

SEVERELY AWESOME GAMES
--PRESENTS--

B.U.M.

BASIC - UNIVERSAL - MODULAR

Tabletop Role-playing System

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Special Thanks to:
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SEVERELY AWESOME GAMES PRESENTS:

BASIC UNIVERSAL MODULAR TABLETOP ROLE-PLAYING

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Tabletop role-playing games are fun, but are plagued by the amount of time and organization they require. The depth of play that most games offer is very rich, if you can get a large enough group of knowledgeable players with at least 6 hours a week to devote to the campaign, not to mention the hours-long character creation session and the countless more hours between sessions during which the GM must set up the campaign and decide what rolls will be required to succeed at each and every thing the players might conceivably try, only to, come game time, find that the players do exactly the opposite of every possible course of action the GM thought of when planning encounters. The intent of these rules is to provide a system for which this improvisation is so easily done that it is virtually indistinguishable from having planned it out beforehand.

The depth of tabletop game systems does allow for lots of strategic and tactical fun in creating and playing a character through the various combat and other encounters, but the most entertaining and rewarding aspect of table top gaming is not using the game system to make an effective character with which to navigate the GM's campaign. The real entertainment comes from spending time with friends, being presented with a problem, and thinking of a creative way to solve it within the framework of probabilities that your character offers, and trying to make the best bet on the combination of the soundness of your plan and the chance that your character succeeds at it.

The following rulebook will outline a simple, generic, and modular system of rules for the creation and navigation of a tabletop game. This system will allow for any kind of encounter to be resolved and offer various optional levels of complexity that can be used by the GM and players, but still remain simpler than other systems. There will be very little in the way of a "dungeon master's guide" that tells the GM frivolous things he will never have time to always be looking up on the fly like, say, how hard it is to smash an oak chest as opposed to one made out of cedar. What does it matter? What matters is how hard the GM wanted it to be. So the GM should, based on the player's ability, just assign a difficulty on the fly (which is what he would have done anyway) in a system that is designed to be used on the fly with decisions little more complicated than "pick a difficulty between three and twelve."

The Golden Rule

The rules of this game are intended to be simple, flexible and easily modified. Because of the fact that rules may (and probably will) vary from game to game, **whatever the GM says goes, regardless of what the "rule book" says.** The rules in the book are the ones that have been used and tested by the author. However, if any of the rules in the core book or the supplements don't work exactly for what *you* wish to do, change them to suit your purposes. The only thing to keep in mind is that any additional rules or rule modifications must be communicated to the players *before* they commit to an action in game. Before the dice are rolled, allow the player to know his chance of success and how the rules will be applied so that he can evaluate whether or not he actually wishes to attempt something.

Necessary Equipment

To play this game, you will need at least two people, at least one six-sided die (D6), paper, and pencils. Even though only one is necessary, the more dice you have on the table the easier, so that each player does not have to share and since they tend to get misplaced. All the information about your character needs to be written down, preferably on an organized "character card" (See Appendix B). Pencils work best as many things will be changed on character cards as characters advance through the game. Aside from these few items, the only other thing you need is *imagination!*

PART TWO: DICE AND HOW THEY ARE ROLLED

The fundamental mechanism of conflict resolution in this game as with almost every other table-top RPG is the die roll. The die represents the random element of the game world, affecting all those actions by any characters in the game that have a chance of both success and failure. When a player wants to do something, he rolls a D6 and adds his relevant stat total, then adds any applicable items, skills, or anything else that modifies the roll. If the total of this roll is high enough, the player is successful in his attempt. There are two types of rolls, fixed difficulty rolls and opposed rolls.

Fixed Difficulty Rolls

This is the standard kind of roll, used for most actions made involving the environment or any kind of inanimate object. The GM sets a difficulty for a certain action and the player's total must meet or exceed this difficulty to be successful. The "standard" difficulty is 6. This gives a player with an average stat score (2) and no applicable skills or items a 50-50 chance of success. The player rolls the die, adds his stat to that number, and if the total is 6 or better (on a roll of 4,5, or 6 for the average stat score) then the player is successful. With the use of skills or items that add to the roll (detailed in the following sections), the player can increase his chance of success.

The GM must choose how difficult any action is and what stats, skills or items can be applied if it is an ambiguous situation. The GM can assign any difficulty he feels is appropriate to any action the player attempts, but must tell the player what the difficulty is before he fully commits to the attempt. This represents the character's in-game knowledge of his own ability. For rolls the players have no choice but to make, such as rolling to see if they noticed something that has just happened, the difficulty does not need to be disclosed.

Example of Fixed Difficulty Roll:

Player A wants to attempt to climb a wall. The GM says the difficulty to climb the wall is 6 and that a strength roll is required. Player A's character has a strength of 2. Player A chooses to attempt the climb. He rolls the die, and gets a 4. He adds his 2 strength to this number for a total of 6. Having met the difficulty, he successfully climbs the wall.

Opposed Rolls

For rolls that are made against another character, animate creature or anything with its own set of stats, an opposed roll is usually necessary. The difficulty is dependent on how well the other character does. This is the method by which all but the most basic forms of combat are resolved. For opposed rolls, a character rolls and adds his relevant stat as well as skills and/or items if he has any. He succeeds if his total *exceeds* the total of whatever roll was required of his opponent. In the case of a tie, both characters roll again. The GM can employ optional rules to decide ties in favor of any particular side, such as in favor of players or defenders in a fight, but this skews the statistics and gives the favored side a substantial advantage.

Example of Opposed Roll:

Player A wants to wrestle with Player B (the difficulty for player A to succeed is dependent on the performance of Player B). Both characters have a strength of 2. Player A rolls a 3, for a total of 5. Player B rolls a 5 for a total of 7. Player B wins.

Failed Rolls and Re-checks

When a player fails a roll, the consequences are up to the GM. The consequences of a failed roll should be based on what the attempt *was* and what the foreseeable consequences of failure should be. It would be a good idea to communicate to the player the consequences for failure. For many rolls, failure will simply mean that the attempt is unsuccessful and nothing happens. For some rolls, however, consequences of failure could be dire. For example, if a player wants to walk a tightrope, failing the roll would obviously result in a fall. How far the fall is would dictate the terminal consequences. For certain high-risk rolls, leaving things up to a single die roll might be a bit too dangerous. A GM can decide to give players a roll to try and recover from a failure. In the tightrope example, the GM could say that a failed roll causes the character to slip and then require another roll (at a higher difficulty as appropriate) to catch the rope and avoid falling to his death. This sort of roll is also a good idea for things like sneaking. If a character is going to have to do a lot of sneaking, one failure could give him a whole lot of trouble. A better way to handle the situation would be to consider a failure of the stealth roll to be attracting some kind of attention, at which point the player would have to hide. This would allow him to make another stealth roll at a higher difficulty to represent his hiding from the alerted guard. If he succeeds this, the guard does not find him, but if he doesn't he gets caught. As always, what rolls are allowed to have a re-check is up to the GM, and should be based on the situation and whether or not it would allow for a contingency plan.

Example of a failed roll and re-check:

Player A is attempting to sneak up on foe. The GM says the difficulty to sneak up on the foe is 5. Player A rolls a 2 and adds his dexterity score of 2 for a total of 4. He fails the roll. The GM then says that the foe hears him and goes to investigate. He allows Player A to make a re-check to represent a hasty attempt to hide from the alerted foe. The GM says the difficulty to hide is an 8. If Player A rolls a 6, his total will be 8 and he will successfully avoid detection. If he fails to roll a 6, the foe will discover him, and the GM then decides what results (likely he will have to fight or flee!).

PART THREE: CHARACTERS

In order to play, players must create a character. Character creation in this game can be of varying levels of complexity. The complexity of character ability you use is up to you, and depends on how in-depth you want the player's challenge resolution abilities to be, and whether it will matter if they are specifically skilled or just generally talented.

Basic Character Creation: Stats

The basic character is a name, preferably with a background story, attached to some stats. Stats represent a character's innate ability. There are four stats: Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, and Socialization, described in the box below.

Strength (STR): How strong and tough you are. How hard you hit things and how much you can withstand being hit. Strength represents your fitness, health, and all related things. This includes that which is often "constitution" in other games, as well as "fatigue" or "endurance" and in the slightly-less-than-basic game it is your "hit points." Hit points will be used interchangeably with "wounds" hereafter. Your number of hit points is the amount of times you can be hit (the number of wounds you can sustain) before you are incapacitated. STR is almost always the basis for a melee combat/attack roll, unless the GM is allowing a certain type of weapon or combat to use DEX to hit, such as fencing or knife-fighting.

Dexterity (DEX): A measure of your character's overall coordination, balance, fine manipulation, etc. This stat is used for any kind of balancing, accuracy, ranged-weapon use, acrobatics, agility, steady-handedness, etc. In advanced combat rules, DEX is the basis of your defense roll. In general, Dexterity is used for any roll relating to a physical action that is not dependent on a character's size and strength.

Intelligence (INT): How smart you are, used for any task requiring cogitation. This stat is also used to determine if you see or notice something important happening near you (what is often "perception" in other games). Intelligence can also be used to roll to see if your character already knows something about the game world not expressly related to his or her background. (If the GM allows that). Generally, anything non-physical that does not involve interaction with another entity would be governed by intelligence.

Socialization (SOC): How well you deal with people, how attractive your character is, how well you can lie, bluff, flirt, con, give a speech, make your point, etc. Depending on how you play your character, your socialization is either your ability to speak well, your physical attractiveness, your likability, or a combination of any of those. A character with a high socialization doesn't have to be physically attractive, just likable (a kindly old lady, for instance), or conversely, doesn't have to be too good with words if their looks do the talking. How exactly any character explains his socialization score is up to them, but a character should be required to use his Socialization score in the way that fits his character. For example, if a player wants to gain information, and their character is the sweet old lady, they would have to describe their method appropriately, that is, offering the target cookies rather than trying to seduce them. Your Socialization score is not a substitute for role-playing.

The basic character has ten points to distribute among these four stats, with a minimum of 1 in each and a maximum of 4. Stats can go beyond these numbers, but that should only be the case when dealing with magical or superhuman characters or with exceptional circumstances and will severely unbalance a “standard” game.

The given descriptions of the stats are for the general idea of it. Any specific roll required of the players should be based on the stat that the GM thinks it should be based on. Some might allow a choice of which stat to use. For instance, you could fight with your strength and overpower your opponent, or you could fight with your dexterity and outmaneuver your opponent. You could use your socialization skill to trick someone in conversation or you could use your intelligence to outsmart them. The GM is the ultimate arbiter of which stats can be applied to which rolls.

Stats are the most basic necessity, and with your stats chosen you can play the game in the most basic form. For any roll required, the GM decides the relevant stat and chooses a difficulty. This can be as simple as resolving a fight by making a strength check against a fixed difficulty. Sure it’s quick and a little boring, but if it’s the story that the GM is trying to move it is all that is strictly necessary. More depth is certainly possible, and that detail is outlined in the following sections.

Example of Stat Selection:
 Players A, B, and C are making characters, and want to make their characters each to fulfill a different useful role. Player A decides to play a very strong character to fight well above all else. He puts 4 points in STR and 2 in each other stat (10 total). Player B wants to be a well-rounded physical character, equally good at fighting with melee and ranged weapons and other physical things. He puts 3 in his STR and DEX and two in the other stats. Player C wants to be smart and crafty, as well as good at gathering information. He puts 3 points in his INT and SOC and two in his other stats.

Illustrative examples of stat scores:

	Strength	Dexterity	Intelligence	Socialization
1	Child/weak/very old	Clumsy/uncoordinated	Dumb	Awkward/rude/ugly
2	Average	Average	Average	Average
3	Works out/big	Graceful/ steady hand	Smart	Likeable/attractive/persuasive
4	Weightlifter/Mighty	Gymnast/juggler	Brilliant	Great orator/smoking hot

Advanced Character Creation – Skills

Don’t become dissuaded as to the simplicity of this game by the word “advanced.” The advanced character just takes it one step further, adding skills. Skills are simply points that add to a roll, in addition to stats, but for a more specific group of actions. Skills allow a character to remove more of the random element from an action and represent something that a character is rather practiced at. The standard character starts with 10 skill points to distribute. The GM can choose to give his characters more or less skill points to start with, depending on how competent or incompetent he wishes them to be. Standard 10 point characters are above-average in their ability, and can be either very skilled at a few things or somewhat skilled in a variety of thing. They are more competent than the average person, as they are intended to be the heroes of the adventure. A “regular guy” game should start with characters having around 5 skill points, and the available skills should be limited to what “regular

people,” of their background/circumstances (such as the iconic farm boy who doesn’t know he is the son of the king and has a destiny) would have available to him.

So what kinds of things are skills? Let’s just take some common examples from other games, one for each stat:

Axe/Mace (Strength): your character’s ability with an axe, mace or similar weapon. This skill value would be added with your strength to determine your character’s total bonus in a fight when armed with such a weapon. Other characters would use axes or maces using only their basic strength score and whatever bonus the weapon bestows (see next section on items).

Acrobatics (Dexterity): how well your character is trained in flipping around. You would add this skill value to your dexterity for the purposes of any kind of acrobatic act, like jumping through a window and rolling on the ground to avoid injury or doing a back-flip. Any other character could still roll his basic dexterity to attempt it, but you will be at an advantage to all such actions by being skilled in it.

Navigation (Intelligence): Your character’s ability to read the stars, maps, and instruments to navigate a ship. Other characters could still attempt this, but based only on their intelligence score. For certain skills, especially some intelligence based skills, the GM may consider not letting players attempt an action without a relevant skill. Some skills *require* special training, like nuclear physics.

Lying (Socialization): Your ability to lie convincingly. Other characters can attempt to lie based on their socialization, but having specific skill makes you much more believable.

Each skill is based on a stat that governs it (Acrobatics is a skill based on Dexterity and Lying is a skill based on Socialization, etc). The governing stat is the one that adds to the total roll for a given skill attempt.

Depending on the setting, the GM can allow any kind of skills he wants. Players can also propose skills to the GM, telling him what they want to be able to do, and working it out into a skill with clearly defined limits. Lists of available skills in certain common types of settings are available in various sourcebooks.

So you can see that having points in a skill can make you very effective at a certain action, adding on top of the base stat to a roll, but the idea is that they are only usable in select situations. How broad a range of activities a skill covers is up to the GM and, of course, held in check by the difficulty of what the GM is having the players do. Just try to keep the players challenged enough that they make smart, or at the very least fun, decisions.

Optional Rule:

Limitations on Skill Values

Consider limiting the number of points a character can put in some (if not all) skills to the total value of the governing attribute. So if someone has a dexterity of 2, they cannot have an acrobatics of more than 2. The extent of someone’s ability in doing something is necessarily limited by his physical/mental capacity. A person with an average (2) intelligence cannot be a master (4 skill) of physics.

What skills are available to what character is not dictated by any kind of character class, but instead by what the GM will allow a player based on his or her character's background and the specifics of the game setting. It would not make sense to allow a character who has lived in the desert his whole life to start out with points in a swimming skill.

Illustrative examples of Skill Levels

Points	Skill Level	Example
1	Familiar	Your character has done things involving this skill from time to time.
2	Proficient/well trained	Your character is well practiced or has received formal training.
3	Expert/specialist	Your character goes well beyond what standard training can offer.
4	Master	Your character is the best that any normal human can hope to be.

PART FOUR: ITEMS

What game would be complete without all kinds of sweet gear and loot? Well, this one would, but the addition of items can add a lot of depth without too much complication. For the most part, items work like skills, giving you a bonus to a roll in which the item can be applied. This is obvious for combat. Most items should be treated as adding a bonus to a skill when used. For instance, a compass would give a bonus of +1 to a navigation roll, and a map would provide an additional +1 bonus. A sledgehammer would give a substantial bonus to the strength roll required to smash that chest from the other stupid example over doing it bare handed. That could also be a situation in which the GM demands that the player use an item, if the chest is too strong to break without a tool. Another example of this would be using a lockpicking skill. It doesn't matter how good you are at lockpicking if you don't have anything to pick the lock with. For such skills requiring items to even use them at all, consider allowing your players to use improvised items, such as the classic bobby-pin lockpick. These items would actually give a negative to the skill check, but would at least allow the skill to be used when it otherwise could not be. For example, a standard set of lockpicks would allow you to pick locks using your normal lockpicking skill. Improvised lockpicks, depending on how poor they are, would give -1 or -2 to your lockpicking roll. Exceptional quality lockpicks, on the other hand, would give a +1 or +2 *bonus* to the roll.

Weapons and Armor

Weapons just add bonuses like any other items, and it's the same with armor. There are multiple ways to resolve combats, and based on the one you are using the weapons and armor will work a little differently. For a basic table of standard weapon and armor bonuses, see Appendix A. For more comprehensive lists of weapons, armor, and other equipment for various settings, see the relevant sourcebook. In the simple combat rules, just add all these bonuses to the stat and skill and roll against the difficulty to win. In the more advanced rules, attack and defense bonuses will be applied separately. That is the next section.

Money

It is silly to write rules in the rulebook about how much money players start with and how much all the equipment costs. How much money the players have is dependent on who the players are and where they are. Starting characters can be anything from poor farmers to paid soldiers to affluent nobles. It is pointless to make a rule that says starting characters get X money, as this is wholly dependent on the characters, setting, and storyline.

That being said, it is still necessary to determine how much money (or its equivalent value in gear) the players have in a game where the players are not limited (or enriched) by their setting or standing. It is easiest to base the cost of equipment on a standard starting wealth of "100." In a fantasy game, this would usually be 100 "coins" or ounces of silver. The costs of equipment in Supplement 3 are based on a starting wealth of 100.

In games that are not in a medieval-type setting, the "100 monies" scheme does not work. For a modern game it is easy, just use modern retail prices for goods, and then assign players an amount of money that makes sense for their characters. For sci-fi, you'll just have to make up currency and costs, or just revert to the "100 monies" scheme and assign gear costs based on how much and what kinds of equipment you want to have available to your players when they begin the game.

PART FIVE: COMBAT

Every RPG seems to focus pretty heavily on the fighting, even though really it should be a small part, if at all, of most things people need to get done. So even though you could play a game in this system and completely ignore this whole section, this section needs to be here because the simulated combat is what most people enjoy about table-top RPGs.

As stated previously, there are multiple ways combats can be resolved; four ways in total. Here they are in order of complexity:

Level 1: The GM sets a difficulty, as for any other roll, for a fight to be won. The Player rolls the die, adds his strength or dexterity (depending on what the GM is allowing) and any bonus from skills or items. If he succeeds, he wins. If he fails, he loses, suffers a wound, is captured, dies, or whatever makes sense in the story.

Level 2: The player makes a roll as above, but the difficulty for said roll is equal to the same roll made for the enemy (an opposed roll). Rolls happen at the same time to add some tension to it.

Level 3: Combat proceeds as in level two, but for each roll the loser loses a hit point (equal to your strength). The first character to reach zero loses.

Level 4: This is the most complex that this game will get unless you add more rules to it (optional and advanced combat rules are available in the Advanced Rules Supplement). This is similar to level 3, except rolls are divided into attack rolls and defense rolls. When you attack, you roll, add your stat (usually strength), skill, and weapon bonuses. The defender rolls, adds his dexterity, weapon and armor bonuses. If the attacker wins he deals a point of damage/a wound (or more points if you have a special weapon that does that, magical or high tech, etc.). This continues with the other character then making an attack roll and you defending. Continue this way with as many characters involved in the combat until one side is defeated. It is necessary to use this method of resolving combats when using other advanced rules, such as magic or high-tech, where the particular effects of things come into play.

Feel free to switch between these methods during a big fight if things are taking too long, though the most advanced method allows for the most tactical variation. In such a fight, consider using a low complexity method for the bad guy's goons and a higher complexity method for more important enemies. If a character fails a level one or two complexity combat check against an unimportant character to the story, consider having a mild penalty, i.e., he is held up getting to his intended target, he takes a wound, he has to dodge another arrow, the bad guy gets away, etc. In an important encounter, just being *delayed* another round can be penalty enough. Challenge your players, don't defeat them.

Turn Sequence

So who goes first in a fight? Who saw who first? What are the circumstances? Turn sequence is decided by the GM based on the circumstances leading to the encounter. Generally, the person initiating the violence goes first, and turn sequence is generated based on which characters make the next move. If the GM doesn't want to decide or wants it to be random, have the players roll their DEX or INT, whichever seems appropriate, and go in order of highest to lowest. A player can choose on his first turn if he wishes to go later in the turn order, and must declare after which character he wishes to be placed in the turn sequence. After the first round, turn orders remain fixed.

Generally, if a combat begins in a situation where combatants are in range for melee attacks, give longer-range weapons higher turn order. If three people enter a room and decide to fight, one with a crossbow, one with a spear, and one with an axe, the bow would go first, then the spear, then the axe.

Elements of a Turn

On each of his turns, a character can only do a certain amount of things. Think of a turn or combat round as one to two seconds, depending on the setting (modern/sci-fi weapons may have a high rate of fire, necessitating a round to be considered shorter). On a standard turn, a character can move if he chooses (see below) and make one Standard (attack-equivalent) action. This can be any kind of attack, melee or ranged (if your ranged weapon is ready), or any other action taking a similar amount of time, such as casting a spell or picking up an object. What a player can do with his action is ultimately up to the GM, as no body of rules can be exhaustive enough to cover every possible action. If a player wants to do something in addition to his move that is not an attack, spell, or other "standard" action, the GM decides if it can be done in just one turn. Some actions may require the player to devote multiple turns simply to that one action, such as like turning a crank to raise a portcullis, or pushing a heavy boulder over a cliff.

There is no limit on how many defense rolls characters can make. Characters get to roll defense against every attack. See the Advanced Rules Supplement for optional rules on fighting multiple opponents.

Movement

The specific distance a character can move is only necessary if you are playing with advanced combat rules and are using a grid or map. Otherwise, movement and distance should be expressed in "turns." That is, characters are 1 turn away from each other, 2 turns, etc. This is only really necessary if some combatants are using ranged weapons or if someone is trying to accomplish an action before the enemies close in. How many turns of distance there are between combating parties determines how many ranged attacks or other actions can be made before the other side can close to melee.

If you are using a grid or map and want specific distances that can be moved in a turn for tactical consideration, a character can move 5 squares, hexes, inches, or whatever unit you are using, per turn. You can adjust this number to any that you see fit if you want more or less movement to be available in a turn. You can also choose to allow characters not attacking or otherwise making a standard action on a turn to move twice as far in a turn than those who do make an action. This represents characters making a flat-out run, not being held up by any other action. This rule is necessary if a ranged attacker fires and moves away from his target each turn, otherwise he could never be caught if he started firing outside of melee range.

Ranged combat

Any weapon that can inflict damage at a distance through some kind of projectile is a ranged weapon. This includes bows, firearms, thrown weapons, etc.

Ranged attacking

If you are armed with a ranged weapon and your opponent is not, you simply roll to see if you hit him (against a GM set difficulty in basic combat or against his ranged defense roll in advanced combat) until he closes the gap to melee, in which case the GM decides whether or not you can still use your weapon. In the case of a bow, probably not. A handgun, however, still works just fine, and at point blank range the GM would be well served to not even bother rolling the combat and just roll to see who shot first based on dexterity or other factors (who got the drop on who).

Ranged attacks suffer negatives to the roll based on range. Since movement distance is not always expressed in numerical terms, this is handled in terms of turns. If a target is within 1 turn of you (he could reach you on his turn), there is no negative. If it would take him more than one turn, negatives are cumulative. Shooting someone 2 turns away would be at a -1 penalty to the total roll. -2 for 3 turns away, and so on. These figures are for medieval ranged weapons such as bows, crossbows, etc, and will also work for handguns. Rifles, on the other hand, should suffer negatives at at least half the rate if not more. Shooting something with a rifle at 100 yards is as easy as or easier than shooting something with a handgun or bow at 25 yards. Thrown weapons should also be given a maximum range, and should not be permitted to be thrown at any target more than 2 turns away with any chance of success. Details for the distances at which various firearms begin to incur range penalties can be found in the relevant sourcebooks for the settings in which they are available.

Ranged defending

Ranged defense and melee defense are different. Ranged defense scores don't include weapon bonuses to defense (parrying an arrow isn't something that happens often.) If this seems to you to make ranged weapons too powerful or too easy to hit with, remember that ranged attack rolls suffer a penalty based on range. Also keep in mind that ranged weapons must be reloaded after each shot for most fantasy and medieval weapons.

Wounds/Injury

The number of wounds that a character can sustain before he is no longer able to participate in combat is equal to his strength score. This is often referred to as "Hit Points." Since the overall number of wounds a character can sustain in combat is very small in this game, keep in mind that each hit point lost/wound taken represents a pretty significant injury. These wounds will likely need to be bandaged or sutured after a combat. Without any magic, healing potions, or similar supernatural aid, wounds sustained in a fight will take some time to heal. Depending on how beat up a character is, he may take days, or even weeks, to recover. There is no good way to make up rules for how long injuries take to heal, because injuries can be very variable, and because everyone ignores these rules anyway. The GM must decide for how long an injured character remains injured based on the extent of his wounds, and should try to make dealing with injury a part of the story, not an obligatory thing that gets glanced over. Glancing over injury is fine, however, in a game where there aren't any time-sensitive issues. Don't worry about how long injuries take to heal if you always end up saying "ok you all rest up until your injuries heal."

Again, being reduced to 0 hit points does not kill a character. He is simply too wounded to continue fighting or move quickly. 0 hit points represents being knocked out, too wounded to fight or do any kind of magic or other strenuous activity. At this point you are in great pain and are likely bleeding heavily, but you are not dead. You can still attempt to crawl off the battlefield (you are too wounded to run or walk without help) or to bandage yourself, and can still speak (maybe, through the slurring and gurgling). The specific results of the injuries are up to the GM and what he feels appropriate based on

the way the wounds were inflicted. Wounds that are “equivalent” for combat purposes are not necessarily equivalent outside of combat. For example, if Player A reduces Player B to 0 hit points by punching him, player B would be knocked out or too dizzy to continue fighting, but would recover from these wounds in only a day or two. If Player A reduces Player B to 0 hit points with a sword, these wounds would be much more serious and take a lot more time to recover from. Combinations of different wounds are handled by having them heal independently in order of severity, from least to most. If Player B has 2 hit points and loses one from being punched and another from being hit with a sword, the hit point from being punched would be “healed” by the next day, whereas the lost hit point from being slashed would take a week or more.

Death

Where’s the fun in that? If a player character is reduced to 0 hit points, it is up to the GM what happens. The best course of action would be to have him wounded for a while and unable to do physical stuff, or if all the players lose to their enemies the enemies carry them off to prison and they have to escape. Keep it interesting. Killing characters is not fun unless they really, really deserve it for being stupid and need to learn a lesson in mortality. Losing a fight should be a setback, not a game-ender. After the combat, if your side won, you can be tended to by your friends. If the other side wins, the GM should consider having the enemies capture the players and then make them escape somehow, or instead of having the enemies come around and kill the wounded just have them steal all of the player’s stuff. The exact penalty for losing a fight is up to the GM, but killing characters is usually not fun.

Keep in mind that when a player reduces an enemy to 0 hit points, that character is also not dead (unless the GM says so, as killing NPCs is not a problem at all.) This means that once a character is “defeated” (reduced to 0 hp), the players could choose to interrogate him if they stop him from bleeding to death or are quick about it.

Sneak Attacks

If a player manages to sneak up on a foe, a melee attack does not require a roll to hit and kills or incapacitates instantly (The classic throat-slit). A ranged attack would be made against a difficulty assigned by the GM based on range and armor as a normal ranged attack, but without the target’s dexterity or shield bonus to defense which represents his dodging, moving, and blocking. Ranged sneak attacks do not do more damage than normal ranged attacks unless the surprise is used to aim for a headshot, which also applies a penalty (-4) to the roll. See the Advanced Rules Supplement for additional combat rules involving targeting specific body parts.

PART SIX: ADVANCEMENT

As much if not more than anything else, how characters advance is up to the GM. Depending on how many sessions the adventure is going to last, the GM may wish to advance the characters more quickly or slowly. One to two skill points is a good reward for a successful session of a game that is supposed to last a while. These points can be put directly into skills, or a character could save them up and put them into a stat. Stat points cost 4 skill points. Each character can only increase each of his stats by 1 in the course of a game. Stat increases are necessarily limited by a character's physical and mental capacity. While it is possible to lift weights to gain strength, practice to gain dexterity, study to gain intelligence, and socialize to gain socialization, a person can only increase these so much. An average sized person (STR 2) can only become so strong (STR 3), where a naturally big person (STR 3) can with the same effort become much stronger (STR 4). Dexterity can only be improved so much also, as it is a function of someone's natural ability of balance and coordination. Intelligence is obvious also. Studying can only help someone so much. It is the same for socialization. Even if you try to be an extremely likable person, you are limited by how attractive you are.

Items gained during the session can also be decent enough reward if you wish to keep advancement modest. A weapon or armor upgrade is essentially equivalent of some skill points. Watch what you make available. If characters have enough money and/or if any items they want are available in shops than this is a poor scheme of advancement. Remember that in the middle ages a sword would be ridiculously expensive for your backward farm types that always turn out to be the lost son of King Hero on an anti-orc hate crusade. Killing General McBad and getting his maille armor and sword would be a good session reward for a character in leather armor with an axe if maille armor and swords simply are not available to buy in the area.

Keep advancement modest. Making the players too powerful too fast screws with storytelling. Can you imagine real people improving their skills as vastly and as quickly as characters in games do?

The "A is for Axe" Problem

Consider prohibiting any skill points being applied at the end of a session to skills not used or little used in that session. For example, it doesn't make sense for a barbarian who has spent the entire campaign hitting things with an axe to apply the skill points gained toward the ability to read. If you are using this optional rule, players can still learn new skills that they have not attempted before, but require them to actually find a teacher. The barbarian *can* learn to read, but not by slaying his foes. If the barbarian wishes to use his skill points earned at the end of the session to learning his letters, have him find a tutor, or at least have him role-play asking a literate party member for help.

PART SEVEN: OTHER STUFF AND SPECIAL RULES

So far the system allows for an easy game in a non-magical, non-superhuman, non-sci-fi game. So what if you want to add fantastic or high-tech elements? Well, that can get pretty complicated, so you have to figure that out.

Magic

If you wish to play a true fantasy game, a magic system developed for this game system is available in the Magic Supplement. Magic can also be improvised or independently created by the GM, but be careful of unbalancing things unintentionally, especially if you have whiny players. Magical ability should cost skill points, and any magical spells should cost an amount of skill points that is appropriate for their power. Deciding what amount of skill points any given magical ability should cost can be difficult, and often times bending the rules of physics in-game with magic tends to bend the rules of the game itself in ways the GM did not anticipate.

Technology

It may seem intuitive simply to increase the attack bonus for modern or future weapons, but this is probably not a good idea. Attack bonuses should be kept modest, probably no more than +2, for high-tech ranged weapons. This should be done because there is little in the way of armor or shields to protect against bullets. Rules for modern or high-tech weapons may be difficult to reconcile with rules for fantasy/medieval weapons if you choose to, for whatever reason, include both contemporaneously. A good way to handle this without simply increasing the attack bonuses to the point where the die roll is irrelevant is simply to say that medieval style armor and shields do nothing (or very little) to offer protection against modern bullets.

High tech weapons, like modern firearms for example, should not begin to suffer negatives to the roll for distance at the same rate. They also can do more damage than their medieval counterparts, and of course they fire rapidly (one or more times per attack action). The only problem with this is that once the bonuses can become high enough, coupled with increased damage and with the lack of effective armor to stop bullets, fights can become very short and bloody. This may not make for a fun game if you want a combat-heavy adventure. Keep in mind though that this is still fairly realistic. At close ranges, people don't live very long in gunfights. If you want to have a modern or sci-fi game with rifles or laser guns, just try to make any combat encounters at long distance, so the range penalties come into play. You can also employ "taking cover" rules, and determine what negatives would be applied to a roll against an opponent partially protected by the terrain. A high tech game, in order to be handled more realistically, should probably include rules found in the Advanced Rules Supplement. Rules for modern and sci-fi combat, including stats for weapons and armor, are available in the Modern and Sci-fi sourcebooks.

Other non-combat technology can be handled easily enough. Most things can simply work without requiring a skill roll or anything, unless the item requires skill to use. Any setting using advanced technology will likely require that the necessary skills be added to the game for their use. Characters in a sci-fi game should have skills like "Starship Piloting" available to them. Exactly what items or actions might require skill rolls in a high tech setting is up to the GM. For example, flying that starship would require some training, but something like a Navigation roll would be unnecessary for a character with a GPS system handy.

Special Rules and House Rules

This game is designed to be easily modified to any purpose a GM might have. Special rules are encouraged to accomplish what you want to accomplish with your game. One caveat is that the further away you get from the core rules, the more difficult it may be to balance. This system is designed to be universal, that is, usable with any setting. However, it may not be the ideal system for certain settings that necessitate complicated rules, such as a super-heroes game. When the power of individual characters becomes great and can vary widely, the D6 based system becomes less than ideal. This system is designed to utilize the smallest possible numbers, so a game that will require really big numbers might be difficult. The rules don't have to be changed just because you are playing a game where the characters are something like super heroes or giant robots. You can use the same stat and skill scheme, only you can treat the stats as relative to a superhero or giant robot, rather than based on an average person. So a 2 STR would be average for a superhero or giant robot, depending on the game. Just consider the stats of normal people to be on an entirely different level and assume that a super hero can ignore regular, non-super characters.

Coming up with special rules for every setting that isn't a standard "medieval" type can be daunting and more time consuming than one might like, especially if using this system to save time and effort and get to playing sooner. Sourcebooks for common settings (medieval/fantasy, modern, and sci-fi) are available to provide the "standard" features of these game worlds to allow the GM to forego the drudgery of creating all the necessary components. Additional rules supplements for advanced games and magic are also available. It is recommended that a GM use these as appropriate for a complicated game. The supplemental rules in no way limit how much any GM can change the rules to fit his purpose. They can be followed in entirety, ignored completely, or simply provide a starting point to facilitate game creation and play.

Damage from Sources Other than Weapons

There are many situations in which a character may suffer wounds or other effects from a source other than an attack, for example, being set on fire, falling, running into some kind of hazard, etc. For many of these situations, the GM should simply decide what is appropriate, for example, if something falls on a character the GM could just give him a wound as normal, or have him knocked unconscious for an appropriate amount of time. Some rules should be made somewhat standard (and will be used in supplements to these rules in a standard form).

Falling: As a general rule, a character takes one wound for every 10 feet he falls. If a character falls less than 10 feet (1 story) he takes no damage. If he falls between 10 and 20 feet, he takes one point of damage, over 20 feet, 2 damage, over 30, 3 and so on.

Fire: if a character is set on fire by a small flame, he can spend his next action to put the fire out. If he does not, he is on fire. If a character is hit by a large flame, he takes a point of damage and is on fire immediately. A character who is on fire takes a point of damage after every other turn. A character can attempt to put out this fire using the "stop drop and roll" method (if there is nothing like a pool of water to jump in to). To do this, the character must sacrifice his entire turn (movement and attack) to put the fire out. He must make a DEX roll against a DC 6 to be successful. If he fails, he must attempt it again on the next turn. Note that some fires can't be put out like this, for example, being covered in napalm.

Explosions: A basic rule for explosions is to determine how powerful the explosion is. Give it a numeric value. At the point of the explosion's origin, the explosion does that amount of damage. For each space out from the center, it does one less damage, until it reaches 0. For example, if an explosion has a power of 4, it does 4 damage in the space it explodes, 3 damage in all adjacent spaces, 2 damage in spaces adjacent to those, and so on. Depending on the type of explosion, it could also set things on fire.

Electricity: Electricity can be tricky, and depending on the circumstances can have different effects. Generally, smaller charges can cause disorientation/unconsciousness, and larger charges can cause burns or other injury (wounds) in addition to this. A character should be stunned for a number of rounds based on the power of the charge minus their STR score. This way, stronger characters can recover a little bit faster. For example, if a charge has a power of 6, a character with 2 STR would recover in 4 rounds and a character with 4 STR would recover in 2. A bear or some large creature with a STR of 6 or higher would be unaffected. Charges of sufficient power can also deal damage. The GM should decide at what point electricity deals wounds. This can be a hard thing to set a standard for, as a stun gun could cause unconsciousness for a few minutes (several hundred rounds) and still not do enough “damage” to deal a wound. Lightning would either kill right-out or incapacitate for several *days*, so the damage/X power level scheme won’t always work. The GM is advised to make electricity work how he wants it to work, and if he wants a character to take a wound and only be stunned for 5 rounds, that’s fine.

Cold: If for whatever reason a character is exposed to extreme cold, there should be negative effects due to this. Cold would not likely do damage immediately, and a character exposed to cold would likely only suffer adverse effects if exposed to the cold for a prolonged period, the amount of time dependant on the amount of cold. This is difficult to quantify in game rules, so the GM must decide how cold something is. Cold should probably not deal wounds, but instead drain STR. For each period of X time a character is in, for example, a frozen lake of X cold, he would lose 1 STR temporarily. STR would return after the character warmed up again. A character reaching 0 STR would begin to lose consciousness (essentially the effect of running out of HP) and would be unable to do things like swim, so this could be extremely dangerous.

Acid: Corrosive substances can vary greatly, and acids in fiction and gaming are normally much more powerful and deadly than most of those one would encounter under normal circumstances. Damage from acid should be treated something like damage from fire. Based on the potency of the acid, a character would take a point of damage every X turns. A weak acid might only deal a wound every 10, 20 or however many turns, where a very powerful acid could deal a wound every turn or two. “Stop Drop and Roll” would not work very well on acid, so a character covered in it would likely have to wash the acid off or otherwise neutralize it.

PART EIGHT: SUMMARY AND RECAP; EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Step-by-Step Review

If you have read straight through to this point and are about to play, but cringe at the thought of having to go back through all the rules again to make characters and get started, don’t worry. The following is a summary checklist of steps for getting started.

1. Create setting – the GM must, first and foremost, decide what kind of adventure he wants to have, what the setting is, how he wants the players to start out, and what will happen to them. This is the “story” of the game. The GM must also decide what special rules (character abilities, special items or skills, etc) this setting will require, if any, and get those rules worked out.
2. Gather materials – Print or draw up character cards, get some pencils and paper, and as many six-sided dice as you can get your hands on.
3. Create character names and backgrounds – All players must decide what kind of characters they want to play, that is, generate a concept and possibly a background story in the GM’s setting, and give the character a name.
4. Choose stats – Each player allocates his ten stat points among the four stats, Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, and Socialization, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 4. Write these totals on

your character card. This is the most basic necessity. You can begin playing now, and either stick with a very simple game, or you can choose to include skills and/or equipment later.

5. Choose skills – The players decide what skills they want and how many points they wish to allocate to each one. Each player starts with 10 skill points to distribute in a standard game. Players cannot have a skill total higher than that's skill's governing stat (unless the GM wishes otherwise). The players and GM discuss specific limitations if the skill they wish to have is ambiguous. Write what skills you choose and their total values on your character card. You are now ready to play an advanced game, and the next few steps can be completed in-play if desired.
6. Choose items – Players either choose how to spend their starting wealth to determine what equipment they start the game with, or the GM can choose to forego this step until the game starts, and have the players buy equipment in the game, or find it if they are in such a situation of scarcity.
7. Total Attack and Defense scores – Add up your Stat (STR or DEX as applicable), Skill total, and weapon attack bonus (see appendix A) to compute total attack for all of a character's weapons. Add up your DEX, armor, shield and weapon defense bonus to compute your melee defense score. Take that total and remove the weapon bonus to defense (if there is one) to compute your ranged defense score. Write these totals on your character card.
8. Play the game! – The GM sets the stage, describes what is going on, what the players are doing, what happens, etc. The players react to what situations the GM presents.

Example of Play

For anyone who has never played a table-top RPG, the whole idea of the interaction between GM and the players may be unclear. The following is an example of what a transcript of a game session might be like.

In this example, the players are being paid to track down some thieves who kidnapped a young girl. Player 1 is armed with a sword (2 ATK), shield (2 DEF) and a coat of maille (2 DEF). Player 2 is armed with a heavy crossbow (2 ATK), a dagger (1 ATK), and leather armor (1 ATK). For the sake of simplicity, they have 2 skill points in 5 different skills each.

GM: You follow the tracks to a cave in the forest. The cave is dark as far as you can tell, but the thieves' tracks clearly enter the cave.

Player 1 to Player 2: We should sneak in. You are better at sneaking than me, so you should go in first, and I'll stay a few yards behind you.

Player 2: Ok. I sneak in, crossbow ready.

GM: Roll your Stealth skill against a DC 8.

Player 2 rolls a 4. He adds his DEX of 3 and stealth skill of 2 for a total of 9. He exceeds the difficulty, so he successfully sneaks. Had he failed, the thieves would have heard him, or the GM would have decided upon some other penalty.

GM: Ok, you sneak into the cave with Player 1 not far behind. You see a faint light up ahead, and can tell that the cave turns to the right.

Player 2: I carefully peer around the corner.

GM: You see the two thieves around a campfire a few yards deeper into the cave. They are armed with only daggers and are wearing leather armor. The kidnapped girl is bound and gagged in a corner.

Player 2 has no sympathy for kidnappers and decides it will be easier and more satisfying to kill them than try and negotiate.

Player 2: Ok, I whisper to Player 1: "They're just around this corner. I'm going to shoot one of them, and then you charge the other."

Player 1: Ok, go for it.

Player 2: I peer around the corner again and shoot the closest one in the head.

GM: Ok, at this range, it isn't a very hard shot when he is sitting still and it is a sneak attack. Roll your attack against a DC 10.

This is a 2/3 chance for Player 2 to hit, so he decides to attempt it. Player 2 rolls a die and gets a 3. He adds his DEX of 3, skill of 2, and weapon bonus of 2, for a total of 10. He meets the difficulty so he succeeds, just barely.

GM: The crossbow bolt takes flight and strikes the thief at the base of his skull, killing him. The other thief is startled and leaps up, pulling his knife.

Player 1: I charge in and attack the other thief.

GM: Ok, you attack him. The turn order will be Player 1, the thief, and then Player 2. Player 1, roll your attack.

Player 1 rolls a die and gets a 2. He adds his STR of 3, skill of 2, and weapon bonus of 2, for a total of 9. The GM rolls the thief's defense and gets a 5. He adds the thief's DEX of 2 and armor bonus of 1 for a total of 8. Player 1's attack is successful.

GM: Your sword strikes the thief and cuts his thigh. Blood begins to stain his pants. He takes a wound. The thief now attacks you.

The GM rolls the thief's attack and rolls a 6. He adds the thief's DEX (knives use DEX) of 2, skill of 1, and weapon bonus of 1, for a total of 10. Player 1 rolls a 2, adds his DEX of 2, shield bonus of 2, and armor bonus of 2, for a total of 8. He fails to defend against the thief's attack.

GM: the thief manages to stab you. His dagger penetrates your maille. Take a wound.

Player 1 marks one wound out of his total of 3 on his character card.

Player 2: I draw my dagger and attack the thief.

Player 2 rolls his attack and gets a 4. He adds his DEX of 3, skill of 2, and weapon bonus of 1, for a total of 10. The thief rolls his defense and also gets a 4. He adds his DEX of 2 and armor bonus of 1 for a total of 7. He fails to defend.

GM: You stab the thief, your dagger penetrating a soft spot on his armor and sipping between his ribs. His wounds are too much for him, and he collapses.

Player 1 to Player 2: Do we want to question him? He is still alive.

Player 2: No, I don't think he knows anything we need to. The girl is safe now.

Player 1: Ok then. I stab the thief again to put him out of his misery.

GM: He gurgles a bit and dies.

Player 2: I cut the ropes holding the girl.

GM: She thanks you, and is happy to be getting out of here.

Player 1 to Player 2: Alright, let's return her to her parents and get our reward.

GM: You return the girl to the village. The village elder gives you a bag of silver that he collected from all of the concerned families.

Player 1: I tell him thank you and that we were glad to help people in need.

GM: The innkeeper offers to put you up for the night free of charge.

Player 2 to Player 1: I think we should stay the night and rest up so you can tend to your wound.

Player 1: I agree. We accept the innkeeper's offer so we can recuperate before we look for any more trouble.

GM: The innkeeper feeds you a hearty stew and gives you each a free mug of ale. He shows you to your room. It isn't much, but it is warm and dry and the beds are clean.

Player 1: I want to attempt to stitch my wound. I open my pack and pull out my suture kit.

GM: Ok, roll your Medicine skill against a DC 7.

Player 1 rolls to attempt to patch himself up. He rolls a 3. He adds his INT of 2, medicine skill of 2, and item bonus of 1 from the suture kit. His total is 8. He successfully stitches his cut.

GM: You neatly sew up the gash in your chest. It isn't fun, but your wound will heal much faster now that it is cleanly sutured.

Player 1: Well, I am going to sleep.

Player 2: So am I.

GM: You spend the night and wake well rested. Player 1 notices that his wound is already looking better. You estimate it will be effectively healed (*enough to restore his wound level*) in only a few more days.

Player 1: Alright Player 2. Let's continue down the road and find some other adventure to go on. I think we should try and find the nearest city and spend some of this hard earned silver.

The players continue on their quest. What further adventures await the intrepid pair known only as Player 1 and Player 2?

So that is how a run-of-the-mill encounter could happen. How much detail in descriptions the GM gives or requires of the players' actions is up to him. Just what actions will require a roll and how often is also up to the GM. For example, when Player 2 was sneaking into the cave, the GM could require stealth rolls to be made periodically to see if he remains hidden, such as when he wanted to peer around the corner or when he walked back to talk to Player 1, rather than having just one stealth roll for the whole thing. Again, this is entirely up to the GM and what he thinks is appropriate for his situations and how quickly he wants events to proceed. There is no "right" way to go about anything; the GM should require whatever rolls he feels are necessary in his presented scenarios. After all, he controls the entire world and the workings of everything therein.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: WEAPON AND ARMOR LIST FOR ADVANCED COMBAT SYSTEM

The following chart is a list of the standard types of weapons and armor available in a medieval/fantasy setting, along with the attack and defense bonuses they confer. These are broad categories, and any kind of historical arms can be fit into one of them. If you want to use a weapon that you feel does not fit into one of these categories, feel free to make up bonuses or special rules for it.

The attack bonus does not represent "how much damage" a weapon does as is the common feature of RPGs. All weapons deal one wound, with the exception of the musket, which should deal two. The attack bonus represents the weapon's ability to deliver that wound. A larger weapon is more able to inflict a wound than a smaller one. For example, it is easier to stab someone with a sword than a dagger due to the length. The stab wound, however, is still a stab wound, not matter how long the weapon was. The defense bonus represents how much a weapon contributes to your ability not to be hit. Longer weapons that can keep the opponent at bay or weapons that are designed for parrying give defense bonuses.

Hand Weapons	Attack Bonus	Defense Bonus
Dagger/ knife, hatchet, club/light mace/baton, nunchaku	+1	0
Sword, battleaxe, mace, flail, warhammer	+2	0

One-handed spear, rapier/basket sword/saber, hooksword	+1	+1
Longsword/Bastard Sword/Katana*, longspear**	+2	+1
Quarterstaff	+1	+2
Two-handed battleaxe/mace	+4	+0
Greatsword/Halberd	+3	+1
Shields	Attack Bonus	Defense Bonus
Buckler	0	+1
Small shield (round, heater, etc)	0	+2
Large shield (Tower, kite, hoplon)	-1	+3
Ranged Weapons (See note below on reloading)	Attack Bonus	Defense Bonus
Thrown knife	-1	-
Thrown axe or javelin, Shortbow	0	0
Longbow, Small Crossbow, smoothbore pistol	+1	0
Large Crossbow, Musket	+2	0
Armor	Attack Bonus	Defense Bonus
Leather, heavy cloth, etc.	0	+1
Maille, Brigandine, breastplate, scale armor, etc.	0	+2
Light Plate	0	+3
Tournament/Jousting Armor	-1	+4

*These swords can be used in one hand or two. When used in one hand, they are treated as a normal sword (+2/+0). The stats listed here are for these swords used in two hands.

**Optional rule for longspears: The length of the longspear allows for a character armed with one to always get the first attack in an engagement. If the spear-wielding character is attacking, combat is as normal. However, if the spear-wielder is *attacked*, he gets to make his attack for the turn *before* the attacking character.

Reloading Bows, Crossbows, and Muzzleloading firearms

Bows, crossbows and primitive firearms take different amounts of time to reload. Bows take one attack action to reload. In other words, it can be fired every other round. One attack action is spent in the attack, and another attack action must be spent on fitting another arrow. Crossbows take 3 rounds to reload, in other words, it can be fired on every fourth round. It takes an attack action to set the weapon down and brace it, another to draw the bowstring back, and a third to fit a new bolt. A muzzleloading firearm takes 20-30 seconds to reload, which is something like 10-15 combat rounds. Thus, these weapons generally cannot be reloaded in combat. However, once they are loaded, they remain ready to fire, unlike bows and crossbows which cannot be set down with an arrow or bolt ready to fire. This means that a character carrying multiple pistols can fire one each round until they are empty. This can give pistols a high rate of fire, but one that is very limited.

Thrown weapons work similarly, in that a new one can be thrown every round, but they have a lower attack bonus due to difficulty of use and again a character should only be allowed to carry so many. One could definitely carry many knives, but few axes or javelins.

Balance among ranged weapons can be a delicate problem. A GM running a game in a setting where bows, crossbows, and primitive firearms are all available will likely want there to be a purpose for each. The stats given in this rulebook are those that attempt to reflect reality while also balancing the weapons for the purposes of this simple system. Bows have a higher overall rate of fire than other primitive ranged weapons, but they have a lower attack bonus. This makes hitting a target with a bow more dependent on skill. This is a crude approximation of reality, as crossbows and firearms replaced bows on the battlefield largely due to the fact that they were easier to learn to use. This is reflected by

the higher attack bonus inherent in the weapon, since an untrained wielder would have a harder time hitting a target with a bow, and even with training the bow will still have a slight handicap over the same amount of training with other weapons due to their inherent ease of use. The bow does, however, have a much higher rate of fire, so a character endeavoring to put a lot of skill into the use of a ranged weapon would likely be better suited with a bow. His attack bonus will still be high due to skill, and the slight difference between the attack for a bow and a crossbow would be offset by the fact that the bow gets to attempt an attack twice as frequently.

Partially Loaded Weapons

As stated above in the reloading section, bows and crossbows cannot be ready to fire if they are not in the character's hands, whereas firearms and thrown weapons are always ready to go. A player cannot switch to a bow or crossbow from another weapon and fire it on the next round; the reloading has to happen first, or at least part of it. An unready bow must have an arrow fitted, which takes one round. A crossbow, on the other hand, can have the bow cocked, in which case a character must only fit an arrow (1 round, like the bow). If a crossbow is not cocked, it takes 3 rounds to prepare to fire. However, if the bow is kept cocked, it can be made ready to fire in one round like a bow simply by fitting the bolt in place.

A GM may want to include situations where bows and crossbows can be made unready. For example, if a character with a crossbow at the ready with a bolt fitted is knocked over or falls off a horse, etc., the GM should declare that his bolt has fallen out of place and that he must take another attack action to re-fit it. This can happen for bows as well, though it might take considerably more interruption, since the arrow is held partially in the hands of the user whereas the crossbow bolt simply sits in a shallow groove on the stock.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE CHARACTER CARDS

Here are two examples of character cards for a standard medieval-type setting using the most advanced rules in this book, one blank and one filled out.

NAME:

PLAYER:

CAMPAIGN:

STATS		SKILLS/SPELLS	BONUS	SKILLS/SPELLS	BONUS	
STR						
DEX						
INT						
SOC						
WEAPONS		ATTACK	DEFENSE	ATTACK TOTALS		
PRIMARY				PRIMARY	RANGED	BACKUP
RANGED						
BACKUP				DEFENSE TOTALS		WOUNDS
ARMOR				MELEE	RANGED	
SHIELD						
I T E M S						

NAME: *Victor Mordox*

PLAYER: *Noob Gamerson*

CAMPAIGN: *Sample*

STATS		SKILLS/SPELLS	BONUS	SKILLS/SPELLS	BONUS	
STR	3	Crossbow	2	Dagger	1	
DEX	3	Axe/Mace	2	Stealth	2	
INT	2	Tracking	2			
SOC	2	Survival	1			
WEAPONS		ATTACK	DEFENSE	ATTACK TOTALS		
PRIMARY	Battle Axe	+2		PRIMARY	RANGED	BACKUP
RANGED	Heavy Crossbow	+2		7	7	5
BACKUP	Dagger	+1		DEFENSE TOTALS		WOUNDS
ARMOR	Leather Armor		+1	MELEE	RANGED	
SHIELD	Round Shield		+2	6	6	
I T E M S	Crossbow Bolts x 10					

This should be pretty straightforward. Put the stat values in the boxes next to their names. List any skills in the skill slot and the level of bonus in the corresponding bonus slot. List weapons in the weapons boxes and give their stats. Add the total of your stat, skill, and weapon bonus for each and put those in the “attack totals” boxes. Add your dexterity to your armor, shield and weapon defense bonus and put that value in the melee defense total box. Subtract any weapon bonus from that figure and put the new total in the ranged defense total box. Use the wounds box to make tally marks for every wound you take. Finally, list other relevant items and their bonuses in the generic item slots.

You can print this two to a page, or just write up similar things on an index card. This chart will fit on a 4x6 if you’re neat about it. You can create any type of layout for character cards for your particular game, depending on what variation of the rules you are using or what special rules you have developed.

Gaming Glossary

In this section, I will define all the terms that most gamers will understand as second nature, but that some newer people may not quite understand. Some terms here may not be included in this book, but may be used in supplements or sourcebooks, and you will likely encounter them if reading any other game system.

D6/1D6 – “D6” is short hand for six-sided die. In games where there is more than one kind of die the distinction is more necessary, but in this game the term is used for ease or expression of rules. 1D6 means, obviously, one 6 sided die. If a quantity of something is expressed as “(X)D6,” roll that many dice. If the GM says you are stunned for 2D6 rounds, you roll two dice and are stunned for a number of rounds equal to the total of both dice.

DC – Difficulty Class. This is a borrowed term from other games that, while it isn’t exactly the term best suited to this game, is a common abbreviation that makes rules more easily related. Any time in these rules you see DC it refers to the difficulty of a roll. For example, “make a DEX roll against DC 6” means the difficulty for the dexterity roll is 6. The total of the character’s DEX + die roll must be 6.

GM – Game Master. The GM is the storyteller who presents the story and situations to the players. He is the arbiter of all rules and the referee. He determines everything that happens in the world that is not direct actions of the players, and even then determines the effects of everything the players do on the world. If you don’t really know what a GM is at all, maybe you shouldn’t be endeavoring to run an RPG at the moment.

HP – “hit points.” Equal to your strength, this is the number of times that you can be hit before you are incapacitated. Used interchangeably with “wounds.” “Taking a wound” and “losing an HP” are the same thing.

Melee – Hand to hand combat. Melee refers to any weapon or attack with a non-ranged weapon, like a sword, axe, knife, or fist.

NPC – “Non-Player Character.” Any character in the game controlled by the GM. Any character that is not a player’s character.

Round – The passing of every character’s turn. A combat round is over when every player has taken their turn. The term “round” and “turn” can sometimes be used interchangeably. A character can do in a combat round what he can do in a turn, because he gets only one turn in each round. Thus, saying “once per round” is essentially saying “once per turn.”