shameful Defeat	A Saved Life	A Marriage!	Undeserved Praise
2	A Narrow Escape	A Close Call	Gone Over the Edge	Friends Taking Sides	A Humiliating Affront	A Debt Paid
3	A Natural Disaster	Ran Afoul of the Law	Strange Occurrence	Awkward Moment	Revenge is Coming...	Mistaken Identity
4	A Small Tragedy	Unravalled Mystery	Horrible Misunderstanding	Mysterious Disappearance	A Small Victory	You Were Robbed
5	A Bizarre Coincidence	Hard Times	A Heist Gone Wrong	Sticking it to the Man	Walking Away from an Explosion	Unjust Punishment
6	Winning One for the Team	Death of a Friend	You Were Swindled	Taking One for the Team	Miraculous Coincidence	A Blessed Event

As you will notice each of these events is very vague. It is up to the player or players to insert the details to turn these vague phrases into a moment worthy of a backstory. For each event, the player (or players in collaboration) should come up with the following:

1. A connection between player characters or a connection between the player character and an NPC.
2. A plot element. This could be a thing of value, a place of interest, a person or group of people, etc.

The details can be developed by asking basic who, what, why, where, when and how questions, perhaps prompted by the GM, by other players or the player developing the details.

Example

Bob is making a character, Father Crawford, in a Victorian era supernatural mystery game. He rolls or picks his four connection events: Strange Occurrence, a Marriage, Revenge is Coming, and Unraveled Mystery. Starting with the Strange Occurrence, Bob decides to include his fellow PC, Arthur, a scholar. Crawford and Arthur met when they were both hired on by the London police to consult on a mysterious cult discovered in an abandoned building. During their investigations they find a small stone statue of some sort of elephant god. The statue was smeared with what appeared to be human blood.

For his second connection event, a Marriage, Bob decideds to

flesh out Father Crawfield's family. He decides that he had the honor of officiating the wedding of his sister, Margret, to Carl Reesestone, who is the son of a wealthy businessman from the Continent. The GM asks the name of the business and what they do, and Bob answers, "Reesestone Motor Works, and they sell horseless carriages."

For his third connection, Revenge is Coming, Bob decides to include another PCs. Once upon a time, back in seminary school, Crawfield befriended a working class boy, PC Albert. They became fast friends. During an evening at the local pub, Albert got in a row with a group of local toughs, known as the Kingsby Gang. Crawfield called the constabulary, and several of the toughs were arrested. Ever since, the Kingsby Gang vowed to get Crawfield back for that.

And finally, with an Unravelled Mystery, Crawfield, as a young priest at the local church, is sent by his superior, Father O'Malley, to investigate reports of a local miracle: at the Danesborough Pub, a ghostly image of Christ appears on a wall of the pub at sundown. After his investigation, Crawfield discovers that the proprietor of the Pub, George Dimsley, has been painting the image in the window with melted paraffin wax to cast the ghostly image. George Dimsley is embarrassed and resentful, and Father O'Malley is impressed with Crawfield's sharp powers of perception.

Setbacks

As mentioned earlier, you can roll a critical success by rolling two or more successes more than required by the TN. Inversely, you can suffer a critical failure by rolling no successes and also rolling two 1s in your dice pool.

But there is a third possibility: you can succeed but suffer some sort of setback or complication. This happens when you roll the required number of successes but also **more 1s than successes**.

When a player rolls such a result with a single dice pool, it means that although the PC succeeded in the attempted task, there was some sort of unintended consequence to that success — a

consequence that has some sort of short or long-term negative effect on the party's efforts.

Adjudicating Setbacks

There are two ways the GM can adjudicate what exactly went wrong when a player rolls a setback. The GM might simply ask the player who rolled the setback (or all the players in general) exactly what the setback is. With some groups, it is not uncommon for players to inflict much harsher penalties than the GM ever would have. In other groups, the players might try to worm some benefit from their suggestion of a setback, or come up with something too mild or utterly insignificant. In these cases, the GM should just determine the setback.

The GM should keep two things in mind when adjudicating a setback:

- 1) the circumstances under which the setback occurs.
- 2) the intention of the action the player was trying to accomplish.

Under no circumstances should the setback go against the intention of the player's declared action. If the player was trying to shoot an opponent, that opponent should be shot. After all, the player rolled a success, so the setback shouldn't directly interfere with that success.

The best setbacks are ones where the circumstances of the scene and the success of the PC conspire to create a sort of Pyrrhic victory.

Perhaps the party is trying to reach their aircraft to make their escape when they discover that gunmen are standing on the wings of said aircraft. One PC fires and hits a gunman (but rolls a setback). The gunman is shot and falls off the wing ... into the jet engine intake, severely damaging the engine (and the shot gunman).

In the above example, the GM has not interfered with the intention of the PC's action. The PC tried to shoot a gunman, and the gunman was shot, but the long-term efforts of the party are now far more complicated, as their intended escape craft is now inoperable

(or at least damaged).

Setbacks should never mean utter defeat, only a complication. Let's say the party is chasing an NPC they wish to interrogate. A player takes a swing at the NPC's legs to trip him up (but not kill him). He rolls a setback, hits the NPC's legs, and the NPC falls to the ground. But what of the setback? Perhaps when the NPC fell his neck landed on a curb, crushing his larynx. He's not dead, but now he's unable to talk. Perhaps he hit his head and is now unconscious, and the party has to find some place to hide him until he comes to, so they can perform their interrogation.

The goal of setbacks is to make the story more interesting, more tense and more dramatic. It's not there to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

Moments of Truth

Moments of Truth are both the basic reward mechanic of the game and the consolation prize. They are presented to the players by the GM under specific circumstances, and the players can use them to gain advantage during the session. Used individually, Moments of Truth are not very powerful, but when used in multiples, they can become a true game changer.

In most games, the GM may elect to have the players start their first session with one or more Moment of Truth (hereafter called MoTs) each. The number of MoTs a player has at the end of the session carries over to the next session, but players do not automatically gain one at the start of every session, only the first.

In face-to-face games, GMs may use poker chips, stones, bottle caps, or any other physical counter as MoTs. In online games, players and GMs might want to simply track MoTs on a piece of paper, or perhaps keep track in a shared online document.

Earning Moments of Truth

You can earn MoTs in several different ways, depending on the flavor of the campaign.

Player-Triggered Rewards

If you use MoTs at all in a gritty setting, the follow reward mechanics are more suited to such a campaign tone.

You may **take a failure**. This means that the GM has asked you to make a skill roll, but instead of rolling your dice pool, you simply tell the GM that you fail the roll. **Taking a failure earns you two MoTs.** Once you have your MoTs, you deal with the failure of your attempted task and move on. You cannot take a failure on an attack roll or a damage roll.

You may **raise the stakes**. This means the GM has asked you to make a roll, you declare that you're raising the stakes, meaning that if you do not get successes equal to the TN of the roll, it is a critical failure. **Raising the stakes earns you two MoTs.**

You may also **take a setback**. This means that the GM has asked you to make a roll, you've succeeded without a setback, but you choose to take a setback anyway. **Taking a setback earns you one MoT.** You still succeed at your task, but you now have to deal with the unintended consequences of your action.

You may also **take a critical failure**. This means the GM has asked you to make a roll, but instead of rolling, you declare that you have suffered a critical failure. **Taking a critical failure earns you three MoTs.**

Dice-Triggered Rewards

For high-flying adventure and daring-do campaigns, you can use the following reward mechanics for the awarding of MoTs.

When you fail a roll, you are awarded one MoT. When you roll a success with a setback, you are awarded one MoT. When you roll a critical failure, you are awarded two MoTs.

Role-Playing-Triggered Rewards

In some cases, GMs may reward MoTs for moments of role-playing greatness. As stated previously, players should WANT to embrace their characters' problems and explore their flaws in the

context of the story, but not all groups want to do this (or feel comfortable doing it).

In these cases, the GM may elect to award MoTs when a player succumbs to the PC's problems, or for particularly poignant or dramatic role-playing.

Unfortunately, not all players are as prone to high drama as are other players, so the GM should try to make sure opportunities for the less dramatic arise, so rewards do not all end up in front of one player.

Using Moments of Truth

MoTs can be used one at a time or in multiples. As a player, you can use as many as you possess, all at the same time if you like.

MoTs can be used for several things.

+1d6 - You can spend one MoT to add 1d6 to your dice pool. This can be any dice pool: statistics roll, skill roll, damage pool. Any dice pool. Note: this has a cumulative effect. If you have 5 MoTs, you can spend them all and add +5d6 to a dice pool.

Add a Detail - You can spend two MoTs to add a minor detail to a scene. This could be a useful item that might be at the scene that the GM hasn't mentioned (but could logically be there anyway). It could be a complicating detail that deters or hinders your adversaries. The detail you add should fit the setting and tone of the scene the GM has set, and if it meets this criteria, the GM should allow it. Sometimes the players will want to add a detail that really isn't minor. The GM can allow these, but perhaps charge an additional MoT.

Create an NPC - You can spend three MoTs to create an NPC and determine this NPC's relationship with either you or another member of the party.

Moments of Truth and Narrative

The last two options for using MoTs requires a bit more explanation. The point of adding details within a scene is to give

you, the player, more options to work with within the scene or to make the scene more personal to your character.

The goal with this option is to give you a little edge or advantage in the scene to increase your likelihood of a favorable outcome, or to give your character a motivation to take the scene in an interesting direction. This option is not intended to create an “easy button,” nor should it be used to usurp the intended tone of the scene as set by the GM.

As a general rule, any narrative use of a MoT should meet the following criteria:

- It should not revise the narrative the GM has already put forth, though it may add to it.
- It should not run contrary to the tone of the setting or the scene.
- It should not affect a named NPC without the consent of the GM.

The GM might have to inform you if your narrative use of a moment of truth violates the last two criteria. For instance, you might meet an NPC, whom the GM describes as a "mysterious stranger." This NPC might have a name, but you just aren't aware of it yet. If you tried to change the character in a way that was not consistent with the GM's plans for that character, the GM could inform you that "this character has a name" and disallow the detail.

Additionally if the GM is creating a mysterious murder scene, as in with the dead office worker, you cannot narrate that the killer's still in the room, as this would run contrary to the GM's intention of setting up a mystery.

It's okay if there's a moment of give-and-take negotiation between the GM and the player as to any narrative use of MoTs, but the GM should make every effort to accommodate your change to the scene as long as it meets the above-listed criteria.

Additionally, the GM should offer suggestions to revise a narrative change that would be consistent with the scene but still allow the use of the MoT to be valuable.

Sidebar: Moments of Truth as Dials

Much like modifying the TN for success with dice pools, the rules for earning MoTs can be tweaked to fit your campaign tone

Because MoTs have the potential to cause game-changing effects, the GM has some methods of controlling MoTs. GMs should feel free to mix and match both the Gritty and Heroic Rewards mechanics mentioned in this chapter.

Furthermore, GMs can set limits to how many MoTs are in play. For instance, GMs could set a player limit of three MoTs. That is, no player may ever possess more than three MoTs at any time. Any opportunities to gain them while at that maximum are lost.

In very dark games, where the PCs are ordinary people uncovering sanity-shattering cosmic truths, the GM may set the MoT limit to one. That is, no character may possess more than one MoT at any given time.

In a freewheeling pulp game, filled with acts of daring-do, the GM may set the MoT limit to 6, or say there is no limit whatsoever.

Additionally, the GM may set a "table limit" to the number of MoTs all players are allow to possess. In an extremely gritty game, the GM might set the table limit to one (1), meaning that only one PC may possess a MoT at any given time. Such a table limit might discourage hoarding, or it might not.

To insulate the players from the cold hard reality of dice mechanics, a GM could use the Dice-Triggered Rewards,

Chapter 6: Social Mechanics

Introduction

Generally speaking, it is very difficult to change someone's mind. Anyone who's witnessed political or religious arguments on the internet will probably agree. Furthermore it is even more difficult to get someone to act against their own self interests, all things being equal.

One can certainly try to convince opponents to see the errors of their ways, but this is for the most part futile and incredibly time-consuming.

Social mechanics in Moment of Truth are meant to provide you, the player, with an array of tools with which to formulate the tactics necessary to get someone to do what you want them to do, or believe what you want them to believe.

For our purposes here, we will refer to any situation where one character is attempting to coax another to do something (by action or inaction) as a social encounter. We will refer to the character being coaxed as the "mark."

Resolving Social Encounters

As a general rule, social encounters should be resolved with role-playing. That is, a player, attempting to convince his or her mark to do something should be acted out. The GM should in most cases take the mark's personality into account when playing the other end of the encounter.

With the exception of Lying, most social skills give PCs the tools they need to formulate a strategy to get what they want, rather than just changing the NPCs mind.

The Basic Lie

Using the Lying skill is fairly straightforward. The PC states the falsehood, and the GM determines whether or not the mark would

be suspicious. A well-paid and highly motivated guard at a high-security installation might very well be constantly suspicious. A poorly paid night watchman who hates his job and wants to quit might not be suspicious at all.

In the easiest of situations, the GM might only call for a simple lying roll, to indicate that the delivery of the lie is sufficient to pass as truth. A successful roll would indicate the lie was delivered well enough to be accepted and move on.

In some situations where suspicion makes sense to the story and the disposition of the mark, the GM may call for a contested skill roll (this is usually against Read Individual or the perception stat). It should be noted that the possession of Read Individual is rare, and most marks should be making an unskilled default roll (rolling perception with only 6s counting as successes).

Law enforcement officers with experience, certainly police detectives, intelligence officers, highly trained guards and the like would probably have Read Individual. The average parking lot guard, however, probably doesn't (unless it's the parking lot at the NSA headquarters).

It is important for GMs to realize that ubiquitous possession of the Read Individual skill will cripple the social mechanic character. Players who play social mechanics see the world as a vast array of marks with various buttons and weaknesses to be leveraged and exploited, and that is how most players of social mechanics envision their characters. Give them the opportunity to work their magic.

Beyond the simple lie, social mechanics become much more complicated, should rely more on role-playing for resolution and may often play a major role in a large portion of the game session.

Beyond the Simple Lie

The permutations of all the variables that might go in to a social encounter are practically infinite, so to try to cover every eventuality is futile. Instead, here's a general overview of some common situations and where the social skills might be useful.

As previously stated, it's difficult to get someone to do something they don't want to do. Badgering them into doing it (ie. fast-talk) rarely works and often has the opposite effect.

Knowing the mark is the first step in determining what a successful strategy might be. Some people can simply be deceived (see Lying, above), while others need to be leveraged.

The Approach

First contact with the mark is dangerous, as you might tip off your play before you've fully formulated it. There are a couple skills handy for this.

Read Individual can be useful to observe the mark from a distance and determine demeanor. Is this a rent-a-cop who is more concerned with the contents of the vending machine than the building's security? Is this a dangerous looking guard who is the product of military training.

Conversation can be used to approach the mark to have an innocuous conversation, with the conversation gradually veering toward divulging personal details: attitudes toward one's job, family life, financial situation, etc.

The purpose of the approach is to gain information. Will this be a simple job of lying your way through the situation, or do you need something more?

Intelligence Gathering

Once you have a plan of action, it's time to find out what pieces you have to work with. This could involve observing and shadowing the mark both on and off the job, looking for information to use as leverage.

It might involve engaging in a conversation with the mark's family, coworkers, favorite bartender. These are generally safe conversations as long as the stakes are low for those involved in the conversation. Two guys in a bar complaining about their wives would seemingly be a very low-stakes conversation, but might glean some useful information if one of the wives is a network

security engineer for a company you're trying to infiltrate.

The Play

Once the intelligence has been gathered and the weaknesses for exploiting have been identified, it's time for the social mechanic to make a move, but again, there are things to consider. Where do you make your move? Should it be at the mark's place of employment? Perhaps it takes place at the mark's mistress's apartment. Or maybe while he's waiting to pick up his kids from soccer practice.

The situation where you make your play might instantly send messages to the mark. "I know where you live." "I know you're having an affair." "I know where your kids are." Even if no overt threat is made, the message will be received.

The Resolution

This is the most important element to this sort of social mechanic system. Once the play has been made, and the party has made clear what they want (either subtly or explicitly), and what might happen if they don't get it, the GM needs to get inside the head of the mark.

Even if this NPC has up to this point only been a name on an index card, the GM must now construct a persona for the mark. If the player has done a good job with the approach and intelligence gathering, the GM should have a good idea whether or not the mark has been leveraged or not.

The GM must be honest with him or herself. Have the PCs put this mark in a place where they'll cooperate? If you've provided them with honest information from successful rolls, the answer should be "yes."

If the GM still isn't sure, perhaps the answer is a complicated success. Maybe the mark complies, but calls the police once the situation's over. Maybe the mark asks for something else in return.

Remember, It's a Party

One possible problem with this sort of social mechanic is that there is a danger of one PC (the social mechanic) dominating a good part of a game session with sidebars and note passing with the GM.

Both the player of the social mechanic and the GM should be cognizant of this danger. Look for ways to include the rest of the party. The social mechanic doesn't have to be the one following the mark around through his day of work, chores and leisure time. Another character can do that.

Furthermore, other PCs can go have leisurely conversations with the mark's family, or coworkers. Remember, these are conversations with low stakes. There need not be any rolls to botch.

The GM should look for (or create) parts of the mark's life where other PCs can contribute to the gathering of information. It needn't (and probably shouldn't) be the social mechanic who discovers the Achilles's heel of the mark.

Chapter 7: Combat Mechanics

Time and Space

Here are a couple definitions for clarity. A combat turn is one character's or NPC's action. A combat round is the culmination of all combatants' turns. A combat round always begins with the character that won the initiative roll at the beginning of combat.

Combat rounds represent a short but unspecified amount of time. It could be one second, slightly less than one second, a few seconds, etc. Characters can make one move and one action or two moves in a single turn. Readyng a weapon takes an action, so a character who wants to draw a weapon and shoot is looking at a two-turn process. This process can be hand-waved by the GM for the sake of drama.

Distances are measured in meters.

During your turn, you can move a number of meters equal to your **move** derived statistic. If you do not take another action, you may take two move actions (covering twice your move in distance). There is an exception to this rule in the Advance Combat section.

If you and someone else are less than a meter apart, you are considered to be in **close range**. Some weapons, like daggers and fists, requires you to be in close range to hit your target. It is also necessary to be at close range to attempt a grapple.

All other distances are measured in meters.

When Combat Begins

Combat begins when either a single PC or NPC makes an attack or if two people declare their intention to take an attack or ready a weapon simultaneously.

If one PC or NPC attacks and there is no competition by anyone else to go first, the attacking PC or NPC acts and then initiative is rolled.

In situations where there's a standoff, and more than one potential

combatant is ready for trouble, any declaration to attack should be resolved with an initiative roll first, so that the higher rolling attacker may go first.

Example: If four characters are in a scene, but only two are armed and waiting for trouble, have all characters roll initiative (see below). However, before starting the first round of combat, check the numbers rolled by the two characters looking for trouble. Allow both of these characters to take an action – in order of initiative rolled (highest first) – then begin the first combat round.

Initiative Order

Once combat begins, the GM must determine the initiative order. This is determined by reaction time:

Reaction Time = (Agility + Perception)/2 (Drop Fractions)

Each player (including the GM) rolls a number of d6s equal to their reaction time and totals the pips on their dice (you're not counting successes – just totaling the number on each die). The player who rolled the highest number acts first.

If the highest roller rolled an odd number, play continues to that player's right (or counterclockwise). If the highest roller rolled an even number, play continues to that player's left (or clockwise). For online play, the GM should make a quick virtual seating chart (or perhaps using the order in which the players appear in a Google Hangout or other online meeting tool).

Who's Initiative Does the GM Roll?

All combatants controlled by the GM act on the GM's turn as per the initiative order. So if the GM is controlling multiple combatants, whose reaction time does the GM roll?

This is up to the GM. In some cases, where you have several dumb henchmen who slavishly follow some sort of evil mastermind, the GM should roll the mastermind's reaction time. If you're up against a highly trained and motivated special ops team, the GM might roll the highest initiative in the group of NPCs.

If it's a group of untrained, unorganized combatants, the GM might choose the NPC with the lowest reaction time.

In the end, it's up to the GM, who should give some consideration to the competence and organization of the opposing force.

Play continues around the table in the direction indicated above, including the GM, who will have all enemies act when the GM's turn comes.

Attacking and Defending

Every player character and NPC in the combat has a **combat dice pool**. You determine your dice pool at the start of your turn, and it depends on the weapon you wish to employ.

If you are using unarmed combat or a melee weapon, you add your **melee attack** score to your relevant weapon skill. If you are using a ranged weapon, add your **ranged attack** score to your relevant weapon skill. This is your **combat dice pool**.

You will use this dice pool to make attacks by rolling a number of dice equal to your chosen attack score plus the relevant weapon.

In order to hit any aware and unfettered opponent, you must get two (2) successes with your combat dice pool for a gritty setting. For a cinematic setting, you need one (1) success.

Defense Dice

At the beginning of combat, once initiative is determined, each character has the option of reserving a number of dice from their combat dice pools for defense. The number of dice you reserve cannot be altered until the beginning of your character's turn second turn. That is, you cannot alter your defense dice until the beginning of your turn, before you act, in the second round of combat.

Dice reserved for defense, or defense dice, are set aside and remain unrolled when you attack. **For every two (2) dice you reserve for defense, the number of successes your opponents must roll to hit you increases by one (1).**

For example, by default, assuming you are aware and unfettered, NPCs must get two success to successfully attack you. If at the beginning of your turn you decide to reserve two (2) dice from your combat dice pool, NPCs must now get three (3) successes to hit you.

Dice reserved for defense **cannot be used for your attack roll during your turn.**

The defense dice mechanic is a method to abstract many of the actions a character might take in combat. For instance, a swordsman might concentrate more on parrying his attacker's blows than attacking, an archer might constantly move and shoot, making herself a more difficult target, but losing accuracy with her own shots, or a gunman might dart from cover to cover, taking pot shots while on the run. All of these cases could describe a combatant reserving more dice for defense than attack.

As an optional rule, the GM may allow you to gain two dice to your attack pool by lowering your own TN to hit from two (2) to one (1). This represents a desperate attempt to hit your opponent while sacrificing defense. This option is not available if the default TN of the campaign is 1.

Grappling

If you are unarmed (or you elect to drop your weapons) and you are at or can get to close range with your opponent, you may attempt to grapple. To grapple, you make an unarmed combat or martial arts roll. If successful, you have grappled your opponent and the following applies:

- Your opponent is **immobilized**, and anyone attacking your opponent (including you) needs to get 1 less success than normal to hit. Attacks that result in critical failures hit you instead. The TN to hit a grappled character can never be lower than 1; however, called shots (which increase the TN) are now easier by 1).
- Your opponent cannot move away from you.
- You may attack your opponent at close range.

On their turn, your opponent can make a contested roll to break free. This roll is either Strength or Melee Combat plus either unarmed combat or martial arts, whichever is higher.

If one opponent is using martial arts and the other is not, the one not using martial arts may only count sixes as successes. A deadlock means the grapple remains.

Take-down

After grappled (if your victim hasn't broken free, you can attempt a take-down. Win a Strength + Unarmed Combat or Martial Arts contested roll and your opponent is **prone**. If the roll is a tie, you are both prone.

Strangle

While your opponent is grappled, you can win a Strength or Agility + Unarmed Combat or Martial Arts contested roll and you have your opponent by the neck, and he or she is **suffocating**. While in this position, your opponents takes one point of minor damage at the beginning of their her turn until they break free. To break free, your opponent must win a Strength + Unarmed Combat or Martial Arts.

Disarm

While you have your opponent grappled, you can attempt a disarm. This is Strength + Unarmed Combat or Martial Arts contested roll. If you win this contest, your opponent is **disarmed** with his or her weapon on the ground.

Damage

Moment of Truth uses **two different types of damage: minor and serious**. Both minor and serious damage deduct from your character's hit points total when inflicted, **minor damage deducts one hit point and is easily healed** (perhaps a good night's rest, taking a breather, etc), and **major damage deducts one hit point and requires first aid, medical attention and/or time to heal. In**

most circumstances, a die that inflicts a point of major damage also inflicts a point of minor damage.

The amount of damage you take has various effects, detailed below. If you take enough damage, you will suffer penalties to skills roll dice pools (but never statistic roll dice pools).

Also, major damage can use the optional bleeding rules (see below), while minor damage does not.

Every character has a number of **hit points equal to six plus twice endurance.**

HP= 6 + (endurance x 2)

Damage to a character has specific effects listed below when it reaches certain thresholds.

Six Hit Points Remaining

Characters are considered **injured** when they lose all but six hit points. When they reach injured they suffer a -1d6 penalty on all skill dice pools.

Two Hit Points Remaining

Characters are considered **wounded** when they lose all but two hit points. When characters reach wounded they suffer a -2d6 penalty on all skill dice pools.

Zero Hit Points

Characters are considered **unconscious** when they take damage equal to or greater than their hit points total. They immediately fall unconscious, crumple to the ground or roll up into a ball of pain and won't be capable of acting for several minutes (2d6 minutes), or possibly not at all, if the bleeding rules are used or combatants continue attacking you after you're down.

Death

Death – specifically of PCs – is handled differently in Moment of Truth. The GM and players should decide which death mechanics they're going to use prior to any combat.

Harsh Death Rules

A character is considered dead when the total number of hit points is equal to their twice their hit points total plus one (or their total damage equals their negative hit points total).

Example: Jane has 12 hit points and takes a hit from a rifle for 8 minor and 5 serious, bringing her total damage to 13, or current hit points to -1. If on the second turn she take at least 11 points of any combination of minor or serious damage, Jane is dead.

Heroic Death Rules

As a character continues taking damage into the negative range, you (the player) may eventually decide that the character is too injured to go on. At any point when your PC's hit points are below zero, you may declare your character dead. When you determine that your character has died, you can award three Moments of Truth to ever other character in your party. This mechanic is used to represent the dramatic backlash of a comrade's death. Use them well.

Rolling Damage

Moment of Truth uses a two-tiered damage system, but the amount of damage is determined by a single dice pool and counts against a single hit point total.

When you've successfully rolled an attack, roll the damage dice pool according to the weapon's description. Some weapons (mostly melee weapons) have you add your strength and skill to the damage dice pool. Other weapons have you add only your weapon skill to the damage dice pool.

Your weapon's description will also list two other numbers: minor and major. The first number is minor, and it is the number you must roll (or higher) with your dice to inflict minor damage. The second number is the major number, and it tells you the number you must roll (or higher) to inflict major damage. Any die that matches or exceeds the major damage number also inflicts a point of minor damage (as it also exceeds the minor damage number), so dice that roll the major number inflict two points of damage, one minor and one major.

Armor and Called Shots

If your opponent is wearing armor subtract the damage reduction number of the armor from the amount of damage you rolled.

Always deduct major damage before you deduct minor damage.

Before you roll your attack, you can declare a called shot. You can use called shots to bypass armor your opponent may be wearing or to aim for a specific body part.

To bypass armor on a partially armored character (a character will less than 75% of their body armored), you must roll three successes rather than two (or increase the TN by 1). If the character is fully armored (a suit of plate mail, full combat armor, etc), you must get four successes rather than two (or increase the TN by 2).

You may also aim for specific body parts.

To target the legs requires one extra success. If you roll four damage (or two major damage) the target is knocked **prone**.

To target a weapon hand or arm requires two extra successes. If you roll four damage (or two major damage) the target is **disarmed**.

To target the head requires two extra successes. If you successfully hit, add 4d6 to your damage pool, and drop the minor and major numbers for the attack by one each (see below).

To target the neck requires two extra successes. If you hit, drop the minor and major numbers of your weapon by one. If you are using a large blade weapon (like a sword or ax) four points of major damage in a single attack decapitates the target, killing them.

Bleeding (optional)

While this rule would over time speed up combat, I suggest you only use it in dramatically appropriate situations. Requiring another die roll every round will slow down combat, but it might bring tension to a particularly dramatic fight.

Once you have take **major damage** equal to one third of your hit

points pool (drop fractions), you may begin bleeding in a non-superficial way. After every subsequent combat round, make an endurance roll. In every round in which you do not get any successes, you lose one hit point (this is serious damage, as opposed to minor damage).

Healing

A character with First Aid or Medicine can make a roll to treat serious damage. Every success heals one hit point of major damage for First Aid or two hit points of major damage for Medicine. Only one First Aid and one Medicine roll can be made on a character (unless the character receives more damage later). A character who has been treated with first aid or medicine and is spending his or her time resting can make an endurance roll each day thereafter. Every success heals one additional hit point of major.

The GM can assess a one or two dice penalty to First Aid or Medicine if conditions (including lack of proper equipment) dictate. The GM can assess a one or two dice bonus to skill rolls and the character's healing rolls if conditions are very favorable (like being admitted to a world-class hospital).

Minor damage heals much faster than major damage; however, First Aid and Medicine do little to help with minor damage. Think about what doctors do after you've been in a car accident. They take some X-rays (looking for major damage), and if they don't find any, they tell you to "go home and get some rest."

Minor damage heals from rest. For every one hour period you spend resting, you may make an Endurance check, which heals one point of minor damage for every success. The GM can speed up this process when dramatically appropriate by saying every two hours of rest heals one point of minor damage.

Endurance checks for minor and major damage should be made separately.

Combat Conditions Summary

Several conditions that may occur in combat have been mentioned in this chapter. Here is a rules summary in one place you may use for easy reference.

Dead – You die when you believe your character has taken too much damage to go on (at least your hit point total or more). You may not act. You are an ex-PC. The only way you can become not dead is if someone gets a critical success on a medicine skill roll. If you have any Moments of Truths, they must be spent for this roll. When you die, each other PC in your party immediately receives three Moments of Truth. If you choose this option, you may not be revived. Make a new character.

Disarmed – You become disarmed when an opponent attacks your weapon hand or arm and does four points of damage or two points of serious damage. This can also be a result of a grappled disarm maneuver. You must spend your action retrieving your weapon (or readying another weapon).

Grappled – You become grappled when an opponents attempts to grapple you and makes a successful martial arts or unarmed combat roll. When grappled, you are easier to hit. Opponents need one fewer success to hit you (minimum: 1). If they roll a critical failure, they hit the opponent grappling you instead. You may break a grapple on your turn by winning a successful strength or melee combat plus unarmed combat or martial arts roll.

Injured – You become injured when you take enough damage so that you only have six hit points remaining. You suffer a penalty of -1d6 to all skill checks.

Prone – You become prone by choice or by an attack to the legs. You are also prone if you have been **unconscious** and regained consciousness. You are at -2d6 to all melee attacks and +1d6 to all ranged attacks.

Suffocating - You can be suffocated from a grappling strangle maneuver, being immersed in water, in the vacuum of space, etc. You take one point of minor damage at the top of every turn until you are unconscious or end the situation causing the suffocation.

Unconscious – You become unconscious when you have taken damage equal to your hit points total. You may take no actions or move. Anyone attacking you needs to roll one fewer success to hit you (minimum 1). You remain unconscious until you heal enough damage naturally or receive medical aid.

Wounded – You become wounded when you only have two hit points remaining. You suffer a penalty of -2d6 to all skill checks.

Chapter 8: Miscellaneous Hazards

Apart from wielded weapons, bullets and the occasional fist for knee, there are other things in the world that can hurt your character. This chapter is by no means exhaustive, but tries to provide enough common hazards to build a framework by which the GM can reason the effect of other, less common hazards.

Falling

Even a short fall can be injurious for the clumsy or unprepared, so even short falls have the potential to cause serious injury. As a rule-of-thumb, falls create a damage dice pool consisting of 1d6 (3,6) per two meters fallen. A player can make an Agility check and deduct 1d6 per success. Falling has a Serious number of 6 and a Minor number of 5. In the event of very high falls, the human body hits terminal velocity after about 570 meters, so the maximum for a dice pool should be around 285d6.

Fire

Catching on fire is difficult without an accelerant, like napalm or gasoline. Assuming the presence of an accelerant, the fire damage dice pool starts small and grows. It could start with the initial attack as small as 1d6, assuming perhaps a splash from a deep fryer, or as high as 5 or 6d6, assuming a hurled Molotov cocktail. On the enflamed character's turn, he or she may make an Agility check, with each success deducting 1d6 from the fire's damage dice pool. For every 5 or 6 rolled in the damage dice pool, add 1d6 to the next turn's damage dice pool.

The Minor and Major numbers for a fire dice pool are (3,4).

Other people can help smother the flames by making Agility checks and deducting 1d6 per success on the next turn. Fire always does damage on the same turn as the initial attack. Using a blanket or similar device increases the dice pool to put out the fire by three dice for every turn they're used.

Attempts to put the fire out with fire extinguishers and buckets of

water can add 6d6 per turn to an Agility check (most fire extinguishers won't extinguish for more than 13 seconds). Some accelerants (the the aforementioned deep-fryer grease) doesn't react well to water. In these cases, the effect is a wash because the fire spreads, but unburned material is now wet and harder to ignite.

Explosions

The damage from explosions is reduced gradually as the distance from the center of the explosion increases. The explosion starts with a damage dice pool and deducts 1d6 per meter (assuming no cover). A grenade might have an initial damage dice pool of 20d6 for the first meter, 19d6 for a distance of up to 2 meters, 18d6 for 3 meters, and so on.

If the explosion contains shrapnel (like grenades and bombs, outhouse explosions, dynamite wrapped with nails, etc), the explosion has a Serious number of 5 and a Minor number of 4. For explosions without shrapnel, they have a Serious number of 6 and a Minor number of 5. Flash bang grenades do only Minor damage with a Minor number of 5 (6s also inflict minor damage).

Vacuum

Finding yourself in a vacuum unprotected is likely a quick death. You lose consciousness in about 10 seconds and die after about two minutes. Studies show that if you are brought to a normal pressure in 90 seconds or less, you'll probably make a full recovery.

For every second after the first second that you're in vacuum, make an Endurance check. If you succeed, you remain conscious. Once you miss an Endurance check, you lose consciousness and cannot assist with your rescue.

Vacuum has a 1d6 damage dice pool (Minor 5, Serious 6) per turn after the first second exposed.

In addition your character is suffocating.

If you're wearing a ruptured pressurized suit, your exposure isn't nearly as dangerous. To determine how quickly you're losing

pressure, roll 1d6. This determines how many turns pass between Endurance checks for consciousness. Multiply this die result by 3 to determine how many turns before damage dice pools need to be rolled.

Chapter 9: Advanced Combat Rules

Additional Firearms Combat Rules

Automatic Fire

For automatic weapons, like a mounted machine gun, an Uzi and the like, your character scores an additional hit and rolls damage for each and every success above and beyond the required successes to hit. You must roll the correct number of success (not counting near misses) in order to score any hits. For example. if your character is firing a Hi ROF weapon and requires two successes to hit, if you roll the required two, you can count any additional successes as hits and roll damage accordingly. If you only roll one success you miss the target entirely.

Spraying Fire

If you're using a weapon with a Hi ROF, you can also elect to "spray fire" and attempt to hit multiple targets. Each additional target requires another success to hit. So if you're firing at two different targets, and the GM determines the target number to hit one of them is 2, you must roll 3 successes to hit both of them.

You must designate one of the targets as your primary, and in the event (with the example above), you get the required 2, but not 3 successes, you do manage to hit your primary target, but not your secondary. You can attempt to hit up to three opponents with this rule.

Shotguns

Anywhere in the Optimal range for this weapon, you may score a hit and roll damage for one extra success should you roll higher than that required by the GM. If other targets are adjacent to your main target, you can elect to hit up to two targets with a shotgun for an additional success. As noted above, if you get the required number, but miss the additional success, you score a hit on your

predesignated primary target.

Scopes

For more detailed combat, you can use the following guidelines for penalties and ranges.

A scope on a rifle will double the distance for long range modifiers (this is the -1d6 column to the right of the Optimal column).

If your character has a weapon equipped with a laser sight and you are in a situation where it is visible (like night time, smokey or misty environment), you gain +2d6 to hit.

Additional Melee Combat Rules

Dual Weapons

Any character may pick up a second weapon and attack with both. Under normal circumstances, you must divide your melee attack dice pool (including skill) and roll separately for each attack.

You can choose to take a dual wield talent, which would allow you to add +3d6 to an attack roll (meaning your dice pool is now increased by 3d6, so you have more dice to divide up). Bonuses from this talent can also be used to allocate defense dice, simulating an off-handed parry weapon.

Charge Attack

A charge is a specific type of attack used when one quickly closes with an enemy. If you move in a straight line for at least one multiple of your move statistic (in this or in this and the previous turn), you may end your turn with a melee attack. If your line of travel extends through the target, you may double your strength for the damage roll for this attack only for any damage dealt to this target.

Any attacks made to you after your charge attack ignore any defense dice you may have allocated until after your next turn.

If you are moving two multiples of your move statistic in a turn, this is the only way you can get an additional action (other than your second move).

Chapter 10: Equipment

Generally speaking, this is not a system about encumbrance and resource management. As such, I have not included weights and costs for any items listed. Truth be told, setting has an enormous amount to do with costs. Future setting material will include costs for all items.

Melee Weapons

Melee weapons will note the distance at which they can strike a target. "C" indicates close range only.

Weapon (Reach)	Damage
Unarmed Attack (Cls)	Strength+Skill (5/6)
Martial Arts Attack (Cls)	Strength+Skill+1 (4/6)
Martial Arts Attack deadly (Cls)	Strength+Skill+1 (4/5)
Club (1m)	Strength+Skill+4 (4/6)
Short Sword (1m)	Strength+Skill+4 (4/5)
Broad Sword (1m)	Strength+Skill+6 (4/5)
Mace (1m)	Strength+Skill+6 (4/6)
Dagger (C)	Strength+Skill (4/5)
Staff (2m)	Strength+Skill+2 (4/6)
Spear (2m)	Strength+Skill+4 (3/5)
Pole Arm (3m)	Strength+Skill+6 (3/5)

Shields

Shields make the holder more difficult to hit when used (usually in the off-hand). Small shields give attackers a -1d6 penalty. Medium shields give attackers a -2d6 penalty.\

Ranged Weapons

Below are a few medieval and modern ranged weapons. Range modifiers for weapons are listed from low to high. The first column shows the "too close" modifier. The middle column shows the optimal range (this is the range below which the weapons performs best (thus there is no modifier). The last column shows long range (which requires a -1d6 penalty). The number in parentheses after the -1d6 penalty number shows how many multiples of that range it take to hit the maximum range. It tells you how many times the -1d6 penalty distance can be added together (also causing an additional -1d6 penalty).

Example: the .45 Automatic Pistol lists the -1d6 penalty as 12m (4). This means that at 12m, you suffer a -1d6 penalty to your dice pool to hit. You can add 12 to this, getting 24m. So at 24m you have a -2d6 penalty, and at 36m a -3d6 penalty, but the maximum distance is 48m (or 12m times 4). A Long Bow, listing 35m(2) receives a -1d6 penalty at 35m and has a maximum range of 70m (with a -2d6 penalty to hit). At a weapon's maximum range, damage rolled is halved (round down).

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Weapon	Damage Dice	Close (-1d6) Range	Optimal (No Mod) Range	Long (-1d6) Range
Long Bow	Skill+5 (4/5)	C-1m	20m	35m(2)
Cross Bow	Skill+7 (4/5)	C-1m	30m	45m(2)
Sling	Skill+3 (5/6)	C-1m	6m	12m (1)
Thrown Knife	Str+Skill+2 (4/5)	C-1m	4m	6m(1)

Thrown Ax	Str+Skill+4 (4/5)	C-1m	6m	10m (1)
Thrown Spear	Str+Skill+4 (4/5)	C-2m	10m	20m (2)
.38 Revolver	Skill+8 (3/4)	C-1m	8m	10m (4)
.45 Auto Pistol	Skill+10 (3/4)	C-1m	10m	12m (4)
Assault Rifle	Skill+14 (3/4)	C-1m	20m	40m (4)
Sniper Rifle	Skill+14 (2/3)	C-2m	50m	100m(5)
Shotgun	Skill+12 (3/5)	C	5m	10m (2)

Armor

Armor reduces the amount of damage that is applied to your character's hit points. After the attacker rolls damage, reduce the results of this roll by the reduction number listed below and apply the result to your hit points. **Always deduct serious damage first, then deduct minor damage.** Armor deducts from the total damage, not from both the serious and minor separately.

In situations where you are trying to precisely attack an armored opponent where their armor does not protect them, you may make a **called-shot**.

Firstly we need to define a couple of terms. A **partially armored** target is one that has coverage over 25-50% of his or her body. Examples of partial coverage would be a bulletproof (ballistic) vest, a chainmaille shirt, etc. If coverage is less than 25% (ie, a helmet, gloves, boots, etc) the damage reduction does not apply, unless under very specific circumstances (eg. aiming for a weapon hand, etc).

A **fully armored** target is one that has coverage over more than about 50% of his or her body. Examples of a fully armored target are full plate mail, police riot gear, vacuum suit, etc.

If your target is wearing **partial armor**, you can add one success to your target number to bypass all damage reduction.

For a **fully armored target**, you need two additional successes to bypass all damage reduction. This is normally TN:2 to TN:4

Armor Type	Damage Reduction
Cloth	-1
Leather	-2
Chainmaille	-3
Scale	-4
Plate	-5
Ballistic Vest	-6

Chapter 11: Character Advancement

Character Advancement

As your character goes through the trials and tribulation of the game, he or she will get better, stronger and more skilled.

At the end of each session the GM will reward the players with experience points. Guidelines for this reward are given below.

Character advancement in Moment of Truth is intended to be slow, therefore, costs to improve your character are far more expensive than they are in character generation.

In the tables below, you'll find the costs to increase skills and stats. Find your current level for the skill or stat first, then play the experience point cost for the next level.

In each table, find your current stat or skill level, then pay the Exp Points cost for the next level to increase. **Without exception, you should, within the narrative of the game have a justification for increasing any skill level or stat.**

Skill Level Advancement Table

Skill Level	Skill Level Description	Exp Point Cost
0	Familiar	5
1	Trained	5
2	Skilled	10
3	Expert	20
4	Master	40

Statistic Advancement Table

Stat Level	Statistic Level Description	Exp Point Cost
2	Poor	10
3	Average	20

4	Above Average	40
5	Gifted	80
6	Exceptional	120

Justifications for spending experience points can take several forms. Most obviously using a skill repeatedly in play is justification for increasing that skill. Making several successful (or unsuccessful) unskilled rolls can justify purchasing a skill at the "familiar" level. Seeking out training from a PC or NPC with a specific skill and the teaching skill also justifies buying said skill at the "familiar" level.

Raising statistics during character advancement requires a justification specific to the stat in question. Two of the physical stats (endurance and strength) require either extensive physical training or extreme conditions that constantly challenge that stat to improve. Will would require extensive psychological conditioning or perhaps exposure numerous horrific events to steel oneself to the point to increasing.

Education would require extensive schooling or real world experience to increase.

Perception and agility are particularly problematic. Today, there are physical training methods that will improve agility, but those are recent advancements in physical training. Apart from supernatural or high-tech solutions, it would be very difficult to increase perception.

The GM can always hand wave these problems and simply consider perception and agility to be just like any other stat, or the GM can assess an additional cost (perhaps double) to increase these. For most games, assuming a gritty, realistic setting, the latter option is suggested.

Awarding Experience Points

Each session, the GM should award a number of experience points. How these points are awarded depends on GM preference. Some GMs care more for plot advancement, and might award experience for how far the party got in the story, how well the party works

together, or how smartly the party deals with various challenges presented by the GM.

Other GMs might put a higher value on characterization and reward experience for playing a character true to concept, causing complications by the character's shortcoming and failures.

Other GMs may try to balance these two extremes and award experience for good role-playing and story advancement. There is no wrong way to do this.

However the GM decides to award them, consistency is important. The GM should make his or her preference for awarding experience clear at the start of the game.

There are other ways the GM can shape game play with awarding experience.

If the game is being GMed correctly, players will be reluctant to "take a failure" when offered a roll. Since the GM should only require a roll when the roll will make a real difference to the game, many players will be understandably reluctant to announce a failure.

To encourage failure, the GM might consider awarding an experience for every time a player takes a failure.

If the GM finds that a player or players hordes unused Moments of Truth (since they are held over from session to session), the GM might consider "buying back" unspent MoTs for one experience point each (or maybe more...).

How Many Experience Points?

The average number of experience points the GM awards per session should be determined by how quickly the GM wants the characters to advance.

For a slow advancement, GMs should award no more than three experience points per session. For fast advancement, suitable for a short campaign, the GM can award five to eight points.

Traits

Generally speaking, traits should not be purchased with experience points, though there are a few exceptions. Some traits (specifically talents) are intrinsic knacks the character possesses. These aren't things that can be “trained up.” You either have them, or you don't.

Both troubles and boons can be added during play. These are just ordinary consequences of play and neither cost nor award experience points. Furthermore, boons or troubles lost during play are (again) simply a consequence of play and do not need to be bought off or replaced.

A special category of traits (not covered in this book) is supernatural talents. These can be improved with play. Each supernatural talent has a cost (usually two problems) and comes with a specific list of skills using that talent. In many cases, these special skills can be improved, and in some cases, these supernatural talents can be improved as well.

Appendix: Probabilities of Success

Probabilities of Success

I've included these tables simply as a reference for GMs and players, so they may understand how adding or subtracting dice from a dice pool or requiring more or fewer success changes the dice probability.

Trained

of Successes. **Success = 5 or 6**

Successes	Dice Pool									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	33.33	55.56	70.37	80.25	86.83	91.22	94.15	96.10	97.40	98.27
2	-	11.11	25.93	40.74	53.91	64.88	73.66	80.49	85.69	89.60
3	-	-	3.70	11.11	20.99	31.96	42.94	53.18	62.28	70.09
4	-	-	-	1.23	4.53	10.01	17.33	25.86	34.97	44.07
5	-	-	-	-	0.41	1.78	4.53	8.79	14.48	21.31

Untrained (or peripheral skill)

of Successes. **Success = 6**

Successes	Dice Pool									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	16.67	30.56	42.13	51.77	59.81	66.51	72.09	76.74	80.62	83.85
2	-	2.78	7.41	13.19	19.62	26.32	33.02	39.53	45.73	51.55
3	-	-	0.46	1.62	3.55	6.23	9.58	13.48	17.83	22.48
4	-	-	-	0.08	0.33	0.87	1.76	3.07	4.80	6.97
5	-	-	-	-	0.01	0.07	0.20	0.46	0.90	1.55

Dialing-in the System

Through play testing, I discovered that there are a few things you can change to dramatically effect the tone of the game, providing a wide array of gaming experiences with the same system.

The first is the Target Number. Changing the TN from 1 to 2 (or 2 to 1) has a dramatic effect on success and failure of any action. It can be used to encourage (or discourage) players from making unskilled checks and also make them try out (or avoid) actions that might incur TN penalties.

This alone can have a dramatic effect on the attitudes of the players with regard to what their characters are capable of, and in turn, change their attitudes when confronted with the various challenges the GM throws at them.

The second “dial” for game tone is damage. By default, the serious and minor damage numbers for weapons will give the game a grittier feel. Assault rifles will often kill PCs and NPCs with one or two shots, and even less deadly weapons will leave characters debilitated with serious damage.

Increasing weapons' serious damage numbers will increase the amount of minor damage (which is far more trivial game-wise) and decrease serious damage. Furthermore, increasing the minor damage number as well, will decrease the amount of minor damage weapons will do.

This can transform the players' attitudes in combat dramatically. Whereas players might be reluctant to get into a fire fight with the default damage numbers, they might shrug off the likelihood of minor damage if those numbers are modified upwards.