

Rules To Live By (Revised Edition)

A Live Action Roleplaying Conflict Resolution System

by

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EXTRA THANKS

Live action roleplaying games can often hold dozens, even hundreds of players. Rules to Live By has been used for over a decade for many LARP campaigns and one-shot games. Unfortunately we simply don't have the room to list all of the people involved. But we would like to thank the following groups of individuals:

The GMs and players of the following campaigns: Dark Summonings, Outpost X, Mersienne Medieval, 1936: Horror, Brassy's Men, Dark Summonings Two, 1948: Signals, Threads of Damocles, and Void Stalkers. The Brass Collective: Dave Coleman, Yvonne DiGiacomo, Laura Quimby, Abi Thompson, Mark Wallace, Paul Wayner, and Suzanne Wayner. Also special thanks to anyone who has ever written, run, or played in a Rules To Live By one-shot game.

Welcome To Rules To Live By

Rules to Live By (RTLB) is a set of generic rules for live action roleplaying games (LARPs). We assume that you have some sort of passing knowledge of roleplaying games (RPGs) in general, but you might not know exactly what a LARP is.

This book is broken out into three distinct sections. The first section is for players and will tell you how to create a character in RTLB, how to use the runtime mechanics, and gives many useful tips and tidbits for playing a character. The second section is targeted toward GMs and contains a good deal of useful information on running RTLB and running a LARP in general. The third section contains Plug-In systems, optional rules that can be added to enhance your LARP.

Players should definitely read the first section, and may choose to read the second section to learn more about running a LARP. GMs should read the first two sections. The Plug-In section is written for GMs, but contains useful mechanics for the players to know.

Info: Callout Boxes

You'll find a number of callout boxes like this one all throughout this book. They are there to provide extra information. There are two types of callout boxes.

Info boxes provide you extra information. They are often used to explain why we choose a specific method for our game mechanics.

Tip boxes give suggestions to help make your LARP run smoothly. Some tips are geared toward GMs and others are geared toward players. Some are intended for both players and GMs. Note that while you will find GM tips in the player section, you will not find player tips in the GM section.

What Is A LARP?

The simplest answer is that a live action roleplaying game is like a traditional "tabletop" roleplaying game except instead of telling the GM what you do, you go and do it. Think of it as a cross between your "tabletop" game and improvisational theatre.

In a LARP, you usually have a character to roleplay. Your character has personality and hopes and dreams and beliefs and limitations and skills and sometimes even special powers, just like a "tabletop" roleplaying character.

However, unlike a "tabletop" game, you are active as a player and move about the gaming space. Instead of telling the person in charge* that you talk to the stranger, or pick the lock, or fight the monster, you actually do these things, well, more or less.

Unfortunately, it is sometimes costly, dangerous, or physically impossible to provide the actual objects used in a live roleplaying game world, or to perform the actual stunts. You don't actually want to get shot with a gun, for example, and dragons are scarce these days. That is why LARPs have systems and mechanics.

A *mechanic* is a rule to simulate a specific action. For example, some LARPs simulate picking a lock by moving a loop of wire around another wire with the setup rigged to beep if the wires touch. Mechanics are used in situations where the characters have abilities that the players do not, or where the players' abilities cannot be easily used in the LARP.

* Different games have different names for this person: Keeper, Storyteller, Big Mac Daddy... In RTLB, we use the term GM for Game Master, but feel free to call him or her whatever you wish.

The most often used example of mechanics in LARPs is combat. You don't want your players actually hurting each other, so combat is simulated with mechanics. There are essentially two flavors of combat mechanics. This is not to say that combat is the most important part of a LARP, but it is usually the clearest difference.

Live Combat or “boffer” games use padded weapons to simulate combat. Live combat includes a high degree of verisimilitude and requires the players' abilities to perform an action. You want to hit someone with a sword? You have to actually hit the player with a prop representing a sword, usually a padded weapon. NERO™, for example, is a well known live combat organization.

There are many advantages to live combat. Combat, and all other mechanics, happen in real time. You don't have to stop the game and wait around to get a GM ruling. And there is a real adrenaline rush when you are carrying a sword and suddenly see a gang of monsters running right for you.

The main problem with live combat, however, is that you cannot play a character who is a better fighter than you actually are in real life. Some groups try to offset this by allowing characters to do more damage, but it doesn't matter how much damage you do if you cannot hit the other person in the first place. Also, the high degree of verisimilitude of Live Combat makes it difficult to simulate many things you might find in a tabletop game like guns, or high-flying martial arts kicks.

Simulated Combat is more abstract. It uses an external method that does not rely on player ability. For example, if you want to hit the other person with a sword, you may have to make a rock-paper-scissors challenge. You might not even have a sword prop; it may just be a 3x5 card with the word “sword” written on it. Rules To Live By is a simulated combat system.

The biggest advantage to simulated combat is flexibility. It is easy to run a game that has guns, or swords, or computer hacking. Further, most live combat games require a physical representation for items, but you can run a simulated combat game on a budget using index cards to represent items. This is useful if your players are supposed to create items in the game.

Finally, you can play simulated combat games in places that would not readily allow live combat, such as bars or museums or swimming pools or china shops. And it is easy to create a character that is more skilled than you, the player.

The biggest disadvantage to simulated combat is that it is intrusive and can often be time consuming. Combat and mechanics take a longer time and can take you out of the game. Often, a GM is needed to adjudicate results.

Simulated combat games can often also lack verisimilitude. Holding a padded “sword” that you can hit another player with just seems more “real” than holding a card or miming it. It is a tradeoff.

Info:

Example

John is playing Marcus the Brave, an adventurer. He is walking down the road alone when he is ambushed by a goblin. Here is how it would play out, first in live combat then in a simulated combat situation. The actual systems used have been made up for this example.

Live Combat

Both John and the goblin are carrying padded weapons. Marcus has a sword made with a PVC (pipe tubing) core and covered in closed cell foam and silver duct tape. The goblin has a club, also made with a PVC core and closed cell foam, but with brown duct tape.

The goblin jumps onto the path behind John and touches him lightly in the back with his club, calling “wood-3” to let John know that he has been hit with a wooden club and has taken three points of damage. Marcus can take 5 points of damage before falling unconscious, so he can only take one more hit with the club.

John maneuvers out of range and draws his sword. He advances on the goblin, swings and hits him in the arm, calling “metal-5” to tell the player of the goblin that he was hit with regular metal doing 5 points of damage. That’s all the goblin can take and the player falls down and pretends to be unconscious.

Simulated Combat

Both John and the goblin are carrying small note sheets of paper called “stat sheets” to let the players know how well they can fight. They have numbers on them. Also, John has a 3x5” card with the word “sword” written on it, while the player of the goblin has a paper towel tube to represent a club.

The goblin jumps onto the path behind John and yells “combat.” John is surprised, so the goblin has initiative. They both pull out their stat papers and compare numbers. Marcus is better, but the goblin gets a bonus for attacking from behind. They do a round of rock-paper-scissors, and the goblin wins doing 3 points of damage. Marcus can take 5 points of damage before falling unconscious, so he can only take one more hit.

John pulls out his sword card and attacks. Marcus has slightly better numbers and John wins in rock-paper-scissors, so the goblin takes 5 points of damage. That’s all the goblin can take and the player falls.

Why Rules To Live By?

Live action roleplaying is on the rise. More and more companies are putting out live action versions of their tabletop roleplaying games. And that’s great... if you want to play a game in their universe.

Most other LARP systems are genre dependent. That means that if you want to play, say, a game of gothic horror and then want to play a space opera game, you have to learn two different systems.

RTLB is “all purpose.” It has been used to run horror, medieval fantasy, historical, gothic punk, science fiction, and eclecticLARPs and can be used easily for any genre. We even include ideas for making your own rules to work with RTLB to keep the flavor of your world within the game.

RTLB has been extensively play-tested. Years of work have gone into this product. We have done our best to provide you with an easy to learn, streamlined, flexible system for use in any LARP. It is, we believe, the best conflict resolution system available on the market for live action roleplaying games.

What is RULES TO LIVE BY?

Rules To Live By (RTLB) is a genre-independent simulated combat system. It contains a number of STATS and Abilities that allow the creation of any character for a LARP. GMs can use RTLB to quickly add a system into a LARP in development to streamline producing the LARP.

This second edition of Rules To Live By contains streamlined rules for minimal intrusion into play. It also includes tips for GMs and players alike to help them minimize the amount of time they look through the rules and maximize the time spent roleplaying. And while RTLB can be occasionally complex before the game starts, all you need to be able to do during runtime is be able to add a couple of single digit numbers and then compare the result to another number.

That’s because nearly all the mechanics of Rules To Live By are based on the following challenge:

STAT + Skill + Die Roll vs. Target Number + Die Roll

That is the basic challenge used in RTLB. Once you've learned that, you've learned the system.

Rules To Live By has a simple philosophy: all systems and sub systems are based on the same challenge mechanic and all challenges are streamlined so they intrude as little on the game. The purpose of LARP is to interact; RTLB is there to assist with interactions, not to interfere with or replace them.

Info: Why Dice?

Many LARPer's have an immediate visceral reaction to dice. They cannot see how a LARP can work with dice. But let me assure you that the authors of RTLB have seen LARPs with nearly every mechanics possible*, and settled on dice as one of the best methods for randomization for results. Here are our answers to most of the objections.

Dice are slow and intrusive. Dice are no more intrusive than any other method of simulated combat. And they are faster than most of them. Try timing rolling a die vs. playing a game of rock/paper/scissors.

You have to carry a die around with you. Yes you do, but most LARPs also make you carry around a character sheet, your stats, and bunches of cards. A die simply doesn't take up that much room. Furthermore, we've found that players usually don't have to carry dice as long as the GMs do.

I can't see players sitting around rolling dice in a LARP. Actually neither can we. We recommend building a dice shaker and then standing in position and roleplaying your actions. A dice shaker is highly portable, easy to build and easy to use. See below on how to make one.

I'm sorry, I just don't like dice. That's ok. We understand. Some people just don't want dice in their LARPs. For you, we have an alternate system that uses finger flings (like rock-paper-scissors, but simpler).

Player Tip: How to make your own Dice Shaker

You can build your own dice shaker for less than a dollar.

You'll need two small dice of different colors and access to the gumball machines in a normal supermarket. See the callout box on page ## to figure out what types of dice work best with Rules To Live By.

Buy one of the large toys from the gumball machines. These usually cost 50¢, but if you shop around, you can find them for 25¢.

Discard the toy, but keep the plastic bubble it comes in. Place the dice in the plastic bubble and you have a handy place for holding your dice, a flat surface (the bubble lid) for rolling, and little chance that you'll lose your dice.

* I've played in LARPs that have used drawing random marbles from a bag, wagering colored popsicle sticks, comparing numbers on a chart, flipping bunches of coins, rock/paper/scissors, and many others.

Safety

Rules to Live By is designed to be safe. There is no reason to get hurt while playing this game. A participant should never have to actually run, climb, or jump over anything, even if her character does. Participants should never have to hit or grapple with anyone.

Participants should never, ever use real weapons, even as props. They should be extremely cautious about using anything that looks like a real weapon - police get nervous. RTLB simulates physical activities with dice and description, which is not only safer, but lets anyone play an athletic character, even if they have no real athletic ability.

REQUIRED ITEMS

There really are no completely required materials for RTLB. The list below contains suggestions. Alternatives are suggested later in this book, for those who do not like to have dice or badges in their games. Nonetheless, the following items are important to have, and should be considered part of each player's "kit" for the game:

- 1) A name badge for each character.
- 2) Copies of the character sheet in the back of this book for all characters.
- 3) Cards to represent items in the game. GMs can certainly use props for their games; in fact, it is recommended. But if there is a limited budget, index cards will do.
- 4) Stick-on Stars, like the teacher used to put on kids' foreheads in elementary school. These are stuck to the nametag to simulate damage. Basic RTLB uses three different colors of Stars: Red, Yellow, and Blue, but some of the expanded systems also use Green. A good deal of Red Stars will probably be needed.
- 5) Dice. At the very least, each GM should have one or two dice, preferably in a shaker. For best results, each player should also carry two dice of different colors, as the players will be rolling one die for two different totals at the same time when they make a challenge.

Rules to Live By Player's Guide

The Meat of Rules To Live By

Before you can build a character in Rules To Live By, you should learn what characters can do. Each character has a number of Statistics (STATs) and a number of Abilities. There is a detailed Ability list a bit later on. Each Ability relates to a STAT. When a character wants to do something, the player must perform a challenge. It is done as follows:

Base STAT + Ability Level + one die

vs.

Target Number + one die.

Note that the sum of the STAT + Ability Level is called an *Ability Rating*. Ability Ratings can be calculated before the game starts, so that the challenges can run faster during runtime.

The target number is decided based on the Ability. It could be an opponent's STAT or a set number (such as the difficulty in picking a lock). If the player's total is higher than the target, the player succeeds. If the target total is higher, the player fails. That's it. All resolutions are done essentially the same way.

Info: What If There's a Tie?

There is a special case for when the die rolls produce a tie. If the totals after the die rolls are the same, then the winner is the one who had the lower ability rating *before* the die roll. There is a mnemonic for this: *Ties go to the wiener*.

For example, John decides to shoot Marsha. He has a DEX of 5 and a Ranged Weapon of 3 for an Ability Rating of 8. The target number is Marsha's DEX, which is 6.

John rolls a 2 and Marsha rolls a 4. They are tied ($8 + 2 = 6 + 4$), but Marsha's total (her DEX) was lower before the roll, so Marsha wins the challenge and John misses.

This works no matter what the Target Number happens to be. If it is, say, a static 5, the player will miss on ties if his Ability Rating is 6 or more.

If the Ability Rating and Target Number were the same *before* the die roll and the rolls are the same (a true tie), then roll again. This is the only circumstance in rules to Live by where a reroll is allowed for a challenge.

STATISTICS

Statistics (STATs) describe a character's innate capabilities – how strong, smart, quick and willful the character is. Characters have four base statistics:

- **Strength** (STR) is a measure of the character's base strength. Feats of strength, such as lifting a heavy object or breaking down a door, are based on this STAT. STR also helps determine how much damage the character can take before falling unconscious.
- **Dexterity** (DEX) is a measure of the character's speed and coordination. Abilities based on Dexterity include shooting a gun and picking a lock.
- **Intelligence** (IQ) is the character's brainpower. Mental Abilities, such as research and languages are based on this STAT.
- **Willpower** (WILL) determines the character's true grit. This is more of a defensive STAT, used in determining the character's ability to avoid being seduced or fast-talked. WILL also has a hand in how much damage a character can take before falling unconscious.

Some GMs may decide to add additional STATs as well; these STATs are called "Advanced STATs." The core RTL rules have one Advanced STAT as well. It is called "Hit Points" and is the sum of your character's Strength and Willpower. Other Advanced STATs are discussed in the sections on plug-ins in this book.

Basic STAT levels can range from 1 (pitiful) to 6 (human best). Some Advanced STATs can have a different range. Hit Points, for example, range from 2 to 12.

ABILITIES

Abilities are the meat of RTL. There are many different abilities that allow characters to do things. You do not have to memorize all the Abilities to play in a LARP that uses RTL. You don't even have to memorize all of *your* Abilities. The best thing to do is carry a reference sheet that lists what your Abilities are, what they do, and how good you are at them. Then you can refer to the sheet when you wish to use an Ability. It is a good idea to at least have a general idea what your character can do during a LARP.

Most Abilities have *Levels* which are added to STATs when players want to perform a challenge. For example, someone with the “Ranged Weapon” Ability can add his Level of Ability to his DEX when trying to shoot someone with a pistol.

There are four basic types of Abilities:

- **Skills** are the workhorses of RTLB. Whenever a player tries to do something active in RTLB, such as fighting or researching or seducing, she uses a Skill.
- **Resources** are used to help make up the character’s background and determine his or her place in the world. Wealth and Contacts are example Resources.
- **Handicaps** are the opposite of Skills and Resources. They subtract from a STAT for a particular action. Handicaps give your character more depth by which to roleplay, and give roleplaying opportunities. They also give you more points on which to build your character.
- **Aptitudes** are like Skills, except they are innate things that come naturally to a character and are not things that could be taught. Tough and Acute Sense of Smell are Aptitudes.

Abilities’ levels range from 1 (pitiful) to 6 (human best). The sum of an Ability Level and a STAT is called an *Ability Rating*, and that can be no higher than 12 for a human character. For example, a character with a DEX of 4 and a Ranged Weapon Ability of 2 has a Ranged Weapon Ability Rating of 6.

A very coordinated person (a DEX of 6) with a little Ranged Weapon Skill (Level 1) would still be an excellent shot (Ability Rating of 7). An extremely clumsy person (DEX of 2) with a lot of Ranged Weapon Skill (level 5) is just as good (Ability Rating of 7).

However, not *all* Abilities have Levels that are added to STATs. Sometimes, the level of the Ability is the number of times that Ability can be used. For example, the Ability: Luck allows a player to get a +2 to a challenge, but she can only use it as many times as she has levels.

Target numbers were mentioned before. For most Abilities, that is one of the STATs of an opponent. Using the example of Ranged Weapon, the target number is the target’s DEX. For other abilities, the target number is a value called the *item complexity*. Lockpicking, for example, uses the item complexity of the lock to determine the target number. Finally, some abilities just have a set target number.

Regardless, do not forget that when you make a challenge, you *always* roll one die and add it to the target number of the challenge. So even if your challenge is listed as DEX + First Aid vs. 5, that is *still really* DEX + First Aid + a die roll vs. 5 + a die roll.

Ability Rating	Description
1-	Unusable
2	No Real Ability
3-4	Hobbyist
5	Amateur
6	Journeyman
7	Professional
8	Master
9-10	Expert
11-12	Leader in the field.
13+	Superhuman

(callout chart)

Types of Challenges

There are three main types of challenges:

- **Player vs. Player** – This is when one player’s character wishes to do something to another character. These challenges may be actions such as combat, lying, healing, and so forth. The target number is almost always one of the defending player’s STATS. Sometimes the target may be able to use a defending Ability as well, such as Dodge.
- **Player vs. Item** – These challenges occur when the player’s character wants to affect a static item, for example picking a lock or repairing a broken machine. A GM usually plays the role of the item, although sometimes it will have the target number printed on it. Items have a complexity number used as the target number that the player must beat. This may be marked on the item or determined on the spot by the GM. Perform the challenge against the GM, or if no GM is available, another player can play the role of the item, or a single player can play both roles if she has two dice.
- **Player vs. GM** – Some things simply require GMs. For example, making a roll to research information in a book. A GM will assist you in these Challenges.

Self-Adjudicated Challenges

It is possible in RTLB for players to adjudicate challenges when the GM is not around. For example, you may want to pick a lock or attack another character. In general, you should check *before the game starts* to see if the GM will allow player adjudicated challenges. Some LARPs have *Player Assistants* who know the rules and are allowed to adjudicate challenges when the GMs are otherwise occupied.

Hidden Challenges

Sometimes you may want to make a challenge without your target knowing. This could be a thing like pick pocketing, attempting to assassinate someone from across the room, and so forth. You can always ask a GM to make the challenge for you. The GM will approach the target and make the challenge without giving the information away. That way, your target doesn’t know who did it out of game. Of course, if you trust the target player to keep out of game knowledge out of game, then you can make the challenge yourself.

Items and Bonuses

Some items may add to challenges. For example, a player might have a laser scope on his sniper rifle to add +2 to Ranged Weapon when using it. There is a list of common items and their effects later in this book, as well as tips for making your own items.

Likewise certain abilities, situations, and handicaps give bonuses to challenges. *In Rules To Live By, the maximum amount of bonuses you can get toward a challenge is 6, even if the sum of the bonuses would be higher.* This means that the absolute maximum a human being can have before the die roll is 18: 6 for the STAT + 6 for the Ability + 6 for the bonus.

There is no lower limit for bonuses. If someone has a handicap that gives them -4 to a roll, and then she also has -2 from damages, and then she becomes cursed giving her another -1, then she is at -7 for the challenge.

Example: A SAMPLE CHALLENGE

Martha’s character wants to hypnotize John’s character.

1. First, Martha announces his intentions. “I’m going to hypnotize you, John.” This requires a RTL challenge, so they both get out their STATs and have them ready.
2. They check their STATs and relevant Abilities and bonuses. They can total up their numbers at the same time. Martha’s STAT sheet has a description of the Hypnotize skill. Hypnotize uses IQ. Martha’s IQ is 4 and has a Hypnotize skill of 1, for an Ability Rating of 5 (this can be added pre-game). She also has the Wand of Mesmer, which gives a bonus of 1. Martha’s total is 6.
3. The description of Hypnotize says that the target number is the defender’s WILL. John has a WILL of 5, but has a Handicap which subtracts 1 from his WILL on all attempts to control his mind, so his total is 4.
4. Now they roll the dice. They can both roll at the same time. Martha rolled a 3 for a total of 9. John rolled a 4 for a total of 8. The challenge succeeds and John is hypnotized!
5. Had Martha and John tied, John would have won as his 4 is less than Martha’s 6. Ties go to the person with the lower number before rolling the dice. *Ties go to the wiener.*

Undefended Challenges

What if someone uses an Ability on you and you do not want to resist?

Sometimes a player will *want* to be the target of an ability. For example, John may actually want to be hypnotized by Martha.

In this situation, use a target number of 0, but this can only be done for Abilities where there is a player target. Abilities that have a set target number are *always* resisted.

Note that some Abilities say that they must be resisted. Then use the Ability as normal, regardless.

Unskilled Abilities

Can you attempt a challenge even if you don’t have the Ability?

The default answer is “no,” with a few exceptions. A character without surgery would have difficulty stitching up a wounded colleague, but anyone can pick up a stick and try to wallop someone even if they don’t have the “Close Weapons” Ability. Abilities that can be used, even if the player doesn’t have them are assumed to default to 0, so use the base STAT with these Abilities.

Abilities with defaults are listed in the skill descriptions, and on the character sheet at the end of this book. As always, a GM may override these and say that the use of an Ability is so widespread in the game world that it has a default.

The following Abilities default to STATs: Library Use, Dodge, Close Weapons, Ranged Weapons, Thrown Weapons, and Unarmed Combat.

Building A Character

Before you even start creating the Stats and Abilities for your character, you should have a good concept of what you want to do during the game. Think of your character’s background. What was life like growing up? Where did you go to school? What are things like in the game world? What are your character’s hopes and fears, his ambitions and pitfalls?

Also talk to your GM during the character creation process. Find out what are the useful skills and abilities would be for the game. Also, what sort of LARP is it? If the majority of game time will be spent in negotiations, creating a combat monster with little intelligence and resources means that you

won't be called upon to use your skills for the majority of the game. And do make sure that your character fits in with the game; your GM will be essential for this. Find out from the GM what kind of world the LARP is set in. The GM may restrict the Abilities you can choose based on the type of world, to prevent laser pistols, for example, from showing up in his Three Musketeers game.

Once you have your character history fleshed out, you can start creating the character. RTLB advocates the building of balanced characters. That is, we feel that your character should be good at a number of things, not min/maxed to be "the best" in a certain area.

Character building does involve a bit of math, much more than runtime. You may want to have a calculator handy when building your character.

Player Tips: Character History

Your character's history is the most important part of your character. It defines who your character is, what your character has done, what your character knows, and what your character wants to accomplish.

If you are coming into a new campaign, try to find out what you can about the world and players. Play a pregenerated character at first to get a feel for the world. One excellent suggestion is to have at least one hook for your character. There are three basic hooks:

Plot Hook – Your character is essential to the plot of the current game episode or your character's history is relevant to the central plot of the game. Discuss this with the GMs before jumping in with a central character.

Character Hook – Your character has some sort of mystery to solve, or has a particular goal that you must accomplish. Character hooks can also be loose ends in your background, perhaps a long lost relative, or a friend who is an important NPC.

Group Hook – Your character is part of a group. This can either be an already established group in the world, or it could be a group you form with friends (with GM approval, of course). Either way, you'll be able to deal with "group politics" should the game get slow.

Talk with other players before building your character. Find out what "niche" you can fill. It's bad when you find out halfway into a science fiction game that no one can pilot the ship! In the same way, if everyone chose to be a pilot, the game could get pretty boring. Characters should complement each other.

Make sure that your history makes sense within the game world. Imagine the embarrassment of joining a medieval fantasy game as Buck Jones, Space Ranger.

Character Points

RTLB uses two pools of Character Points to build a character. The STAT pool is used to buy base and advanced STATs. You usually have 60 points in your STAT pool; however, you can buy Handicaps to gain more points.

You buy Abilities using the points in the Ability pool. You get 70 points in your Ability pool; however, you may also use unspent STAT points as well. That is, STAT points flow into the Ability pool, but it is a one way flow. You may not move points from your Ability pool into your STAT pool.

Your GM may adjust these numbers upwards to create more super heroic characters or downward to create weaker character, but those are special cases. Check with the GM to be sure.

STAT Level	Point Cost	
------------	------------	--

1	3	Below Average
2	9	Human Average
3	18	Above Average
4	30	Excellent
5	45	Extraordinary
6	63	Human Best

(another callout box)

STATs

Characters have four STATs: Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Intelligence (IQ), and Willpower (WILL).

These range from 1-6 with average human being 2. Each level of the STAT costs a certain amount of character points. For example, an average Intelligence of 2 costs 9 points.

That means that an average character (2's across the board) will eat up 36 points from your STAT pool. You can use the other 24 to add to your STATs or buy Abilities. If you need more points, you can take Handicaps.

There is a pattern to the STAT costs. Each STAT level costs the sum of all of the levels up to and including it, then multiplied by 3. So a STAT at level 6 costs $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6) * 3$, or, $21 * 3$, or 63. Again a calculator may come in handy.

Handicaps

Handicaps are things that affect your character in a negative way. The most common way a Handicap can affect your character is to subtract from die rolls in challenges. Because a Handicap subtracts from a character's ability to do things, the player gains character points for handicaps instead of spending them. All points gained from Handicaps are added to your STAT pool, and unspent STAT points go into your Ability pool, so the points gained from Handicaps trickle down as well.

It is suggested that players not be allowed to gain more than 10 points total from all Handicaps and that they not be allowed more than 3 Handicaps, but it is all at the GM's discretion.

Abilities

Abilities are purchased using points from the Ability pool. This is 70 points for a typical starting character. Rules to Live By comes with a fairly comprehensive list of Abilities, but you will want to check with your GM as some may not be allowed in the game. For example, "Computer Programming" would not be an appropriate ability to have for a game set in the Middle Ages.

Abilities have costs, just like STATs, but there are *five* different cost types of Abilities: very easy, easy, hard, very hard, and cost. Note that these cost types are just mnemonics for the levels. Really, the cost of the Ability is based on how relevant and useful the Ability is. The more relevant and useful, the more the Ability is likely to cost.

GM Tips: Changing The Cost of An Ability

As a GM, you may wish to vary the costs for Abilities in your game depending on the setting. For example, you might have a far-future setting where it's assumed nearly everyone can program a computer. In that case, you might decide to lower the cost of "Computer Programming" to Easy or Very

Easy. It's entirely in your hands, but make sure you let the players know of any changes when the build characters.

The following rules governing buying Abilities also govern Handicaps, although remember that instead of paying points for Handicaps, you gain the points and add them to your STAT pool.

Like STATS, Abilities and Handicaps can only go up to Level 6.

Some Abilities have a blank after them, such as "Aversion to: _____." The blank is filled in when the Ability is chosen. Many of these Abilities have their cost listed as "Varies." That means that the cost of the Ability is determined by the GM when the blank for the Ability is specified.

Some Abilities have a base cost without having a cost type. These Abilities do not have levels; you either have them or you don't.

Info: Ability Cost Types

Ability Level	Very Easy	Easy	Hard	Very Hard
1	1	1	2	3
2	2	3	6	9
3	3	6	12	18
4	4	10	20	30
5	5	15	30	45
6	6	21	42	63

(chart is part of callout)

The pattern for Abilities is similar to the one for STATS. Easy Abilities cost as much as the sum of each level up to and include the one you buy it at. So an easy Ability at level 6 costs (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6) or 21. Hard Abilities cost twice as much as Easy ones. Very Hard Abilities cost three times as much. This means that STATS cost as much as Very Hard Abilities. Why? Because STATS are the most useful and relevant part of the RTL system.

Step by Step Breakdown of an Ability

Here is a breakdown of the Ability: Close Weapons

❶ CLOSE WEAPONS

❷ *Thal fingered his dagger and eyed his opponent. Soon it would be time to strike!*

❸ **Category:** *Martial*

❹ **Cost Type:** *Easy*

❺ **Effect:** You can use all close combat weapons (knives, clubs, etc.) using your Ability Rating instead of the default. Note that this does not include rapiers, foils, and other fencing swords, which are handled by the FENCING Skill.

❻ **Chance of Success**

STR + Ability Level	vs.	Opponent's Dodge
---------------------	-----	------------------

❼ **Time to use:** 1 Combat Round

❽ **# of Uses:** Unlimited

❾ **Other Constraints:** You get +2 to your challenge if you attack from behind. This Skill automatically defaults to your STR.

❶ **Title:** This is the name of the Ability (in this case, “Close Weapons.”) Some Abilities have a blank line in the title, such as, “Repair: _____.” This means it must be specified what the Ability is used upon, such as “Repair Cars.” This happens at character creation.

❷ **Flavor Text:** Has no real game effect, but can give an idea of the kinds of characters that might use this ability.

❸ **Category:** These describe how the Ability is used. Categories are often important in determining how one character’s Ability will affect another’s. Also, there are some Abilities that affect an entire category of Abilities. For example, Charisma gives a bonus to all abilities in Category: *Influence*. There is a list of all Abilities sorted by category on page XX. There are six categories:³

1. ***Influence*** Abilities allow you to force some other player do something his character may not want to do. Mind Control would be Category: Influence. So would Intimidate and Seduce.
2. ***Information*** Abilities deal with knowledge. Truth Sense, Logic, Research and Lie are all Category: Information.
3. ***Item Manipulation*** Abilities deal with the things all around us. Repair and Pickpocket are both examples of Category: Item Manipulation.
4. ***Martial*** Abilities are used during combat. Examples of Category: Martial are Ranged Weapon and Dodge.
5. ***Medical*** Abilities allow you to heal, and also deal with sickness. Both Surgery and Allergies fall into the Medical category.
6. ***Miscellaneous*** abilities are ones that doesn’t easily fit in to one of the other categories.

❹ **Cost Type:** How expensive the Ability is to buy with character points. Abilities have five cost types: very easy, easy, hard, very hard, and cost. Some Abilities have a cost type of *Varies*. This means the GM will decide on the cost type of the Ability, based on how valuable the GM thinks it will be in his or her game. For example: “Area of Knowledge: _____,” could be any level depending on what it is the character knows.

❺ **Effect:** This describes what the Ability does. Regardless of the game mechanics effects, you should *always* roleplay your Abilities.

❻ **Chance of Success:** Abilities are usually challenged (an *Ability Rating* verses a *target number*.) This area of the ability description tells how to calculate the Ability Rating and target number. In the Close Weapons example, the Ability Rating is Strength plus the Ability level. Use this Ability Rating verses the opponent’s Dodge. Some Abilities have a 100% chance of success, and some use set numbers for target numbers rather than calculating a value. If there is a 100% chance of success and no dice are rolled, “Chance of Success” will not appear in the description.

❼ **Time to Use:** How long it takes to use the Ability. Some Abilities are instantaneous and take effectively no time. Many take one or more combat rounds, and some take much longer (perhaps 30 minutes or more). If a player uses an Ability, she must wait this amount of time, using no other Abilities, before making the challenge. The player can still talk to people, but may not use any other Ability until she is done. If the player is interrupted, for example by a combat, she should note where

³ Some Abilities will have the word “Defend” at the end of the Category. Those Abilities are used as a defense against other Abilities and are added to the Target Number of the other player’s Ability in a challenge.

she left off and resume the clock after the interruption has finished. During combat, Abilities that have the duration “1 combat round”, may be used every round. If they say “2 combat rounds”, the player must skip a round in between uses, etc.

⊕ **# OF USES:** Most Abilities can be used as often as the player likes. Some, however, are limited to a certain number of uses per Game Period (Game Periods are explained later in the book). The Luck Ability, for example, has one use per game period for every level. At the end of a game period, the player gets a new set of uses. If he didn’t use all his uses last game period, he cannot “carry them over” into the next.

⊕ **Other Constraints:** Additional rules and clarifications concerning this Ability.

Handicaps

ABSENTMINDED

A look of horror crept up my face as I slowly realized I had forgotten that key piece of information.

Category: Information Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You forget things. For each level of Absentminded, a GM can refuse to answer a Yes/No question from a Skill. That question still counts as one of your uses for that Skill.

Time to Use: Instantaneous # of Uses: 1 per level per game period.

Other Constraints: You may not take this at a higher level than the total number of yes/no questions derived from Skills that you get each game period. You *must* let the GM know you have this Handicap and how many levels you have left whenever you ask a Yes/No question.

ACHILLES’ HEEL: _____

The dark fey paused, the cold iron cross keeping them at bay.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you are hit with a weapon made of this substance, you take your level in additional Stars of damage of the type the weapon does.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The additional damage is not affected by armor or other Abilities.

ADDICTION TO: _____

John looked at the clock. It had only been an hour, but already his hands had started shaking. He reached for the vial...

Category: Medical Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are physically addicted to some drug (alcohol, cocaine, etc.) and without regular doses you become weakened and ill. At the start of each game period, take a Blue Star of damage for each level of your addiction. When you take a dose of your drug you may remove a star of addiction, otherwise the stars of addiction do not go away.

Time to use: 1 Game Period # of Uses: Unlimited

ALLERGIC TO: _____

I tried to get the vase for you, but the room was so musty that I couldn’t stop sneezing.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Easy or Hard

Effect: You take a Blue Star of allergy damage for every level of your allergy if you come into contact with your allergen. If the allergen is one that is inhaled (pet dander, cocaine), then it is enough that you are in the same room with your allergen. The Blue Stars last for fifteen minutes after you are no longer in contact with your allergen.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Do not attempt to use this Handicap as a cheap “Detect _____.” A good GM who discovers that should either start giving you extra Stars of damage, making them last longer, or simply disallowing using this Handicap in that way. If the character knows what he is allergic to, then the cost type for this Handicap is Easy. However, the GM may choose to make the allergen secret. The cost type for this Allergy is now Hard. The Allergen chosen for this Handicap **must** be one that the character will reasonably come into contact with during the course of the game.

AVERSION TO: _____

The spider stood there, blocking his path. Arthur blanched and took a step forward, and then collapsed in a heap, sobbing.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You fear something (or things). When you are in sight of these things, you gain your level of Aversion + 1 in Blue Stars of Terror. If you contact the thing in question, you gain double your Level in Blue Stars (including the ones already gained from being in sight of it). If this lowers your Hit Points to 0 or below, then you swoon, passing out for at least five minutes. (There is no reason to “come to” if it will just make you faint as soon as you open your eyes, unless you enjoy the comedic effect.)

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The Blue Stars from Aversion go away one every minute after leaving sight of the object of your Aversion. The Aversion chosen for this Handicap **must** be one that the character will reasonably come into contact with during the course of the game.

GM Tips: Make A List

For Abilities with a blank, such as Addictions, Allergens, Aversions, Compulsions, Moral Codes and the like, make a list of potential targets before the game, and allow players to choose them from your list. It will make things easier all around.

COMBAT PARALYSIS

The stranger stuck the gun in his face! Arlo froze.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You “freeze up” in combat situations. For each level of Combat Paralysis, you may do nothing except stand there and defend for one round at the start of every combat. (So if you had 2 levels, you must stand still and defend for the first 2 rounds of every combat in which you participate).

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

COMPULSION TOWARD: _____

The cookies seemed to be calling her name. “I must be strong,” she thought.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are hopelessly drawn to an activity (gambling, drinking, snacking, carousing, etc.). At the start of each game session, take a Blue Star of Desire for each level of your compulsion (you are so overcome by your compulsion that you cannot concentrate on anything else). You may remove a Blue Star for every fifteen minutes you spend performing that activity. You may also remove a Blue Star at the start of subsequent game periods, instead of removing a Red or Yellow damage star.

Time to use: One Game Session # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Note that some compulsions require other people. For example, you cannot play solitaire for fifteen minutes and call it “gambling.”

GM Tips: How long is fifteen minutes?

Fifteen Minutes? Fifteen minutes is a large percentage of a four hour game and a relatively short part of a game that lasts three days. The durations specified in Abilities presume that your LARP lasts for a weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. However, GMs whose LARP runs for less time should consider shortening the durations of Abilities so the players have more time to interact freely with others.

DARK SECRET: _____

“Nobody must know,” though Officer Malone desperately, “nobody must know.”

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You have a dark secret hidden in your past. If your secret is discovered, it will cause you embarrassment and loss of social esteem (possibly reflected in your wealth or it might get you arrested). It might even get you killed. The GM should see to it that at least some evidence exists within the game.

Level 1 – Your secret would prove slightly embarrassing, or embarrassing and painful but only to a select group of people. Maybe you pulled a practical joke on a friend, or you claim to keep Kosher but have eaten pork. Most people would understand, or not care, but those who do care might care deeply.

Level 2 – Your secret would prove painful and embarrassing (Your parents were not married; your father was a drunkard). People would laugh, and you might lose respect, but there would be few grave repercussions.

Level 3 – Your secret would result in some losses, or serious anger. Perhaps you defrauded your brother of his inheritance, or used a trick to steal someone’s beau.

Level 4 – Your secret would result in your complete disgrace or would cause you legal trouble. Perhaps you are known as a war hero, when in fact you turned and fled like a coward, later taking credit for the deeds of someone who was slain, or perhaps you were involved in a bank robbery some years ago, and still have an outstanding warrant.

Level 5 – Your secret would result in the loss of all your property and wealth, and might result in your imprisonment. Perhaps you are a wanted criminal charged with a major robbery for which you could receive 40 years imprisonment.

Level 6 – Your secret would result in your death, or certain exile. You killed a man in cold blood, or perhaps you are a traitor to your government.

Time to use: N/A # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This is an extremely powerful Handicap, with the potential to give you a lot of points. If you take it at levels 4-6, you may be setting up a situation that could leave your character unplayable. Do not take this Handicap if you are not prepared for that possibility.

GM Tips: Dark Secrets, the GM's friend.

Dark Secrets are a very powerful force in a live action roleplaying setting. They give the GM insight into what parts of the character's history the player finds especially important, and they produce hooks upon which plot can be written that takes advantage of a character's background.

As a GM, you owe it to your players to go through their Handicaps and make notes of their Dark Secrets and introduce them into the game.

And as a player, you should expect your Dark Secret to be revealed at some point in the LARP. Do not fear this out of character. Even if things turn out poorly for your character due to the revelation, you will have an excellent chance of drama and good roleplaying opportunities during the game, and you'll have stories to tell afterwards.

DELUSIONAL: _____

No you don't understand. If I don't close that window right now, the ghosts will get out.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You believe something that just isn't true. This is considered part of your beliefs for the purpose of Influence Abilities.

Level 1 – Your delusion, while important to you, does not really affect the way you interact with the world. You may be occasionally eccentric, but - for the most part - you seem completely normal. Example: The letter X is a telepathic consonant.

Level 2 – Your delusion is noticeable to most people, but you still can function in society... usually. Example: It is bad luck to walk into a room without knocking on the doorframe.

Level 3 – Your delusion not only affects you and your current life, it also directly relates to a specific situation you find yourself in frequently. It is often difficult for you to function in normal society. Example: My boss is an agent for a secret society.

Level 4 – Your delusion comes into play in almost every area of your life. You find it nearly impossible to function in normal society. Example: There are aliens somewhere in this very city, and they are reading my thoughts.

Level 5 – Your delusion makes it impossible to function in normal society. Your delusion is applicable to every situation and often makes you opposed to the actions of those around you. Example: I must steal the souls of twenty-four random people in order to save the earth.

Level 6 – Your delusion makes you dangerous to be around. You are a direct threat to yourself and those around you. Example: I must feast on the brains of the living to gain their power.

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: It is always possible that your delusion is true within the context of the game. However, it must be something that seems to be false to the casual observer when you take the delusion. Your delusion and level must be approved by the GMs. If you fail to roleplay your delusion, the GM may temporarily take control of your character, forcing you to have an unpleasant psychotic episode.

Note that taking this Handicap at levels 4-6 sets your character up to be unplayable, possibly very quickly into the game. Do not take this Handicap unless you are prepared for that possibility.

GULLIBILITY

I think the Queen is under the middle card.

Category: Influence Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are easily influenced. For each level of Gullibility, subtract 1 from your WILL when defending against any kind of Influence challenge (Category: Influence).

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

ILLITERATE

Joey squinted at the writing on the page. He tried to sound out a few words then gave up.

Category: Information Cost Type: Cost, 7 Character Points

Effect: You can neither read nor write. You may not use any Abilities involving reading (Library Use, written Language, Computer Science, etc). You may not read anything in game, nor write anything down. Your Library Use Ability Rating defaults to 0, and you may not spend points to raise it. Abilities that use Library Use are added to a base of 0.

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If this Handicap is bought off, then your Library Use Ability Rating automatically defaults to your IQ.

LARGE

I glanced at the trees and the people towering over them. That couldn't be right.

Category: Martial, Defend Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You are much larger than a typical character. You are (your level + 1) times larger than a normal character. For each level of Large, subtract one from your Dodge in combat. During combat, you may take a step that is proportional to your size. For example, if you have a Large of 2, you are 3 times the size of a normal character, subtract 2 from your Dodge, and take a step 3 times the normal size in combat.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may not take this Handicap and the Tiny Ability. If this Ability makes you much larger than typical for your character type – an ant the size of a dog for example – then you are also a supernatural creature.

LIGHTWEIGHT

“And then he passed out after only one glass of sherry. How gauche.”

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You gain an extra Damage Star per level from any alcohol, drug, potion, poison, or venom that causes damage. The additional Star is the same color as the Stars the source normally does.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Level

Other Constraints: The extra Stars remain for as long as the ones gained from the source. If you normally gain no stars from the source, then you do not gain any through Lightweight.

LIMP

He tried to escape, but the bandits quickly caught up.

Category: Martial/Medical Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You cannot run or evade as a combat action. During combat, you take one less step when moving and cannot take a step if you perform a combat action.

Time to use: 1 round of combat/use.

of Uses: For as many rounds of combat as you have levels in Limp. You must use up all of your “Limp” rounds before you can take normal rounds of combat.

LOW PAIN THRESHOLD

Earl curled up on the ground weeping. Beth just looked down her nose, remarking, “It’s only a paper cut.”

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For the purposes of determining unconsciousness, your Hit Points are lowered by 1 for each level of Low Pain Threshold.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

MONSTER MAGNET

Joe considered himself a “very big game hunter,” but the monsters thought of him as fair game as well.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For some reason, supernatural creatures and animals prefer you to other prey.

Level 1 – When in combat, supernatural creatures and animals will choose to attack you in a fight unless there is a clearer threat or better target. Supernatural creatures and animals will not behave differently when not in a combat situation.

Level 2 – When in combat, supernatural creatures and animals will choose to attack you in a fight before they attack an equally dangerous target. Said creatures will be somewhat suspicious of you, and may interpret sudden movements as an attack.

Level 3 – When in combat, supernatural creatures and animals will choose to attack you first, as long as you are in range. Said creatures will be very suspicious of you and will interpret anything other than obvious surrender or retreat as an attack.

Level 4 – Supernatural creatures and animals will immediately attack you on sight and will choose to attack you first, as long as you are in range.

Level 5 – Supernatural creatures and animals will immediately attack you on sight and will choose to attack you first, as long as you are in range. If you are not in range, the creatures will attempt to get in range, fighting through others to get to you.

Level 6 – Supernatural creatures and animals will seek you out and immediately attack you. They will choose to attack you first, as long as you are in range. If you are not in range, the creatures will attempt to get in range, fighting through others to get to you.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This Ability only affects Non Player Character (NPC) creatures. Player controlled supernatural creatures and animals start with an immediate dislike and distrust for you, but retain free will. It is suggested that characters with Monster Magnet wear a prominent badge or ribbon marking them as such. See the Plug-In for Supernatural Creatures much later in this book for more information.

MORAL CODE: _____

Brother Mark was raised by the Church. They had been very kind to him and it was the only life he had ever known. He would never betray the Church. Ever.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are beholden to some code of duties and ethics. For example, a policeman could have a Moral Code to “Uphold the Law” or a pacifist might have a Moral Code to not attack someone. You may choose violate your Moral Code any time you wish, without a WILL Check. However, when you do, you gain your level of Blue Stars of Remorse which last for the rest of the game session. If this would give you enough Stars to knock you unconscious, you collapse at a dramatically appropriate moment after breaking your Moral Code, and awake five minutes later, losing just enough Blue Stars to allow yourself to regain consciousness.

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The GMs must approve your Moral Code and its level. If your game session is part of a campaign and you break your Moral Code, you lose one level of this Handicap and must spend the next between games period paying off the XP as if you bought off a level of this Handicap.

OVERCONFIDENT

“It seems so easy,” Marshall thought, “what could possibly go wrong?”

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You must wear a badge that says “I am overconfident.” Opponents (or GMs) may cause you to completely fail a challenge.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per level of handicap per game period.

Other Constraints: Once you have “used up” all your uses of this handicap, remove your badge until the start of the next game period.

GM Tips: Badges? We Don’t Need...

Some games use name badges or descriptive badges to signify in-gam information to other players. Badges are an intrusion into the game, a visible sign that says, “we are just pretending here.” Not all games use badges, but some do.

Why use badges? Well, they provide an easy way to signal information to other players. For example, the badge might have a description of the character to signal how to treat her. Sometimes a badge might be used for a simple description, such as “I am very wet,” or “I smell bad.” Sometimes the badge might have the character’s name on it for easy recognition and as a way to remember who is who.

Some games use badges to convey game mechanics information. For example, RTL B uses Unlucky and Overconfident badges. The game mechanics for those two Handicaps require a visible signal. Other

players need to know when they can give potential opponents -2 to a challenge or make them fail outright.

For GMs who feel uncomfortable allowing badges in their games, we suggest scarves and handkerchiefs. A red scarf/handkerchief could mean Unlucky and a yellow one means Overconfident. Use green for Monster Magnet.

The important thing is that the information is conveyed, and you do not have to drop suspension of disbelief to do so.

PAWS/CRIPPLED

Fluffy tried to wield the sword, but it kept clattering to the floor.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Cost, 8 character points

Effect: Your hands are paws or are deformed or damaged. You cannot wield weapons or use tools. You may not use any Ability that requires weapons, or tools. Your Close Weapons and Ranged Weapons Ability Ratings default to 0, and you may not spend points to raise them. You may still carry objects, but you cannot use them in a meaningful way.

Time To Use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If this Handicap is bought off, then your Ability Ratings automatically defaults back to normal.

POVERTY

Trenton grew up on the streets of Paris. He has never lived a life outside the gutter.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of Poverty, you start with 25% less money than average for your game. Additionally, if your character earns a salary, you receive 25% less per level.

Time to use: N/A # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You cannot take this handicap and the Wealth Ability.

Level	% Starting Money
1	75%
2	56%
3	42%
4	32%
5	24%
6	18%

RESPONSIBILITIES

I'm sorry. I'm just too busy.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You are busy. You get your level fewer Between Game Actions (BGAs) per Between Game Period.

Time to Use: Between Game Number of Uses: Your level per potential BGA.

Other Constraints: You may take this Handicap and any Resources that give you extra actions. They may cancel each other out. This Handicap may only be used in campaign LARPs that have Between Game Actions.

SLOW REFLEXES

By the time I saw it coming, it was already too late.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You are not as good at deciding what to do in critical situations. Subtract your level in Slow Reflexes from your WILL for purposes of determining order during rounds in combat.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: You cannot take this handicap and the Quick Reflexes Aptitude.

UNLUCKY

Cordelia is the sort of person... Well, black cats avoid her crossing their paths.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You must wear a badge that says “I am unlucky.” Opponents (or GMs) may add or subtract 2 from any challenge against you, as long as it makes it worse for you. (That is, add 2 to your opponent or subtract 2 to your Ability Rating).

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per level of handicap per game period.

Other Constraints: Once you have “used up” all your uses of this handicap, remove your badge until the start of the next game period. You may use several uses of Unlucky in the same challenge. Unlucky must be declared before any dice are rolled.

Resources

ALTERNATE IDENTITY

Samuel ducked around a corner and removed his fake beard.

Category: Information Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You have another distinct identity which will be treated in game as a different character with his or her own contacts, friends, and plots. When creating your character and spending XP, you must specify which Resources belong to which identity.

Time to Use: Unlimited Number of Uses: 1 Identity Per Level

Other Constraints: You may have as many alternate identities as you have levels in this Resource. Abilities which see through disguises or give information about characters secrets may affect either identity. You cannot change from one identity to another in the presence of others. Anyone who sees you change identities then knows that both identities are the same character. It is presumed that you have documentation for all of your identities in case people try to research your past.

GM Tips: Alternate Identity

Be careful when allowing Alternate Identities in your game. It is very much like allowing one player to play multiple characters, and can cause you headaches when writing plots. Also, clever players will

notice that both identities are being played by the same player and that the two identities are never in the room at the same time. They then have out of game information that they will want to use in-game, and that can be tough to police. It is imperative that if you allow Alternate Identities in game, you specify a method that players can break them, even if that method is, "Alternate Identities cannot be broken ever." See the GM section for more ideas on disguises, impersonations, and alternate identities.

BLACKMAIL MATERIAL

Joan smiled. The countess would never trouble her again...

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You have sources of blackmail material. Before each game session, you will learn one random Dark Secret per level of Blackmail Material. It is possible that you will get the same dark secret more than once.

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: One draw per level

Other Constraints: Knowledge is not the same as proof. However, you now have a leg up on getting proof.

CONTACT: _____

I went to the street. The shoeshine boy always knew the lowdown.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You have an information source. Just ask the GM any questions you would like to ask your source. Your source may not be available: see constraints. You may attempt to contact your source as many times as you like, but each attempt per game period adds one to the target number. Each time you may ask as many questions as you like, although the GM is free to be stingy with information.

Chance of Success

5 + Ability Level VS See Constraints

Time to use: Variable (ask GM)

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The information you get will be restricted to what your source would know and what the source would tell you (GM decision). And you must have a way of contacting your source within the game. (For example, if you do not have access to a telephone, you cannot access your source).

Common Difficulty Levels. These may be different if your contact works strange hours.

ITEM SOURCE: _____

Randolph has a friend downtown. He can get things. Randolph doesn't know how or from where and doesn't ask questions.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You have a place from which you can get items (it could be your employer, laboratory, parent's house, etc.). Just ask a GM

Chance of Success

5 + Ability Level VS Varies

Time to use: Variable # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The GM will decide if your source would logically have the item and would give it to you. Also, the GM will determine how long it takes to get items. It is perfectly reasonable for your item source to demand goods, services, or money in exchange for the item.

Player Tips: Contacts vs. Item Sources

What's the difference between a contact and an item source? A contact will give you information and an item source will give you objects, specifically rare or difficult to obtain objects. Sure, you might be able to get a gun or knife from a contact, but only an item source can provide you with that plasma cannon you've been wanting for so long. In general, though, if you wish to have a contact who can also provide an item, buy both Resources and call them the same person.

SPARE TIME

Paul flipped through his day timer and stared at the empty pages.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You have free time and may perform extra Between Game Actions (BGAs). You get one extra BGA slot per level of this Ability.

Time to Use: Between Games Number of Uses: 1 Slot per Level

Other Constraints: You may take this Resource and any Handicaps that take away BGA slots. They may cancel each other out. This Handicap may only be used in campaign LARPs that have Between Game Actions.

STASH SITE: _____

Hee hee hee! They'll never ever ever find it here!

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You have an out-of-game place to put items that cannot easily be searched or looted easily by anyone in the game. A player can only search/loot a stash site if they have the "Search Virtual Location" ability (see same).

Time to use: Variable # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The GM will determine how long it takes to retrieve an item from your Stash Site, or put something in it. The ability to hide items from a game is very powerful. It is within the GM's right to restrict access to a stash site if it is being abused.

WEALTH

Percival was born with a silver gravy ladle in his mouth.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of ability, you start with 50% more than the average amount of starting money. This applies every time starting money is given out.

Time to use: N/A # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You cannot take both this Resource and the Poverty Handicap.

Level	% Starting Money
-------	------------------

1	150%
2	225%
3	338%
4	506%
5	760%
6	1140%

Skills

ADMINISTRATION

Bill knew the ins and outs of the Tax Bureau - who to talk to in order to get what he wanted.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You have knowledge about the workings of a bureaucracy. For each level of this ability, you may ask one administration related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing research related to the workings of organizations, or GM required rolls to run or manipulate bureaucracies.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: Your questions can only be about organizations you belong to, or can easily get information about. You cannot, for example, ask a question about the inner workings of an enemy spy organization without some sort of reference material. If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question that question does not count.

ALIEN LANGUAGE: _____

Penelope often enjoyed singing and dancing with the faeries in her garden.

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can read and speak an unearthly, magical or otherwise non-human language. This includes the languages of aliens, esoteric languages (such as Enochian), and the languages of animals (such as wolves, or birds).

Time to Use: Varies Number of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: In general, this skill should be very rare among normal humans in a realistic game. You are considered proficient at a language when you reach level 4. You may take this Ability even if you have the Illiterate Handicap in which case it is up to the GM to determine if you can read and write the alien language or if you can only speak it.

ANCIENT LANGUAGE: _____

Hm. This seems to be written in a strange dialect of Assyrian. Give me some time and I believe I can translate this.

Category: Information Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You can speak and read an ancient language. This is especially useful for pouring through old books, spell manuals, etc. This language must not be in common usage in the game (in a modern game, Latin and Aztec would qualify).

Time to Use: Varies Number of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Languages are not challenged, nor do they add to your Library Use. You are considered proficient at a language when you reach level 4. You may take this Ability even if you have the Illiterate Handicap in which case it is up to the GM to determine if you can read and write the ancient language or if you can only speak it.

Player Tips: Speaking In Tongues

Occasionally it becomes necessary for a group of characters to speak in a language that the players do not know. It can be difficult to signify this to casual observers and deliberate eavesdroppers.

Some LARPs use a visual signal to indicate, “we are speaking a foreign language.” One common signal is pointing to the mouth while talking.

Other LARPs use a verbal signal by having the person say the name of the language before and after speaking. For example, “Seneca. We need to figure out who is stealing all our corn. Seneca.”

Regardless, if you believe you have a persistent eavesdropper, you can always say, “out of game: we are speaking German, and you probably cannot understand us.”

ANTHROPOLOGY

Lady Cloverwood was always interested in primitive cultures.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this Ability, you may ask one anthropology related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing anthropological research in books/articles.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question does not count.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Hey! Look over here! I think there’s something buried underneath these rotted floorboards. Hand me a shovel.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you may ask one archaeology related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use to examine relics.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question does not count.

AREA OF KNOWLEDGE: _____

John has been studying horticulture for ten years and is considered one of the leading experts in the country.

Category: Information Cost Type: Varies

Effect: For each level of this ability, you may ask one yes/no question in your given knowledge area per game period. Also adds Library Use rolls when researching something in your area. Also can be added to your IQ for challenges to identify something related to your area (like a rock for a geologist)

Chance of Success

Library Use or IQ + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question does not count.

GM Tips: Providing Information

Information Abilities can sometimes be the most frustrating and time consuming ones you will have to deal with. You need to finely balance giving enough information to enlighten the player while not giving so much away that you derail the plot. Also, some players will see information resources as a way to circumvent roleplaying and interacting with other players. You want your players talking to each other, not coming up to you with questions.

It is perfectly fine to give players out of game results such as, “that information is in the hands of other players. Ask around and you might find something out. Perhaps the clergy knows something...” Note that last sentence. You have given the player information and direction, and the player has a reason to talk to other players. Often that will be enough.

It is also acceptable to say, “I’m sorry, if I answer that, then I am short circuiting the other player’s game. While you have asked a good, valid question, I cannot answer it at this time. Your question does not count toward the number asked.” A good player will understand and will even glean from that information that they are on the right track.

Likewise, it is fine to say, “That information is not really relevant to the game. Your question does not count toward the number asked.” While making up details on the fly can be fun and diverting, adding too many red herrings to your game will confuse your player base and make it impossible for them to tell what information is useful and what isn’t.

Finally, to keep from being overwhelmed, set up a contacts box, where players can write down and submit their questions and you can answer them in your spare time. This will keep the game running smoothly.

Player Tip: Do Your Research

Playing a character who is an expert in a certain area? Read up on your area of knowledge before the game. Even if you aren't an expert in real life, if you know enough to "talk the talk," you'll at least be able to better roleplay your character. And if you get the chance, bring a reference book with you. You'll be able to use it to add verisimilitude to your character and to look up things you don't already know out of character.

ARTISAN/CRAFTSMAN: _____

Duncan's sketches were known far and wide.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You are skilled in some art or craft not covered by any other ability, such as carpentry, sculpting, or painting. To use this skill, tell a GM what you are going to attempt to create. The GM will assess the time required and your target number.

Chance of Success

DEX + Ability Level VS Craft Complexity

Time to use: Variable (ask GM)

of Uses: 1 per level per game session

ASSASSIN

Gregor hid in the shadows, poised to strike when the moment was right.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You have a chance of being able to attack someone without having to declare combat. If you succeed in this roll, you can attack without declaring combat. If you fail, you must declare combat immediately against your target.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's IQ + Alertness

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: 1 per game period

Other Constraints: To use this Skill, first tell a GM what you plan to do. The GM will tell you to move to the position where you would make the attack from. Then the GM will make the ability challenge and announce to people what they have observed. You are free to sneak out while this is happening. However, to continue the attack you must declare combat.

AUTOPSY

Martin looked down at the body, announcing, "He was killed by a right handed man, about six feet tall. I'll need a lab to get you any more information."

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: When you examine a body, you may ask yes/no questions about how the deceased was killed. The player of the victim or GM must answer truthfully.

Time to use: 15 minutes

of Uses: One question per ability level per body.

Other Constraints: This skill requires you to examine the body in a private area away from crowds. If you are in an actual medical facility, you may ask 2 additional questions. If the GM or victim doesn't know the answer to your question, it still counts as one question asked.

BIOLOGY

Dr. Entson has been teaching at Johns Hopkins University for over ten years.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you may ask one biology-related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing biological research - either laboratory style experiments or searches of literature.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question that question does not count.

BOTANY

"Plants are a little like people, don't you think?"

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you may ask one botany-related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing botanical research, either plant examinations or searches of botanical literature.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question that question does not count.

BUSINESS

"Listen. I've been running this operation for five years now. I know what I'm doing."

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you can ask one business or financial related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing business or financial research.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question does not count.

CHEMISTRY

The fluid in the beaker started bubbling and smoking. “Step back,” Jackie warned.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you can ask one chemistry-related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing chemistry research - either laboratory style experiments or searches of chemistry literature.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question does not count. Chemistry research requires appropriate chemicals and equipment.

Player Tips: Props and Abilities

If you know ahead of time that you will be playing a character whose abilities require certain props, or it looks like you would be able to create items during game, plan ahead by bringing those props with you. For example, if you are a chemist, bring some beakers and flasks, and food coloring to use with water to represent chemicals.

CLOSE WEAPONS

Thal fingered his dagger and eyed his opponent. Soon it would be time to strike!

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can use all close combat weapons (knives, clubs, etc.) using your Ability Rating instead of the default. Note that this does not include rapiers, foils, and other fencing swords, which are handled by the FENCING Skill.

Chance of Success

STR + Ability Level VS Opponent’s Dodge

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You get +2 to your challenge if you attack from behind. This Skill automatically defaults to your STR.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Sarah broke into her first mainframe when she was only eleven.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: On a successful challenge, you can break through computer security or manipulate programs. Also allows you to ask one computer-related yes/no question of the GM each game period.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Program Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If you fail you may try again, but each retry adds 1 to the Program Complexity. If the GM answers “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question does not count.

CONCEAL IN VIRTUAL LOCATION

Laura knew all of the twists and turns and secrets of the old family home.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are good at concealing things in virtual locations. If that location is looted, you can keep one item per level of skill from being looted (the GM won’t even tell the looter that those items are there).

If the looter has the Search Virtual Location skill, the GM will use your Conceal Skill as the defense. If the search succeeds, all items are found. If it fails, the concealed items remain hidden and cannot be looted.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: 1 item per level of skill.

Other Constraints: Items must be marked as concealed and given to the GMs ahead of time.

Info: What is a Virtual Location?

Sometimes game space is not the same as real space. Perhaps you are trying to represent all of London in a hotel, or want a friend’s basement to represent cyberspace.

Virtual Locations are places that exist in the game, but not in the real world. Conceal in Virtual Location and Search Virtual Location allow players to affect those places.

If you don’t like the concept of Virtual Locations, then by all means don’t use them. The skills are there for LARPs that need them and can be ignored by LARPs that don’t.

In the past, we’ve represented virtual locations with paper grocery bags and/or envelopes and had players put their items and props in the envelopes and bags. We have run games that had no virtual locations and the relevant skills weren’t allowed. Use your best judgment.

Items stored in a virtual location are automatically found by people searching that location. Any player can attempt to *hide* things in a virtual location. If someone tries to search one, they cannot find hidden items unless they have the “Search Virtual Location” skill. If a player decides to loot a virtual location, the player should get the items in a random order, one every 3 minutes or so. Unless an ability is used which negates this, of course.

CRYPTOGRAPHY

John could break most ciphers just by looking at them.

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can break codes. After examining an encoded document for at least five minutes, you may ask one yes/no question about the code per level of Ability. This Skill may also be used to encode messages.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 5 minutes Number of Uses: 1 Question per level of Ability

Other Constraints: If the GM answers, “I don’t know,” the question still counts.

CURRENT EVENTS

Mark reads the paper front to back, every day.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: When current events — real or made up by the GMs — are placed in the LARP, you may ask the GMs about their significance and how they relate to the events in the game. You may do this once per level per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing current event research in periodicals and the like.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: Note that your questions do not have to be yes/no questions.

DEFUSE BOMB

Agent Franklin looked Charlie in the eye, “We’ve evacuated the building. This one’s yours.”

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can deactivate bombs.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Bomb Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If you fail a challenge, make an immediate second challenge using the same target number. Success on this second challenge means the bomb is still armed, but didn’t blow up in your face. Failure means it did. Oops. If the bomb didn’t explode add +2 to the target number.

DEMOLITIONS

Boom.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can create bombs.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Bomb Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If you fail, make an immediate second challenge at the same difficulty. Success on this second challenge means the bomb was not created, but didn’t blow up in your face. Failure means it did. Oops. If the bomb didn’t explode, you have to start over to build the bomb.

DETECT: _____

Agent Zero looked the man straight in the eye. Within seconds, he knew the man’s homeworld, political stance, and preference for autogyro.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are an expert on the characteristic listed (could be nationality, race, job, dynasty etc). On a successful challenge, your target has to tell you if that he or she has that characteristic. This can also work on detecting types of objects, such as art forgeries.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's IQ

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: 1 question per level per game period

Other Constraints: This can only be attempted once on a given target per game period, even if you fail.

GM Tips: Badge Codes

If your LARP uses badges, you can put them to good use by placing encoded information for people with the Detect Skill or similar Abilities, like reading auras. The simplest way to encode information is to give that information a codeword or number (for example 3 might mean the person is someone else in disguise) and then give the decoder key to the players with the relevant Abilities. You can place the code on the front of the badge for ease of use, or on the back of the badge if you want the code to remain hidden.

DETECT INFORMATION

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can tell things about people just by talking to them. After every five minutes of conversation, you may make a challenge. If successful, you may ask one of the questions from the approved list. This question must be answered truthfully by the player. Your target does not know you are doing this.

Challenge: IQ + Ability Level vs. Your Opponent's IQ + Inscrutable

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 question per level per person per game session.

Other Constraints: Even if the challenge fails, it counts as one of your uses.

Approved Questions:

1. Have you been to [specific country] in the past year?
2. Have you been to [specific place in the city in which the game is set] in the past week?
3. Were you raised by [specific nationality]?
4. Is your job [specific job]?
5. Are you skilled (have level 2 or above) in [specific Skill]?
6. Are you very skilled (have level 4 or above) in [specific Skill]?
7. Are you older than [some number of years]?
8. Have you ever suffered from [a specific disease or injury]?
9. Have you ever served in [a particular branch of the military]?

The target must answer truthfully one of "Yes", "No", or "I don't know." Any answer counts as one use of this Ability. Your GM may restrict or add questions to the list.

DISGUISE

She was a woman of so many faces she sometimes forgot which one was hers.

Category: Information Defend Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may disguise yourself as a non-specific member of a group, class, or organization, such as a criminal, police officer, priest, or noble. You may not use this ability to disguise yourself as another character in game or as a famous person. You may add your level of Disguise to your IQ for defense against See Through Disguise challenges. You don't tell other players that you have this Skill; you just declare your IQ to be equal to your IQ plus your skill in Disguise.

Time to use: See Constraints # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: It takes at least 5 minutes of uninterrupted privacy to change into or out of a disguise. If someone encounters you during this time, they have stumbled onto your disguise. Use this as a defense only when attempting a general disguise, not when impersonating or using an alternate identity.

GM Tips: Disguises

It is very difficult for a player to pull off a successful disguise in a LARP. Because the LARP has so few players compared to the real world, and because it is difficult to do a professional quality disguise, and because disguises are dramatically interesting, many players will immediately presume out of game that someone playing more than one character is actually playing one character in disguise as a different character. Be aware that disguises will tend to be broken fairly quickly and plan accordingly.

Also, if you have disguises, alternate identities, or any other reason that a player might seem to be playing more than one character, you may wish to strongly consider having name badges so players can tell the characters apart.

DODGE

There was a blur and then Vivienne was several steps to her right.

Category: Martial Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can defend against close combat or ranged weapon attacks using your Skill as a bonus. Dodge may be used whenever you would normally use DEX to avoid taking damage.

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This skill defaults to your DEX.

ELECTRONICS

Yeah, I can fix this. Give me two, three hours tops.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may repair electrical items. You may also create new items, but your Ability Rating will be at a -3.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Item Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited to repair, 1 item built/level/game period

Other Constraints: May require specific parts/tools.

ESCAPE ARTIST

They checked his bonds less than an hour later, but he was long gone.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can escape from personal restraints (ropes, handcuffs, and the like).

Chance of Success

DEX + Ability Level VS Restraint Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This can only be used on personal restraints (ropes, handcuffs, etc.) Does not apply to picking the lock on the cell door. If you fail you may try again, but add +1 to the Restraint Complexity

GM Tips: Locking People Up

In general, the purpose of playing in a LARP is to interact. Characters who are imprisoned in some way are usually unable to interact and that frustrates the vast majority of players. In general, there are two tactics that seem to work best. Your LARP could use one or both of these tactics.

- Allow the player to switch characters. Some LARPs have minor characters just for that purpose. Some LARPs create generic “friend of” characters that can go around letting others know the player’s main character is imprisoned and can also forward the main player’s plots. Some LARPs allow imprisoned characters to communicate with the outside world by having the player play a messenger or communicate via telephone. If the character will be imprisoned for the rest of the game, it might be time for the player to just pick up an entirely new character to play.
- Reduce the time it takes to imprison someone. This could mean that the imprisonment might last only fifteen minutes, or that there will be a trial with some non-imprisonment punishment happening soon after the person is imprisoned. Some LARPs simply state that any character restrained or imprisoned automatically escapes after a certain amount of time. If you choose to do this, use the alternate rules for Escape Artist below.

ESCAPE ARTIST (Alternate)

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: When imprisoned, the amount of time before you are allowed an automatic escape is shortened by five minutes for every level of this Skill.

Time to Use: Five minutes per level Number of Uses: Your level per game period.

FAST TALK

“Look, it couldn’t have been me you saw with your wife last night. I was out helping my... mother. Yeah, I was helping my mother.”

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: On a successful roll, you can make someone believe something that is not patently ridiculous or contrary to their beliefs. The effect only lasts for one die roll’s worth of minutes (rolled for secretly by the target). After the effect ends, the target is fully aware that he’s been bamboozled.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent’s WILL + Stoic

Time to use: 1 Minute # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Target gets a +1 to defend against all future fast talk attempts by you for the rest of the game period (cumulative). This is if the Fast Talk succeeds or fails.

GM Tips: Influence

RTLB contains a number of skills, such as Seduce and Orate, which can allow a player to temporarily control one or more characters character.

There are those who feel that such skills are unnecessary, and that players should roleplay instead of using those abilities. We at RTLB HQ approve of roleplaying *all* abilities, but we also want to give people an even playing field. Just as not all of us are mathematical geniuses or black belt karate champions, not all of us can seduce or lie convincingly.

The Influence Abilities give characters the ability to do things the player might not be able to. And, as with all RTLB Abilities, if you don't like them, don't use them in your games.

Also be aware: sometimes players will try to use Influence abilities as a form of mind control. They should *never* be allowed to make a player do something uncomfortable. Influence abilities are touchy and you should probably have an out of character chat with any player you feel is abusing his or her Abilities.

FENCING

Have at you!

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can use all fencing weapons (rapiers, foils, and so forth).

Chance of Success

DEX + Ability Level VS Opponent's Dodge

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You get +2 to your challenge if you attack from behind.

FINE ARTS

Lady Florence had attended the ballet since she was three, and had learned Italian just to better enjoy the Opera.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you can ask one fine arts (music, drama, art, etc.) related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when examining objects of art or performing research in fine arts texts.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research and 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question that question does not count.

FIRST AID

“Hang in there! I’m here to help.”

Category: Medical Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may remove your level of Yellow Stars from a character.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Sum of Target’s Stars

Time to use: 5 minutes # of Uses: Once per character per combat

Other Constraints: You cannot use this skill on someone who has taken double their HP in Stars. That person is irretrievably dead. A person can only successfully receive first aid once per each combat or damaging event. If you fail, you or someone else may try again after a full 5 minutes have passed. *Any First Aid attempt on a character will keep that character from bleeding to death, even if the die roll was a failure. However, if the roll fails, the person doing First Aid, must remain with the character, actively roleplaying the First Aid until the character is stabilized and no longer bleeding to death.*

FORENSICS

Inspector Breckle surveyed the scene. Two people had been fighting here, most likely with knives. The victor ran to the east, but where was the body?

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you are at a crime scene you may ask yes/no questions of GMs or dead victims which must be answered truthfully. You may also get a general forensics report from the GMs. This report will be the same for all characters with Forensics.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: One question per ability level per crime scene.

Other Constraints: If the answer is “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question still counts.

GAMBLE/GAMING: _____

“Cut the cards,” he said with a smile, “good... luck.”

Category: Miscellaneous/Defend Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You know how to gamble or play a specific game or sport. You get a bonus for all gambling challenges. You may also use this as a bonus against challenges involving cheating at gambling, or gambling itself. You don’t need to tell other players that you have the skill for defense; you just declare your IQ to be equal to your IQ plus your skill in Gamble.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent’s IQ + Gamble/Gaming Ability Level

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Player Tip: Shall we play a game?

If your character likes to play a certain game, bring a copy of that game with you. Regardless, a deck of cards always gives you something to do in character if you’re bored, and can often bring others to the table giving you a chance to interact in character while playing.

HAGGLE

“Have I got a deal for you!”

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: When you are conducting a financial transaction (buying, selling, renting, etc.) with someone, make this challenge after you have agreed on a price. If you succeed, you may raise or lower that price by 20%, and your opponent must conduct the sale at that price. If you fail, your opponent can raise or lower the price by 10%. If you or he does not have enough money, you may still cancel the sale.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent’s IQ + Haggle + Stoic

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Your level per game period

Other Constraints: Only one haggling challenge can be made per sale. If someone else initiates a Haggling challenge, you may still use your Haggle to defend, and it does not count as one of your uses. Your opponent knows after the transaction that they agreed to pay a bit more, or sell for a bit less than the transaction would normally be worth.

HISTORY

Not many people knew the true nature of this old Boston Church. Bishop Cathcart was one of those people.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: When historical elements – real or made up by the GMs – are placed in the LARP, you may ask the GMs about their significance and how they relate to the events in the game. You may do this once per level per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing historical research.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: Note that your questions do not have to be yes/no questions.

HOLD OUT

“Did you search her?” “Twice.” “Did you find it?” “No.”

Category: Item Manipulation, Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are good at concealing things. If you are looted or pickpocketed, you can keep one item, pistol size or smaller, from being taken (don’t tell the looter you have it).

If you are challenged with the Pat Down skills, declare your IQ to be your IQ plus your Hold Out Skill. You don’t have to tell the challenger you have the Skill. If the Pat Down fails, treat it as a normal looting, otherwise they have found your hidden item.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The one item you conceal can’t be an item you have used in the last 5 minutes.

HYPNOTIZE

“You are getting sleepy, very sleepy.”

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may do one of: (1) Allow a character to recover a lost memory, (2) Allow a character to ignore a compulsion or aversion for the rest of the game period, or (3) Ask the character a question which must be answered truthfully. You may attempt more than one of these per hypnosis session, but each one is a separate die roll.

Chance of Success (1) or (2)

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic

OR (3)

WILL + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic + 3

Time to use: 10 Minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If your target is unwilling to be Hypnotized, you are at -3 to Skill.

IMPERSONATE: _____

*But did you expect to see **two** Queen Victorias?*

Category: Miscellaneous, Defend Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may impersonate one specific player character or famous person. You may do this for as many hours per game session as you have levels in this skill.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: See Constraints Number of Uses: Your level in hours per game session

Other Constraints: You may not have this Skill at a higher level than your level in Disguise. You may add your level to your IQ for defense against See Through Disguise challenges. You don't tell other players that you have the Skill; you just declare your IQ to be equal to your IQ plus your Skill Level. It takes at least 5 minutes of uninterrupted privacy to change into or out of a disguise. If someone encounters you during this time, they have stumbled onto your disguise. Use this as your defense only when impersonating, not when in a general disguise or as an alternate identity.

INTERROGATE

Dunross squinted across the table at his adversary. Learning her secret would be a true battle of wits.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may trick or persuade another character to answer a question truthfully if interrogating in a formal setting (meaning your opponent is isolated and restrained or imprisoned). .

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per question asked.

Other Constraints: If you fail a challenge, you learn nothing and cannot ask that question again. Note that questions need not be yes/no.

INTIMIDATE

Ralph was always real big, real strong, and real mean.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: On a successful challenge, you can give another player a Blue Star of Fear which lasts for 15 minutes. You may use this with your STR or IQ.

Chance of Success

(STR or IQ) + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic + Fearless

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Once per character per game period

LANGUAGE: _____

"Let me through! I speak Urdu!"

Category: Information Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You can speak, read, and write a modern language. This is especially useful for poring through books, spell manuals, etc. This language must be in common usage in the game.

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Languages are not challenged, nor do they add to your Library Use. All characters are assumed to have their native language at Level 4. You are considered proficient at a language when you reach level 4.

LAW

Judge Pierce smiled, "yes, please explain again why you think you aren't guilty."

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You have knowledge about the workings of the legal system. Adds to Library Use when performing research related to the law. Also allows you to ask law-related yes/no questions of the GM each game period.

Challenge: Library Use + Ability Level vs. Research Complexity (GM determined)

Time to Use: Varies Number of Uses: 1 question/level per game period

Other Constraints: If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question that question does not count.

LIBRARY USE

"Let's see. According to the encyclopedia, The Orb of Olmstead is a harmless trinket. But the Book of Gnuoy says something quite different."

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You have a bonus in attempts to glean information from any media source (book, computer, archives, etc). You may also add your level in any Skills applicable to the subject you're researching (it will say in the Skill description if it affects Library Use).

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Information Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This defaults to your IQ. The maximum bonus you may derive from applicable Skills to add to Library Use is 6. This is the maximum allowed bonus for any challenge.

LIE

I am not Baron Theodore in disguise.

Category: Information, Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You add this bonus to your IQ to defend against Truth Sense challenges.

If you are challenged with the Truth Sense skill, declare your IQ to be your IQ plus your Lie Skill level. You don't have to tell the challenger you have this Skill.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Player Tips: Roleplay it!

The time will come when you want to fast talk or seduce someone or you have to lie to cover your tracks.

Don't just walk up to your target and say, "I fast talk you." Roleplay it. Fast Talk takes a whole minute to perform. Spend that minute actually talking to your target, trying to fast talk him.

Likewise, if you are building a device or mixing chemicals don't just stand or sit around waiting for your time to roll the dice. Get some water and cups and mix those chemicals. If props aren't available, mime mixing the chemicals. If you can't actually build the device, spend some time sketching it.

Use your abilities as a way to enhance roleplaying, not as a substitution. Keep in character. Interact. Remember, you can always talk to people when using your abilities, unless you are in combat of course.

LOGIC/DEDUCTION

"Give me a second to think about this and I'll have an idea of what's going on here."

Category: Information Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You can ask a yes/no questions of the GM on *any* topic.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: 1 question/level/game period

Other Constraints: If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question, that question does not count. This is a very powerful ability, and you might want to talk with the GM ahead of time to find out if there are any limitations.

MARTIAL ARTS ATTACK

Akiro eyed his opponent carefully. Every move would have to be timed with exacting perfection.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may attack someone using this ability instead of using Unarmed Combat. If you hit, you may choose to do **one** of the following as your combat effect, as long as your Skill Level is high enough.

- Level 1 or higher: You do 2 Yellow Stars of damage.
- Level 2 or higher: You may move your target 2 steps in a direction of your choice.
- Level 3 or higher: You do 1 Yellow and 1 Red star of damage.
- Level 4 or higher: You do 3 Yellow Stars of damage.
- Level 5 or higher: You may take an extra step in a round when you attack.

Chance of Success

STR + Ability Level VS Opponent's Dodge

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may not combine this with the Unarmed Combat Skill in a challenge. You may not use this ability with a weapon. You may use this ability with Power Hitter. Any other abilities that mention Unarmed Combat may also affect Martial Arts Attack. Let your GM be the judge.

MARTIAL ARTS DEFEND

Wanda had been studying Karate for several years so she could easily hold her own against the street trash.

Category: Martial Defend Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may use this to defend against Unarmed, Close Weapon, or Martial Arts Attacks. Add your level of Martial Arts Defend to your DEX for these attacks, instead of using your Dodge. If you successfully defend, you not only do not take damage, but you may also do one of the following:

- You do 1 Yellow Star of damage to your attacker.
- You may move your attacker up to 2 steps in any direction.
- You may take 1 step in any direction.
- Level 3 or higher: If grappling is allowed, you may automatically grapple your opponent.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You must have both hands free (not holding anything) to use this Ability. You may not simultaneously use this Ability and Dodge.

MATHEMATICS

"My grades are in. I got an 'A' in differential equations!"

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you can ask one mathematics-related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing mathematical research – either solving a mathematical problem or researching mathematics.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question that question does not count.

MECHANICS

After dropping out of the Talmudic Academy, Louie went to vocational tech school and learned how to fix cars.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may repair mechanical items. You may also create new items, but your Ability Rating will be at a -3.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Item Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited to repair, 1 item built/level/game period

Other Constraints: May require specific parts/tools.

NAVIGATION/CARTOGRAPHY

“Even though they are so far away, the stars can tell us exactly where we are! Isn’t that exciting?”

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you may ask one navigation/cartography-related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when examining maps.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Map Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question does not count.

OPERATE: _____

Nigel knew the old forklift inside and out.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You can operate some category of machinery, such as cars, airplanes, steam locomotives, nuclear reactors, etc. Depending on how the machine is operated, this can be based off of IQ or DEX.

Chance of Success

(IQ or DEX) + Ability Level VS Item Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Note that this only allows you to use the machine. It doesn’t give you any bonus on how to repair the machine or its background.

ORATE

“Friends, listen. Can I have your attention please?”

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can convince a group you are suggesting a good idea. Each member of the audience gets a separate defense. Your targets retain free will, but must act as if they think your suggestion is worthwhile. The suggestion cannot be ridiculous, suicidal, or contrary to the targets’ beliefs. The effect lasts until the end of the game period.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponents’ WILL + Stoic

Time to use: 15 minutes

of Uses: Once per game period

Other Constraints: Your audience must be listening to you of their own volition. They cannot be restrained in any way.

Player/GM Tips: Multiple Targets

Making an RTL challenge that involves many on one? Have the solitary person make one die roll and use that roll for all the challenges. For example, if a character is using the Orate Skill to make a speech, that character makes one roll for his Ability Rating, and then all of his targets make their own rolls at the same time as each other, for their defense against that number.

PARABIOLOGY

That is a Phantasm Incorporeous, known as a Pooka.

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You study the biology of supernatural creatures. For each level of this Ability, you can ask one yes/no question per game period about supernatural creatures. Adds to Library Use when performing Parabiological research, laboratory experiments or searches of literature.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

PAT DOWN

“Did you search him?” “Twice.” “Did you find it?” “Yes.”

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can quickly determine what a person is carrying. You may search a consenting (or restrained) character and determine his possessions (i.e. a police pat down).

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent’s IQ + Hold Out

Time to use: 5 Minutes

of Uses: Once per character per game period.

PERFORMER: _____

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You are skilled in some performing art not covered by any other ability, such as singing, dancing, or acting. To use this skill, tell a GM what you are going to attempt to do. The GM will assess the time required and your target number.

Challenge: IQ + Ability Level vs. Variable (see GM)

Time to Use: Variable (ask GM) Number of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This ability will allow you to perform well, but does not add to Orate, Disguise, or Impersonate.

PERSUADE

Johann knew he had only one choice. The Magistrate must listen to his pleas.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can convince another person that what you're suggesting is a good idea. Your target retains free will, but must act as if she thinks your suggestion is worthwhile. The suggestion cannot be ridiculous, suicidal, or contrary to the target's beliefs. The effect lasts until the end of the game period.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic

Time to use: 5 minutes

of Uses: Once per character per game period

PHARMACY

"I think five milligrams of acetobenzedrine should do the trick."

Category: Medical Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can ask one pharmacy-related yes/no question of a GM per level each game period. You can also identify drugs, and fabricate new ones.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Drug Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level; 1 drug created/level/game period

Other Constraints: If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question that question does not count. Creating drugs in game will require all the appropriate ingredients and equipment.

PHYSICIAN

Mark's father was a doctor as was his grandfather and his father before him.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may examine the victim of an illness, poison, or other chemical substance, and determine what – if anything – can be done to help him or her. You may set limbs, treat for hypothermia, and do other basic medical procedures. Also, you may heal your level of Red Stars of damage that are the result of damage taken from previous game periods.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Illness/Poison Complexity

OR To Heal:

IQ + Ability Level vs. Sum of Target's Green Stars

Time to use: 5 minutes

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: A character may only have one physician healing attempt (for stars from previous game periods) per game period. Otherwise, if you fail, you may try again in 30 minutes.

PHYSICS

The situation called for a slide rule. Luckily, Thaddeus always carried one.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you can ask one physics-related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing physics research - either laboratory style experiments or searches of physics literature.

Chance of Success

Library Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers “I don’t know,” to the yes/no question that question does not count. Some research may require appropriate equipment.

PICK LOCK

Kirk was an expert in getting into places he didn’t belong.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can open locks. These can be door locks, padlocks, combination locks, handcuffs, or any lock that uses a key.

Chance of Success

DEX + Ability Level VS Lock Complexity

Time to use: 5 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Without lockpicks, your skill is at a -2. If you fail, add 1 to the lock complexity for future challenges.

Player Tips: Unskilled Abilities

So, if I don’t have an Ability, can I still attempt the challenge anyway?

Unfortunately, the answer is “no,” with a few exceptions. Someone without the Pick Lock Skill would have difficulty picking a lock, for example, and you really wouldn’t want someone who wasn’t a trained surgeon operating on you, would you?

On the other hand, anyone can pick up a stick and try to wallop someone even if they don’t have the “Close Weapons” ability. Abilities that can be used, even if the player doesn’t have them are assumed to default to a Skill Level of 0, so their Ability Rating would be the base STAT used with these Abilities.

The following Abilities default to STATs: Library Use, Dodge, Close Weapons, Ranged Weapons, Thrown Weapons, and Unarmed Combat.

PICK POCKET

“Hey! Where’s my wallet?”

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: To pick a character's pocket, first you must touch or brush against the character. (Some LARPs may require that you stick a colored dot on your target as "proof.") You can either then challenge your target directly, or go through a GM.

If you win the challenge, you get one random item (not one that was in the target's hands). Your target will only notice the loss the next time she tries to use the item. If you fail, your target knows that someone was trying to pick her pocket, but doesn't know who, and you don't get an item.

Chance of Success

DEX + Ability Level VS Opponent's IQ + Alertness

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may go for a specific item, but you must know where on the player the item is, ahead of time. Subtract 2 from your Ability Rating if you are trying for a specific item. You may attempt to put a specific item onto your victim, as well. Subtract 1 from your Ability Rating if you are attempting a "putpocket."

PSYCHOANALYSIS

Dr. Brandon looked Emory Madding clear in the eye, "tell me about your mother."

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may allow someone to ignore an Aversion, Compulsion, or Delusion for the remainder of the game period.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic + Handicap Level

Time to use: 10 Minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may only attempt this once per character per game session, regardless of effect. You cannot use this on yourself. This must be actively defended.

QUICK DRAW

Bart carefully surveyed his opponent then said the fateful word. "Draw."

Category: Martial Cost Type: Cost: 2 Character Points

Effect: You may draw and use a weapon in the same combat round.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

RANGED WEAPONS

"Bring me my bow!"

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may use ranged weapons (guns, bows, etc., but not thrown weapons).

Chance of Success

DEX + Ability Level VS Opponent's Dodge

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If your target is at least 50% obscured by something that would stop your missile (including another person), you are at a -2 to hit. You get +2 if from behind. If you do not have levels in this Skill, your Ability Rating is equal to your DEX.

GM Tips: A Gun Is Not A Crossbow

Some of the RTLB abilities are pretty broad. In real life, being able to use a bow probably doesn't mean that you can shoot a machine gun with the same level of accuracy.

If you feel strongly that any of our abilities are too broad, feel free to break them down. There's no reason why your game can't have a Ranged Weapon: _____ Skill, to make it on a weapon by weapon basis.

REPAIR: _____

"I'll need a screwdriver, a hacksaw, and some bubblegum, but I can fix this."

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You can repair a particular category of item (could be computers, guns, engines, etc).

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Item Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This may require tools. See a GM. If you fail you may try again, but subtract 2 from your Ability Rating for that item. You must also have either Area of Knowledge, Mechanics, or Electronics, depending on the item (this is called the "base skill.") You cannot have Repair at a higher level than the appropriate base skill.

SEARCH VIRTUAL LOCATION

Marjorie had been in the old man's room for hours. She knew the scroll was somewhere. She just had to keep looking.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can determine what items are in a virtual location (not represented by a real room in the game). When you loot a virtual location, you get the items in the order you want.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS IQ of character who put the items in the location.

Time to use: 3 minutes/item # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You can only use this ability once per location per game period

SEDUCE

Delilah had known many men in her time.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you can get someone of the opposite sex alone, you may take one item (your choice), 1/2 of the money on their person, or ask him/her a yes/no question that he/she must answer truthfully. Your target cannot take revenge on you for this action later (you're sooo nice...) You may choose which of the three

results you want your seduction to have. Alternatively, you may have your partner perform a specific task for you. Both you and the player of your partner must agree to the task beforehand.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic + Faithful

Time to use: 15 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You can only attempt this once per character per game period.

SEE THROUGH DISGUISE

Martin peered curiously at Valerie, "Excuse me ma'am. Haven't we met before?"

Category: Information Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: If you have seen a character out of disguise (or a good picture of them), you can ask the player or a GM if they are that person in disguise. On a successful challenge, they must answer you truthfully.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's IQ + Inscrutable + (Disguise or Impersonate)

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Can only be attempted once on a given character per game period. Your target is not made aware by the challenge that she has been unmasked. This only works on characters using the Disguise or Impersonate Abilities, not on the Alternate Identity Resource.

GM Tips: More on Disguises

We've talked a bit about disguises, but one more important thing to keep in mind is that the ability to see through them can be game breaking. It might cause the disguised character to become unplayable. Be careful when allowing this Skill into your game.

SPEED READER

Five minutes later, Alice was halfway through the report.

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can perform Library Use faster than most people. For each level of this Skill, you perform Library Use and Research at the speed listed on the chart below.

Level	Speed
1	3/4 (75%)
2	2/3 (66%)
3	1/2 (50%)
4	1/3 (33%)
5,6	1/4 (25%)

Time To Use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

SPRINTING

Peter had been an Olympic hopeful... once.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may take one extra step during a combat round, (that is, take two steps when evading or attacking, or 3 when moving).

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Your ability level per combat.

Other Constraints: This one is often confused. You may not take more than one extra step per combat round. You may do this for as many rounds as you have levels in this ability.

SURGERY

“Don’t worry. I’ve done this hundreds of times.”

Category: Medical Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may heal a wounded character. After a successful surgery, you can remove your Ability Level of Red or Yellow Damage Stars from a patient. This may be done after or in place of First Aid.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Sum of Target’s Stars

Time to use: 10 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Once a person has been healed with this skill, they cannot be treated again until they take at least one more Red star of damage. If you fail, you may try again (or someone else may try) but only after 30 minutes have elapsed. Requires surgery equipment. If you have to improvise, the GM will assign a negative modifier to your rolls.

TACTICS

Wooster studied at West Point. They knew he’d go far.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may use your combat action to evaluate the situation and get information from the Combat Moderator which you can reveal to others in subsequent combat rounds.

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: Once per level per combat

Other Constraints: The amount and usefulness of the information will depend on your level and what information is available.

GM Tips: About Tactics

The use of Tactics requires that a GM be present for combats with possibly useful information about the opponents or the circumstances. Alternatively, the GM could prepare potential Tactics information ahead of time to give to combat moderators and NPCs. Still, if you don’t want to be tied to this degree of work, do not allow this skill.

THIRD DEGREE

Johan slapped Manning roughly across the face, “you have the information we need to know, and you will tell us one way or the other.”

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may force another character to answer a question truthfully if interrogating in a formal setting (meaning your opponent is isolated and restrained or imprisoned). Every use of this Ability gives either a Blue or Yellow Star of pain, your choice. Stars last until 10 minutes after the interrogation.

Chance of Success

STR + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per question asked.

Other Constraints: If you fail a challenge, you learn nothing and cannot ask that question again. This Skill may *not* be used in Combat.

THROWN WEAPONS

Thag picked up a rock and heaved it at the giant cat.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can throw things (daggers, axes, stones, grenades, and so forth) using your skill instead of the default. (+2 if from behind, -2 if target is obscured).

Chance of Success

STR + Ability Level VS Opponent's Dodge

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Improvised thrown weapons do 1 Yellow Star. This skill defaults to your STR.

TRUTH SENSE

Marta looked Kelly in the eye. "You're lying to me."

Category: Information Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You can tell if someone's lying to you. After asking a character a question, you can make a skill check to see if you can tell if she was lying.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's IQ + Inscrutable + Lie

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per level per game period. No more than once per character per game session.

Other Constraints: If you fail, you learn nothing.

GM Tips: The Whole Truth

Truth Sense may be the most powerful Ability we have in the game. It allows a player to have confirmed absolute knowledge of another character's motivations and statements. Be very careful when allowing your players to have this Skill.

UNARMED COMBAT

"Put up your dukes and fight like a man!"

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can use this skill to attack in unarmed hand to hand combat. (+2 if from behind) If you hit, you do 1 Yellow Star of damage.

Chance of Success

STR + Ability Level VS Opponent's Dodge

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You must be close enough to touch your opponent to attack. This skill defaults to your STR.

ZOOLOGY

When he was twenty, Jeremy Walker moved to Africa to study the local fauna in their native habitat.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For each level of this ability, you may ask one zoology-related yes/no question of the GM per game period. Also adds to Library Use when performing zoological research, either animal examinations or searches of zoological literature.

Chance of Success

Lib Use + Ability Level VS Research Complexity

Time to use: Varies

of Uses: Unlimited research & 1 question/level

Other Constraints: If the GM answers "I don't know," to the yes/no question that question does not count. Some research may require appropriate animals and equipment.

Player Tips: How Can I Remember All These Abilities?

Often, players new to Rules To Live By find the number of Abilities presented to be daunting. They feel they need to know how every Ability works in order to play effectively.

But you don't have to. All you really need to know are what Abilities your character has. If someone uses an Ability on you, they should explain to you how it works, and what your defense should be. And if neither of you know, that's what the GMs are for.

When you play your character, you should keep a reference sheet of your Abilities, their levels, their Ability Ratings, and their target numbers. If you have room, add the description. Keep this paper with you at all times during the game. Use it as a primary reference then use this book and the GMs as secondary references. If you want, you could disguise your reference sheet as an in-game document, like a journal or reference manual.

GM Tips: How Can I Help My Players?

In campaign games, players become very familiar with their characters, and tend to know how their Abilities work. For new characters, or for NPCs, there are three ways you can help:

GM Adjudication: The GM should carry around the rules. If a player wants to use an Ability, but can't remember the details, she can call for the GM to come help. This method works well in games with a good GM-to-player ratio.

Detailed character sheets: You can compile sheets for each character explaining the details for each of their abilities, and pass them out. Or you can photocopy the ability descriptions from this manual, cut out the ones for each character, and staple those ability descriptions into little booklets to give to the players. Please include our copyright notice – it's on the very first page – if you photocopy and distribute Ability booklets for your game.

Extra Manuals: Leave extra copies of your RTLB Manuals in the game space for player reference. Encourage players to share their manuals, or to buy them if they do not already own their own copies. Make sure you put your name in your manual, and use a book cover if you're afraid of the cover affecting the game ambience.

Aptitudes

ACUTE TASTE

Cassandra took a taste of the stew. "You're right; this is definitely off."

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you taste something, you can determine if there is any strange substance (such as a drug or poison) in it. This ability is used after the fact, when someone tells you that you have been poisoned, feel sick, etc. If this happens, let them know you have this skill. If your condition is due to something you consumed, make a check. If you succeed, then you didn't eat/drink the item after all.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Substance Detectability

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Unless you have an appropriate Area of Knowledge skill for the substance, you won't be able to identify it. You'll only know that there is something strange in the food/drink.

ALERTNESS

Flash's hand shot out and grabbed the man's wrist, "I suggest you remove your hand from my pocket."

Category: Miscellaneous Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If someone has tried to use a physical Skill or Aptitude on you without your knowledge (like Pick Pocketing or Assassin), you may add your Alertness level to your defense against that ability. If successful, you will know who did it, and can confront the person before they finish the task (if you wish). You don't have to tell other players that you have this Aptitude; you just declare your STAT to be equal to your STAT plus your level in Alertness.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If your IQ + Alertness is greater than or equal to four, then players do not get a +2 bonus when attacking you from behind. Damage stars do influence this.

GM Tips: Alertness

Be careful not to use Alertness as an active skill to determine if a character notices something, such as hearing a noise in the woods. It makes the Ability too powerful and subsumes other Abilities such as Detect. If someone needs to make a roll to see if they notice something, just have them roll IQ.

CHARISMA

Everyone loved Norman. And Norman used that to his advantage...

Category: Influence Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You may add your level of this Aptitude to any challenges you make using your own Skills of Category: Influence.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This can only affect Skills, not Handicaps, Resources, or Aptitudes. This may only be used when you make the challenge, not when you are defending against challenges made by others. Remember that the largest total bonus you may get to an Ability Rating is 6 regardless of the sum of the bonuses involved.

CLAWS/FANGS

Her claws ripped through my shirt.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Cost 3 or 5 Character Points

Effect: You may do Red Stars of damage in Unarmed Combat. At a cost of 5, your claws/fangs are retractable and are not noticeable when retracted.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may always choose to do Yellow Stars instead of Red. This Aptitude is intended for monsters and animals. Normal humans should not take this Aptitude.

Info: What's With the Monsters and Animals?

Rules to Live By is designed to be flexible enough to handle any genre of LARP. Some LARPs have monster and animal characters and we wanted to make sure that their Abilities were represented. In general, normal humans should not take Abilities meant for monsters and animals. See the Supernatural Abilities Plug-In for more information.

FAITHFUL

Her love for Norman could not be denied.

Category: Influence Defend Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You have a bonus to your WILL for resisting Seductions.

You add this bonus to your WILL for defense against Seduce challenges. You don't have to tell other players that you have this Aptitude; you just declare your WILL to be equal to your WILL plus your level in Faithful.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

FEARLESS

I entered the tomb slowly, my torch casting crazy shadows in the darkness.

Category: Influence Defend Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You have a bonus to your WILL for Intimidation challenges made against you. You add this bonus to your WILL for defense against Intimidation challenges. You don't have to tell other players that you have this Aptitude; you just declare your WILL to be equal to your WILL plus your level in Fearless.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

FIERCE

His fist struck me like a ton of bricks. I never expected this kind of fight.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: After your first successful close weapons or unarmed attack of a combat, you may give your opponent a Blue Star of Fear if you succeed in the check. This star lasts until the end of the combat.

Chance of Success

STR + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Once per combat

Other Constraints: You can only attempt this once per opponent per combat.

FORCEFUL PUNCH

Marshall struck first, and struck hard.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: When you inflict a hit in unarmed combat, you may also move the defender away from you two steps in the direction you hit.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Your ability level in any given combat.

HEALTHY

Actually, I'm feeling remarkably well.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: Add your level of Healthy to your Hit Points. You go unconscious when your Hit Points + Healthy reaches 0 and you die if you have double your Hit Points + Healthy in Stars.

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: Your level added to your Hit Points

HOLD YOUR ALCOHOL

"Really, Officer. I haven't been drinking that much."

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You ignore all negative effects of some of the Blue Stars you receive due to alcohol or drugs. You ignore the effects of 1 star per level of aptitude.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: 1 Star/Level

IMPERVIOUS TO PAIN

"This? This is only a flesh wound."

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: For each level of Impervious To Pain, you may ignore the effects of 1 Damage Star to your Ability Ratings. For example, if you have Impervious To Pain at level 3 and 3 Damage Stars, you do not have a -3 to your Ability Ratings; you are still at normal. Once you take a fourth damage star, you would be at -1 to your Ability Ratings. The stars still affect your Hit Points, and you will still fall unconscious when you have as many Stars as your Hit Points.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: One Star per Level

INSCRUTABLE

Category: Information Defend Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You may add your level of Inscrutable to your defense against Detect Information, Truth Sense, and See Through Disguise challenges. If you are challenged with such a Skill, declare your STAT to be your STAT plus your Inscrutable Aptitude. You don't have to tell the challenger that you have this Aptitude.

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Inscrutable *does* stack with other defenses. So if you have both Inscrutable and Lie, you may add both to your defense, **but** your total defense bonus may never be higher than 6.

LUCK

The bullet whizzed by my ear. Whew.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can add or subtract 2 from any challenge in which you are the challenger or the target.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Your level of Luck uses per game period

Other Constraints: You must announce you are using this ability before the dice roll. You may only use this once per die roll. If the Ability targets yourself and others, your Luck only covers you, not the others.

NATURAL ARMOR

I tell you man, it was like shooting a fricking rhino!

Category: Martial Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: Your skin is thick. Subtract your Ability Level from the number of Red or Yellow Stars you take each combat round or from any damage causing event. You only take the damage remaining after the subtraction.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This Aptitude is intended for monsters and animals. Normal humans should not take this Aptitude. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round, but you may not use this more than once per round, since it reduces the amount of damage you take per *round*, not per *attack*.

NIGHT VISION

She moved silently in the darkened room, her pupils so large that her eyes seemed black.

Category: Information Cost: 1 or 3

Effect: Cost 1: You can negate the effects of darkness as long as there is some light (such as starlight).
Cost 3: You can see in complete darkness.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

POWER HITTER

Starke was strong, real strong.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You do an extra star of damage with close combat weapons or in unarmed combat.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Your ability level in any given combat.

Other Constraints: The extra damage will be of the same type the weapon does normally. That is, if you punch, you do an extra yellow star, but if you use a knife you do an extra red star.

QUICK REFLEXES

I was juggling eggs at age 6 and by the time I was 12, I was up to chainsaws.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You are good at deciding what to do in critical situations. Add your level of Quick Reflexes to your WILL when determining order for rounds of combat.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: You cannot take this Aptitude and the Slow Reflexes Handicap.

SKILLED DRINKER: _____

Mark had studied Physics in college. He also drank... A lot. He took his 401 Final Exam while still under the influence of a pretty loud party the night before. He got an "A."

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You are better at a particular Skill after having been drinking. The can only be applied to a Skill that you have. For each Blue Star of alcohol or drug damage you take, the Ability Rating for that Skill goes up (not down) by one. The damage stars still affect everything else you do, however, including going unconscious.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This can only affect Skills, not Handicaps, Resources, or Aptitudes. You cannot take this at a higher level than the Skill itself.

SOCIAL DRINKING

"Excellent bon mot, good sir."

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Hard

Effect: For each Blue Star of alcohol or drug damage currently affecting you (up to your skill level), you temporarily add 1 to any Skills or Aptitudes you have of Category: Influence (including Influence Defend). Your Skill level and associated Ability Rating goes up (not down) by one. The damage stars do affect everything else you do, however, including going unconscious.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This only affects Skills and Aptitudes of type: Influence, not Handicaps, or Resources.

Player Tips: A Note On Drinking Bonuses

Keep in mind that the largest your bonus can be is 6. So if you have both Charisma and Social Drinking and their totals add up to more than 6, you still only get a bonus of 6.

STOIC

The knife moved past his ear. Allen didn't even flinch.

Category: Influence Defend Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You have a bonus to resist all Skills of Category: Influence. If you are challenged with such a Skill, declare your STAT to be your STAT plus your Stoic Aptitude. You don't have to tell the challenger that you have this Aptitude.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Uses

Other Constraints: Stoic *does* stack with other defenses. So if you have both Stoic and Faithful, you may add both to your defense, **but** your total defense bonus may never be higher than 6.

TINY

I'm telling you, there are people living in our mailbox!

Category: Martial Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are much smaller than a typical character. You are (your level + 1) times smaller than a normal character. For each level of Tiny, add one to your Dodge. During combat, you can only take a step that is proportional to your size. For example, if you have a Tiny of 3, you are one eighth the size of a normal character, you add 3 to your Dodge, and take one eighth of a normal step in combat.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may not take this Aptitude and the Large Handicap. In general, this Aptitude is intended for monsters and animals. Normal humans should not take this Aptitude at a level higher than 1.

TOUGH

He took four punches to the gut and was still standing. I knew I was in trouble.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may ignore one star of damage from one attack or damage causing event.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period.

Other Constraints: This must be declared when you take the damage. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round, but you may not use this more than once per round.

VENOM

The wound wasn't that bad, but I still felt woozy an hour later.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: Your bite or claws are venomous. After a combat, all opponents damaged by you must make a STR vs. 4 challenge or take Red Stars of Venom damage equal to your level. Keep track of Venom Stars separately than normal Red Stars. Suggestion: Write a V on them. One star of Venom goes away at the start of each game period (in addition to the normal healing).

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Venom cannot be cured by surgery. Venom can be completely cured by a Physician challenge vs. 6. You must have Claws/Fangs (or naturally do Red Stars of damage in combat) in order

to use this Aptitude. This Aptitude is intended for monsters and animals. Normal humans should not take this Aptitude.

Player Tips: Preparing for the Game

While you can just jump in and start playing, here's a list of hints to help you get the most out of your LARP.

- ➔ Read your character sheet and any background information. Review how the game rules work, especially those that involve your character. If you have questions, try to talk to the GMs before the game starts.
- ➔ Make sure you know what optional rules are being used.
- ➔ Choose a costume. Try to always wear something to differentiate your character from your normal self, even if it's only a hat.
- ➔ Make sure you have a place to store your props, character sheet and any other documents. Some costumes don't have pockets! You don't want to run around with stuff in your hands during the whole game. Instead, you can:
 - Ensure your costume has a place to put documents (like a big inside pocket in a sport coat, sewing a new pocket, or a in-game prop like a briefcase or purse (something you won't lose), or
 - Copy all relevant information and character STATS/Abilities into a pocket sized notebook, or make photocopies that reduce the size of the documents.
- ➔ Make sure you have all out of game items needed to play. RTLB, for example, uses dice, and stick-on stars for damage. Make sure you have a place to store these items.
- ➔ Make sure you've had enough rest and that you've eaten. No one likes a cranky player, or even worse, a player who leaves the game early to get something to eat or take a nap, leaving other players wondering where the character went.

Abilities By Category

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Aversion To:	Handicap	
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Delusional:	Handicap	
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Charisma	Skill	
Faithful	Aptitude	
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Alternate Identity	Resource	
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Contact:	Resource	
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Alien Language:	Skill	
Ancient	Skill	

Language:		
Anthropology	Skill	
Archaeology	Skill	
Area of Knowledge:	Skill	
Autopsy	Skill	
Biology	Skill	
Botany	Skill	
Business	Skill	
Chemistry	Skill	
Cryptography	Skill	
Current Events	Skill	
Detect:	Skill	
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Fine Arts	Skill	
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History	Skill	
Language	Skill	
Law	Skill	
Library Use	Skill	
Lie	Skill	
Logic/ Deduction	Skill	
Mathematics	Skill	
Navigation/ Cartography	Skill	
Parabiology	Skill	
Physics	Skill	
See Through Disguise	Skill	
Speed Reader	Skill	
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Stash Site:	Resource	
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Conceal in Virtual Location	Skill	
Defuse Bomb	Skill	
Demolitions	Skill	
Electronics	Skill	
Escape Artist	Skill	
Hold Out	Skill	
Mechanics	Skill	
Operate:	Skill	
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Ranged Weapons	Skill	
Sprinting	Skill	
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Forceful Punch	Aptitude	
Impervious To Pain	Aptitude	
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Hold Out	Item Manipulation Skill	
Impersonate	Miscellaneous Skill	
Lie	Information Skill	
Martial Arts Defend	Martial Skill	
Alertness	Miscellaneous Aptitude	
Faithful	Influence Aptitude	
Fearless	Influence Aptitude	
Inscrutable	Information Aptitude	
Stoic	Influence Aptitude	
Tiny	Martial Aptitude	

Creating a Character, An Example

First, create a character history...

Paula will be playing a character named Joan for an upcoming campaign. First Paula writes Joan's history.

Joan was born to an upper middle class family toward the end of the twentieth century. Growing up she was always very

curious about how things worked and that curiosity made her lean toward science classes in school.

She first met her "nemesi s" Jane when the two were lab partners in High School. Jane always managed to make herself look good while making Joan look bad. The two have a rivalry to this very day.

Joan graduated second in her class (to Jane) in High School and went on to Johns Hopkins University, eventually receiving a PhD in Biology. From there she went on to become on to become one of the world's leading microbiologists.

Eventually, she was tapped by Mister Y to join The Y Team, and now she travels with them across the globe solving crimes and battling evil.

It is assumed at this point that Paula has gotten approval for Joan from her GM and is ready to go forward.

Before Paula writes Joan's history, Paula finds out from the GM what sort of game she'll be playing in. The GM tells her to make a normal person living in the year 1995.

Here Paula sets up a bit of information about Jane's personality.

Aha, a rivalry. This is a fine plot hook. Maybe this Joan will show up in the campaign to make Joan look bad.

Another hook. At some point, Microbiology might be important to the LARP and Joan will have a chance to shine.

The Y Team is a group hook. At least some, if not all, of the other characters will probably be part of the Y Team. It's even likely that the person playing Joan is working with the other people playing Y team members to create a shared history of the group.

Then, STATs and Handicaps

Based on her history, Joan should be quite smart, and have a strong will. She doesn't have to be that athletic, although that doesn't need to be ruled out either. Paula has 60 points for STATs and Handicaps.

Paula decides she wants Joan to be human average for Strength and Dexterity. That's level 2 for each. 9 points apiece. Before choosing her IQ and WILL, Paula considers her options.

Paula doesn't want to be bogged down with a lot of crippling Handicaps, but she also wants a high IQ and WILL. Putting them both at level 4 would require her to take 18 points in Handicaps and that's a lot. Instead, Paula chooses an IQ of 4 and a WILL of 3. Both are above human average, and a 4 IQ means that Joan will be quite intelligent.

These STATs (STR: 2, DEX: 2, IQ: 4, WILL: 3) costs 66 character points, but Paula only has 60 to spend. She'll need to buy some Handicaps to make up those extra 6 points. Paula chooses Compulsion Toward: Learning New Things, and Lightweight, both at level 2. They both have a cost type of Easy, so they each bring in 3 character points, making up the difference. Joan will have to be careful around pharmaceuticals since they'll do two extra Blue Stars of damage to her due to her being a Lightweight. Paula also checks with the GM to make sure her Compulsion is ok, since it is an Ability with a "fill in the blank" part.

Resources, Skills and Aptitudes

Because Paula spent all the points from her STAT pool on STATs, she doesn't have any to carry over to Resources, Skills and Aptitudes. She only has 70 points to spend on Resources, Skills, and Aptitudes.

Luckily, Joan doesn't need a great number of Resources. Paula takes two: A Contact at John's Hopkins University at level 2 (3 points) and her Lab at Y Team HQ as an Item Source at level 3 (6 points). Paula has spent a total of 9 points on Resources and has 61 points available for Skills.

Joan's potential skill set can be broken down into two categories: those as required by her background and history, and those which are generally useful but aren't described by her background.

The skills that are derived from Joan's background may still be useful; however, they tend to be more research oriented. The generally useful skills will tend to be more action oriented.

Joan's "Background" Skills:

Skill	Level	Cost Type	Cost
Ancient Language: Latin	2	Very Easy	2
Area of Knowledge: Microbiology	5	Easy	15
Biology	4	Easy	10
Chemistry	3	Easy	6
Library Use	3	Easy	6
Parabiology	1	Hard	2
Zoology	2	Easy	3

An IQ of 4 and level 5 in Microbiology gives Joan an Ability Rating of 9 in Microbiology, making her an expert in the field. She will be able to put her skills in Biology, Chemistry, and Zoology to use doing research and analysis. Library Use is a generally useful Skill, especially for researchers. With the bonus for Library Use, Joan would have a total of 12 on any research challenge involving Microbiology.

Paula did have to check with her GM when she took Parabiology. It isn't a Skill that can be useful in all campaigns, but it is very useful in campaigns with high supernatural or horror elements. Luckily, the GM said that it was fine.

The total cost of Joan's research based skills is 44 character points, leaving her 17 points for active skills.

Joan's "Active" Skills:

Skill	Level	Cost Type	Cost
Autopsy	2	Easy	3
Cryptography	1	Hard	2
First Aid	3	Easy	6
Logic/Deduction	1	Very Hard	3
Physician	1	Easy	1
Surgery	1	Hard	2

While none of these Skills form the core competency of a microbiologist, they are tangentially related. Further, they are all generally useful during a LARP. Skills like First Aid, Physician, and Surgery can all be used to treat wounded and sick characters. Cryptography is useful in solving puzzles, and

Autopsy is useful for investigations. Logic/Deduction is one of the most powerful Skills available in RTLB. That's why it costs so much.

At this point, Paula is done creating her character. She didn't take any Aptitudes for Joan, but she doesn't really need any. If Paula wanted to buy Aptitudes, or more Skills or Resources, she would need to either lower her levels in some of the Skills and Resources she has, or take more Handicaps to give her more character points to spend.

Now Paula should review Joan with the GMs and then she is ready to play.

Combat

Combat in Rules To Live By can seem difficult and complex at first, but when you know the system it's really quite easy. The important things to remember are:

- **Be Prepared.** Have your STAT and Abilities list at hand. Calculate your Ability Ratings before the combat. Have dice on hand. This cannot be stated strongly enough. You will need to reference your STATs and Abilities during combat. They can be printed on paper and hidden somewhere on your person, or you could print them into a book or put them onto a PDA to make them look like an in-game prop, but please, *keep your STAT and Abilities list on your person at all times during the LARP.*
- **To initiate combat, point at someone and say, "Combat."** If you do this, or see someone do this, get out your STAT and Ability list and dice and wait patiently for the combat moderator to organize the combat.
- **Once a combat starts, don't move around.** RTLB uses your physical position to determine if you can hit your opponent. Stand still and wait to be called upon for your action.

As mentioned above, combats work best when organized by someone not involved in the action fight itself. That person is called the Combat Moderator, and it is her job to make sure the combat runs smoothly and quickly, and that everyone gets a chance to do something. There are tips for being a good Combat Moderator in the GM section.

Initiating Combat

Players *must* declare combat before attempting any Ability that might harm another character.

To declare combat, simply point at your target and announce, "combat," in a loud, clear voice. All players within hearing range are part of that combat.

Everyone who hears someone announce "combat" should wait patiently in place. This establishes the starting positions for the fight. Players can, of course, move their heads around to see if someone's attacking. But they cannot move around, draw a weapon, duck out the door, etc. Combat freezes the game temporarily.

The one exception is that players may leave and return to get their STAT and Ability lists, dice, or any other out-of-game item they need for the combat. They can't go back to their hotel room to get their sword prop, but they can duck back to game central to get their STATs.

Info: Why Bring Everyone Into It?

One on one combats run much quicker than multi-player combats. Each person involved adds to the time the combat takes. So, why *start* with the worst possible scenario, bringing everyone into the combat when it begins?

It has been the experience of the RTLB creators that combats are *player magnets* and players will try to join nearby existing combats, even if their characters don't have much stake in the resolution. It is *far* easier in RTLB to leave a combat than join an existing one, so we might as well get it over with early. In fact, what usually happens is that there is a first round which consists of a mass exodus of uninvolved parties and everyone left over *wants* to be in the combat and has been there from the start, making a more satisfying experience for all involved.

Combat Actions

On each regular round of combat, all players get one combat action. These are *declared* in increasing order of WILL (modified by Quick Reflexes and Slow Reflexes) and *resolved* simultaneously.

Again, *first* all players will get a chance to declare their combat actions in increasing WILL order and *then* all players may resolve their actions simultaneously. The combat moderator should be there to call out WILL order and to make sure everyone gets a chance to declare each action.

Info: Why WILL Order?

Players new to Rules To Live By often question the WILL order rules. They claim that characters with low WILLs have the advantage because they move first. But actually, the exact opposite is true. By moving later, characters with higher WILLs can observe what has already happened in the combat and choose their move accordingly. They can get out of the way of oncoming attacks, and choose to attack in coordination with their peers. Remember, damage is not assigned until after *everyone* declares. A higher WILL can give you a tremendous advantage in combat.

Available combat actions are:

Take a Free Step – No matter what action you decide to take, you may always choose to take a step beforehand. For most combat actions, this step is *optional*. Remember that Abilities such as Lame and Sprinting can modify how far you may move during combat. Note that you cannot move through a space that is obviously being blocked. For example, if someone is guarding a door you cannot just slip by them and into the doorway.

GM Tips: Outdoor Combat

For outdoor games or games held in large indoor spaces, you could replace all references to “one step” with “three steps” quite nicely. Otherwise you end up with combats that take a really, really long time to resolve.

Attack – Take the optional free step, and then declare that you are attacking a specific character, and what Abilities and items you are using to do so. Your target does not have to be in the combat; attacking someone not in the combat automatically brings that character into the combat.

In order to declare an attack using your Unarmed, Close Weapons, or other close combat Skills, you *must* be able to touch your target with your hand or the weapon. You can take your step *first* and then declare your attack. And please remember: in RTLB, combat is simulated with dice; do not physically strike another player in RTLB combat.

You may declare a Ranged Weapon or Thrown attack at any target you can see. If the target is around the corner or too far away, then the attack fails.

If your target moves *after* you declare, such that your declaration would not be valid (they are too far away for a close attack or you cannot see them for a ranged attack), then your declared attack *automatically* fails.

There are two normal combat modifiers.

- If your target is under partial cover when attacks are resolved, (at least 50% obscured), the target gets a +2 to his defense for the challenge.
- If you are behind the target when attacks are resolved, you get a +2 to your die roll for the challenge. You must be truly behind the target; to the side doesn't count.

Player Tips: Additional Combat Modifiers

Some LARPs add the following combat modifiers. Check with your GM to be sure.

- When you declare your attack, you may choose to make a “called shot.” If so, you subtract 2 from your roll, but you do an extra Star of damage if you succeed (damage is explained right after combat).
- If you declare a ranged attack when you are close enough to touch your target, you get +2 to your die roll for the challenge, even if you cannot touch your target when attacks are resolved. This bonus is called “point blank.”

These, and other potential combat modifiers, are listed in the Plug-Ins section of this book under Combat.

One final rule for attacking: If you attack something that cannot actively defend itself move – an unconscious character, a tree, a gazebo, whatever – the defense in the challenge is 0 + the die roll, regardless of the target's relevant STATs and Abilities. If you fail the die roll, you have still managed to hit your target, but you do no damage.

Evade – To evade, you must take the free step, then you may add +2 to all your defense rolls for the rest of the combat round. You *must* take the step – you may not stand still and evade. You may not take any other combat actions the same round of combat you choose to evade, although you may use skills such as Sprinting. Keep in mind that Evading is a combat action, and is not the same as the Dodge skill which you use to make the target number for your opponents' attacks. Also note that Handicaps that keep you from being able to take your free step, such as Limp or Combat Paralysis, mean that you cannot Evade while you are under their influence.

Draw An Item – You may choose to take your free step and then draw an item out of a pocket, holster, or open container; or may pick the item up. If two players wish to go for the same freely available item (such as one lying on a table) then they should make a DEX challenge, and the one who rolls the higher total gets the item.

Run – You must take your free step and then you must take a second step. You may take no other combat actions this round, although you may defend against attacks as normal. This is the only action that will allow you to flee a combat in progress. See “Leaving a Combat in Progress,” below.

Other Action – You may choose to take your free step then do something else not listed above as long as it's quick, and the other players in the fight agree it's reasonable. Jumping up and screaming, “Stop!” is reasonable. Writing a 20-page dissertation on Moby Dick is not. Using smelling salts already in your hand to try to wake an unconscious person is reasonable. Performing surgery is not. In general, anything that takes about two seconds to perform is okay. The combat moderator can help make this call, but players involved in a combat may always agree to vote on actions to determine if they are okay.

You may talk as part of your combat action, but keep it short – something that would only take a couple of seconds to say.

Player Tips: An Unrealistic Soliloquy

Sometimes you want to make a dramatic speech in the middle of combat. This usually happens when you're the villain and you are about to be defeated, but sometime it is when you are the hero and you need to lecture the villain. In general, the combat moderator should allow at most one or two unrealistic soliloquies to the combat to add to the drama. You can always make your soliloquy after combat has been resolved. If you would fall unconscious at that point, you can do it after your speech.

But you should always remember: when you are making your speech you are keeping others from being able to do *anything*. During combat, players and characters are frozen to the spot except when they have actions. While it is nice to have a captive audience, your audience will appreciate being able to get back to roleplaying as soon as possible. If you must make an unrealistic speech during combat, please keep it short.

The First Round of Combat

The first round of combat is special. The person who declared the combat gets a pre-emptive attack or action. That person is the *only* one who gets an action during the first round.

If two or more players declare at the same time (as in a western "quick draw"), the player with the highest (DEX + Quick Reflexes – Slow Reflexes) is considered the declarer of combat. In the case of ties, have the tying players roll a die and add it to their (DEX + Quick Reflexes – Slow Reflexes) until there is a definite winner.

There are some Handicaps like Limp and Combat Paralysis that affect the character for a certain number of combat rounds. Only rounds in which the character could take an action are counted toward this total. So this round would not count for a character with Combat Paralysis who cannot move for two rounds of combat and did not declare the combat.

Subsequent Rounds of Combat

Each combat round has three phases:

Declare Phase: One the declare phase, players declare their combat actions in increasing order of WILL. These actions are not yet resolved, although movement is performed at this time.

Resolution Phase: During this phase, *all* declared actions are resolved simultaneously.

Damage Phase: During this phase, damage is assigned, characters attempting to flee may get away, and other "end of round" effects go off.

Player Tips: Joining a Combat in Progress

In a LARP, people often want to join a fight when they see one happening. In real life, not so much. RTLB handles this by starting the combat with everyone being involved.

However, sometimes people aren't there for the start of combat, but discover it while the combat is going on. And then these people want to join the combat.

When you want to join a combat in progress, first make the combat moderator aware that you wish to join. Next go to where you first became aware of the combat and when it would be your turn to declare an action declare that you are joining the combat. That is your action for that turn. You do not get a free step.

Next round, you are considered to be part of the combat and may choose any legal combat action. Remember you have to start from where you were first aware of the combat, so there may be a bit of distance before you can really do anything useful except move.

Declare Phase

At the start of each round, the combat moderator should first declare the round number (as some things last for a certain number of rounds).

Next the combat moderator will start calling WILLS in order starting from 1 and going up to the highest WILL in the combat (normally 6).

When the combat moderator calls your WILL, *and* you wish to perform a combat action, raise your hand. When you are called upon, first declare your action then act it out. If you are running, take your two steps. *Take normal steps, not huge leaps.* If you are shooting at another character, point your prop or item card at that character and say “bang.” It doesn’t matter what side of the combat you are on, all characters declare in order of WILL.

Remember, in this phase all you are doing is declaring your intent. You do not resolve until the next phase.

Player Tips: Equal WILLS

There may come a time when two characters have the same WILL and are trying to perform mutually exclusive actions. For example, one is trying to punch the other while the other is trying to get away. The players resolve this by DEX order. The lower DEX takes the first action. If the DEX is also a tie, then players roll dice with the *lower* die roll taking the first action.

Resolution Phase

Begin the resolution phase after everyone has declared an action. At this point, all challenges are resolved simultaneously. Well, in any order you want. If you’ve attacked John and John attacked you, it doesn’t matter in which order the challenges are resolved as damage taken this round does not affect any challenge made during the round.

Damage Phase

Begin the damage phase after all the actions have been resolved. Damage is taken at this time, and characters may become wounded, fall unconscious, be healed, escape the combat, die, or do any other thing that happens at the end of the round. All damage is assessed simultaneously. The effects of this damage are immediately applied at this time. So if two characters shoot each other, they might both die from the results; however, their damage does not affect each other’s actions *this* round.

Player Tips: Leaving a Combat in Progress

In order to leave a combat in progress, you must declare on your action that you are running away. You must take run as your combat action and must move the full two steps. Further, you must have a clear escape route. If you are surrounded on all sides, you cannot declare that you are running away.

If no character *successfully* attacks you during round, then you may escape at the end of the round during the damage phase. Note that you can be successfully attacked, but not take damage. For example, you might be wearing armor and be hit by a knife, but the armor absorbs all of the damage. You were still successfully attacked and cannot leave the combat.

If you do successfully flee the combat, you must leave the general area of the combat and may not be attacked again by the same group of people for at least fifteen minutes.

Ending The Combat

The combat ends at the end of any combat round where there were no attacks attempted, or at the end of any combat round where it is clear to all that there will be no more immediate hostilities.

GM Tips: Short Parleys

The GM may wish to allow a short exchange of conversation between the opposing sides in between each round. This allows for more roleplaying, and in particular gives the losing side a chance to surrender.

Damage

Rules To Live By separates damage into three types: Temporary, Permanent, and Special. Sticky colored stars are used to track the damage. If your game uses name badges, the stars can be stuck directly to the badge so anyone can see how badly the characters are hurt. And the stars can be peeled off when the damage is healed. This is easier with plastic name badge holders than paper badges.

- Yellow Stars indicate temporary damage. This damage goes away on its own over time, but enough temporary will convert into some permanent damage. A character might get a yellow star from being beaten up.
- Red Stars indicate permanent damage. This damage only goes away by being healed. A character might get a red star of damage from being shot or stabbed.
- Blue Stars indicate stun or other special damage. Usually the source of the damage will tell when the stars go away. A character might get a blue star from poison, drugs, or bizarre mental powers.

When a character takes damage, the player should place the appropriate number of colored stars on his nametag (or clothing). If actual sticky stars are not available, the damage should be noted on the player's STAT and Ability list.

For example, bare fists do one yellow star of damage. A character that has been punched will have one yellow star on the player's badge.

Stars of damage affect your Abilities. For each star of damage you have regardless of color, subtract 1 from all of your Ability Ratings. So if you have 2 Yellow Stars, 1 Red Star and 1 Blue Star, you would subtract 4 from all of your Ability Ratings. The subtraction penalties go away when the Stars go away.

Keep in mind that damage is not assigned until the end of a combat round, so damage taken does not affect challenges during that round of combat.

You can have negative Ability ratings because of damage. Just subtract the number from the die roll during a challenge.

Player Tip: Alternate Stars

Most stars come in packs of Red, Blue, Silver, Green, and Yellow.

Rather than just waste two thirds of the stars, we suggest you use both Silver and Yellow stars for temporary damage.

Our experience shows that you will need more Red stars than any other color and relatively few Blue stars. If your players can handle the difference, use the Green stars for permanent damage, otherwise use them where you would normally use Blue stars.

The damage stars are stuck directly on the player's name badge. If there is no name badge, they are stuck to the clothing, in a prominent place. This gives the player a visible way of showing to the world that his character has been beaten up or wounded without having to resort to makeup, fake blood, descriptive badges, or out of game comments.

This doesn't mean players *shouldn't* use makeup or fake blood, of course. Verisimilitude in live roleplaying is a good thing. But this gives players and GMs a less expensive and less messy way.

If no colored stars are available – they can be found in most groceries, drug stores, and stationary stores – the players can keep track on their STAT and Ability sheets.

Unconsciousness And Death

You check for unconsciousness and death at the end of any combat round or any damage causing event. You fall unconsciousness when you have as many Damage Stars as you have Hit Points (no matter what color those stars are). This happens immediately. Remember that your Hit Points are the sum of your STR and WILL STATS.

Your character dies when he has twice as many *Red and/or Yellow* Damage Stars as she has Hit Points. This happens instantly at the end of the combat round during the Damage Phase.

However, there is one more way for a character to die, even if the character doesn't have double her Hit Points in Stars. This death can happen during the Star Conversion Exchange.

Ten minutes after a combat ends, two things happen, in this order:

First, all players in the combat remove all Yellow Stars gained from the combat. Then, they immediately gain 1 Red Star for every three Yellow Stars removed. Round down. If two or fewer Yellow stars are removed, the character gains no Red stars.

After replacing the temporary Yellow Stars, the character dies if he has as many or more Red or Yellow Stars as his Hit Points. He has bled to death. Again, remember that Blue Stars do not affect death ever, only unconsciousness.

Info: The Death of Mike

An example character, Mike, has a STR of 3 and a WILL of 2. This gives him 5 Hit Points.

Mike has been drinking and has 1 Blue Star of drunkenness. He's still up. But then John declares combat and shoots Mike and he takes 4 Red Stars of damage. Now he has 5 Stars total, which is as much as his Hit Points, so Mike falls unconscious.

Next round of combat, Mike still has 5 Damage Stars so he is still out. John decides to start kicking Mike's unconscious body. He does 5 more Yellow Stars before being dragged away. Mike now has 10 damage Stars which would normally be enough to kill him, but since only 9 of them are Red and Yellow, he isn't quite dead yet. Blue Stars don't count toward death.

Ten minutes after the combat ends, Mike converts all his Yellow Damage Stars to Red at the rate of 3 to 1, rounding down. Mike has 5 Yellow Stars, so that is just 1 additional Red Star. Mike now has 5 Red Stars and 1 Blue Star. The Blue Star still doesn't count toward death, but 5 Red Stars is still as many as his Hit Points, so Mike has bled to death.

Item List

Items are a difficult subject to describe succinctly in a genre-independent rules book. You want to be able to deal with weapons from slings to plasma blasters, healing items from sulfa powder to tissue

regenerators, and so forth. This section gives some ideas of how items work mechanically, but cannot provide an extensive or exclusive list of items, just an overview.

Before the game, you should find out what sorts of items will be allowed in game, and what your character will start with. The same items may cost different amounts based on the game setting. If play balance is critical, GMs may have players buy items with their starting money, otherwise you may be able to just list your starting items. And, in many LARPS, the GMs just assign what items you start with.

GM Tips: Props vs. Item Cards

Props and sets are a great way to add verisimilitude to your LARPs. Imagine your players running around your underground lair carrying realistic looking weapons, wearing armor, and having to lug around big sacks of heavy, heavy gold.

Unfortunately, props can be expensive, time consuming to make, difficult to transport, or just plain illegal (silhouette laws and so forth). Props are great, but they are not absolutely necessary for a LARP.

That's why some LARPs use item cards. To make an item card, simply write the relevant information about the item on an index card and use that card to represent the item.

Item cards are great for impromptu games or games on a budget. Let's say that you decide you want to run one of the LARPs provided in the Rules To Live By book for your gaming group one night. You can just copy the item cards provided onto card stock and let your players use their imaginations. Yes, real items and props make the game seem more real, but they are not absolutely necessary for a LARP, at least not one using Rules To Live By.

And if you do use real props, it often helps to tag the prop with a card that explains the game mechanics the prop affects, so characters know what the prop does. At the very least, you should tag the props so you know who to return them to after the game.

Here is an example of an item description with explanations:

❶ Electrical Repair Kit

❷ **Effect:** *Allows the use of the Create and Repair Item skills for certain electrical/ electronic items (see GM). Adds 1 to your Create and Repair ability rating for electrical/electronic items that do not require the kit in order to make repairs.*

❸ **# of Uses:** *Unlimited*

❹ **Cost:** *\$15.00*

❺ **Complexity:** *7*

❻ **Concealable?** *Yes*

❼ **Comments:**

❶ **Item Name:** The name of the item.

❷ **Effect:** The game mechanics for the item. Some items grant bonuses to Abilities. Remember that the largest total bonus you can get for an Ability is 6, even if individual bonuses add up to more.

❸ **# Of Uses:** Some items can be used up. For example, a grenade would have 1 use, while a can opener might have unlimited uses. This tells you how many times you can use the item.

❹ **Cost:** The cost of the item in a modern day, urban, game. GMs may adjust this cost for different locales or time periods.

⑤**Complexity:** Many challenges are done against item complexity. For example, the Lockpick Skill's target number is the lock complexity. Items with no complexity do not even have this field.

⑥**Conceal ability:** Tells you if the item is small enough to put in your pocket, or under your coat. If the item is not concealable, you cannot hide it, even if the item card representing the item would fit in your pocket. You must keep non-concealable items in plain view.

⑦**Comments:** Other rules concerning the item.

Player Tips: Armor

Armor in RTLB will save your life but it won't keep you from getting hurt.

Armor doesn't remove the damage stars for the most part, but instead allows you to convert them from Red to Yellow.

That is, your bulletproof vest will keep the bullet from entering your body but it doesn't stop the kinetic energy, resulting in a bit of bruising.

We only listed a few pieces of armor here, so use common sense for things like gauntlets and helmets. And remember armor will only protect the part of the body it is covering. If you wear armored boots and then take partial cover behind a wall, don't expect your boots to provide additional coverage.

A Suggestion for Hit Locations and Armor:

The simplest suggestion is to say that chest/torso armor always protects, unless your chest/torso is behind cover. However, if you want to be a little more complex, you can use the following suggestion.

Because Base RTLB doesn't have hit locations, you can do the following to see if your armor has protected you. If you've been hit, roll one die. If it is less than or equal to the armor's complexity, then it protects you. Luck and Unluck may be used to modify this roll. (Complexities assume a six sided die; if you are using a 10 sided die, add 2 to the item's complexities).

Bomb Defusing Kit

Effect: Adds 2 to your Defuse Bomb Ability Rating.

of Uses: Unlimited Cost: \$50

Concealable? Yes

Bottle of Booze

Effect: One drink causes 1 Blue Star of alcohol damage that lasts for 30 minutes.

of Uses: Six Cost: \$10

Concealable? Yes

Comments: Can also be used as a weapon, doing 1 red star of damage (but all remaining drinks leak out).

Bulletproof Vest

Effect: If the wearer takes damage from physical weapons, all Red Stars become Yellow Stars.

of Uses: Changes 6 Stars, then is destroyed.

Complexity: 4 Cost: \$350

Concealable? Only under clothing

Chainmail Shirt

Effect: If the wearer is hit by a weapon, the armor turns the first 2 Red Stars of the hit into Yellow Stars.

of Uses: Changes 4 stars, then is destroyed.

Complexity: 4 Cost: \$200

Concealable? No

Comments: While you wear this, subtract 1 from your ability rating in all STR and DEX based abilities (it's heavy).

Electrical Repair Kit

Effect: Allows the use of the Create and Repair Item skills for certain electrical/electronic items. Adds 1 to your Create and Repair ability levels for electrical/electronic items that do not require the kit in order to make repairs.

of Uses: Unlimited Cost: \$150

Concealable? Yes

Flashlight

Effect: Lets you light up a dark room.

of Uses: Unlimited Cost: \$5

Concealable? Yes while off. No while activated.

Leather Vest

Effect: If the wearer is hit by a weapon, the armor turns the first red star per hit into a yellow star.

of Uses: Changes 6 stars then is destroyed.

Complexity: 4 Cost: \$50

Concealable? Only under clothing

Mechanical Repair Kit

Effect: Allows the use of the Create and Repair Item skills for certain mechanical items. Adds 1 to your Create and Repair ability levels for mechanical items that do not require the kit in order to make repairs.

of Uses: Unlimited Cost: \$100

Concealable? Yes

Medical Kit

Effect: Adds 2 to any Medical Skill Ability Rating.

of Uses: 2 Cost: \$100

Concealable? Yes

Poison (Generic)

Effect: Does 6 Red Stars of Poison Damage. These stars can only be healed by the Physician Skill, or by natural (or supernatural) healing.

of Uses: 1 Dose Cost: \$200

Concealable? Yes

Suit of Plate Mail

Effect: If the wearer is hit by a weapon, the armor turns the first 3 Red Stars of the hit into Yellow Stars.

of Uses: Changes 10 Stars, then is destroyed.

Complexity: 8 Cost: \$1000

Concealable? No

Comments: While you wear this, subtract 2 from your ability rating in all STR and DEX based abilities (it's heavy).

Weapons

What follows is a basic list of weapons for RTLB. Note that while there *is* a difference between a Colt .45 and a Glock 9mm, this list has been kept simple.

Info: A Gun is a Gun

In general, weapons in LARPs tend to be simple, like “gun” or “crossbow,” rather than Colt .45 and Greek Gastraphetes. There is a reason for this simplicity: the more complex the weapon mechanics, the longer a combat will take. We want fast combats.

Note that neither cost nor uses are included in this chart. It's up to the players to keep track of bullets and/or prices for their weapons.

Weapon	Damage
Axe	2 Red Stars & 1 Yellow Star
Blackjack	2 Yellow Stars
Bow/Arrow	1 Red Star
Brass Knuckles	2 Yellow Stars
Club	3 Red Stars
Crossbow	1 Red Star
Fist	1 Yellow Star
Grenade	2 Red Stars to all within 10 feet.
Handgun	3 Red Stars
Knife, Long	2 Red Stars
Knife, Short	1 Red Star
Large Gun	4 Red Stars
Mace	3 Yellow Stars
Rock	2 Yellow Stars
Spear	3 Yellow Stars or 2 Red Stars
Staff	3 Yellow Stars
Sword, Broad	3 Red Stars
Sword, Fencing	2 Red Stars
Sword, Two Handed	3 Red Stars & 1 Yellow Star

Pharmacopoeia

RTLB does not promote illicit drug use or abuse. Many of these effects are pretty nasty for a very good reason.

Most drugs do Stars of damage and then say something like, “Duration: 15 minutes/Star.” That means that a Star goes away every 15 minutes. For example, Chloroform does 5 Blue stars of damage with a duration of 15 minutes/star. That means that after 15 minutes, the victim will have 4 stars. After another 15 minutes (a half-hour total), the victim will have 3 stars, and so forth. These durations assume a weekend long game; GMs may wish to lower the durations for shorter games.

Don’t forget that if you ever have double your Hit Points in Red or Yellow Stars, your character has died. Watch out for overdoses.

Prescription and “over the counter” drugs

Drug	Effect (1 Dose)
Analgesic (Aspirin, Ibuprofen)	You may ignore 1 Red or Yellow Star of damage for the purposes of Ability Challenges for the next 15 minutes. Only one dose may be active at a time.
Antihistamine (Benadryl)	You may ignore 1 Star of Allergy damage for the rest of the game period. Every two doses cause 1 Blue star of Drowsiness damage. Duration: 15 minutes/Star.
Antihistamine (Loratidine)	You may ignore 1 Star of Allergy damage for the rest of the game period.
Ether	Take 5 Blue Stars of Sleepiness. Duration: 15 minutes/Star.
Ipecac	You vomit. All poisons ingested in the past 5 minutes are negated.
Nitrous Oxide	Take 2 Blue Stars of Sleepiness. Duration: 1 minute/Star, or 1 combat round/Star.
Novocain	You may ignore 2 Red or Yellow Stars of damage for the purposes of Ability Challenges for the next 30 minutes.
Sedative	Take 1 Blue Star of Sleepiness. Duration: 30 minutes.
Valium, Prozac	Take 2 Blue Stars of Sleepiness. Your Levels of Aversion and Compulsion are at -2 for the rest of the Game Period. Duration: 15 min.

Street drugs

Drug	Effect (1 Dose)
Alcohol	Take 1 Blue Star of Drunkenness. Duration: 30 minutes/Star.
Cocaine	Take 1 Blue Star of Jitteriness. You gain the Alertness Ability at level 1 for the duration of the game period. Addictive. Duration: 15 minutes/Star.
Chloroform	Take 5 Blue Stars of Sleepiness. Duration: 15 minutes/Star.
Opiate (Heroin, Morphine,	Take 2 Blue Stars of Sleepiness. You may ignore 2 Red or Yellow damage Stars for the purposes of Ability Challenges for

Codeine, Opium)	each Star of this drug currently affecting you. Addictive. Duration: 15 minutes/Star.
PCP	-2 to IQ. +2 to STR. Take 1 Blue Star of confusion. Addictive. Duration: 15 minutes.
LSD	You hallucinate. See a GM for your delusions. Duration: 1 hour.
Marijuana	Take 1 Blue Star of Calmness. Duration 15 minutes
Speed	Take 1 Blue star of confusion. You get +2 to DEX, and -1 to IQ. Addictive. Duration: 15 minutes.

Addiction

Many of the drugs listed here are addictive. If the GM notices a character taking a number of addictive drugs in one game period, she should consider giving the character the Addiction disadvantage for that drug. You may wish to report to the GM if your character has taken a good number of addictive or illicit drugs.

Game Sessions and Game Periods

A Game Session is an entire episode of the LARP from the start of the event until it wraps up. A campaign LARP may be broken down into many individual Game Sessions. A Game Session may last for an evening, a whole day, a weekend, or longer depending on the event.

Game Sessions are divided into Game Periods. A Game Period is an artificially divided block of time decided by the GMs. A short game might have only one Game Period. A weekend long game traditionally has several Game Periods, one Friday night, three or four on Saturday, and one for Sunday. The Game Periods within the Game Session do not have to all be the same length. A good rule of thumb for Game Periods is four-six hours. Often it is convenient to delineate Game Periods by meals. So Period One could be “From breakfast through lunch”, Period Two could be “after lunch, through dinner”, and period Three could be “after dinner, until game is called at midnight”.

In RTLB, many Abilities may only be used a certain number of times each Game Period. This allows a limit to the use of Abilities, and also fosters the desire in players to use the Abilities all throughout the game instead of saving them up for a specific event that might never come.

Uses of an Ability do not carry over between Game Periods. If you have an Ability that may only be used twice during a Game Period, and you only use it once on the first Game Period, you still only get two uses in the second Game Period.

Natural Healing

At the beginning of each Game Period, players may remove one star of their choice from their character. All other stars are carried to the next game period.

GM Tips: Game Periods

Many players will probably try to get your attention at the end of each Game Period to use up their Abilities, particularly Information abilities. Likewise, players may wish your attention at the start of each Game Period to deal with things like natural healing. It is wise to prepare for these eventualities.

Player Tips: What to Bring to a LARP

Here is a long but very handy checklist of everything you could bring to a LARP. We've tried to be as general as possible, so narrow it down to what you need. Write your own items at the end. It's a good idea to label your props so you can find them after the game.

Costuming, Male

- bow-tie/cummerbund/vest
- dress shirt
- pocket watch
- suit jacket/tuxedo
- trenchcoat
- undershirt
- underwear
- uniform

Costuming, Female

- ball gown
- hoops
- panties
- panty hose
- purse
- shawl, fur, opera cape
- wrap around/skirt

Costuming, Generic

- baseball cap, straw hat
- belt
- chainmail/armor
- hats/helmet/crown
- hiking boots
- holster
- jacket
- jeans, shorts
- jewelry
- long sleeved shirt
- pants/tights
- pouches
- rain coat
- robes/cloaks
- sandals, sneakers, shoes, boots
- scarves
- shower shoes/flip-flops
- sleepwear
- socks
- sunglasses
- sweat shirt/pants
- swim suit
- tee shirts
- tunic

Props/Weapons

- briefcase
- gun/rifle/tommy gun
- ID Cards/passport
- knife
- mug/flagon
- shield
- sword/staff

Personal Items

- "mundane" clothing
- ace bandage/knee brace
- alarm clock
- baby wipes
- band aids
- basket for shower stuff
- book to read
- cash, money
- contact lenses
- eye drops, ear drops
- eyeglass repair kit/extra pair
- flashlight
- hair bands, wraps, combs
- hair brush / comb
- headache relief, antacids
- journal
- matches/lighter
- medications
- Pocket Players Guide
- radio, tapes, CDs
- razor
- shampoo/conditioner
- tape: scotch/masking/duct
- toothpaste, toothbrush
- towel (very important)

Accessories

- chits, as required
- dice, as required
- head band
- pen/notepad/highlighter
- supplies to build props/weapons
- theatrical makeup
- baby wipes to remove makeup
- latex appliques

- spirit gum, spirit gum remover

Camping Gear (As Required)

- air mattress/cot
- batteries
- bedding, sheets, blanket, pillows
- bottle opener
- camp chair
- can opener
- clothes hangers
- collapsible shovel (ditching)
- corkscrew
- duct tape
- fork, spoon, knife
- grill, charcoal, lighter fluid
- hammer
- ice chest
- ice packs
- inflater for air mattress
- insect repellent
- knife
- lamp/lantern
- leatherman tool
- matches
- mess kit
- paper towels
- pliers
- rope
- sunscreen
- tanning lotion
- tent, tent stakes (and spares)
- toilet paper
- trash bags
- travel mugs
- water bottles

Food (As Required)

- coffee/tea
- Gatorade™
- granola bars/snacks
- ice
- soda
- water

Finger Flings

Finger flings are an alternate system for those who do not like dice. When using Finger Flings, you still use all of Rules to Live By as stated in this book except: instead of using dice to resolve the challenges, you perform finger flings.

A finger fling is a simpler version of rock-paper-scissors. The two opponents count to 3, and then hold out either 1 or 2 fingers. (That's, "One, Two, Three, Shoot,") The challenger wins if the two players are holding out the same number of fingers. If the two players are holding out different numbers of fingers, the challenger loses.

Just like with dice, a player can challenge another player, an item, or a GM.

Here's how to challenge:

First, declare your intentions. For example: "I'm going to hit you with this magic sword."

Tell your opponent your Ability Rating (STAT + Ability Level – Stars), and what is needed to defend against the challenge. Continuing the example: "Close Weapons uses STR. My total rating is 5. I am also using this magic sword, which adds another 1, for a total rating of 6. The Close Weapons Ability description says that you defend with your Dodge."

Your opponent declares the value for his defense, and shows you the item and special ability cards that will modify the value. "My Dodge is 4, and I have no items to modify this."

Subtract your opponent's value from your value. This results in a positive or negative difficulty number. "Let's see... My 6 minus your 4 equals 2."

Look up the difficulty number in the Challenge Chart (listed below). This tells you how many finger flings you have to win in order to succeed in your challenge. "Since the difference is 2, I have to win 1 out of 2 finger flings in order to hit you with the sword."

Do as many finger flings as the chart tells you to. If you win at least as many flings as the chart requires, you succeed in your challenge. If not, the challenge fails.

"First fling: one... two... three... shoot! Darn, you're holding out two fingers and I'm holding out one - I lost the fling. But I only have to win one of two, so let's try again. One... two... three... shoot! I'm holding out one finger and so are you. I win the fling! The challenge succeeds and I hit you."

Number	Difficulty	Finger Flings	Chance of Success
-6	Impossible	Can't Win	0%
-4,-5	Very Hard	3 out of 3	12.25%
-2,-3	Hard	2 out of 2	25%
1,0,-1	Average	1 out of 1	50%
2,3	Easy	1 out of 2	75%
4,5	Very Easy	1 out of 3	87.75%
6	Automatic	Always Wins	100%

Info:

We have found, after years of playtesting, that dice work better than Finger Flings. They are quicker, are more likely to provide randomization, and provide a better range of probabilities. If you are determined to use finger flings, have copies of the chart available to all players for easy reference.

Player Tips: What To Do If You Aren't Having a Good Time in a LARP

Believe it or not, this happens. Sometimes your character doesn't seem to fit in, or you've run out of things to do, or the situation seems so hopeless that you feel you're doomed. It may not be that bad. Here are some hints.

- ➔ Go in with a positive attitude. If you go to the game with the attitude that the game will suck, you'll find it becoming true. If you go into the game thinking, "Yeah, there are flaws, but I'm not going to dwell on them and I'm going to have fun instead," you will. Really. Every game has its problems; no game is perfect. Focus on the positive, and don't let the negative get to you. Attitude truly is half the problem.
- ➔ Plan on things getting slow. Does your character history seem plot thin? Bring diversions with you to the game. A deck of cards can lead to an interesting poker game. A craft project will get people interested in what you're making.
- ➔ Don't expect the gamemasters or other players to provide diversions for you; bring them yourself. Lend them to other players if you think your character would enjoy them but it would make more sense for others to bring them. This won't get you through a whole weekend, but it will allow you to keep your "down time" in character.
- ➔ If you see something exciting happen, explore it. Why are all those people running over there? What are they all looking at? What is that loud argument? What made that horrible boom? Go explore it. Once you get there, offer to help (within limits of your character), or discuss the scene with the other characters. Don't be afraid to get involved for fear that it might hurt your character. LARP is about interaction. Interact!
- ➔ Make the wrong choice. Sure, you can play it safe with your character, but your life will be more interesting if you take the bold, dangerous choice. Never be afraid to put your character in danger. You'll be happier with your bold, dramatic actions than you will be sitting alone with your safe character.
- ➔ Talk to everybody. LARP is about interaction. There might be a character out there with the critical clue you need. But you'll never know unless you ask.
- ➔ Especially talk to any other bored people. Feel out the other characters for why they are here. Maybe you can find a common ground or some plot the two of you could work on together. Don't be shy; unless your character sheet says otherwise, there's no reason why your character can't be an outgoing busybody, even if you aren't.
- ➔ Find an active character and ride his or her coattails. Offer your aid to someone who is doing something. Try to find an in-character reason, but if worst comes to worst, explain out of character that you are bored and that the other character looks to be doing something exciting and that you are interested. It might just work.
- ➔ Have a dramatic scene. Is your character a mystery waiting for others to unravel, but nobody seems interested? Make them interested. Have a fainting spell or a loud argument or do something weird. Make other people take notice of you and then they'll interact.
- ➔ Examine your character history. Were you given a character history by the GMs? Maybe there's a clue hidden somewhere that you missed in the first read through. Maybe there's someone your

character was supposed to know about whom you, the player, forgot. Maybe the progress of the game has brought to light a bit of your character history that didn't seem important before the game.

- ➔ Take a break. Things running too slowly? Nobody else around? Maybe the rest of the game went to get dinner or something. Take a break from the game for a little bit, maybe watch some TV. Maybe play a different character for a while (check with the GM before playing a new character).
- ➔ If you drop out of character, please don't stay in the game space. Very little is more distracting than people having an out of game conversation, and it can be very difficult to get back on track. And please, don't complain about the game during runtime. If you complain to the other players, you're not only keeping them from being in character, but you run the risk of taking them down with you and worsening the game for them. Complaining to the GMs, as opposed to asking for help, only raises their stress and doesn't accomplish anything because the GMs often cannot change their mechanics or plots while the game is happening.
- ➔ Talk to the GMs. If you've tried all of the above, and are still bored, then talk to the GMs. Be polite and let them know your problem. Perhaps they can help get your character back on track. Or, maybe they can give you a different character to play.
- ➔ As a Last Resort, Leave. If all else fails, you can always leave the game. This should always be your last resort. Don't make a scene, but make sure the GMs know that you are leaving. This lets them figure out how to cover for your absence. Give your character stuff back to the GMs so it can be redistributed later if necessary. Thank them for trying and either ask for a new character or just leave the game. Be polite about it. Running a LARP is very stressful and being mean just won't help.

Now let's take it from the other direction. If everybody rushes into every scene, the game will just move from one mob to another, and it will quickly become a nightmare. So, if you are playing an active character, here are a few tips to keep the game running smoothly.

- ➔ Allow others to have the spotlight. If someone, especially someone who tends to stay in the background, does something dramatic that your character wouldn't oppose, let it go. Wait and watch for awhile. Everyone deserves a day in the sun, and the boost of self-confidence you allow might be just the thing to get the character back on the right track. And you'll still have your time in the spotlight later if everyone learns to share.
- ➔ Talk to the bored people. It was already suggested that you talk to everyone, but if you are active, you almost have a responsibility to bring people who are not active into the game. Remember again, the purpose of a game is to interact. Do so frequently with as many different people as possible. Meeting new people is good.

Player Tips: The LARPA Baseline Social Contract

by Eric Johnson with Abigail Thompson

Done in the form of a series of affirmations in an attempt to encourage a positive attitude.

- I will come to the event looking to have a good time and to give others a good time.
- I will accept both victories and defeats with graciousness and humility.
- I will not unduly prevent another person from actively participating in the event.
- I will not behave in a way so as to prevent the event from continuing to run smoothly.

- I will handle all problems with an eye towards keeping the event running. If my problem will not interfere with the event then I will not interrupt the event to address it; if it does then I will endeavor to resolve it quickly and fairly so that the event may continue.
- I will treat other characters as my character would treat them; I will treat other participants as I would want them to treat me.
- I will respect the out-of-character chain-of-command and treat those both above and below me with respect.
- I will acknowledge that there are out-of-character constraints and concerns which must sometimes come before in-character ones.
- I will come to the event intending to actively participate in it; hiding may be the smart thing to do, but it is rarely the dramatic one.
- I will remember that every person, player and gm, is an equal member of the event's community.

The Live Action Roleplayers Association (LARPA) is a non-profit organization that exists exclusively to promote live roleplaying around the world. Find out more at <http://larpaweb.net>

After The LARP

RTLB calls the period between episodes of LARPs in a campaign the Between Game Period (BGP). During a BGP, you may – at your GMs' discretion – spend experience points (XP), request Between Game Actions (BGAs), communicate with other players, and even attend Between Game Events (BGEs).

Player Tips: Things to Do As Soon As the LARP Ends

- ➔ Make sure you've got all your items, props and costumes back. Also, return anything that isn't yours.
- ➔ You'll probably want some time to unwind. So will the GMs. Typically, GMs love to hear about their game and like to hear players talk about their experiences, but you may want to keep your negative feedback to yourself for a few days. Give the GM a chance to unwind as well.
- ➔ A few days after the game, once you've had a chance to think about it, give the GMs your feedback. What did you like, and what didn't work really well? As always, be polite.
- ➔ Some games have a dinner or a party afterwards. Be prepared. Make sure to have the cash on hand to pay your way.
- ➔ Many LARPs will have a game wrap right after the event ends. This gives the GMs a chance to explain their vision and for players to ask questions and tell quick war stories. As with all situations where you might be the center of attention, keep your war stories and questions short.
- ➔ Games with extensive props or sets will require cleanup. GMs always appreciate help.
- ➔ If this was an episode of a campaign game, you may need to "check out." That may mean returning items and in-game currency, and may even include a quick debrief to tell what you did during the episode.

Experience Points

Campaign LARPs often allow their players to earn Experience Points (XP) each episode. XP are spent to improve the character's STATS and Abilities and to reduce Handicaps. In Rules to Live By, XP are added to the player's STAT Pool which means that they can be spent on STATS, on Abilities, and on Handicaps.

GMs may give out experience points at the end of each Game Session of the campaign. In general, a good rule of thumb is one XP for each game period played, with a maximum of seven XP per Episode. So a game with three game periods would be worth triple the experience points of a one period game.

For the most part, experience points can be accumulated over many games and can be saved up for really big purchases. Unspent XP may be saved for later purchases.

Your GM must approve all expenditures of experience points. You must have a reason why your character has learned a new Skill, or lost a Handicap. For example, if your character has been carrying a gun for a series of campaigns, it's easy to justify gaining the Ranged Weapon skill. But if you wanted to learn First Aid, you'll have to come up with the story behind it. ("Between games, my character joined the Volunteer Fire Department and became an Emergency Medical Technician.").

Spending Experience Points

You may spend XP in many different ways between games.

Raising Abilities. You may spend points to raise Abilities your character already has. Note that Handicaps are special and are handled differently. The cost to get to a new level of an Ability is the same as during character generation. So, to get to level 4 from level 3 of an Ability would cost 1 point for a Very Easy Ability, 4 points for an Easy Ability, 8 points for Hard, and 12 points for Very Hard. Remember, not to skip levels. If you have level 3 of Tactics, you must buy level 4 before going on to level 5. Both of these expenditures may be done in the same Between Game Period.

Reducing Handicaps. Like Abilities, you must reduce Handicaps level by level. The easiest way to see how much it costs is to use the chart provided. Lowering a Handicap one level costs XP equal to your current level of the Handicap (doubled for Hard, tripled for Very Hard, just 1 for Very Easy) + 1 XP (2 for Hard, 3 for Very Hard). Lowering your Handicap from level 1 to 0 is called "buying off" your Handicap and it is as if you no longer have the handicap at all. You may buy off Handicaps that have a static cost by paying that static cost + 2 XP.

Lowering Your Handicap Cost Chart.

From Level	To Level	Cost			
		Very Easy	Easy	Hard	Very Hard
6	5	2	7	14	21
5	4	2	6	12	18
4	3	2	5	10	15
3	2	2	4	8	12
2	1	2	3	6	9
1	0	2	2	4	6

Raising STATS. Raising STATS can cost a lot of points. Raising a STAT costs as much as raising a Very Hard Ability, plus 3 points for each level raised. So, an IQ of 3 raised to 4, would cost 12 + 3, or

15, points. Just like with Abilities, you may not skip levels of STATS. Raising your STR or WILL does affect your Hit Points.

Buying New Abilities. The difference between having and not having an Ability can be tremendous. With few exceptions, if you do not have an Ability, you cannot even attempt to use it. Gaining a new Ability costs the same as buying one at character generation plus 3 startup points (6 for Hard; 9 for Very Hard.)

Abilities with defaults, such as Thrown Weapons or Library Use, do not have startup point costs. For example, if you decided to gain Close Weapons at level 1, it would cost just the 1 XP. You always gain new Abilities at level 1. After you have gained the Ability, you can raise it as normal.

Gaining New Handicaps. It is possible to gain Handicaps over the course of play. Maybe something happened to your character to give her an Aversion To: dogs. Or maybe your character was hit in the leg and now has a Limp. When your character gains new Handicaps, you also gain their equivalent cost in XP. You may also raise your level in a handicap to gain the equivalence in XP, with the GM's permission, of course.

Player Tips: Completely Reworking the Character

Sometimes after playing an episode of a campaign LARP, you realize that your character's STATS and Abilities are completely wrong, either for the character or for the campaign.

When this happens, your GM may allow you to rework your character's STATS and Abilities from the beginning, and then after the rework you can spend your XP. In general, try not to rework your character too many times, though. It can be disruptive to the campaign.

Money and Resources

Some campaign games like to give characters a bit more money at the start of each game. Abilities like Wealth and Poverty affect this income. Likewise, players can get items between games via Item Source, or you could spend money and buy items. Naturally, if your game doesn't use money or it is isolated (say it takes place entirely on a deserted space station), then you may not be able to get money or items between games.

Between Game Actions

Often in campaign games, you will want to do things that affect the game world between actual game sessions. You may wish to acquire or sell objects, perform research, contact people, or do any number of other things to affect the world of the game. These are called Between Game Actions (BGAs).

In general, the GMs should quantify and restrict the number of actions a character can take between games, otherwise there will be players who try to do everything between games, not during games.

Each Between Game Period (BGP) will contain a number of potential slots for BGAs. The GM will let you know how many BGAs are allowed each BGP. Note that the Spare Time Ability, and the Responsibilities Handicap affect the number of BGAs your character is allowed.

GM Tips: A Careful Balance

A careful balance *must* be struck regarding between game communications and events. Not all players have the same amount of spare time, and you want to be careful not to give too much of an in-game advantage to characters whose players have more of an out-of-game resource. The whole point of RTLB is to allow players to build characters whose Abilities can vary wildly from the players' abilities.

Between Game Events

In most campaign games, time does not stop in the game world between Game Sessions. Because of this, players often want to communicate in-character between Game Sessions. RTLB supports between game communications, and get-togethers. They foster a sense of community in the game and allow players to deeply develop relationships and characters.

It is strongly suggested that the GM create an internet mailing list and/or web page where players can communicate in and out of character.

Players may wish to get together for dinner or a social event between games. These Between Game Events (BGEs) are a fine way for players to enjoy the game world in-character without all the annoying monster attacks, politicking, and saving the world that usually comes in game sessions.

There are many tips in the GM sections on how to run BGEs. The most important thing to keep in mind both for players and GMs is that BGEs are designed to supplement games and roleplaying, not replace the actual game sessions. Keep plots, if any, light at between game events, and try to avoid heavy mechanics use. More so than the campaign game sessions, the purpose of a BGE is to allow characters to interact.

Player Tips: How to Be a Good Campaign Player

In general, there are two styles of LARP. *Theater style* games focus on the internal interactions between the characters and have plots that set the characters against each other. *Adventure style* games focus on the interactions between the characters and their environment (be it NPCs, puzzles, monsters, and so forth). The majority of LARP campaigns are adventure style. While these tips are geared toward the adventure style LARP player, there are good nuggets of wisdom here for players in any LARP.

Be Willing To Share Information. In an adventure style LARP, your fellow player characters tend to be part of a team with a connected goal. Sometimes there are internal conflicts within the group, but the group usually has an overall goal. Information can be critical to achieving that goal. If you come across a valuable piece of information, please share it with your fellow players. It will make the game run better for everyone.

Be Willing To Lose Graciously. This is good advice in general, but even more so when it comes to LARPing. Players put a good deal of time and effort into their characters and can come to identify with them closely. Thus, when the adventuring group doesn't succeed in an adventure, players can become depressed and bitter. Please keep in mind that losing an adventure is not the end of the campaign nor is it going to ruin your character. Real life, and good drama has a series of victories and losses. Allow your character a setback or two to make the wins you will have that much more meaningful. Besides, nobody likes a poor sport.

Allow others to have the spotlight. While this is good advice for any LARP, it is especially true for campaignLARPs in which people play the same characters repeatedly. If only a few characters ever seem to be active or important, the rest of the game will slowly come to resent those characters. As a *player* you should be working toward the good of the LARP and sometimes that means that you should let others have their day in the sun.

GM Reference

Welcome to the GM section of the RTLB core manual. Besides information on the rules of Rules to Live By, this half of the book will also provide tips on running live action roleplaying games.

Styles of LARPs

At the start of the book, we differentiated between live combat and simulated combat mechanics. The mechanics of the LARP is one axis where LARPs can be measured. The second axis is the interaction axis where the focus of the interactions of the players can be defined.

In general, an Adventure Style LARP focuses on the interactions of the players with their environment. The environment might consist of monsters to fight, puzzles to solve, non-player characters (NPCs) to interact with, and so forth. While the players will certainly interact with each other, the focus of the plots will be their interactions with the world around them. These types of games have a feel very similar to an adventure story or adventure tabletop roleplaying game. In many of these games, all of the players are essentially on the “same team,” even if they may have disagreements about particulars.

On the other hand, the focus of interactions in *Theater Style* LARPs are player to player. In these LARPs, the players will negotiate, fight, and generally interact with each other. They may still interact with the world around them, but the majority of the plots and storylines in the event will focus on player to player interactions. These types of games have a feel very similar to a drama or even a model United Nations (although political maneuverings are only one possible facet of a Theater Style LARP). In these games, players tend to be on opposing teams, or even “every man for himself.” Most of the conflict comes from players opposing other players.

Managing Player Expectations

As in the player half, this half of the book is arranged in order: before the LARP, during, and after. And one of the most important thing you as a GM can do before a LARP is manage your players’ expectations.

We’ve discussed the different styles and mechanics of LARP. As a GM, you need to communicate to your players what they will expect when they come to your event. People who show up ready to play a lighthearted adventure will be unprepared for an evening of complex Machiavelli scheming, and people who want to sit in a drawing room discussing Victorian politics will be less than happy if they have to spend their time fighting off a horde of goblins.

The more you communicate to your players ahead of time, the happier they will be. Be truthful. If someone won’t enjoy the type of event you are running, don’t try to persuade them otherwise. It’s better to run a LARP with a few slots unfilled than to have a game full of unhappy players.

Important things to tell your players:

- Mechanics of the LARP. Is it live combat, simulated combat, or somewhere in the middle.
- Style of the LARP. Is it Adventure, Theatre, or somewhere in the middle.
- General setting. This can include the time period, the location, the general politics, and other things that are specific to your LARP world.
- Characters. Will the GMs provide pre-written characters for the game, or will players be expected to generate their own characters? If they must generate their own, will they need to submit them for GM approval at some point prior to the game?
- Things to bring. If it’s a weekend long LARP held at a campsite for example, you may need to tell players to bring their own bedding. On page **XX**, we have a good checklist for players for what to bring to a LARP. Reference it in your pre-game announcements.

- What you expect players to do during the LARP. This can be general, such as protect the duchy from invaders, or negotiate mineral rights on a newly discovered planetoid. The more specific you are, however, the better prepared your players will be.
- If the players should expect surprises. Sometimes you cannot tell the players what they will be doing because you want genuine reactions of surprise, or because you have put mysteries in the game for players to solve.

In any case the main point is this: the more information and details you can provide to the players, the better prepared they will be for your LARP. You can severely reduce the number of unhappy players by managing their expectations.

GM Tip: Should I give away secrets?

Suppose you are running a LARP in which a player character is doomed to die, or is playing a villain who the rest of the game wants to foil, or the character thinks he is a genius but is actually insane. Should you warn the player in question ahead of time?

Yes. Absolutely.

Sure, you may want the events to be a surprise to the character, but the player needs to be able to roleplay these situations. While there certainly is a difference between players and their characters, sometimes players will truly identify with their characters and have a sort-of bleed over of emotions where the character's sense of humility and failure will upset the player.

By letting the player know that a horrible thing is in store for the character, you can mitigate things, and allow the player to prepare for the dramatic realization. This will produce more fun for everyone.

Oh, and the examples above are indeed from real life. I have seen players react poorly when placed in those exact situations without warning, and I have seen players rise to the occasion when warned ahead of time. Real life experience bears out this tip. Warn your players. They'll appreciate it.

Drama vs. Realism in LARPs

When designing your LARP, you also have to decide if the feel of the LARP be more dramatic or realistic. A dramatic LARP will feel more like a movie or book. Combats will be more cinematic and less fatal. A realistic LARP will feel more like real life. Combats will be much more dangerous.

We will touch more on this when we discuss running combats, but one important place this decision touches is what kind of dice you use in your LARP.

What Size Dice?

We have not yet mentioned is how many faces the dice used in RTLB should have. And the reason for that is because you, the GM, must choose for your game, based on its level of drama vs. realism.

The more realistic you want your game to be, the less randomness you want in your challenges. In general, we have found that ten-sided dice work best as a happy medium for drama and realism. If you want a more realistic game, try six-sided dice.

We strongly recommend not using dice with more than twelve sides or less than six. With too much randomness, your players will feel their skills don't really matter. With too little randomness, your players will feel like they can never accomplish anything difficult.

STAT and Abilities level ranges presented here have been playtested and work well with six and ten-sided dice. You may wish to change the minimum and maximum allowed levels for STATs and Abilities if you use dice other than six or ten-siders.

One additional option is to not use dice at all. In that case, the player must simply meet or beat the target number and all player vs. player challenges must be resolved by a GM who will act as a sort of drama randomizer. Alternatively, you could just have the higher number win every time with ties going to the player attempting the action.

GM Tips: Props vs. Item Cards

There are many LARPs that make exclusive use of props and physical representations. However, props can be expensive, or time consuming to make, or difficult to transport, or just plain illegal (silhouette laws and so forth).

Thus the item card was born. Simply write the relevant information on an index card and use that card to represent the item. Item cards are great for impromptu games or games on a budget.

And if you do use real props, sometimes it helps to tape an item card to the prop so characters know what the prop does. At the very least, you should tag the props so you know who to return them to after the game.

Running RTLB

You need to be prepared when you GM a LARP that uses RTLB. Carry a dice shaker (see page **XX**) at all times. Have damage stars handy. Be ready to answer lots of questions.

Now, volumes have been written elsewhere on how to run a live action roleplaying game. In general, when GMing RTLB, you want to use the mechanics as a tool to help the game but not allow them to get in the way of roleplaying, which is why we are all here.

GM Tips: Writing and Running a LARP

- Get enough food and sleep and keep yourself hydrated. It's easy to forget these basics in the heat of running a game.
- Be prepared. When you're writing the game, a million things will happen at the last minute. Plan ahead and try to schedule and do a good chunk of the writing ahead of time.
- The most important thing to remember when running a game is that you're all there to have fun. Don't let yourself be bogged down by the mechanics. RTLB has a learning curve – there are hints included later to let you “wing it.” But remember to be fair, too.
- Know the rules. Keep a copy of RTLB with you at all times. Keep copies of all the character sheets as well. Keep your notes on the game handy. When running a LARP, give every GM a 3-ring binder with all the plots, all the secret information, a copy of the rules, and all the character sheets. The GMs can keep those books with them at all times so they can easily answer questions and adjudicate conflicts. For some games, it may be appropriate to use laptops instead of 3 ring binders.
- A good way to make sure to get everything written on time is to budget your time. For example, if you are writing 25 character histories, each 4 pages long, and you can write about 2 pages a day, that's 50 days of writing character histories. That's nearly two months!
- Remember, no set of rules covers all the options. Players will often try to do things that make perfect sense, but aren't specifically covered by the rules. (For example: “I want to grab the muzzle

of the guard's gun and point it away from my friends.”) When this happens, you have two choices: make up a rule to cover the situation, or tell the player it cannot be done. Either option is OK, but be consistent. If you let a player do it one game, her friends will try the same trick the next time.

- Make sure all the GMs talk during the game. Discuss what information each of you have given the players, and what decisions you've had to make. This will keep you from contradicting each other, and confusing the players. Personal radios for each GM can be a lifesaver. If the game lasts for more than a few hours, a scheduled GM meeting to discuss the events so far is not a bad idea.
- Determine how lethal you want your game to be. For example, as RTLB is written, weapons aren't likely to accidentally kill any but the weakest characters, and healing is pretty easy. Want a deadlier game? Up the damage, and cut the effects of the First Aid and Surgery skills. Make sure to brief the players ahead of time!
- Decide how much GM involvement you want in your game. The more optional rules and plug-in systems you use (see below), the more you'll need GMs to help the players resolve challenges. If you are short on assistant GMs, keep the rules simple!

Target Numbers

You will be called upon come up with target numbers for challenges on the spot. For example, a player may want to break into a virtual location, or do some research, or pick a lock, and a target number for those challenges hasn't already been determined.

Keeping in mind that the average human in RTLB has a 2 in all STATs, and a skill range from 0-6. That means that 5 is a good, average target number. Less than that and the character will almost certainly have no problem. Much more and only very skilled characters will succeed. At a difficulty level of 5-7, an average person will be able to succeed about half the time.

Target Number	Description	Examples
1-4	Very Easy	Jumping a 3 foot chasm. Researching something well known.
5-7	Average	Climbing a 10' chain link fence. Researching something obscure.
8-10	Difficult	Jumping out of the way of a car. Researching something very obscure.
11-13	Very Difficult	Catching an arrow without taking damage. Attempting to discover something nobody else knows.
14+	Nearly Impossible	Kicking through a brick wall. Discovering the true nature of the universe.

Things to remember:

- All challenges are Ability Rating + Die Roll vs. Target Number + Die Roll. Don't forget the die roll for the target number.
- Characters cannot even attempt most challenges unless they have the appropriate Ability.
- Sometimes you may wish to challenge someone against a base STAT, like a DEX or WILL challenge. Try to avoid those and use Abilities if at all possible, like Dodge, or Stoic. However, if you must use base STATs, you can use the table above subtracting 3 from the target numbers to get the level you want.

One additional thing to keep in mind is that the more time players spend being GMed by you, the less time they spend roleplaying with each other. Now sometimes, you need to run mechanics for a period of

time, but in general, you want to minimize the time spent rolling dice and maximize the time spent playing roles. Knowing the mechanics so you don't have to look things up helps a great deal, but sometimes you don't even need to roll dice.

The best example would be an Area of Knowledge challenge. If the player is asking for something the character would have a moderate to good chance of knowing, just tell them. Don't roll the dice. Give the answer and let the player get back into the game.

Running Combat

Combat is, unfortunately, the most difficult and time consuming part of Rules To Live By. This problem is fairly systemic among simulated combat games, as combat has to slow down to accommodate every player. While RTLB combats tend to take less time than many other systems, they still can bog down. Therefore, one of your most important goals when running a RTLB combat is: *keep it moving*. For example, if you have a 50 person combat, and each person takes only 3 minutes to go, that's still 2½ hours for a combat round. That's ridiculous. Here are some tips to cut that time down:

- Know the system! Your first few combats will go slowly as the players start to learn the system, but you can practice ahead of time. Invite your friends over for some practice. Use the character templates or the characters from the sample game.
- When a big fight breaks out, take charge. Keep things moving. Declare the attackers and keep them going in order of WILL. If people want to just move or leave the combat, let them. The fewer people in the combat, the better. Have people who want to take game actions raise their hands or resolve the actions themselves, and let the people who are moving or leaving just do so.
- If possible, break the combat down into smaller combats, combining the smaller combats as they resolve themselves. Deputize players who know the rules to run these separate combats, and only get involved if they can't work it out themselves.
- Use the Quick Combat Guide below to help you keep track of what to do next. Try to keep a copy with you at all times.

Quick Combat Guide

Initiating Combat

1. A player points and says, "Combat," loudly and clearly.
2. If necessary, pause the game to:
 - A) Get a GM (if necessary)
 - B) Get character STATS and Abilities.

Organization

1. Say: "Please note where you and your neighbor (or target) are standing now."
2. Check players for STATS/Abilities. On a case by case basis, determine whether to send them for their materials, or whether it is possible to run them from the information on hand. Do this as quickly as possible.
3. Have people return, and keep them in roughly the same place as they started.

Round 1

1. Instigator declares his or her action.
2. Instigator resolves his or her action.

Subsequent Rounds

1. Count WILL order, starting at 1 and going to 6 or more. Toward the end of the combat, you can make people declare by merging WILLs: WILL of 1 or 2, WILL of 3 or 4, and so on.
2. When you announce a WILL, players who wish to do anything that affects another character raise their hands. Players who wish to move, just move. (Ties are resolved by DEX order, then by rolling a die). Do this for each player for each WILL.
3. All players resolve their actions simultaneously. Note that hand-to-hand and close combat attacks automatically fail at this point if the player is not close enough to touch the target with the weapon used.
4. Damage takes effect after all actions have been resolved.
5. Unconsciousness and/or death occurs after damage is taken.
6. All players who wanted to leave the combat, and are able to do so, are out of the combat.
7. Combat ends when no players declare attacks or plan on declaring attacks.

After Combat

1. Check for “out of game” factors that may be delaying real time movement (for example: the player of the kindly doctor is in the other room changing out of his monster costume)
2. Determine if anyone will die if not first aided. Have them start their ten minute death count.
3. Be there to observe healing in progress, and determines if everyone can be, and has been, treated.
4. Be there to handle post combat questions and actions (for example, looting, or arresting participants).
5. Determine if any disposition is being made of any corpses, blood etc., and if it is important, mark the area (item card or prop for corpse, indicator for blood, bullet holes, etc.).

GM Tips: Managing Combats

One tip you have been given is to break a large combat down into smaller combats and have additional moderators on hand to run the smaller combats. In general, you want one moderator per combat; if you try to run more than one combat at once, you are essentially just running one larger combat.

Invariably, these smaller combats will get out of sync, or players from one combat will attempt to affect those from another combat. Don't sweat it too much. Allow players to join adjacent combats at the start of that combat's round. Do be careful, however, to keep players from acting in two combats at once. No matter how many combats are running at once, a player still only gets one combat action each round.

Cinematic vs. Realistic Combats

Earlier in the GM section we discussed cinematic and realistic LARP styles. Because combat is heavily mechanical in RTL, you can especially use it to flavor the style of your LARP.

If you are running a cinematic combat, then you should feel free to give the players more latitude to their actions, making the combat feel like a pulp novel or a movie. A realistic combat should be stricter, limiting what the players can do.

In general, you should be stricter when the combats are player character vs. player character and looser when the players are fighting non-player characters (NPCs) or monsters. When the players are fighting each other, you need to be fair and unbiased. When they are fighting NPCs or monsters, you can allow the players to be more cinematic, and even fudge die rolls when the players perform a spectacular bit of strategy.

One additional thing that can be allowed in a cinematic combat is the *Unrealistic Soliloquy*. An unrealistic soliloquy gives a character a chance to make an impassioned dying speech, or declare their love for a character who has been struck down, or even allows them to give orders in combat. Basically an Unrealistic Soliloquy is a short speech that a character can give during combat. Be careful not to allow too many of them; however, as they can slow down the combat and get in the way of the LARP.

GM Tips: When To Fudge Die Rolls, A Real Life Example

In a recent LARP, I was asked to make a monster, a radioactive mutant, for a sort of dungeon crawl. I was told to expect to have a number of characters who were good fighters.

I looked at the parameters. I'd be one person fighting about 6-11 people. They'd have numbers. I'd need a whopping advantage to stay alive for more than one round. I decided to make the fight personal.

The first thing I did was decide that guns didn't work well against my monster. They would do no more than 1 point of damage and the first five points of damage the creature took were ignored anyway (a high level of Natural Armor). The creature had 20 hit points, more than double the toughest fighters.

Hand to hand weapons would work against the creature, but if they hit and did more than 1 point of damage, the attacker also took damage. Finally, the creature had several special Abilities to deal out lots of hand to hand damage. Its ability to hit and dodge hand to hand attacks was about the same as the better fighters. It was good at dodging bullets to keep the idea that guns wouldn't work against it.

My goal was to knock one-two player characters unconscious and injure several more, but allow the players to win the fight. I fully expected that – powerful as it was – the creature would still lose the fight. I also didn't want to kill any characters, just hurt them a lot.

So the combat started. I discovered an interesting thing at the start of the round. I was attacking the best fighters in the front, but we all had the same stats, so they were as likely to miss me as I was them. Not a lot of damage was done on either side that round. But I could move fast and quickly put myself toward the back lines (thus also putting the better fighters behind me giving them an advantage).

I finally managed to hit someone. With special abilities, I did seven stars of damage (that's a LOT) and she fell unconscious. Other characters by then had knocked out a number of my defenses and were eating away at my hit points. One character had hit my monster character in the back of the head with a huge metal hammer, cracking the character's skull open and revealing the gooey goodness inside. Since he was a mutant, this didn't drop the monster, but it was slowing him down.

Eventually the monster was down to two hit points. I had dropped one character, severely injured another, and had done some minor injuries to a few others when one player decided he would stick his gun in the hole in the back of my head and pull the trigger.

I did a quick check of the scenario. The combat had gone on for several rounds. I had achieved my goal of hurt. I was down to two hit points. A player was doing something way cool. All good. He rolled a 14. I didn't even roll my defense. I announced that he succeeded in blowing my head open and showering my brains on the people on the other side.

I then fell down and was eaten by rats.

And *that's* when to fudge a die roll in combat.

Bestiary

It is rare for a LARP to contain animals. After all, LARPs focus on interaction, and it is difficult to interact with animal characters. Therefore, the most normal use of animals is as “monsters,” creatures out to kill the player characters (such as an angry bear rampaging through their campsite), or to block their progress (the snarling German Shepherd guarding the gates of the prison.)

Animals can also be used as plot goals (for example, if the players were on safari, trying to bag a Bengal tiger) or as an item (if the possessor of the wizard’s pet rabbit gained strange mystical powers...)

Large animals can be played by people (costumes help here). For small animals, it’s normally better for a GM or assistant to use a prop to represent the animal, and move it in combat. Some LARPs have used pictures of animals on sticks or cardboard cutouts to represent the animals.

Sometimes an animal may have some special Abilities, Abilities that people do not have. The most common of these Abilities is Claws where an unarmed combat attack does Red Stars instead of Yellow.

Unless otherwise stated, animals cannot wield weapons or throw objects. Note that animals can have STATs higher than 6, the human maximum. To save space, we have not listed base combat abilities, and summarized them at the top.

Bear

STR: 7	Unarmed Combat: 9	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 5	Dodge: 4	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 1	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 14
WILL: 7	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Large	1			
Fierce	1	STR	7	WILL
Forceful Punch	1			
Impervious To Pain	5			
Power Hitter	6			
Sprinting	4			
Tough	1			
Claws				

Bees, Swarm of

STR: 1	Unarmed Combat: 7	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 7	Dodge: 9	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 0	Library Use: -	Hit Points: N/A
WILL: 1	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Unarmed Combat	6	STR	7	Dodge
Sting (Claws)				
Venom	1			

If Bees hit, they do one die divided by 2 Red Stars of damage. The swarm cannot be killed, but one can run from it.

Boar

STR: 6	Unarmed Combat: 9	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 5	Dodge: 4	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 1	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 13
WILL: 7	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Fierce	1	STR	7	WILL
Impervious To Pain	5			
Forceful Punch	1			
Sprinting	3			
Tough	1			
Natural Armor	1			
Tusks (Claws)				
Power Hitter	3			

Dog, Guard

STR: 4	Unarmed Combat: 6	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 6	Dodge: 7	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 1	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 9
WILL: 5	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating Error! Bookmark not defined	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				

Fierce	1	STR	6	WILL
Alertness	6			
Acute Taste	6	IQ	7	Varies
Sprinting	5			
Bite (Claws)				

Orangutan

STR: 6	Unarmed Combat: 6	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 5	Dodge: 7	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 1	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 11
WILL: 5	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Alertness	4			
Sprinting	5			
Thrown Weapons	4	DEX	9	Dodge
Acute Taste	6	IQ	7	Varies
Bite (Claws)				
Power Hitter	5			

Lion

STR: 7	Unarmed Combat: 10	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 6	Dodge: 7	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 1	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 12
WILL: 5	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Large	1			
Fierce	1	STR	8	WILL
Alertness	6			
Acute Taste	3	IQ	5	Varies
Impervious to Pain	3			
Power Hitter	3			
Sprinting	6			
Tough	2			

Piranha, School of

STR: 7	Unarmed Combat: 10	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 4	Dodge: 6	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 1	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 9
WILL: 3	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Impervious To Pain	6			
Teeth (Claws)				

If school hit, they do one die of Red Stars of damage. Normal weapons do no more than one Star of damage to the school. "Area of Effect"

weapons and Full Automatic Fire (if used) do half damage. Piranha may not leave water.

Rats, Swarm of

STR: 3	Unarmed Combat: 8	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 6	Dodge: 9	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 0	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 4
WILL: 1	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Impervious To Pain	6			
Claws/Fangs				
Venom	1			

Does one Red Star of damage, ignoring armor. Normal weapons do no more than one Star of damage to the swarm. "Area of Effect" weapons and Full Automatic Fire (if used) do half damage.

Rhinoceros

STR: 7	Unarmed Combat: 10	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 4	Dodge: 2	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 1	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 15
WILL: 4	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Large	2			
Fierce	1	STR	11	WILL
Power Hitter	5			
Sprinting	5			
Impervious to Pain	3			
Natural Armor	3			

May attack two characters per round, as long as they are close enough to touch each other.

Scorpion

STR: 1	Unarmed Combat: 7	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 4	Dodge: 8	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 0	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 3
WILL: 2	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Assassin	6	IQ	6	IQ
Tiny	3			
Venom	2			
Stinger (Claws)				

Snake, Constricting

STR: 6	Unarmed Combat: 9	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 4	Dodge: 4	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 0	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 9
WILL: 3	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Impervious to Pain	4			
Fierce	1	STR	7	WILL
Sprinting	1			

The snake grapples its opponent. Grappled character take 2 Yellow stars of damage each round.

Snake, Venomous

STR: 2	Unarmed Combat: 7	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 6	Dodge: 7	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 0	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 6
WILL: 2	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Quick Reflexes	3			
Alertness	7			

Sprinting	2		
Unarmed Combat	6		
Bite (Claws)			
Venom	4		

Wolf

STR: 6	Unarmed Combat: 7	Close Weapons: -
DEX: 6	Dodge: 6	Thrown Weapons: -
IQ: 1	Library Use: -	Hit Points: 10
WILL: 4	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Illiterate				
Paws				
Acute Taste	6	IQ	7	Varies
Fierce	1	STR	7	WILL
Alertness	6			
Sprinting	5			
Tactics	1			
Track	6	IQ	7	IQ
Claws/Fangs				

GM Tips: If I Could Talk to the Animals...

It is usually difficult to communicate with animals in live action roleplaying games. After all, most people cannot understand the language of birds or even dogs. And while scientists believe that most birds understand each other, the jury is out on whether they understand dogs.

Our suggestion is to go with the precedent set by numerous cute animal movies. The animals can all understand each other and they can understand humans, but humans cannot understand the language of animals unless they have the Alien Language skill.

Flavoring Your Game

Reena was born in the northern wastes. She was taught from an early age the ways of herbs and the spirits of nature. She was taught how to defend herself, with knife and spear and when she came of age she was sent on a quest to find her totem.

When she was thirteen she made the trek across the frozen plain to the caves of crystal to choose her mystic stone. Through it she can call forth the power of the Great Bear, and even take its shape when necessary.

Abercrombe is known as the Wizard of Wall Street for a good reason. He uses a hermetic system of magic to influence the laws of probability. Money is his focus and he can actually draw power from larger denominations.

But Abercrombe's most important resource is his cat, Felicity. Felicity is his familiar, and Abercrombe often uses her to spy on his competition. Abercrombe keeps his powers secret. He has to – if he was found out, he'd be lynched... or worse.

Abercrombe and Reena come from obviously different worlds. His is a world of low magic, where adepts keep to themselves and supernatural creatures are rare. She is from an older world of high magic with frequent supernatural creatures and visible spells.

It is important when creating a game world that the mechanics fit, and have a good flavor. Reena, for example, can call upon the power of the Great Bear. This might be represented by the “Power Hitter” skill, but you may not wish to call it that. You could call it “Power of the Great Bear” and then put “Power Hitter” in parenthesis.

In general, you don’t need to create new Abilities when the ones already in existence would fit your situation. Instead, flavor the existing Abilities. You could give them new names, and maybe flavor the effects to fit your world.

The key to flavoring the supernatural is to allow the player to have Abilities with the same result as those already in existence, but which have different names.

For example, Abercrombe might have a spell that lets him tell what stocks will do well. This could be simulated using the Area of Knowledge or Business skills, but you could call it “Mystic Prediction” instead.

Allowing players to have personalized, flavored Abilities will make them feel special and feel more part of the game world. Making the Abilities have the same effect as already existent Abilities gives you one less thing to worry about during run time.

Game Master Created Characters

Non-Player Characters

In a tabletop roleplaying game, non-player characters (NPCs) are created and played by the GM, hence the term *non-player* character. In a LARP, non-player characters may be played by a pool of cast players or a GM. Sometimes, NPCs are minor characters that are just in-game for a small percentage of the game. Sometimes they are there for the entire game. And some NPCs are recurring characters that occur several times over the course of a LARP campaign. NPCs are called by different names in different LARP systems, for example, some systems call NPCs cast or monsters (even if there is nothing especially monstrous about the characters).

There are two things that differentiate NPCs from PCs in a LARP setting: autonomy and focus. In general, player characters are fully autonomous, attempting anything they wish. NPCs are usually put into game with a purpose, and given specific instructions. Some NPCs may have more leeway with those instructions than others, but NPCs usually fill some role in the game.

Also, in general, the focus of the attention of the game is on the player characters. NPCs are there to enhance the game, not be the focus of the plots and activities. If you find you have an NPC that has become the focus of attention, ask yourself if you would enjoy watching the NPC if you were a player character. SomeLARPs have coined a clever term for what two (or more) NPCs have a big scene with each other while the player characters are spectators. They call it “monsterbaiting.” Avoid monsterbaiting in public; it’s embarrassing.

What To Tell NPCs

As stated above, NPCs are sent into game with a purpose. Some NPC roles are quick, “*try to steal the great golden egg; if you are caught fight to the death.*” Some are more involved, “*you are a teacher of*

the magicks of the winds; you are looking for students to instruct. Basic instruction can take as long as three years.” But all of them serve a purpose for the game, and few of them have complete autonomy.

In general, the less in-game time an NPC has, the less you need to do for the character. The egg-thieves, for example, probably don’t need a history more involved than that one sentence. The Master of the Winds may need a detailed history and an explanation of what wind magick is and how to teach it.

More importantly, you don’t need to work up full STATs on most of your NPCs. The thieves would need basic combat stats, but nothing else. There’s no need to work up full characters for them, and the players might suffer from information overload. The teacher, on the other hand, might have more points worth of STATs and Abilities than are allowed to player characters. That is important: *when you create NPCs, you are allowed to break the rules.* As a GM, you can create NPCs that have better STATs that are allowed to players, and you can create NPCs that only have the STATs they need for a given scene, **and** you can change NPC STATs between scenes if it suits your purposes.

GM Generated Player Characters

Sometimes you, the GM, may create the player characters for your LARP. If they are characters which will intermingle with player generated characters, we suggest that you follow the character creation rules you give your players. That is only fair. However, if you are running a one-shot game where you create *all* the characters, we suggest you treat them as NPCs for the purpose of history and STATs: give them only what they need to play the game. You don’t need to have fully flushed out STATs or balanced Abilities if you are creating all the characters, and the game is not a continuing campaign.

Campaign Games

A LARP campaign consists of a number of interconnected LARP sessions, following the stories of the characters portrayed in those sessions. Usually a player will play the same character each session, allowing the character to grow and change as his or her storyline progresses.

As we have discussed, each event in a campaign LARP is called a *Game Session*. Game Sessions are separated by one or more *Between Game Periods* (BGPs). Players may submit *Between Game Actions* (BGAs) to the GMs during each BGP. A BGA is a discrete action the player wishes to perform between games, for example doing research on a prominent NPC, or searching for a lost treasure, or performing an occupation, or fighting crime.

Also, players may spend *Experience Points* (XP) during BGPs to buy off Handicaps and raise the levels of STATs and Abilities.

Experience Points

Experience Points are awarded at the end of each Game Session and are added to the player’s STAT pool (which means they can trickle down into the Ability pool as well). The amount of XP awarded should be determined by the GM, but we recommend one XP for each game period played, with a maximum of 7 XP per Episode. So a game with three game periods would be worth triple the experience points of a one period game. Keep the length of your campaign in mind when deciding how many XP to give out to players. If you give out 7 XP per game, then after ten games your characters will have 70XP more than they started with, which is a substantial increase in power.

Some LARPs like to give bonus XP to reward roleplaying or completing certain in-character goals. Some LARPs give bonus XP as a reward for out-of-game service, such as volunteering to NPC or filling out a post-game survey. These bonuses are entirely at your discretion.

For specific instructions on how players can spend XP, see the section entitled “After The LARP” in the player half of the book.

Income and Expenses

You may wish to give your players income between games. Keeping track of money can be a headache and it is very difficult to make money meaningful in a LARP, so decide carefully how you want to handle income.

The simplest way is just to give players a set income between each game. Keep in mind that there are Abilities, such as Wealth, and Poverty, that affect income. A more complex way would be to have each player choose an occupation with a base salary, which is then affected by Wealth and Poverty.

If you want to be really complex, you could create a sort of stock market system and have resource investments. Actions during the game might affect the income potential of the investments. We’ll have an example of this when we discuss plug-in systems.

Between Game Actions

Players in Campaign Games may submit Between Game Actions to the GMs between each Game Session. However, without restrictions and information, this will quickly get out of control. You will receive questions and actions constantly. You will get novellas of information, some written in a stilted in-character fashion. You will be asked questions at parties and social gatherings. You will lose information. You will be overwhelmed.

We recommend that you limit your players to no more than six BGAs per BGP. Further, we recommend that you limit *what* your players can choose as a BGA. There are some things, such as costume changes, that your players may feel are important, but are too much information than you want to track. You should give your players a clear delineation of what they should submit as BGAs and how they should submit them.

BGAs are an excellent tool, as they allow the GMs to see what parts of the campaign the players are truly interested in. By examining the submitted BGAs, you can see where you need to give more information and where you may wish to focus the plots of future events.

Info: BGA Examples

In my recent steampunk campaign, *Brassy’s Men*, we created a web page where players could choose BGAs from a drop down list. This significantly limited the number of potential BGAs and focused the players. We also allowed player journals where players could communicate what has been happening to their characters and give direction to the GMs.

Here are a sample set of BGAs and a journal entry for Jonathon Breckle played by Aris Kletniaks. Note that the BGAs are direct actions and questions to be resolved between games, and that the journal lists what the character has been doing, and what the player wishes to happen to the character in the future. Keep in mind that this was for a campaign with an average of 5 months passing between games. For a campaign with more frequent episodes, you would expect a smaller amount of information.

[A Sample BGA sheet:](#)

BGA Results For Jonathon Breckle (Arnis Kletnieks)

Action	Information	Result
Occupation	Policeman	Processed: You earn £16 performing

		your occupation. After £0 in taxes, that's £16.
Gather Dirt	Colonel Restfordlington	Processed: Colonel Restfordlington is quite the hard worker. He often works late at home.
Research/Investigate	Roberta Scotsdale (born Roberta Jones) is the wife of one James Scotsdale. James' name was found on the back of a picture of Christopher Fenwich. Roberta may have been Fenwich's ally. Breckle wishes to hunt down the current whereabouts of this lady, and question her if possible.	Processed: According to the Babbage Engine she is still alive and living in French Canada. It would be difficult to question her directly, but she could be contacted via mail or telegram.
Research/Investigate	Nigel Perkins supposedly worked for the Napier family, and he supposedly died in the same fire that killed the husband and wife. But, the Babbage engine has no record of a permanent address or next of kin for him. Either he was using a false name, or his record was erased. Breckle needs to find out which, and who this man really was.	Processed: It was most likely a false name. It takes a bit of doing, but the Babbage Girls confirm that there were no erasures related to Nigel Perkins. You are able to get an address for the boarding house where Perkins was staying while working for the Napiers. The nice woman there says that Perkins was a quiet boy, tall with brown hair and that he kept to himself. When he just never came home after the boiler explosion at the steamworks, she assumed he was dead, poor thing, and gave his effects to his next of kin, his uncle Otto from Germany. She pauses and says that it's funny that so many people are suddenly interested in Mr. Perkins. A nice young boy named Kurt was asking about Mr. Perkins just the other day. Kurt was tall and thin with blond hair.
Gather Dirt	Nicholas Harvey	Processed: Whatever N. Harvey eats for dinner on Thursday always makes his stomach upset the next day. He should fire his cook.

A Sample Journal:

Breckle's Casebook, Episode 4 (Arnis Kletnieks)

Working relationship with Edith Sandeman

Having gotten her man out of trouble, and having helped her and her husband discover some things about their past, Breckle has forged a working relationship with Edith Sandeman. Ms. Sandeman has taken to informing Breckle when her people will be protesting, and they have a simple policy - so long as the protestors stay non-violent, Scotland Yard will let them go about their business. Breckle has ordered (and will likely continue to order) police to defend protestors from errant Brassy's Men, if required.

It is important to note that this arrangement is unofficial - Inspector Stone is uninformed and uninvolved. Anyone of the Yard who breaks this truce will likely have Breckle personally fall on them like a ton of bricks.

Investigation of Moebius' Lab

Having been informed ahead of time, Breckle managed to use the Blackout Protest as a cover for entering and reviewing Moebius' lab without the scientist's knowledge or permission. While most of the contents appeared to be legitimate military contract items, a couple raised some eyebrows. Most notably were blackboards of notes on oxidation rates of explosive fuels. Breckle (who knows a smidgen about explosives) finds this curious. The player (who know a lot of physics) thinks "the man's making a rocket!?!"

Work with Spectre

Claude Spectre has turned his Watchmen into an official (if not widely recognized) force for investigating the strange and unnatural. Breckle's work has led him to be the group's man in Scotland Yard, though he's not officially been moved to the Special Operations office. This seems to effectively mean that he eventually gets briefed roughly at the end of things, when the mavericks finally need to consider that the police might need to be involved. While Breckle chafes a bit at being relegated to working out end-game logistics, it is better than having no involvement at all.

The group seems focused on Brainierd and Ian Dunross' Order of Promethean Light. No telling yet where that one is going to go...

The Pierce Trial

This case has become Breckle's pride and joy. Wrapped up in a nice neat bow - the threat of a curse lifted, Royals safe and secure, and seemingly on decent terms with Elanor, Penelope, and Chadwick Pierce to boot. Eleanor is still in custody, her execution stayed in favor of keeping her as a possible bargaining chip and symbol of English mercy. Of course, politics prevents anyone from officially recognizing there was ever really a threat, so the most Breckle got out of it was a sincere personal "Thank you" from the Prime Minister. But Breckle knows what he managed, and that's perhaps enough.

Mr. Connelly

Connelly has his award, and Ireland some industry. And some folks bucking for the Prime Minister's job are even speaking in public about some form of Home Rule. While in his wedding cups, Connelly suggested that if home rule happens, Breckle had a shot at being the head of Ireland's own Scotland Yard. Breckle, sober, understands that Connelly is in no place to make such offers. Or even if he'd be accepted back at home in such a job anymore. Or if he'd *want* such an administrative position - it isn't as if Dunross, Lascelles, or Talbot have had a real grasp of police work.

Vicar Merrivale

Working with Artemisia Trent, Vicar Merrivale was caught with a large sum of money that belonged to the Trent/Sandeman charity fund. Out of deference, discipline of the Vicar has been left to the Church,

so long as they do the job right. If Ms. Sandeman or Ms. Trent are not satisfied, Breckle has more than enough evidence to slap the man in jail.

The Napier Investigation

The only live lead left points at an “uncle Otto” - this may be one “Reinhart Otto”, who at last report is in Germany. Breckle has no German contacts to speak of, and if Napier had been killed as a piece of international espionage, he can’t just walk up to the ambassador and start asking questions. Unless this man comes back into Breckle’s jurisdiction, there is little that can be done about him. So, to be sure, some checking into his background and any other aliases is in order.

The Future...

Breckle wandered around the emotional landscape about his work. He’s been angry that loose cannons like Habedasher get knighthoods for doing the sort of thing Breckle risks every day for minimal pay. He’s felt driven to reach some semblance of glory for his work. He’s felt like giving up when even his best earned him at most a nod, and frequently derision. Working with Edith Sandeman and Eleanor Pierce finally gave him perspective he lacked. As he said to Ms. Pierce before her trial - in order to be a good Irishman, you first have to be a good man. A good man does what he does because it needs doing, and it is the right thing to do. Fame and money are only useful while you’re alive anyway.

Let Connelly be the face to lead Ireland to where it can be proud again. Let Spectre seem like the mysterious man who knows all the answers to all the crimes. In the end, they, and the labor leader, and the Prime Minister, all need someone doing Breckle’s job. So, now Breckle may occasionally grumble to himself about how things are unfair, but that’s like someone grumbling about the weather. The world isn’t fair, but things need doing anyway.

If one were writing Breckle like a novel, there’d be two basically appropriate endings - 1)He finally breaks the Big Case and gets the Bad Guy in such a way as he gets the recognition he no longer requires or 2)He goes through the grueling ordeal and dies valiantly doing the Right Thing that others can’t do because they think they have more to live for.

That being said, Breckle has already had some really good Dramatic Moments (thanks Laura!), and most of his personal plots seem to have wrapped up, and he’s had really solid internal development. I’m happy with where he’s gotten, and given how messy things will probably get in the final episode, simply focusing on getting the cop things done will keep me more than busy, I’m sure.

Answering BGAs

There are four different categories of Between Game Actions: Information, World Affecting, Player Affecting, and Personal. All of them come with their own issues.

Information BGAs are – by far – the most common types of BGA, and are the second easiest to process (Personal are the easiest). Information BGA is just that, a player requesting more information about the game world. However, like all things, they aren’t always straightforward.

There are several types of information requests. Sometimes the player wants information on a continuing plot, information that will move the plot along and helps the game. These are easy to handle. You give the player the information and everyone is happy.

Unfortunately, sometimes the player wants information that you just can’t give out. Maybe giving out the information would short circuit the game. For example, the players in an adventure-style LARP know that the next episode is set in Sleepy Hollow and they want to find out more about the Headless Horseman. But you’ve set a majority of the game as an information gathering scenario. If you give that

information out early, you'll have a bunch of bored players during the game; if you don't give the information out, you have frustrated players in their BGA attempts.

We suggest that you give out as much information as you can and then let the player know *out of character* that there is no more information available and that what they want to know can be found out in game. For example, in the Headless Horseman scenario, you might tell players about the legend since that would be commonly known, and then say that there is an old gypsy woman who knows the truth, thus setting them on the first step of the adventure.

Sometimes you will have players who submit Information based BGAs derived from incorrect information. Perhaps they jumped to conclusions during the event, or they misunderstood a piece of information, or they were just flat-out lied to. In this case, we suggest you tell the player *out-of-character* that they are basing their research on faulty evidence, and give them in-character results that show what parts of their evidence are faulty. If it really was bad information that they should have had correct, you can then give them the research results based on the correct information.

Finally, be prepared for players to ask you questions about your game world at any given opportunity. I've spent countless parties, lunches, car trips, and such discussing my campaigns, answering questions, and listening to player's thoughts. Players will take any opportunity to ask questions. There are a few reasons for this phenomenon:

- First, players are excited about the campaign. It's a sign of a good campaign when people want to talk about it.
- Second, episodes are busy and chaotic. People often have questions that they just don't get a chance to ask during the game, and want to ask them while you're available.
- And finally, it's something to talk about. It's something that you have in common with your players: the LARP. Just like sports fans talk about the players and their teams, or some people talk about tv shows, or politics, we tend to talk about larp. It's something we all have in common.

The question then becomes: what do you do when players start asking you questions at parties? It depends on how you are feeling and the depth of their questions. Sometimes you can encourage the discussion. Sometimes you may wish to suggest that the questions would be better submitted as BGAs. And sometimes you may need to tell your players that you need a break from the campaign for a night. They'll understand.

World Affecting BGAs are ones that affect the world around the Player Characters, but do not target specific other characters. BGAs that target nebulous organizations, political landscapes, NPCs (major or minor), and so forth would fall under this category.

These BGAs can require a bit of a balancing act. As GMs, you want to make our players feel that they have an effect on the world, but you also want to keep the majority of action during games, not between games, otherwise you really are running a play-by-mail tabletop game.

Again, the solution is to communicate with your players out of character. Let them know when they have submitted actions that would better be resolved during the game and that the purposes of BGAs is to enhance the runtime portions of the game, not supplant them.

Player Affecting BGAs can be particularly problematic. They are actions that directly affect other Player Characters, from trying to steal from them to finding out their secrets (an overlap of Information BGAs).

The difficulty here lies in balancing one player's desires with the other player's game enjoyment. You want to provide enough information that players feel a sense of accomplishment, but not so much information that they have control over the other players, or run those player characters out of the game.

Again, giving out-of-game information helps a great deal. What you can do is include the *provability* of your results. Provability can range from "this is word you've heard on the street," to "you have documents you could use to prove your case in a court of law." You want people to feel the ramifications of their actions, but you don't want to make their characters unplayable due to between game actions.

Personal Between Game Actions are things that are important to the character, but do not affect the world around them. You actually want to minimize these. You want the players to know you care about their characters, but you don't want to suffer from information overload. To avoid being swamped, tell the players where the line is and explain that – for the most part – you would rubber stamp all Personal BGAs. Be prepared, however, to step in if a player goes overboard. You may wish to have a talk with a player who decides that he wins several Olympic gold medals while killing terrorists and saving the world several times over between games.

To summarize: the most important concept for BGAs is communications. Let your players know what to expect and what is expected of them, and give your players out-of-character information when you need to explain why their BGA results were a certain way.

Between Game Events

A Between Games Event (BGE) is an official gathering of campaign players to interact in-game between the Game Sessions. Not all BGEs are created equal. There are different types of BGEs. Here is a list of the base types of BGEs, although actual events may be a combination of the base types.

Party/Social: This BGE is an opportunity for players to interact in character. Party/Social BGEs tend to contain no plots and no game mechanics. There are no need for STAT/Ability sheets in Party/Social BGEs. NPCs tend to be a name and, at best, a paragraph description. Examples: Lady Snooterfield's Tea and Salon, A Night At The Red Lion, 'ey Jack Varden got paid and it's drinks on the 'ouse!

Adventure: This BGE is very much like a short tabletop or live action adventure style game. An Adventure BGE features a team of united PCs working together "against" their environment (including NPCs). NPC characters tend to be pulled from the environment and may include monsters. Players get STAT/Skill sheets in Adventure Style BGEs and a subset of mechanics (varies from event to event) are usually in play. Examples: Captain Wooster's Polar Expedition, Journey To Atlantis, Exploring Lady Snooterfield's Haunted Attic.

Event: A significant event will happen at this BGE. Depending on the event characters may get some background and some subset of mechanics (varies per event) may be used. NPCs are there to enhance the event. Examples: The Wedding of Lady Cloverwood, The Riot at Bently Hall, The Unveiling of the Secret Statue. In general, the GMs should let the players know out of character what the event is before the BGE.

Minigame: A minigame is the most complex of the BGEs. Think of it as a small Game Session. Minigames may use a subset of the game mechanics, as required for the event. Examples: A Night At The Opera. The Exploration of Africa.

Secret/Private: Sometimes you may not want the general public to know about a BGE because it's for a small, secret group of player characters. They often involve performing actions that the GMs don't want

the majority of the players to know about. Examples: The Secret Ritual Under Westminster Abbey, Attempting To Steal the German Plans, Smuggling Mission to Pluto.

Running a BGE can be just as stressful and time consuming as running a full Game Session. Just because you have fewer players, plots, and mechanics doesn't mean you should be less prepared. Most of the GM Tips found in this book are equally relevant for BGEs and full Game Sessions.

Plug In Systems

What you have read so far forms the core of the Rules To Live by system. It is entirely possible to run a LARP using just the core rules. However, mostLARPs like to expand the rules, or flavor them in some way, or simplify them further, or even change them entirely. For that we have Plug-Ins.

A Plug-In is a set of rules and mechanics designed to work with the RTLB system. Sometimes a Plug-In will change existing rules, remove rules or Abilities, or replace rules or Abilities with its own systems. As a GM, you don't *have* to use any of the Plug-Ins described below, but you do have a responsibility to inform your players if you use said systems. We will also have a discussion on how to create your own plug-In systems at the end of this section.

Info: Where did these come from?

All of the Plug-Ins described here have been used in RTLB LARPs, and may have come from the first edition, or from RTLB: Supernatural. That's right, by purchasing 2.0, you have managed to get the original core system and the Supernatural expansion in one handy volume.

GM Tip: Where can I get more Plug-Ins?

From time to time, we will publish more Plug-Ins for RTLB at <http://www.interactivitiesink.com>. If you have created a nifty Plug-In, please feel free to mail it to the folks at Interactivities Ink. Note that all Plug-In submissions become property of Interactivities Ink, Limited.

Contingency Envelopes

The contingency envelope is a very handy tool. It allows the GM to provide information and directions to players that can be triggered by events or times without the GM having to be present or monitor the situation.

If there is a situation where the GM knows ahead of time that a certain thing will happen (say, for example, that seeing a brilliant red gem will trigger suppressed memories in a character), he could then write those memories on a piece of paper and place it in a sealed envelope reading, "open when you see the brilliant red gem." The player opens the envelope at the appropriate time and follows the instructions inside as if a GM were providing them.

Now the GM doesn't have to be there to brief the player about the suppressed memories and has that much more free time.

There are many types of contingencies that can be used for envelopes. Here is a non-comprehensive list:

- Timed. *Open at 5:00 PM. Open after dinner. Open at the start of Game Period 3.*
- Encountering a character. *Open when you meet the Prime Minister. Open when you first see Sally. Open five minutes after talking to Jonathan Blake.*
- Encountering an Item: *Open when you see the red gem. Open if you read the Book of Secrets. Open if you see the item labeled #103/.*

- Triggered by an Event: *Open if the volcano erupts. Open if you touch the red gem. Open if the GM announces “Event A.”*
- Triggered by an Ability: *Open if hypnotized. Open if you attempt to use Sprinting.*

GM Tip: Decoy Envelopes

When players are given contingency envelopes at the start of the game, they will naturally read all of the conditions so that they know when to open them. Many players will then try to engineer situations so that they get to open their envelopes – they will seek out Jonathan Blake, or try to touch the red gem. This is perfectly all right – it helps to drive the game forward. But if you find this to be a problem, you can always introduce decoy envelopes that just say “Nothing special happens” on the inside.

Prerequisites

As a GM, you may wish to add prerequisites for Abilities. They are used when creating characters and buying new Abilities.

For Abilities that have prerequisites, the player may not purchase higher levels of that Ability than the character’s level in those prerequisites. For example, Pharmacy has prerequisites of Biology and Chemistry. If Martha has a Chemistry of 3 and a Biology of 2, she can still only take Pharmacy at level 2. She can later spend XP to raise her level of Biology so she can then raise her level of Pharmacy.

This table contains a number of suggestions for basic prerequisites. As a GM, you are free to see prerequisites as you see fit. Some Abilities on this list, already *have* prerequisites and are listed here for convenience. For example, one of the constraints for Impersonate is that you cannot take it at a higher level than your level of Disguise.

Ability	Prerequisites
Alternate Identity	Disguise
Archaeology	History
Autopsy	Surgery
Impersonate	Disguise
Orate	Persuade
Pharmacy	Biology, Chemistry
Physician	Biology
Physics	Mathematics
Surgery	First Aid
Zoology	Biology

Experienced Starting Characters

At times, players may wish to create starting characters with different levels of experience. For example, the game may be set in a space station and players want to choose characters that have been on the station for years, or characters who have never left Earth.

One way to represent that some characters are older and more experienced than others is with this Plug-In: There are three categories for starting characters. Characters may either be “Rookies,” “Experienced,” or “Old Hands.” All characters start with the same points in their STAT pool, but have different levels in their Ability Pools.

- Rookies have 55 points in their Ability Pool, and may have base STATS of any level up to 6, as normal. They gain double the regular number of experience points.
- Experienced characters have 70 points in their Ability pool, but their starting STATS cannot be higher than 5. They gain experience at the normal rate.
- Old Hands have 85 points in their Ability pool. Their starting levels of IQ and WILL are at a maximum of 5, and starting levels of STR and DEX are at a maximum 4. They gain experience at half the normal rate.

The scale catches up with the players. A Rookie, after gaining fifteen experience points, will move up to the Experienced rate gain. After fifteen more, the character becomes an Old Hand in terms of XP. Players may not increase STATS by spending experience. This is to give more benefit to being a Rookie.

Gambling

Simply rolling dice to represent a game can get boring. The following are suggestions how players can use their Skills and Abilities in some popular games of chance.

Draw Poker: When it is time to draw, the player must first announce the number of cards she wants. She may then make a gambling challenge of (IQ + Gamble/Gaming) vs. (5 + the number of cards the character wishes to draw). If she fails, she draws as normal. On success, she may draw the cards and then choose which to discard instead of the other way around. She may only attempt this as many times per Game Period as she has levels in Gamble/Gaming: Poker.

Stud Poker: At the start of the hand, when the down cards are being dealt out, the player may make a gambling challenge of (IQ + Gamble/Gaming) vs. 6. If he succeeds, he gets an extra down card. The player must discard down to a legal hand when it is time to show cards. He may only attempt this as many times per Game Period as she has levels in Gamble/Gaming: Poker.

Texas Hold-Em Poker: At the start of the hand, when the down cards are being dealt out, the player may make a gambling challenge of (IQ + Gamble/Gaming) vs. 6. If he succeeds, he gets an extra down card. The player must discard down to a legal hand when it is time to show cards. She may only attempt this as many times per Game Period as she has levels in Gamble/Gaming: Poker.

Note that the uses of Gamble/Gaming: Poker are cumulative, so if you use one for one type of poker, it counts as a use for any type of Poker. For example, if you have Level 3, then you have 3 uses for Poker per Game Period, not 3 uses for Draw Poker, 3 uses for Stud Poker, and 3 uses for Texas Hold-Em Poker.

Blackjack: The player may make a gambling challenge of (IQ + Gamble/Gaming) vs. the IQ of the Dealer, to see the Dealer's down card before first deciding to stay, hit, double, etcetera. The player only gets one chance per hand. The player may only attempt this as many times per Game Period as he has levels in Gamble/Gaming: Blackjack.

Roulette, Big Wheel of Chance, Slot Machines, Other Games of Pure Chance: Knowledge of Gambling cannot help a player here, except to know – of course – that these games always favor the house by a large margin and that it is wise to stay away! However, a use of Luck may be used to allow up to *two* re-rolls or re-spins. These re-rolls or re-spins affect all current players. *Three* uses of Luck may be used to act as if the wheel or slots landed wherever the player wants. This may only be done once per Game Session per game of chance.

In General:

Players may use one use of Luck to cause *one* opponent to lose a hand of cards. Use this Ability when it is time for the target to bet. It is used as if the target decided to fold in a card game.

Players may use one use of *someone else's* Unluck to cause *that* unlucky opponent to lose. The player should use this ability when it is time for the target to bet. It is used as if the target decided to fold in a card game.

Players may use Logic/Deduction or Area of Knowledge to ask yes/no questions about the game (“Should I fold now?”, “Does she have a good hand?”, “Is this game rigged?”, etcetera). The GM may look at the other hands before giving the answer.

Surgery and Wounds

This Plug-In is useful to discouraging players from jumping into combat. Also it makes healing someone more than just a simple die roll. It makes it a process of many die rolls. This Plug-In requires six-sided dice.

Triage and Diagnosis

When an injured patient is brought in to the surgeon, the first step is a diagnosis of the wounds. The surgeon, or the person doing triage must roll three dice on the Wounds Table. Luck and Unluck can affect this roll by 4 instead of the normal 2. This is done before any First Aid rolls are made. The resulting number is the number of Wounds the character has.

Wound Table

Roll	Number of Stars																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18+
3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
14	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
15	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
16	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
17	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
18	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4

Remember, a character with more stars than double Hit Points is dead, no matter what.

Let's start a running example. Joe took some shrapnel in an attack. He has 7 Hit Points and took 11 Red Stars of damage. He is unconscious and bleeding to death, but not immediately dead. He is taken to Triage where they determine his wounds. They roll a 17. Bad luck. Joe has three wounds.

The next step of Triage/Diagnosis is to determine where the wounds are located. For each wound, roll two dice on the wound location table. Keep track of where the wounds are; this will matter later (toe tags are a nice touch for keeping track).

Wound Location Table

Roll	Location
2	Head
3	Chest
4	Chest
5	Chest
6	Chest

7	Abdomen
8	Abdomen
9	Left Leg
10	Right Leg
11	Left Arm
12	Right Arm

Finally, after the wounds have been located, First Aid can be performed.

Back to Joe. Joe has three wounds, so they have to roll three times on the wound location table. They roll a 6, a 10, and a 2. So, Joe has been wounded in the Chest, the Right Leg, and the Head. The wound locations are recorded and the person doing Triage spends five minutes doing First Aid on Joe. Joe doesn't have any Yellow Stars, but the First Aid attempt stabilizes him so he won't bleed to death.

Surgery

Divide the damage stars as evenly as possible between all the wounds. If there are stars left over, let some of the wounds have an extra star. The Surgeon must then make a surgery skill check for *each* wound. The target number for each check is equal to the number of Stars assigned to that wound *plus* the total number of wounds.

The surgeon can choose in which order to make the checks. If the surgeon succeeds in a check, remove the surgeon's Ability Level of Stars for that Wound. If the Surgeon fails a check, roll a six sided die. If it is *less than* the number of Stars for that Wound, consult the Botched Surgery table. Luck may be used to modify a botched surgery roll, but Unluck may not.

Botched Surgery Table

Wound Location	Botched Surgery Effects
Head	Character loses 1 point of IQ or WILL, player's choice. WILL does affect Hit Points.
Chest	Character loses 1 point of STRENGTH. This affects Hit Points.
Abdomen	Character loses 1 point of STRENGTH (This affects Hit Points) or gains one level of the Lightweight Handicap. Player's choice.
Left Leg	Character loses 1 point of DEXTERITY or gains one level of the Limp Handicap. Player's choice.
Right Leg	Character loses 1 point of DEXTERITY or gains one level of the Limp Handicap. Player's choice.
Left Arm	Character loses 1 point of DEXTERITY or gains one level of the Slow Reflexes Handicap. Player's choice.
Right Arm	Character loses 1 point of DEXTERITY or gains one level of the Slow Reflexes Handicap. Player's choice.

Joe is lying on the operating table with three wounds. They decide to divide his 11 Stars as follows: Right Leg – 4, Chest – 4, Head – 3. The surgeon has an IQ of 4 and a Skill Level of 3, for an Ability Rating of 7, which gives her more or less even odds against Joe's wounds. She decides to do the Right Leg first. The target number is 7 (Stars + number of wounds). The surgeon rolls a 6 for herself and a 3 for the target number, so she is successful. She may remove three Stars from the Right Leg, leaving Joe 1 left. The surgery for the Chest wound has the same target number, and is successful with the same results.

Unfortunately, the roll for the Head Wound doesn't go so well. The target number is only 6, but the surgeon rolls a 4 for herself and an 8 for the wound. She fails. Joe keeps the stars. Now, she has to roll a six sided die. If it is less than the number of stars for the Head Wound – 3 – then Joe will have to choose between losing a point of IQ or WILL. Luckily, she rolls exactly a 3, so she merely fails to properly heal Joe and doesn't botch the surgery.

Joe is left with 5 Red Stars. One each from the chest and leg wound and three from the head wound. He has 7 Hit Points, so he is awake and can move around, but it will be some time before he completely recovers from his ordeal.

Infection

If your LARP is set in a low tech setting or the place of surgery is particularly unsanitary, you could allow the infection rules to come into play. (Antibiotics became generally available in 1943).

After all surgical attempts, success or failure, you must roll on the infection table. The patient gains that many **Green** stars of infection. Luck may be used by the Surgeon or the patient to modify this die roll.

Stars of Infection *do* count toward unconsciousness and death. As part of Natural Healing, a player may remove one Star of their choice at the start of each game period. That star may be a star of Infection.

Infection can be cured by the Physician skill, in which case the Physician Skill can be used to heal Red or Green stars, similar to the Surgeon skill.

10 sided die:

Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Result	3I	3I	2I	2I	1I	1I	∅	∅	∅	∅

6 sided die:

Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6
Result	3I	3I	2I	1I	1I	∅

Combat Systems

There are many different Plug-Ins for combat. Some completely replace Skill and Abilities. One completely replaces the combat system altogether. Some just add to what is already there. Some Plug-Ins may not work with others. Feel free to use the ones you wish.

One Round Combat System (ORCS)

The One Round Combat System can be used in situations where you want combat to end quickly, and you are willing to accept approximate results. The ORCS highly abstracts Combat with three calculated numbers. Calculate the numbers before the game.

- ORCS Attack is used to determine how much damage you do in the combat.
- ORCS Defend is used to determine how much damage you take in the combat.
- Base ORCS is the *average* of your Attack and Defend numbers. Do not round it. It is used to determine who wins the combat.

Calculating Your Numbers:

For Abilities, use your **Ability Level**, *not* your Ability Rating.

ORCS Attack

STATs/Abilities	Your Level
STR	
DEX	

+ The <i>Highest</i> Ability Level of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close Weapons • Fencing • Martial Arts Attack • Ranged Weapons • Thrown Weapons • Unarmed Combat 	
+ The <i>Highest</i> Ability Level of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fierce • Forceful Punch • Power Hitter 	
– The <i>Highest</i> Level of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limp • Unlucky 	
Total:	

ORCS Defend

STATs/Abilities	Your Level
HP	
+ The <i>Highest</i> Ability Level of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dodge • Martial Arts Defend • Sprinting • Tactics 	
+ The <i>Highest</i> Ability Level of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alertness • Impervious to Pain • Natural Armor (doubled) • Tough 	
– The <i>Highest</i> Level of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combat Paralysis • Low Pain Threshold 	
Total:	

Base ORCS = (Attack + Defend) / 2. Do not round it even if the average is something like 11½.

The One Round

The round is comprised of several organizing steps. Get a combat moderator to handle all the steps in order. The steps are written as a series of instructions to the combat moderator. There will be die rolls.

Step 1. Organize

Have all players involved in the combat cluster into “sides.” All characters on a “side” win or lose the combat as a group. There could be as many sides to the combat as needed. If a few players have difficulty choosing sides, tell them that they are on their own side, by themselves. If a large number of players have difficulty choosing sides, then the ORCS may not be the best solution to the combat and you may wish to go back to normal RTLb combat.

Have each side choose a Representative. The Representative will speak for the group, and should be good at doing math in his or her head. The Representative is not an authority figure and will not be making decisions for the group.

Step 2: Do the Math

Have each side total their individual Base ORCS scores and then add a die roll for a touch of randomness. Ask the Representatives to report the totals to you. The side with the highest total wins. Yes, this gives a huge advantage to numbers, just like in real life. Just like in regular combat, ties go to the wiener; the winning side is the one with the *lower* number before the die was rolled. If it is an exact tie, roll another die and the winner is the one who rolled highest. Luck and Unluck may not be used to modify this die roll.

At this point, the Combat Moderator may assign bonuses to the sides' Base ORCS scores based on in-game situations, like having one side that is better armed or better defended than the other. In general, these bonuses should be 6 or less.

As an extra roleplaying feature, have each person on each side make a die roll. The person or persons on each side who rolled the highest for that side did something spectacular or interesting during the combat and may make up a story to tell afterwards (as long as it is reasonable and possible and they survive the fight).

Step 3: Everyone Gets Their Licks In

Most people don't walk away from a fight completely unscathed. All players must see if their characters have taken damage. Even if the characters have already been knocked out they must still follow this process.

For each player, subtract your ORCS Defend number from the appropriate ORCS Attack number (this may result in a negative number, which is *good*). The appropriate number for the losing sides is the *highest* ORCS Attack number of the winning side. For the winning side, the appropriate number is the *highest* ORCS Attack number of all the characters of the other sides.

Add that number to a die roll (either 1d10 or 2d6 depending on what you have available) and consult the chart below. You may use a point of Luck to subtract 2 from this die roll.

Step 4: Finish Off The Losers.

All characters on all sides other than the winning side must choose. If the damage from the chart below didn't knock them out (that is, Stars equal to their hit Points), they must *either*: take exactly enough damage to knock them out, *or* run away, each character's choice. If they choose enough damage to knock themselves out, they take half Red and half Yellow, rounding toward Yellow.

Roll	ORCS Result
0 or less	No damage
1	1 Yellow Star
2	1 Yellow Star
3	1 Red Star
4	2 Yellow Stars
5	1 Yellow + 1 Red Star
6	2 Red Stars
7	2 Red + 1 Yellow Stars
8	3 Red Stars

9	4 Yellow Stars
10	2 Red + 2 Yellow Star
11	4 Red Stars
12	3 Yellow + 2 Red Stars
13	2 Yellow + 3 Red Stars
14	3 Yellow + 3 Red Stars
15	5 Red + 1 Yellow Stars
16	3 Red + 4 Yellow Stars
17	5 Red + 2 Yellow Stars
18	4 Red + 4 Yellow Stars
19	5 Red + 4 Yellow Stars
20 or more	6 Red + 4 Yellow Stars

At the Combat Moderator's option, ORCS can be declared "non-lethal." This means that the most damage you can take is double your Hit Points minus 1. No matter how much damage you take in the ORCS, you still have 1 Hit Point left to keep you alive, albeit severely wounded and unconscious.

We at RTLB HQ encourage players to act out the fight in slow motion after all the dice are rolled.

Called Shots, Point Blank, and Sneak Attacks

These are three combat modifiers. You can use them as you see fit. Do not forget that the largest sum of bonuses a person can receive to a roll is +6.

- If attacker chooses to make a *called shot* as his combat action, the attacker subtracts 2 from his roll, but does an extra star of damage if the shot hits. This can be done with any combat attack, even close combat.
- If a player is close enough to touch the target and is making a Ranged Weapon attack, the attacker may call *Point Blank* as his combat attack and gets +2 to the challenge. This may be in addition to the +2 bonus for from behind.
- Technically players don't need special, optional, rules to make *sneak attacks*. The attacker already gets a free round of combat. However, if a character completely gets the drop on another character, the attacker gets a +2 that first round of combat only. That is in addition to any other bonuses (from behind, point blank, and so forth).

Partial Armor Coverage

Because RTLB doesn't have hit locations, you can do the following to see if your armor has protected you. If you've been hit, roll one die. If it is less than or equal to the armor's complexity, then it protects you. Luck and Unluck may be used to modify this roll.

Grappling

A grapple is an Unarmed Combat move. If a character successfully makes the skill check – just like a normal Unarmed Combat challenge – her opponent is grappled and cannot move. A character can only hold one other character at a time this way.

Once you are grappled, you may only attempt to break free. You may not move from your current position. You may not add a skill level to your defense, and may only defend with DEX. You break free if you win an Unarmed Combat challenge against your grappler as your combat action.

If you are actively grappling someone else, you may not take any combat action unless you release your target. You may move yourself *and* your target one step per round. You may not add a skill level to your defense, and may only defend with DEX. You may release your hold at any time, including to use a skill to defend.

Players with the Martial Arts Defend at skill level 3 or higher may choose to Grapple as one of their defensive moves.

Collateral Damage

This Plug-In can be used to determine where bullets, arrows, and other projectiles go if the character misses... This is an attempt to discourage shooting into crowded fights, even with highly skilled characters.

If a character attempts a ranged attack and misses (fails the challenge), he must then roll a die for anyone or anything blocking the projectile's path. If the die roll is odd, the projectile hits the obstacle (object or person) instead. Once an obstacle is hit, the player may stop rolling for collateral damage.

If the projectile misses all obstacles/people between the shooter and her target, continue making die rolls for all people and objects in a straight line beyond the target. An odd roll hits the object/person.

If the shot hits someone or something, resolve damage against that. No further checks are needed for that shot.

Luck may be used to avoid being hit by collateral damage, even after the die roll. Unluck may be used to avoid collateral damage.

Players may wish to try to use their dodge to dodge collateral damage. They may not. Dodge is used as a target number for attack and should not be interpreted that the character can dodge bullets.

GM Tip: Avoid Abuse

Players with low Ranged Weapon ability ratings should not be allowed to abuse the Collateral Damage rules by shooting at a friend they know they can't hit with their minimal skill, and therefore having an "average" chance of hitting the monster who's in melee with their friend. People who attempt to do that are just plain cheating.

Default Power Hitter

Characters with a STR STAT of 5 or more get Power Hitter at level STR – 4. The player can improve Power Hitter above the default by spending character points or experience points.

Bombs and Gas – Area Effect Weapons

There are four steps to handle area effect weapons.

1. Determine the effect of the weapon
2. Determine the area of effect (also called the range).
3. Determine the complexity. The complexity is the Target Number for defusing the bomb. In general, the complexity should be the Demolitions Ability Rating of the person who made the bomb. An average bomb would have Complexity 4-6.
4. Handle any modifiers to the effect.

Effect: A simple explosion does 4 red stars to everyone in range. If you want to be complex, you could add “characters must win a DEX vs. 8 challenge or be moved 2 yards away from the blast and knocked down, dropping all items in their hands.”

For a simple gas bomb or spray, the effect is “each round a character remains in the area of effect, they take 1 yellow star of damage.” Depending on the game and, the weapon might affect items as well. For example, “on a roll of 3 through 6 on one die, any exposed item made of glass is destroyed.”

Area of Effect: This determines who will be affected when the weapon goes off. The simplest area of effect is “one room”. In other words, anyone in the room with the weapon when it goes off is affected; anyone outside the room is just fine. A more complicated area of effect might be “anyone within 10 yards.” This will require someone to pace out the distance.

Modifiers: These are things that change the effect for certain characters. For example “Anyone with a solid object blocking them from the blast (a wall, or piece of large furniture) takes half damage, and is not knocked down.”

Info: Item Cards For Bombs

Simple Bomb

Effect: *4 Red Stars of damage*

Area of Effect: *One Room*

of Uses: *1*

Complexity: *5* **Cost:** *\$150*

Concealable?: *Yes*

Comments: *This can be set to go off at a specific time or set to go off due to motion.*

Simple Grenade

Effect: *3 Red Stars of damage*

Area of Effect: *One Room*

of Uses: *1*

Complexity: *Cannot be defused.* **Cost:** *\$150*

Concealable?: *Yes*

Comments: *This goes off the combat round after it is thrown.*

Stun Grenade

Effect: *5 Yellow Stars of damage*

Area of Effect: *One Room*

Modifiers: *Characters beating a STR vs. 6 challenge take 2 Yellow Stars instead.*

of Uses: *1*

Complexity: *Cannot be defused* **Cost:** *\$250*

Concealable?: *Yes*

Comments: *This goes off the combat round after it is thrown.*

Tear Gas Grenade

Effect: *2 Blue Stars per round exposed. Remove a Blue Star every 5 minutes after exposure.*

Area of Effect: *One Room*

Modifiers: *Characters beating a STR vs. 5 challenge take 1 Blue Star/round instead..*

of Uses: *1*

Complexity: *Cannot be defused*

Cost: *\$150*

Concealable?: *Yes*

Comments: *This goes off the combat round after it is thrown.*

Complex Bomb

Effect: *1d6 Red Stars of damage (or 1d10 / 2 Red Stars).*

Area of Effect: *One Room*

of Uses: *1*

Complexity: *7*

Cost: *\$150*

Concealable?: *No*

Comments: *This can be set to go off at a specific time or set to go off due to motion or another trigger specified by the creator.*

Throwing Bombs

Of course, once there are bombs in the game, somebody's going to want to throw them around (it's just human nature). Here is the way to resolve the use of bombs in combat.

The bomb throwing player must take at least one round to ready the bomb. That is his entire combat action for that round. He can still take a step on that round.

On the next round, the bomb thrower declares where he wishes to throw the bomb. This must be a reasonable throwing distance for the character. Place the bomb item card or prop at the desired impact point.

The bomb thrower makes a challenge of DEX + Thrown Weapons vs. 6. If the challenge is successful, the bomb lands where the player wanted it.

If the challenge is unsuccessful, things get interesting. After all, the bomb had to go somewhere! The difference between the two roll results is the *number of steps* by which the bomb missed its intended target. The combat moderator is responsible for moving the bomb based on her best judgment for the situation.

For example, John wants to throw a gas grenade and has a DEX of 4 and a Thrown Weapons of 1 and rolls a 5 for a total of 10. The target number is 6 plus a die roll of 7 for a total of 13. The challenge fails and the difference is 3. The bomb is moved 3 steps from its intended location.

Finally, resolve the effects of the bomb. Note that some bombs may have a delayed fuse, giving the characters a chance to flee.

Damage Results Charts

In the core rules, items do a set amount of damage. A fist does 1 Yellow Star, a knife 1 red, a gun 3 Red, and so forth. However, sometimes you may wish for items to do a variable amount of damage so that there is a touch more uncertainty to combat.

If so, we present these Damage Result Charts. If a character has a successful combat attack, the player then rolls on the Damage Result Chart to see how much damage they do. Feel free to copy these charts

and attach them to gun props and item cards. If you use damage charts, make sure everyone has an unarmed chart on their skill sheets. *These Damage Charts are designed for use with 1d10 and would need to be adjusted for use with d6s.*

Unarmed

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	2Y	1Y+1R	3Y	2Y+1R

Fists

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	2Y	2Y	2Y	1Y+1R	1Y+2R	2Y+2R

Feet (-2 to Unarmed Combat to hit; no subtraction from Martial Arts Attack)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	*	*	1Y*	1Y	1Y	2Y	3Y	3Y+1R	3Y+2R	3Y+3R*

Headbutt (*Attacker takes 1Y damage)

Close Weapons

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	2Y	2Y	2Y	1Y+1R	2Y+1R	3Y+1R

Blackjack/Sap

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	2Y	2Y	2Y	2Y	3Y	3Y+1R	2Y+3R

Brass Knuckles

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y*	1Y*	2Y*	1Y+1R*	2Y+1R*	1Y+2R*	2Y+2R*

Bottle, Unbroken (*Roll of 4+ bottle breaks)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	1R	1R	1Y+1R	1Y+2R	2Y+2R	1Y+3R

Bottle, Broken

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	1R	1R	2Y+1R	3Y+1R	2Y+3R

Small Club, Rock (HTH), Pool Cue

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	2Y	2Y	1Y+1R	2Y+1R	3Y+1R	4Y+1R	5Y+1R

Big Club, Hammer, Staff (Staff allows you to make a Close Weapons attack against characters up to 10 feet away)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1R	1R	1R	1R	1R	1R	2R	2R	3R	4R

Small Knife (HTH or thrown)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1R	1R	1R	1R	2R	2R	3R	3R	4R	5R

Big Knife (HTH or thrown)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Result	1R	1R	1R	1Y+1R	2R	1Y+2R	2Y+2R	1Y+3R	1Y+4R	2Y+4R
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1-Handed Sword

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1R	1R	1R	1R	2R	2R	2R	3R	4R	4R

Fencing Sword

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	2Y	2Y	1Y+1R	1Y+2R	2Y+2R	2Y+2R	2Y+3R	2Y+3R	2Y+4R	3Y+4R

2-Handed Sword (must have STR of 4 or higher to wield)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1R	2R	2R	3R	1Y+3R	4R	5R	5R	6R

Chainsaw

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	2Y	1R	1Y+1R	1Y+1R	3R	3R	2Y+3R

Spear (Allows you to make a Close Weapons attack against characters up to 10 feet away; may be thrown)

Ranged Weapons

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	1Y	2Y	1Y+1R	1Y+1R	2Y+1R	2Y+2R

Slingshot, Thrown Rock

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1R	1R	1R	1R	1R	2R	2R	2R	3R	4R

Bow and Arrow

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y+1R	1Y+1R	2R	2R	3R	3R	3R	4R	4R

Pistol (6 shots)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y+1R	1Y+2R	1Y+3R	1Y+3R	4R*	5R*	6R*	6R°	6R°

Shotgun (1 shot; *does 1R to all characters the target can touch. °does 2R to all characters the target can touch.)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1Y+1R	1Y+2R	3R	3R	4R	4R	5R	5R	5R

Rifle (12 shots)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1R	1Y+1R	1Y+2R	3R	4R	4R	5R	5R	6R	7R

Machine Gun (20 shots)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1R	1Y+1R	2R	2R	2R	3R	3R	3R	4R	4R

Cap & Ball pistol (1 shot)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1B	2B	2B	2B	2B+1R	3B+1R	3B+2R	4B+1R	4B+1R	4B+2R

Taser (B=Blue Stars of pain. Blue Stars of Pain ALL go away 10 minutes after the combat)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Y	1R	1R	2R	2R	2R	3R	3R	3R	4R

Derringer (1 Shot)

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Stun	1B	2B	2B	2B	2B	3B	3B	4B	5B	6B
Kill	1R	2R	2R	2R	2R	3R	3R	4R	5R	6R

Futuristic Laser Gun (may be set to Stun or Kill; B= Blue Stars of pain. Blue Stars of Pain ALL go away 10 minutes after the combat)

Other

You can also make specialized damage charts for animals or monsters. Here is one example.

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	∅	1R	1R	1R+1V	1R+1V	1R+2V	3V	4V	1R+4V	5V

Venomous Snake (V=Red Star of Venom; See the Venom Ability for more information).

Combat Maneuvers

Combat Maneuvers are a new Type of Ability that allows players to have more variety and specialty in combat. Combat Maneuvers completely *replace* core Abilities with the same name. Further, when using Combat Maneuvers, you should not allow the Martial Arts Attack or Martial Arts Defend Skills. These skills are broken up into separate maneuvers.

Combat Maneuvers can be purchased at character creation just like other types of Abilities, with two modifications. Each Combat Maneuver is based on one or more Martial Skills (Dodge, Unarmed Combat, Close Weapons, Ranged Weapons, and Thrown Weapons). You may not take that Combat Maneuver at a higher Level than the Skill upon which it is based. If the Maneuver may be based on more than one Skill, then it may be taken as a Maneuver for *either* Skill and may not be taken at a level higher than the Skill chosen. If you want to take it for more than one base Skill, you need to take the Maneuver as a separate Ability. For example, Berserk is based on Unarmed Combat OR Close Weapons. You may choose to take Berserk for either of those Skills, or you may take Berserk twice, once for each skill. XP may also be spent on Combat Maneuvers.

Also, you may not take more Combat Maneuvers based on a specific Skill than you have levels of that Skill in the first place. For example, if you have Unarmed Combat at level 3, you may only take 3 Combat Maneuvers based on Unarmed Combat and none of them may be at level higher than 3.

Unless the individual Maneuver says otherwise, you may only use *one* Combat Maneuver each round of combat. Also, most Combat Maneuvers have limits to how often they may be used each Game Period. This is to keep them balanced and allow for variety in combat.

Info:

The following Skills and Aptitudes are replaced by Combat Maneuvers. Skills: Martial Arts Attack, Martial Arts Defense, Sprinting. Aptitudes: Fierce, Power Hitter, Quick Draw, Quick Reflexes, Tough

ARMS OF STEEL

I tried to break free, but he held on tight.

Based On: Unarmed Combat Cost Type: Easy

Effect: In a contest to break free from a Grapple, you may add +4 to your roll. This may be used either if you are the held character or the one doing the holding.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared before you declare your action or move. You may only declare this once per combat round.

BERSERK

The next thing Miriam knew, the things was on her, clawing mindlessly.

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you hit your opponent this round you do 3 additional Red Stars of damage. However, all your defense rolls are at -3 for this round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared before you declare your action or move. You may only declare this once per round.

BLOCK

Sir Palavir held up his shield to fend off the goblin's attack.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may block an attack by a close or thrown weapon if you are armed with a close weapon or a shield. You receive +3 to your defense against said attack. Declaration of blocking may occur after your normal declaration of action, and does not preclude your normal attack.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver may be declared when you declare your defense. You may not use this more than once per round.

BODYGUARD

Jimmy sighed as the punk drew a gun. Looks like it was time to be injured on the job again.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may, as your combat action, step between an attacker and target (assuming you are within stepping range) and redirect the attack to yourself. You may also do this as a defense on the first, free, round of combat, even if you didn't declare the combat.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: Once per level per combat.

CHARGE

Starke ran into battle, his sword a blur a metal.

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: To use Charge, you must spend an entire round moving toward an opponent at your full rate of speed (normally two steps). On the next round, your attack, if successful, will do three additional Stars of damage of your choice of color (Red or Yellow).

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: You must declare that you are charging as your combat action.

DARK FIGHTING

There are advantages to growing up in the sewers.

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: For a single round of combat, you may ignore any penalties related to vision impairments (darkness, fog, blindfolded, etc.) You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

DEADLY AIM - CLOSE

One punch, man, you had to see it! One punch!

Based On: Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may roll two dice when you roll damage for your weapon, and then decide which one of the two to use. You must declare the use of this Maneuver before you roll damage.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: You may only declare this once per combat round. If you do not roll dice for your weapon damage, then you may not use this ability for that weapon.

DEADLY AIM – RANGED

Burke leveled his gun at the creature. It would soon be dead.

Based On: Ranged Weapons/Thrown Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may roll two dice when you roll damage for your ranged weapon, and then decide which one of the two to use. You must declare the use of this maneuver before you roll damage.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: You may only declare this once per combat round. If you do not roll dice for your ranged weapon damage, then you may not use this ability for that weapon.

DISARM - RANGED

I cringed as the gun was shot out of my hand.

Based On: Ranged Weapons/Thrown Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Make an attack roll at -4 to hit. If you succeed, your opponent is disarmed. Their weapon is thrown two paces in a random direction.

Challenge: DEX + Ability Level - 4 vs. Opponent's Dodge

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared as your combat action.

DISARM - UNARMED/CLOSE

Shira grabbed the gun, "you won't be needing this."

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Make an attack roll at -4 to hit. If you succeed, your opponent is disarmed. Their weapon is thrown two paces in a random direction.

Challenge: STR + Ability Level - 4 vs. Opponent's Dodge

Time to Use: 1 Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared as your combat action.

DOUBLE SHOT

Strang surveyed the field, a pistol in both hands.

Based On: Ranged Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You get a second attack with a weapon held in your off hand. Both attacks are at -2 to hit. Neither attack may make use of any other combat maneuvers. The two attacks may be at different targets.

Challenge: DEX + Ranged Weapons - 2 vs. Opponents' Dodges

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared as your combat action. The weapons must be those useable in one hand each.

FEARSOME

The monster kept coming at us, tearing through our armor like tissue paper.

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are at +2 to hit and do an extra 2 yellow stars of damage on your first round against an opponent who has not fought you unarmed or close weapons before.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared before you declare your action. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round. You may only declare one use of Fearsome per combat action.

FIERCE

Aigh!

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: After your first successful close weapons or unarmed attack in a combat, you may give your opponent a Blue Star of Fear if you succeed in the check. This star lasts until the end of the combat.

Challenge: STR + Ability Level vs. Your Opponent's WILL

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared when damage is rolled. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round. You may only declare one use of Fierce per combat action. *This replaces the Fierce Aptitude. Do not allow the Fierce Aptitude if this Combat Maneuver is in game.*

FLESH WOUND

I've had worse.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: All Red Star damage you have taken from a specific attack is converted to Yellow Stars. You must declare the use of this maneuver immediately after the damage has been declared.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

FORCEFUL PUSH

Master Yi grabbed his opponent's wrist and flung her at the wall.

Based On: Unarmed Combat Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Instead of doing damage, you may force your opponent to move up to two steps in a direction of your choice.

Challenge: STR + Unarmed Combat vs. Opponent's Dodge

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: This maneuver must be declared as your combat action.

HARDY

No, I'll be fine. See to someone else first.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Hard

Effect: After combat, you may eliminate one yellow star before doing the "3 yellow to 1 red" conversion.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Multiple levels of this Maneuver *may* be used at the same time.

IMMOVABLE

He just stood there and took it.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may use this maneuver to maintain your position when forced to move by a maneuver or other action during combat.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

IMPROVED BODYGUARD

Jimmy sighed again. At least this time, he'd get his licks in defending his boss.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You may, as your combat action, gain an immediate, free attack upon any person who attacks a target you are Bodyguarding. This free attack is in addition to your normal combat action. This ability may be used during the first, free, round of combat, even if you didn't declare the combat.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: Once per level per game period

Other Constraints: You may use other combat maneuvers with your free attack. You may not take this Ability at a higher level than your level in the Bodyguard Combat Maneuver.

IMPROVISED WEAPON

Ravenswood grabbed a nearby stool and swung at the man's head.

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You are at +2 to hit and do an extra 2 Stars of damage when using a traditionally non-weapon object (such as a barstool or a bottle) that you grab in your surroundings. A successful attack with this maneuver destroys your improvised weapon.

Challenge: STR + Close Weapons + 2 vs. Opponent's Dodge

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: The stars done are either yellow or red depending on the weapon. Use common sense.

INSTANT RELOAD

Damn. Out of bullets again.

Based On: Ranged Weapons Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You may reload your weapon without spending an action to do so. Weapons that require more than one round to reload will take one fewer round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: You may use this multiple times for a single reload. For example, you may use this twice on a weapon that takes two rounds to reload to make it reload without taking an action.

INSTANT STAND

Jerry was back on his feet in no time.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may move from a prone to a standing position without it counting as a movement for the combat round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared when you declare your move. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round.

LUNGE

Have at you!

Based On: Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may attack someone who is two or three steps outside of your weapon's range. Use of this maneuver must be declared when you declare your action, before or after you move. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: If you declare Lunge, your attack is still valid if your target moves out of range. Your target must be in Lunge range when you declare. Lunge does not provide extra steps, just an increased hitting radius.

PARRY

You'll have to do better than that.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may parry an attack by a close or thrown weapon if you are armed with a close weapon or a shield. If you succeed in your defense, you do 1 Yellow Star of damage to your attacker.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver may be declared when you declare your defense. You may not use this more than once per round.

PERIPHERAL VISION

He thought he had the drop on me, but I saw him out of the corner of my eye.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You may use this Maneuver to negate all attackers' +2 bonus for "from behind" on you for a given round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: You may declare the use of this ability when the first "from behind" bonus is declared for the round and it stays in effect until the end of the round.

POWER HITTER

Thag had the strength of ten men.

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you hit in close combat, you do one extra star of damage. This maneuver may be declared after the attack has been judged successful.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: You may not use this more than once per combat round. The extra star of damage is the same color as the original damage. *This replaces the Power Hitter Aptitude. Do not allow the Power Hitter Aptitude if this Combat Maneuver is in game.*

PRECISE BLOW

Yeah, I can knock that apple off your head easy.

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You receive the benefits of a called shot without taking the called shot penalty. However, you must declare this action as if your WILL were 1 for this round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared when you declare your action, before or after you move. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round.

PRECISE SHOT

Good shot.

Based On: Ranged Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You receive the benefits of a called shot without taking the called shot penalty. However, you must declare this action as if your WILL were 1 for this round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared when you declare your action, before or after you move. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round.

PRESSURE POINTS

Marshal screamed with pain as the captain grabbed his wrist.

Based On: Unarmed Combat Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Attack your target with your Unarmed Combat skill. If you succeed, you do 3 Blue Stars of Pain instead of your normal damage

Challenge: STR + Unarmed Combat vs. Opponent's Dodge

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: This maneuver must be declared as your combat action. Blue Stars of Pain go away 10 minutes after the combat ends.

QUICK REFLEXES

I saw it coming.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may add +2 to your effective WILL for purposes of declaring your action in combat.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared before you declare your action or move. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round. *This replaces the Quick Reflexes Aptitude. Do not allow the Quick Reflexes Aptitude if this Combat Maneuver is in game.*

QUICK DRAW

Tex drew his gun, putting a bullet through Lance's chest.

Based On: Close Weapons/Ranged Weapons/Thrown Weapons Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: You may draw your weapon without spending an action to do so.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared before you declare your action or move. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round. *This replaces the Quick Draw Skill. Do not allow the Quick Draw Skill if this Combat Maneuver is in game.*

RUNNING START

I took the battle to them.

Based On: Close Weapons/Unarmed Combat Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may take an extra step in a combat round where you declare an attack. That attack is at -1 to hit.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared before you declare your action or move.

SELECT TARGET

Murray took careful aim and fired, hitting Bradford square in the back.

Based On: Ranged Weapons/Thrown Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you miss your target when firing into a melee, your attack will not hit any other target (no collateral damage). May not be applicable to all weapons, such as shotguns.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: You must declare this when your shot misses, before the combat moderator decides if there is collateral damage.

SPRINTING

I'll get there first.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may move one extra step in combat.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared before you declare your action or move. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round, but you may only sprint once per round. *This replaces the Sprinting Skill. Do not allow the Sprinting Skill if this Combat Maneuver is in game.*

STEADY SHOT

They called him “the sniper” for a reason.

Based On: Ranged Weapons/Thrown Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may spend the entire round aiming at a target. You may not move, although your target may. You may still dodge attacks. You gain +2 to hit that particular target on your next shot. Steady Shot may be used for multiple rounds in succession; each round costs one use of the maneuver.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared as your combat action. You must also declare that you have the Steady shot bonus when you make the attack.

STUNNING BLOW

He hit me so hard I forgot my name.

Based On: Unarmed Combat Cost Type: Hard

Effect: If your Unarmed attack is successful, your opponent may take no action other than defense next round, and furthermore must move as if suffering from the Limp Handicap (one fewer steps than normally allowed).

Challenge: STR + Unarmed Combat vs. Opponent’s Dodge

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Your attack does not cause damage. This must be declared as your combat action.

THROW

I tried to punch her, but she grabbed my and flung me against a wall.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Hard

Effect: If you successfully dodge a Close Weapons or Unarmed Combat attack, you may move your attacker up to 2 steps in any direction. You may choose which direction your attacker ends up facing.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared when you declare your defense. You may not declare other defensive combat maneuvers at that time.

TOTAL DEFENSE

Nobody could touch Minerva unless she wanted them to.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You must Evade this round. You receive a +3 to your defense roll, in addition to the +2 gained from Evading, netting you a total of +5 to your defense this round.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared when you declare your action. This counts as your combat action for the round.

TOUGH

Keep firing. We'll wear it down some day.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may ignore one star of damage from one attack.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared when you take damage. You may declare this in addition to any other combat actions that round, but you may not use this more than once per round. *This replaces the Tough Aptitude. Do not allow the tough aptitude if this Combat Maneuver is in game.*

TRICK SHOT

Geoffrey took careful aim. His shot ricocheted against the frying pan, striking the rope holding the chandelier.

Based On: Ranged Weapons/Thrown Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may make a cinematically appropriate trick shot, perhaps by ricocheting a bullet off of an object or shooting an arrow through an apple balanced on someone's head. This negates any bonuses your target gets from partial cover.

Challenge: DEX + Ranged Weapons vs. Opponent's Dodge

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared as your action. The Combat Moderator must approve your trick shot.

TUMBLE

Abi concentrated, jumped, and then she was there.

Based On: Dodge Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may acrobatically tumble to another point on the battlefield. You may take up to four steps, and you are at +2 to defense for the round. You may wind up facing any direction you like. Opponents may attempt to attack you if you are within their range during any part of your movement.

Challenge: Unchallenged

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: This counts as your combat action for the round.

TWO FISTED

One! Two!

Based On: Unarmed Combat/Close Weapons Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You get a second attack with a weapon held in your off hand (or a second fist, in the case of Unarmed Combat). Both attacks are at -2 to hit. Neither attack may make use of any other combat maneuvers. The two attacks may be at different targets.

Challenge: STR + Ability Level - 2 vs. Targets' Dodges

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: 1 Use per Level per Game Period

Other Constraints: Use of this maneuver must be declared as your combat action. If using two weapons, the weapons must be those useable in one hand each.

Mystic Abilities And The Supernatural

The next few sets of Plug-Ins originally come from RTLB: Supernatural. They have undergone additional playtesting, so there are changes and a good bit of streamlining. The Plug-Ins are modular, but interconnected. You can use the Psionics Plug-In without the Magic one or the one for Supernatural Creatures, but there may be Psionic Abilities that you cannot use without those two systems.

GMing the Supernatural

One of the basic tenets of RTLB is minimum GM involvement in mechanics. Most Abilities and challenges are designed so that the players can resolve the action, leaving the GMs free to work on the plot.

But adding supernatural elements to the game will almost always increase the need for GMs. Psionic Abilities like Precognitive Vision only work when a GM provides visions to the players. Since a player with Telekinesis can't really move things with his mind, a GM is going to have to move the objects for him.

A second possibility is to have other players perform actions for things such as Telekinesis. And Contingency Envelopes (see the core rule book) are perfect for Precognitive Visions.

Mystical Information Sources

As a GM, you also need to watch out for Information Abilities that require a good deal of your involvement. For example, the PSI Ability Item History may require the player to ask the GM questions about a items in game.

If a player is energetic, you may get asked about a lot of different objects, and quickly overwhelmed. In the same way, the Communicate With Spirits Spell requires a GM to play the role of the "spirit" and provide information. This could tie a GM to one group of players for a long period of time.

Imagine running a game where everyone is magical entirely by yourself – how will you handle multiple, simultaneous séances, intuition attempts, and players asking if they "sense" anything about an item? Before letting these Abilities into a game, make sure you have enough GM staff to handle them.

Difficult Abilities

You will note that some Abilities are still missing from RTLB. There is a philosophy we follow that is a series of rules for creating Plug-Ins and Abilities. Part of that philosophy is that every Ability should have a workable mechanic or representation, even if that mechanic is just rolling dice.

But there are a number of Abilities that do not have easy ways of representation. Things like enhanced sight and hearing, or astral projection tend to require the player to be in two places at once. This is difficult to represent in game, so we don't have those Abilities in our Plug-Ins.

Abilities that make *other* characters or things invisible, or that create illusions are difficult to represent. Flying can just be plain dangerous and we won't get into the headaches of time travel.

This is why we require additional out-of-game materials for some of our Abilities. For example, you'll find that characters with a Mental Link need to have a set of walkie-talkies or cell phones to represent the Link.

But some Abilities are not worth the hassle it would cause to represent them in game. Thus we have decided not to include some Abilities that might otherwise be useful. Clever GMs can always create their own versions of these Abilities. For example, if you need to have a character who can create illusions, make the player walk around with a deck of index cards and a pen to write down an explanation of the illusion. There is a section toward the end of this book with tips on creating your own Plug-Ins. It will give more details on the RTLB Philosophy.

Regardless, we suggest that these *difficult* Abilities not be allowed in your games. They are usually not worth the trouble to represent.

Psionics

At this point, we start to get to larger Plug-In systems, ones with new STATs and whole new ranges of Abilities. The first is Psionics.

Psionic Abilities are fairly easy to add to a game from a mechanics standpoint, and some of the most tricky from a player enjoyment standpoint. Unlike Influence Abilities, Psionics can deal directly with mind control and mind reading. They can be very powerful Abilities, powerful to the point of ruining someone's game.

Imagine how annoying it would be to have a head full of secrets, only to lose them when someone looks at you funny. Or to have a wonderful character, but the character's will is not his own due to a Psionic puppetmaster. Psionics needs to be carefully balanced to avoid allowing the Psionic characters to run roughshod over the game.

Psionics can often get in the way of plotting, as well. It's not easy to write a murder mystery, for example, if players can figure out "whodunnit" on a roll of the dice.

We have included some balancing effects for Psionicists. The Abilities aren't cheap or easy and it is often dangerous to read or control someone's mind. Still, that will not deter very determined players and GMs should be prepared for the real eventuality of player misuse of the Abilities.

The PSI STAT and Psionic Abilities

The system for Psionic Abilities are pretty standard, STAT + Ability Level + die roll vs. target number. The new STAT for Psionic Abilities is called PSI. It is an Advanced STAT (like Hit Points) which means it doesn't exactly follow the normal rules, although it is close. The average human has a PSI of 0 (which is the only real difference between PSI and the Base STATs). PSI can be bought and raised at

the same price as a Base STAT. Damage Stars affect PSI as they would the base STATs. Human max for PSI is 6.

This Plug-in includes some new Handicaps, some new Aptitudes, and a large number of Psionic Abilities. Psionic Abilities are a new Type of Ability, on par with other types like Skills and Resources. Psionic Abilities may fall into the six basic Categories (influence, information, item manipulation, martial, medical, and miscellaneous). Abilities that can be used to defend against certain Categories of Abilities (like Stoic which defends against Category: Influence) may be used to defend against Psionic Abilities of that category as well. Psionic Abilities are bought just like other Abilities, and XP may be spent on them as well.

GM Tips: Psionic Abilities and Character Creation

How many points should I give players for Psionics when they are creating characters?

It depends on the game. If you want Psionics to be very rare, don't give any extra points. For games in which Psionics are common, give players nine extra points in their STAT pool and ten extra points in their Ability pool. That will give them enough to buy a fairly good PSI STAT and a few Psionic Abilities.

Backlash

Backlash is a special mechanic just for Psionics. Backlash commonly occurs when a Psionist attempts to strongly influence or read another character's mind. Sometimes the stress of invading another's mind causes physical damage to the Psionic character.

Every time a character uses an Ability that causes Backlash, that character takes 1 Red Star of damage. This is *regardless* of success or failure. Even if the Ability fails, the character *still* takes Backlash.

Stars gained from Backlash *cannot* be healed by Medical Skills; they can only be cured by Magic or Supernatural Abilities. However, since players may remove 1 Star of damage at the start of each game period, Backlash Stars may go away in this fashion. Keep in mind that Red Stars of damage can kill you, and characters may die from Backlash in that fashion.

Because Red damage stars indicate physical damage, a character suffering from Backlash looks like he has a nosebleed, or – in extreme cases – is bleeding from the ears or popped a blood vessel in his eye.

Noticeable Effects

Most Psionic Abilities are invisible to the target and casual observers. The target may notice that someone touched her or looked funny at her, but she doesn't know in-character that her mind was read, or whatever. This is true even if the target character or observer has the PSI STAT.

Psionic Abilities with obvious effects, such as Telekinesis, are noticeable of course. Determining who is moving the object is left up to common sense.

For example, Fred the character is standing in a crowd of people when he sees a brick fly across the room. He knows that he saw the brick, but he doesn't who made it move, even though the player of Fred's character heard another player announce out of game that she was using her Telekinesis Ability.

New Handicaps

FEEBLEMINDED

Then the beautiful woman looked you in the eye and you realized that everything would be all right.

Category: Influence Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are especially vulnerable to Psionic Abilities. Subtract your level from your defense for all Psionic Abilities.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You must have no PSI STAT or a PSI STAT of 0. You cannot take both Feebleminded and PSI Resistance.

PRONE TO BACKLASH

Percy tried to think straight, but the pounding in his head made the task impossible.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Cost, 4 Character Points

Effect: You take 2 Red Stars damage when you take Backlash.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You must have at least one Ability that causes Backlash. You may not take the Resist Backlash Ability.

New Aptitudes

PSI RESISTANCE

They often tried to read my mind, but to no avail.

Category: Miscellaneous Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are naturally resistant to PSI. Add your PSI Resistance level to your defense against any Psionic Ability used on you (this includes beneficial ones).

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You must have no PSI STAT or a PSI STAT of 0 in order to take this Ability. If the Ability used on you normally has an automatic success, your opponent must still win a challenge of their Ability Rating (or double their PSI if the Ability doesn't have levels) vs. your WILL + PSI Resistance. You cannot take both Feebleminded and PSI Resistance.

RESIST BACKLASH

My head was pounding but the stranger just smiled.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Hard

Effect: For every level of Resist Backlash you have, you may ignore 1 Star of Backlash per game period.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You must have at least one Ability that causes Backlash. You may not take the Prone to Backlash Handicap.

Psionic Abilities

AMNESIA

Well, we can't have you telling everyone the location of our hideout, now can we?

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: Your target cannot remember anything that occurred in the last few minutes (5 minutes per your level of Ability), and cannot act on information acquired during that time. Tell your target exactly which events you want him or her to have forgotten.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's IQ

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per person per game period.

Other Constraints: Amnesia covers a period of no more than 5 minutes per level. You may always choose to have the Amnesia cover a shorter period. Causes Backlash.

BOOST SKILL

The cheerleaders at my University had their own way of making sure the team did well.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can boost another's confidence and clear their thoughts, allowing them a +2 on any challenge.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: 1 Combat Round

of Uses: Once per character per game period. This *must* be defended.

CLEAR HEAD

I needed him sober and I needed it now!

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may remove Blue Stars of any type from a character. Remove 2/3 of all Blue Stars from your target, rounded up.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. 5 + # of Blue Stars

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per character per game period.

Other Constraints: Challenge *must* be defended.

DETECT LIE

Marcus gripped her arm. "You're lying again, my dear."

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: In a conversation, you can tell if a given statement was a lie. Use this just after the statement was made.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If you fail, you cannot retry on that specific statement unless your target says it again. You may only use this once per target per game period. If using this in an active interrogation, your target gets +2 to her defense. Causes Backlash.

DETECT PSI

Marsha was on a quest. She knew there were others like her... somewhere.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Your target must tell you the level of his or her PSI STAT. If you fail the challenge, target does not give you any information.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's PSI

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per target per game period.

DREAM VISION

Louis woke the next morning, his mind fixed on the picture of the silver chalice.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may send a message to another person in their dreams. The message is delivered the next time the target sleeps.

Challenge: WILL + Ability Level vs. Opponent's WILL

Time to Use: Instantaneous Number of Uses: Once per target per game.

Other Constraints: You may give the information that you wish to convey to the GMs, the simpler the better. The GMs will craft the dream, which may present the information in metaphor.

INTUITION

I've got a hunch.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may ask a GM a yes/no question that must be answered honestly.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: You may ask as many questions per Game Period as (PSI + Intuition – 3).

Other Constraints: If the GM answers, "I don't know," to the yes/no question, that question does count.

ITEM HISTORY

The chalice looked like it was from ancient Rome, but Margarett knew better.

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may gain some insight into the history of an inanimate object. You must be touching the item for it to work.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. GM Determined

Time to use: 5 minutes

of Uses: Your Ability level per game period. Failed attempts do not count toward number of uses.

Other Constraints: This may only be attempted once on a given item. This may cause Backlash, fainting, psychotic episodes, or may have other side effects on a case by case basis, at the GM's discretion.

GM Tips: Detect Abilities on Items

Players with Abilities such as Item History, often try to use them frequently by touching every item in game one at a time, and then trying to get information from the GMs. This is especially prevalent in games set at auctions or other places where there may be a great many esoteric items. This causes both the player and you a great deal of work. Instead, let the player know out of game what the important items are, or that you will be there when needed and they won't need to search for you for every item in the game. Contingency envelopes are also best used for this task.

KNOW SKILLS

One glance at Boris told me everything I needed to know. "You're the one – let's go."

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Your target must tell you the names (and only the names) of all of his or her **Skills**. You must be touching your target.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: You may only attempt this once per target per game period.

Other Constraints: This only gives you the names of the Skills, not other Ability types.

KNOW STATISTICS

She sized Joe up for several minutes before she made her move.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Your target must tell you the level of his or her four basic STATs. You must be touching your target.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: You may only attempt this once per target per game period.

Other Constraints: Causes Backlash

KNOW WEAKNESSES

Guido had an uncanny knack for knowing how to break someone.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Your target must tell you the names of all of his or her Handicaps. You must be touching your target.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per target per game period.

MENTAL LINK: _____

"Lisa's in trouble! This way! Hurry!"

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You have formed a mental link with one or more other characters, allowing you to communicate telepathically at great distances.

All characters involved in the link must take this Ability. Your level is the number of people you can link to. That is, if both Mary and James take Mental Link: Carla, then Carla must take Mental Link at level two: Mary and James. This allows Carla to talk to Mary and James, but Mary and James cannot communicate directly with each other (until they buy the Ability up to level 2).

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The link does not compel thoughts; no character within the link is ever forced to divulge information because of the link. Any character can sever the current communication at any time or refuse to talk or listen.

Player Tips: Simulating the Link

It is strongly suggested that the players involved in the link all bring an out of game method of simulation, such as a set of walkie talkies or a cell phone. If the players are unable or unwilling to provide a medium, it is suggested that the GM not allow the Ability to be taken (because passing notes is a pain, and trying to be in two places at once can really break a LARP).

If the characters are out of range of the walkie talkies or telephones, then the Ability doesn't work. Note that some walkie-talkies can be eavesdropped upon. Use them at your own risk.

MIND BLAST

"Ouch!"

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may shoot a bolt of mental force at any character you can see. The blast does 1 Red Star of damage. Target obscuration does not affect the challenge. No physical defense or armor affects the challenge or the damage.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL + 2

Time to use: 1 Combat Round

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Requires a declaration of combat. Your target knows who attacked him.

MIND SHIELD

I've been trying to get the information for hours, sir. She seems to be resisting my efforts.

Category: Miscellaneous Defend Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can use PSI + Mind Shield as the defense against any Psionic Ability instead of normal defense for that Ability.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

PRECOGNITIVE VISIONS

Barbara got her first odd feeling when she was ten. She knew something was wrong even before she got home that day.

Category: Information Cost Type: Cost: 12 Character Points

Effect: You cannot control this power. Sometimes you get visions of the future. Sometimes they are ambiguous; other times they are crystal clear. Sometimes the visions are so powerful that they cause you to pass out.

Time to use: Variable # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This Ability is entirely under the control of the GMs. This Ability may cause Backlash at GM's option.

GM Tips: Using Precognitive Visions

Here are some ways this Ability could be used:

- Visions before each game session giving a clue about the game.
- A “clue hammer,” to help players who seem to be struggling with plot or puzzles.
- A warning of an approaching deadline.
- A way to involve players who are sitting on the sidelines.

PSIPHER

Ylsa knew there was more to the world around her than met the eye, but she couldn't prove it.

Category: Information, Defend Cost: 5

Effect: You know when someone targets you with a Psionic Ability. You know what the Ability is and who targeted you.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

REFRESH

Ilsa concentrated deeply, then Thag charged back into battle.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may allow another character an additional use of one of their Combat Maneuvers for the current game period. Your target may choose which Combat Maneuver gets the additional use.

Challenge: WILL + Ability Level vs. Opponent's WILL

Time to Use: 1 Combat Round Number of Uses: Once per target per game period.

Other Constraints: You must be able to see your target and your target must be able to hear you. See the section on Combat Maneuvers above.

SEE INVISIBLE

Heather paused, "There's something out there!"

Category: Information Cost: 8

Effect: You can detect people and other beings by their mental energies. You can see all invisible beings in the current room.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This does not work on inanimate objects. If your eyes are covered or closed, you can still "see" all beings in the room, sensing them through mental energies.

GM Tips: Dealing With Invisibility

Invisibility may be damaging to a live roleplaying environment. Players have to remember that they cannot sense the invisible character and that they must act as if she isn't there. Invisibility often needs to be represented though out of game means.

- Some games have had special, "you can not see me" badges.
- Some games use white or colored headbands to represent invisibility.
- Some games use special hand gestures such as crossing ones arms in a certain way or putting a hand on your head.

These have different pros and cons. For example, headbands do not encumber the hands and can be seen from a distance. On the other hand, players need to have the headbands available when they go invisible. The materials needed for special gestures are always at hand.

STUN

The headache was blinding. Tony dropped to his knees.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: Target takes 3 Blue Stars of Stun damage. One Star goes away at the start of each combat round. When the combat ends, all remaining Blue Stars of Stun are removed immediately

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: 1 Combat Round

of Uses: Once per character per game period.

TELEVERSE

I was never afraid of snakes until now.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may cause a victim to have a specific Aversion at your Ability level for the rest of the game period.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per character per game period

Other Constraints: Causes Backlash.

TELECOMMAND

“Go. Away. Now.”

Category: Influence Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You may give a character a simple, non-suicidal command of as many words as you have levels in this Ability. The character must obey this command, and knows that you have commanded him. The player must make a good faith effort to carry out the command, without letting on that he or she is under mind control.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Unlimited (but only once per conversation)

Other Constraints: If you fail the challenge, your target immediately is aware of what you commanded, but does not need to obey. Causes Backlash

TELECOMPULSE

Martha just couldn't stop cleaning.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may cause a victim to have a specific Compulsion at your Ability level for the rest of the game period.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per character per game period

Other Constraints: Causes Backlash.

TELECONVINCE

Marie looked thoughtful. Suddenly Johan remarked, “You're right. We'll do it your way.”

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can convince another person that what you're suggesting is a good idea. Your target retains free will, but must act as if they think your suggestion is worthwhile.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's IQ

Time to use: 5 minutes of conversation.

of Uses: Once per conversation.

Other Constraints: Causes Backlash.

TELEKINESIS

Howard concentrated and the door swung open. I tactfully ignored his nosebleed.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may move an object with your mind. Your weight limit is 20 pounds per level. The object cannot move faster than a slow walk, except for short bursts of speed (such as in combat).

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. 6

Chance of Success To Hit Someone With the Object After Making The Move Challenge.

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's Dodge

Time to use: Instantaneous.

of Uses: 10 minutes per level per game period total, even if you levitate many different objects.

Other Constraints: The object does normal damage in combat as if it were wielded with someone of STR equal to your Ability Rating. You may attempt an extraordinary feat by taking 1 Backlash to double your weight limit for 30 seconds. This doubling is cumulative, so if you were to take 2 Backlash, your weight limit would be 4 times normal. *Note that use of this Ability may require a GM or an out-of-character player to move the object.*

TELEREAD

Karla always had that little gift. It was as if she could see right through you.

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: Your target must answer the following question truthfully: What do you think about _____? Your target is unaware that you have done this.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per character per game period.

Other Constraints: Causes Backlash.

THE SIGHT

I looked at the stranger and my hackles rose.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Your target must tell you if he is a supernatural creature.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. 5

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per target per game period.

Other Constraints: See the supernatural creature rules in the plug-in below.

Magic

Magic is key to many different kinds of LARPs, and often is tied very strongly to setting. This Plug-In contains a number of Spells that can be tweaked and flavored for almost any setting. It also contains a few new Handicaps and other Ability Types as well.

Spells are a new type of Ability, on par with other types like Skills and Resources. Spells may fall into the six basic Categories (influence, information, item manipulation, martial, medical, and miscellaneous). Abilities that can be used to defend against certain Categories of Abilities (like Stoic which defends against Category: Influence) may be used to defend against Spells of that category as well. Spells are bought just like other Abilities, and XP may be spent on them as well. However, the mechanics for Spells are slightly more complex than for other Abilities, but they are more flexible too.

Spells fall into two general categories: personal and ritual. Personal Spells are cast by one individual and have simple, direct effects. Personal Spells can usually be cast instantaneously, even in combat.

Ritual Spells require several people working together and often take longer, several minutes or more depending on the power of the Spell.

The MANA STAT

In order to cast Spells, the character must expend a bit of personal power. This is done via a new Advanced STAT called MANA. The more MANA a character has, the more powerful a spell caster she is. The average person has a MANA of 0. There is no upper limit to the MANA STAT. It can be bought for the same cost as Base STATs.

However, MANA is handled differently than Base STATs. Spells literally *cost* MANA. The level of the MANA STAT is the amount of MANA a character has at the start of each Game Period.

When the character wants to cast a Spell, he or she spends that MANA (keep track on your character sheet). When the character has spent all his MANA, the character cannot cast any more Spells that game period.

Player Tips: MANA Chits and Tokens

We at RTLH HQ recommend that you use chits or tokens to use to keep track of MANA. Tokens could include poker chips, small glass stones, fake plastic gems, or any other small countable token. We've seen people use beads on a safety pin, for example. MANA tokens are out of game, a way for you to keep track of your MANA.

When your character casts a Spell, you can give the chits used to a GM or place them in a receptacle. At the start of each Game Period, you can refresh your MANA back to your MANA STAT.

Spending MANA does not actually lower the MANA STAT. The STAT is an indication of how much MANA the character has to draw from at the start of a Game Period. The MANA spent is temporary and will be renewed back to the STAT level at the start of the next game period. However, the amount of MANA a character has at a given time depends on the Spells she has cast.

Most Spells only require one or two points of MANA, but very powerful Spells or rituals may require more. The requirements (call the *casting cost*) are listed in the Other Constraints part of the Spell. Note that characters must pay the casting cost of a Spell to attempt it, even if it requires a challenge, even if the challenge fails.

MANA is also unlike Base STATs in two other ways. First, Damage Stars do not affect MANA. No matter how wounded you are, you retain your ability to cast Spells. Second, no Abilities will require a roll vs. your MANA. MANA is there to be counted.

Remember: characters get back all of their MANA at the start of every Game Period. This is in addition to anything else that happens at the beginning of the Game Period (stars for addiction, natural healing, and so forth).

There may be Abilities and items that can lower the casting cost of a Spell. Regardless of the actual cost of the Spell, *at least one* MANA *must* be spent to cast the Spell. For example, Majistro wants to cast a Spell that normally costs three MANA. But he has the Trinket of Asmodeus that puts four MANA toward any Spell. Despite the net cost of negative one, Majistro must still pay one of his own MANA to cast the Spell.

The casting cost of the Spell is listed under Other Constraints and should not be confused with the Cost field (which is the cost of the Spell in Character points for Character creation).

Note that Spells do not have a Time to Use. They have a Time to Cast, and the Spell itself doesn't go off until after that time has passed. If the Spell is of limited duration, the duration will be mentioned under Effects or Other Constraints.

GM Tips: Emergency MANA

As a GM, you may want to allow someone to contribute to a Spell or Ritual even if they do not have any MANA (either because they've spent all their MANA or because they never had any MANA to begin with). Here are some suggestions on how to allow Emergency MANA.

- Don't forget about the Blood Magic and Draw Power From Skills. Players could use those skills to gain more MANA.
- If you are using the Sanity rules (see below), players may trade in Sanity for MANA. The exact mechanics of the trade are explained in the Sanity rules.
- You could allow people to take 1 or 2 Blue Stars of exhaustion for a point of MANA. Blue Stars of exhaustion all go away after a good night's sleep. One could also be removed as part of natural healing at the start of a Game Period. This is only to be granted with GM permission on a case by case basis.
- At an extreme emergency, you may allow players to spend a permanent point of WILL for 2 MANA. The player loses 1 from his WILL STAT, but gains 2 additional MANA (no change to the MANA STAT). This is only to be granted with GM permission on a case by case basis.

GM Tips: Spells and Character Creation

How many points should I give players for Spells and MANA when they are creating characters?

Just like Psionics, it depends on the game. If you want magic to be very rare, don't give any extra points. For games in which magic is common, give players nine extra points in their STAT pool and ten extra points in their Ability pool. That will give them enough to buy a fairly good MANA and a few Spells.

New Handicaps

MAGIC ALLERGY

I never was that comfortable around all that weird mumbo jumbo.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you are the target of any Spell or magic item, drink any potion, cast a Spell, use a magic item, or participate in a ritual, you immediately take 1 Yellow Star of allergy damage for each level you have of this Handicap.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Like all Yellow stars, these last for 10 minutes then go away. For every 3 you have at that time, gain a Red Star. This may not be used to Detect Magic items or characters.

REQUIRE FOCUS: _____

Lara always wore the Black Crystal around her neck.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You are dependent upon a focus to cast Spells. You must spend 1 extra MANA per level to cast a Spell without your focus. The focus may be a specific object or a type of object.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may still be part of rituals, although you may not be the Caster without your focus. The GM must approve your focus.

NEW RESOURCES

FAMILIAR

Lawrence was never seen without his weasel.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Hard

Effect: A familiar is a creature – magical or mundane – with whom you have forged a special link. It can take several weeks, even months to form this bond. Creating this bond can raise the creature's STATs and Abilities to those far beyond a normal creature of that type. Familiars are, by their very nature, supernatural beings (see the section on Supernatural Creatures later in this book).

You may:

- Draw MANA from your familiar.
- Draw SAN from your familiar (if using the Sanity system).
- Communicate mentally with your familiar as long as the two of you are close enough to touch each other.

If your Familiar dies, you lose 1 in all of your STATs (not below 0). That is how strong the bond is.

Time to cast: Pre-Game/Between Games # of Uses: You may only have 1 Familiar

Other Constraints: see the "Creating a Familiar Character" callout box.

Player Tips: Creating a Familiar Character

A familiar's character points are based on what level it is when you create your character. Start with the STATs for a normal base animal of its type. For every Level of this Ability, your familiar gains 2 points to its STAT pool and 3 points to its Ability pool. It may have any Ability (including supernatural ones) allowed by the GM.

Typically familiars are played by NPCs and do not gain experience points. If your familiar is played as a Player Character, you and your familiar may use both of your experience points as a pool from which either may draw. For example, if you have 5 experience points and your familiar has 3, you may spend 8 XP, leaving both of you with 0. This is not true for character creation points. If you cannot find an NPC or PC to play your familiar, you must bring a physical representation of the familiar with you to events.

A familiar character automatically gains the Ability to draw MANA and SAN (if applicable) from its owner; no extra points need to be spent for that Ability.

New Skills

ALCHEMY ID

“Wait! Don’t drink that!”

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can identify potions without taking them.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS. Alchemical Complexity

Time to use: 5 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If you fail, each attempt on the same potion adds one to the effective Complexity for all future attempts by you. You may not take this at a higher level than your level in Alchemy.

BLOOD MAGIC

Ironius concentrated as the knife bit into his flesh. After a moment, he began chanting.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may gain 2 points of MANA by doing 1 Red Star of damage to yourself.

Time to use: 1 Combat Round

of Uses: One per level per game period.

Other Constraints: The MANA must be used by the end of the game period or it is lost.

DRAW POWER FROM: _____

Isabel placed her hand in the water, feeling its power.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may draw MANA from a specific type of inanimate object (rocks, the air...)

Time to use: 5 Minutes/MANA point Drawn

of Uses: One MANA/level per game period.

Other Constraints: The MANA drawn must be used by the end of the game period or it is lost.

New Aptitudes

MAGIC RESISTANCE

“Quite frankly, I don’t believe magic exists.”

Category: Miscellaneous, Defend Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You must add your level of Magic Resistance to your defense against any Spell or magic item (even beneficial ones). You may not cast Spells or be the Caster in any rituals. Also, your level of Magic Resistance is added to the MANA cost of any ritual in which you are participating.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If the Spell does not specify a defense, make a challenge of the SpellCaster's IQ + MANA spent against your WILL + Magic Resistance Level. For potions and items, use the item complexity for the challenge.

Spells

ALCHEMY

Luther carefully measured three tablespoons of powder.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can create potions. You can start each game session with a number of potions equal to either your Ability Level or your MANA STAT, whichever is lower.

Time to cast: Varies # of Uses: 1/Level

Other Constraints: This Spell does not explain how to create potions during games. Unless the GM has provided a mechanic (for example, the Alchemy Plug In) it is assumed that creating potions is so time consuming that it cannot be done during a game.

CARTOMANCY: _____

Lady V. spread the cards in front of her. "The future looks bleak."

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can use cards (or dice, or runes, or coins) to gain information. For each level you have of this Ability, you may ask 1 yes/no question of the GMs about a character (including a situation the character is in).

Time to cast: 3 minutes

of Uses: Once per character per game period.

Other Constraints: Costs 1 MANA/question. You must choose a form of Cartomancy (tarot cards, dice, runes, I-ching...) and you must have the appropriate materials when you cast the Spell. Your target must be present and willing. The question still counts even if the GM answers, "I don't know."

COMMUNICATE WITH SPIRIT: _____

Lady Theresa closed her eyes; she could feel the mystic presence forming before her head.

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may talk to a supernatural non-corporeal presence (examples: an angel, your spirit guide, the ghost of your late husband, Baron Samedi). You can ask the spirit questions, command it, and so forth. The spirits are often capricious.

Time to cast: (Spell Duration): 1 Minute/Level + 1 Minute/MANA Spent

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: While your spirit must answer your questions, it is not required to be truthful or provide useful advice or perform tasks you request. Costs At least 4 MANA. You may add to the MANA by adding more people, a'la a séance. A valid focus, such as a Ouija board or a Crystal Ball, doubles the spell duration. Valid focuses are approved on a case-by-case basis by the GM.

COUNTERSPELL

Ha! I laugh at your pitiful attempts at Spellcasting!

Category: Miscellaneous, Defend Cost: 5

Effect: You may negate the effects of any Spell cast upon you, even in combat. If you counter a Spell that affects others as well, the Spell still affects them, but has no effect on you.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Costs as much MANA as the Spell you are countering plus 1 MANA. You must be aware that the Spell is being cast on you. If you are caught by surprise, then you cannot counter the Spell. This spell does not count as your combat action for that round.

CREATE ITEM: _____

"Be a dear and summon up dinner."

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You can focus your MANA and use it to create an inanimate item out of the aether.

Time to cast: Varies

of Uses: Once per level per game period

Other Constraints: Costs a variable amount of MANA. The difficulty, time to use, and cost in MANA is determined by the GM when the Ability is bought. Common items which do not influence the game much (such as food, knives, or dictionaries) are Easy. Items which are rare or influence the game a great deal (such as machine guns, platinum bricks, or mystic tomes) are Hard. If the game does not use item cards, it is the player's responsibility to bring props for created items.

DETECT POISON

"Excuse me," Franklin said to the waiter, "I think I'd like a different glass of wine, please."

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Tells if a substance will damage you if consumed. Does not give details of the poison, if discovered. You must be able to smell the item being tested.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS. Poison Complexity

Time to cast: 5 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Costs 1 MANA. For each additional MANA, add 2 to the chance of success. If the Caster fails or there is no poison, the result is, "you found no poison."

DIRECT DAMAGE: RED

Flame leapt from Cara's hand, illuminating the combat.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may do Red Stars of damage to another character that you can see. The damage cannot be defended against physically, but is affected by armor. The chance of success is not altered by target obscuration or from behind.

Time to cast: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Cost: Level 1 or 2: 3 MANA per Red Star; Level 3 or 4: 2 MANA per Red Star; Level 5+: 1 MANA per Red Star. Casting this requires a declaration of Combat.

DIRECT DAMAGE: YELLOW

Imri was forced back into the wall by the shock.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may do Yellow Stars of damage to another character that you can see. The damage cannot be defended against physically, but is affected by armor. The chance of success is not altered by target obscuration or from behind.

Time to cast: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Cost: Level 1 or 2: 3 MANA per Yellow Star; Level 3 or 4: 2 MANA per Yellow Star; Level 5+: 1 MANA per Yellow Star. Casting this requires a declaration of Combat.

Info: Direct Damage Spells

In the previous edition of RTLB, these Spells were known as Fireball and Force Blast. Their names have been changed to ones that give more of a description of what they do. It is suggested that when players take these Spells, they give the Spells flavorful nicknames, like Ring of Stone, or Hammer of Thor, or Iceblast, or whatever is relevant to the character.

EVIL EYE: _____

The stranger locked eyes with Mordechi.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You may give another character the Handicap specified up to your level of Evil Eye. You must be able to see your target.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Handicap lasts until the end of the Game Period. This automatically fails on characters who already have that Handicap. The Cost Type for this is the same Cost Type as the Handicap in question. If the Handicap requires a specific type (like Aversion or Compulsion), you must specify the details when you buy this spell. Cost: 1 MANA/level of Handicap.

FORCE WALL

No matter how hard we tried, we couldn't seem to hit him.

Category: Martial, Defend Cost Type: Cost: 5 Character Points

Effect: Projects a wall of force around you, saving you from harm. You may cast this as a defensive action instead of rolling your defense for a specific attack. The attack is presumed to be successful. You may negate 1 Star of Damage from the attack for every MANA you spend.

Time to cast: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per combat round.

Other Constraints: You must choose to do this instead of rolling your defense; you may not choose to cast it after rolling your defense. Cost: 1 MANA per Star negated.

FUMBLE

Well, he did say, "Drop It."

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: On a success, your target must drop anything she is holding in her hands.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS. Opponent's DEX

Time to cast: 1 Combat Round

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Costs 1 MANA. It takes 1 combat round to pick up an item. Casting this requires a declaration of Combat.

HASTE

"I'm telling you Sarge, she moved faster than I'd ever thought possible."

Category: Martial Cost: 4

Effect: Your target may move 1 additional step each combat round for as many combat rounds as you spend MANA toward this Spell.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Costs 1 MANA per combat round. You may add rounds to the Spell's duration by spending additional MANA. Adding MANA to the Spell after it has been cast does not count as a combat action. Multiple uses of this Spell do not *stack*, they do not give more than 1 additional step per round. This Spell *does* stack with Aptitudes like Sprinting.

HEALING SPELL

Rohan touched Patrick, healing him to fight again.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may remove a number of Red or Yellow damage stars from yourself or others. May be cast as an action in combat. You must be touching your target.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Cost: Level 1-3: 2 MANA per star healed. Level 4+: 1 MANA per star healed.

IDENTIFY

I know this item is special. Let's try to find out why.

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You can identify the Spells cast upon a person or enchanted item.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level + MANA Spent VS. 5 + Number of Enchantments

Time to cast: 5 Minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may not spend more MANA on this Spell than your Level. If you fail, you may try again, but each retry adds 1 to your target number. You can only cast this on targets upon which you have cast Sense Magic.

INVISIBILITY

Ronald concentrated and smiled. They'd never find him now.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Hard

Effect: Renders you invisible to all normal human senses. You become visible as soon as you modify (move, alter, or damage) a physical object not on your person when you became invisible. You also become visible if you drop, throw, or release a physical object on your person when you became invisible.

Time to cast: 5 Minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Cost: You get your Level in minutes of Invisibility for each MANA spent. See the "dealing with invisibility" callout box on page **XX**.

KNOW SPELLS

I gave her the once over. Something about her just didn't sit right.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Your opponent must tell you the names all the Spells he knows.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level + MANA Spent VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

LIGHT

Gutman spoke the words of power and the room was lit.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Lights a dark corridor or room. Eliminates all effects of darkness. Lasts for 5 minutes per level of Spell.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Costs 1 MANA. It is up to the Caster to bring an artificial, out of game, light source to simulate the Spell.

MINOR CURSE

Sebastian was an unhappy man and needed to share.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost: 2

Effect: Target gains a Blue Star of Cursed "damage" that lasts for 10 minutes.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Cost: 2 MANA.

MINOR EXORCISM

“In the name of all that is Holy, leave this place.”

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You force a Supernatural Creature to leave for at least 15 minutes. It must avoid the area where the Exorcism was performed.

Chance of Success

WILL + Ability Level + MANA spent VS. Opponent’s WILL

Time to cast: 10 Minutes

of Uses: One success per game period.

Other Constraints: This requires a ritual and a religious symbol. You must spend at least 1 MANA on an Exorcism. This has no effect on non-Supernatural creatures, although the MANA is still spent. This cannot be cast during combat.

MYSTICALLY SKILLED: _____

“Can you defuse this bomb?” “I can now.”

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You may give any character a valid RTL Skill (or Combat Maneuver if you are using them) up to your level of Mystically Skilled. You must be able to see your target. If the target already has the Skill, the target gains levels equal to what you have cast (up to 6).

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The Skill lasts until the end of the Game Period. The Cost Type for this Spell is equal to the Cost Type of the Skill chosen. Cost: 2 MANA/level of Skill.

PORT

Frostborne paused and considered. No, the danger was too great. And then he was gone.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You may create a mystical portal leading to anywhere within game space. If you wish to travel out of game space, you cannot return until the end of the current game period (porting back at that time will require spending enough MANA to do so). The port closes as soon as you go through. Porting is not instantaneous. If not in combat, it takes as long to get to your destination as it would by walking. See Constraints for combat information.

Time to cast: See Constraints # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This takes 1 Combat round to cast and a second Combat round to go through. After that second round, you are in the Port for two rounds and then return to real space at the start of the next round. You may only Port to places you have been or can see while casting. You may only port yourself any anything you are carrying. Cost: 7 – Your Level MANA. (So at Level 1, it would cost you 6 MANA and at level 5 it would cost you 2 MANA).

REFLECTSPELL

As soon as the bolt of flame left my hand, I knew something was wrong. A second later, I was engulfed in my own mystic fire.

Category: Miscellaneous, Defend Cost: 8

Effect: You may reflect the effects of any Spell cast upon you back upon the Caster, even in combat. If you reflect a Spell that affects others as well, the Spell still affects them, but has no effect on you.

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Costs as much MANA as the Spell you are reflecting plus 2 MANA. You must be able to see the Caster to reflect her Spell. This spell does not count as your combat action for that round.

REMOVE ENCHANTMENT

Mamma Petruska touched Anastasia on the head and the curse was lifted.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may remove all the Spells cast upon a person or enchanted item. You must be touching the target.

Chance of Success

$IQ + Ability Level + MANA Spent$ VS. $5 + Number of Enchantments$

Time to cast: 5 Minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may not spend more MANA on this Spell than your Ability Level. If you fail, you may try again, but each retry adds 1 to your target number. You may only cast this on targets upon which you have cast Identify. Very powerful Spells might not be affected by this Spell, or may add to the target number (at the GM's discretion).

SCRY

"I think I can find your lost dog for you, but it will cost."

Category: Information Cost Type: Hard

Effect: Allows you to see a person, place, or thing, which you have encountered in the past. The less sure you are about the target's current position, the less information you will get. The information is presented in the form of a picture that the GM will describe (as if you were seeing it on television).

Chance of Success

$IQ + Ability Level + MANA Spent$ VS. Target Complexity

Time to cast: 10 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If the GM has no additional knowledge or you fail the challenge, you will get the equivalent of a screen full of static. Cost: You must spend at least 1 MANA. Requires an object related to the target.

SENSE MAGIC

Percival had grown up in the Order House. He could always tell if something was mystical.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You can sense if an item is magical or if a character has MANA.

Chance of Success

$IQ + Ability Level + MANA Spent$ VS. Opponent's IQ

OR

IQ + Ability Level + MANA Spent VS. Item's Complexity

Time to cast: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may not spend more MANA on this Spell than your Ability Level. If you fail, you may try again, but each retry adds 1 to your target number.

SHARE MANA

If we all work together, I think we can get the job done.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may send MANA to another character, even one without a MANA STAT. You may send as much MANA as you have (after paying for this Spell). The amount of MANA must be announced before the challenge is made. You must be touching your target.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS. 5

Time to cast: 1 Combat Round

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Cost: 1 MANA. The challenge must be defended. If the Spell fails, all MANA sent is lost. The MANA sent must be used by the end of the Game Period or it is lost.

SLOW

Suddenly my legs turned to molasses.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Very Easy

Effect: Your target must move 1 fewer steps than normal in all combat actions. For example, he may not move at all when Attacking or Evading, and may only move 1 step when running.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS. Target's DEX

Time to cast: 1 Combat Round

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Costs 1 MANA per combat round. You may add rounds to the Spell's duration by spending additional MANA. Adding MANA to the Spell after it has been cast does not count as a combat action.

SUMMON/BIND: _____

The circle glowed faintly, a cloud forming in the center.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may summon a non-human creature (either supernatural or animal), and then give it one command to carry out. Note that very unintelligent creatures may have difficulty comprehending complex commands and that very intelligent creatures may obey the letter of the command rather than the spirit.

Chance of Success

WILL + Ability Level + Additional MANA Spent VS. Target's WILL

Time to cast: 15 Minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Cost: Varies, depending on Creature. The summoner may spend additional MANA to add to their chance of success (no bonuses more than 6, though). Requires a containment figure for the creature to appear in (or travel into). It is presumed that the summoned creature is banished after it makes a good faith effort to achieve the command; however this may change depending on the needs of the GMs.

GM Tips: Summoning Tips

It can often be a problem when players want to summon things unexpectedly during game. As a GM, you may not have an NPC available to play the creature, or you may not have the correct costuming or props.

You may wish an additional requirement: The Caster has to provide a physical representation of the creature (for example, a stuffed animal or costuming), and has to find someone to play the creature while it was in game. This could be an NPC, or even a PC who wants to play a different character for a while.

Also, you will note that it doesn't say how long it will take for the summoned creature to arrive. This is to allow you a chance to prepare for it, especially if you are busy elsewhere when it is summoned. Players will expect an instant arrival, so you should let them know out of game that the creature has been summoned but it will take a while to arrive.

A good rule of thumb for the MANA cost of a summoning is about twice the target's base WILL. A snake might be a cost of 4, while a demon might be 12 MANA or more. Keep in mind that players can band together to form a ritual to pool their MANA.

TRANSMOGRIFY: _____

"Hey! You have claws!"

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Varies

Effect: You may temporarily gain a specific Aptitude or Supernatural Ability up to your level of Transmogrify. While you have a Supernatural Ability, you are considered a Supernatural Creature. If the Ability does not have levels, then your cost for this Ability is the same as the cost of the Supernatural Ability.

Time to cast: 10 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Cost: Cost 1 MANA/Level. Duration: Five minutes (you may choose to end the Spell early if you wish). You may keep the effect in place longer by spending additional MANA (this does not count as an action). The Cost Type for this Spell is equal to the Cost Type of the target Ability.

WARD

Charlotte carefully drew the circle on the floor. Soon he would be safe.

Category: Miscellaneous, Defend Cost: 7

Effect: The Caster marks a containment figure physically (chalk, drawing in the dirt, line of objects, etc.) Targets who cross the line take a Blue Star of pain damage for every point of MANA put into the Ward. The Stars last as long as the target is in the containment figure. The target must be defined when the

Spell is cast, and can be either be a single individual (my friend Mike), a race (humans, werewolves, ghosts etc), or simply any living thing.

Time to cast: 15 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The ward lasts for the rest of the game period or until the Caster falls unconscious, dies, breaks the containment figure, or moves out of line of sight of the containment figure. The Caster (and anyone else involved in the ritual) do not take damage from the Ward, but crossing the Containment figure by any of these people drops the Ward. Entities other than the targets and the casters have no effect on the WARD, but can break it if they make a specific effort to break the containment figure.

Ritual Magic

Spells cast by Ritual take more time and have greater requirements than Spells cast by an individual. However, they allow players to pool their MANA. Ritual magic is an excellent opportunity for roleplaying. Players can draw symbols, and chant, and light candles, and so forth.

Any Spell can be cast as a ritual, even personal ones. The minimum duration of a ritual is five minutes, but players can take longer if they want. However, the effect happens immediately after the MANA is spent.

When several people join in a ritual, they can all spend MANA toward it. In fact, in order to be considered part of a ritual, a character *must* spend at least 1 MANA. So, if a ritual requires five people and seven MANA, then each of the five people must spend 1 MANA and either two of them can spend an additional MANA or one of them could spend three MANA.

Regardless of the number of characters involved in a ritual, only *one* who needs to know the Spell itself. That one is considered the Caster. If any challenges need to be made because of the ritual, the Caster is the one who makes the challenges.

The Caster may add 1 to the Ability Rating used in the challenge (if any) for every person in the ritual above the minimum required. So, if the ritual requires 3 people, and five participate, the Caster can add +2 to the Ability Rating. Also, every person involved in the ritual above the minimum required adds 5 minutes to the time to cast.

Creating Rituals

Many games with magic involve complex, dramatic rituals, often as a resolution to a big problem. It is certainly possible in Rules To Live By for GMs to create their own Rituals. Rituals created this way do not count require character points to be bought the same way Spells do.

The main key to creating rituals is Power. How much MANA should a ritual use?

First, determine how many people the ritual should require. For less powerful rituals, the cost should be a point of MANA for each potential person. For more powerful rituals, make it 2 or more points of MANA per potential person.

Remember that participants in a ritual can put as much MANA in as they wish (as long as they put in at least 1 MANA). So a ritual requiring eight MANA could have eight people putting in one MANA, or two people putting in three and five MANA or one person putting in all eight MANA.

Assume that an average spell caster has around 3-4 points of MANA and that affects the minimum number of people the ritual could hold. For example, an eight MANA ritual could be performed by two average spell casters (assuming they haven't spent their MANA already).

A ritual's power really is based on its game balancing effects. If the ritual will cause a character or group of characters to have an advantage, or if it would end the game then the ritual should have a high cost. If the ritual has few game consequences, it should have a small cost.

The time to cast should be long enough to make it dramatic, but not so long that it becomes boring. GMs should try to keep the ritual to 15-20 minutes or less.

To make rituals more difficult or dramatic, add a chant that must be said or ingredients that the players must find or build. You could also add Skill challenge as part of the ritual. If the Sanity mechanics are being used, then the ritual could cause SAN loss as well.

Also, rituals can have unknown or unwanted side effects. Maybe a ritual completely heals someone, but – unknown to the players – only lasts for 30 minutes and then the target takes all the damage again.

It is a good idea to create rituals needed for plots before the game even starts. Most rituals will be necessary for game plot: banishing a monster, dropping a ward, closing a portal, and so forth.

These rituals can be complex, and even encoded. The paper they are written on can be prematurely aged (heat works, as does coffee). Since these rituals tend to be the focus of the game, they should involve group participation, and could take a little longer than a normal ritual.

Example: GM Pregenerated Ritual

Harry is writing a game that involves saving someone dying from a magical illness. His game has a number of mages and some physicians. Harry decided to make them both important.

The game will have 10 players, so Harry decides that the ritual will require 21 MANA. That way most people must participate, but there is still a safety point if they don't have enough participants. Remember: each participant must put at least 1 MANA into the ritual.

Harry decides that the ritual takes 18 minutes to cast, so he has to make it interesting in different ways.

To make it more participatory, Harry decides to split the ritual into thirds; one to heal the character using magic, the second to heal the character using Physician, and the third to lock the ritual into place. Each phase of the ritual takes 6 minutes and will require 7 MANA. The phases are all part of the same ritual, so while each participant must add MANA, they do not have to put in a MANA every phase.

The first phase of the ritual involves drawing 7 MANA and using it to cast a Healing Spell. This means the Caster must have that spell.

The second phase requires a member of the ritual to cure the target using the Physician Skill, while all the participants gather together 7 MANA.

The final part of the ritual involves chanting and movement and expending the last 7 MANA.

The ritual is in the callout box. For reasons of flavor, "mystic force" means MANA.

The Removal of The Curse of Libirium

This is an example of the in-game document created by Harry for the game.

First know you that the Curse is more than spiritual. You shall need a physical healer- one who specialized in diseases of the body- and you will need one who can heal by the ancient mystical forces.

The ritual is three parts in one. The first will heal mystically. The second will heal physically. The third shall banish the curse for all time. You will need to provide no less than seven measures of mystic force for each part. You need not have the same Caster for each part, and participants may change, but each part is – indeed – part of the selfsame ritual.

For the first part, each participant must call to his deity and chant for 6 minutes, then channel his power to the Caster who will use it to cast a Magical Healing Spell on the afflicted.

The second part involves chanting and turning clockwise around a participant and the afflicted while the participant uses the Physician Ability to cure the disease. [Target number of 5 – GMs.]

Finally for six more minutes all must chant individually in a circle around the afflicted. The cadence should rise and fall, and then seven final parts of mystic force should be sent to drive away the curse.

Thus the afflicted is cured.

Example: Impromptu Ritual

Sometimes players may wish to create their own rituals. At that point, the GM has to be quick on her feet.

Dirk has been leafing through *A Child's First Necronomicon* and asks the GM if he can find a ritual to turn someone into a stone statue. The GM says that he can and takes a few minutes to create the ritual.

The GM decides that the target must be physically restrained – or unconscious – inside a ritual containment figure, like a circle or a pentagram. Now if Dirk is able to get someone into a containment figure, he probably could kill the character, so the ritual isn't *that* game unbalancing.

It could also be used to put a dying person into stasis, if the ritual were short enough and done quickly, so the cost and time to cast should be equivalent to that. The GM decides on a cost of 6 MANA and a casting time of 7 minutes. That will probably get 3-4 people casting the ritual at once.

The GM decides that the ritual needs some special items. The target must be in a containment figure, and a stone of the type the Caster wants the target to turn into must also be in the figure. The stone must weigh at least 10 pounds, and could not have been created as the result of this ritual. The ingredient stone is destroyed as part of the ritual. Dirk may have been planning to turn someone into gold. He'll have some difficulty locating ten pounds of gold. But if he does, then he has a gold statue which could be valuable. A more careful GM may wish to limit it to just granite. If you are part of a team of GMs, *always* have the other GMs sanity check your impromptu rituals.

The GM writes up the description and hands it to Dirk. Since the GM is using the Sanity system and he doesn't want Dirk pestering her for more rituals, he also takes one Temporary Sanity from Dirk for the discovery of the ritual.

GM Tips: Warning: Magic Overuse

Be careful allowing your players to create their own spells and rituals. Because magic tends to be ill-defined in game, players may eventually try to use it as a shortcut to solve all of their problems, instead of roleplaying or attempting more conventional solutions.

Here are some tips to discourage this behavior:

- Set strongly defined limits to what can be achieved with magic.
- Make the cost of powerful spells prohibitive. This can be done through high MANA costs, or by adding additional costs, like a great deal of in-game resources, or STATs or XP, or requiring a human sacrifice. You can even have in-game ramifications, like making the spell illegal and if the characters are caught, they get arrested.
- Telling the players out-of-game that you would prefer they find a different solution to their problems. Be diplomatic. Congratulate them on their ingenuity, but be firm.

High Magic vs. Low Magic

When creating your game world, you should take into consideration if you want the world to be High Magic or Low Magic. A High Magic world has obvious magic with obvious effects. You may see spell casters throwing fireballs in the streets. A Low Magic world is much closer to our own, where magic is subtle and difficult to find. It might still have magic, but such that it is invisible and irrelevant to the mundane observer. For example, it could have the undead slinking around back alleys trying not to be noticed.

You may need to restrict some of the Spells and Abilities for your world if it is Low Magic. Lightning bolts and shape changing might not be appropriate. On the other hand, if your world is very high Magic, you may want to reduce the cost of the MANA STAT, or make Spells more powerful.

Low Magic Tips

Here are some suggestions for making magic less powerful and prevalent for a Low Magic world.

- Add components for Spells. In order to cast a Spell, a character must not only spend the MANA, but must also sacrifice a physical component (examples: eye of newt, a rose, a Red Star's worth of blood.)
- Force all Spells to be rituals with a preparation time of at least 5 minutes. Once a spell is "prepped," it can be carried around ready to be cast. Limit the number of "prepped" Spells a player can carry around to his or her MANA STAT.
- Make all magic *coincidental*. All Spells and supernatural effects must be able to be rationalized away. Attempts to prove magic works and is real always fail.

High Magic Tips

The Magic Plug-In as it stands is already good for a High Magic world. For a very High Magic world, don't allow the individual Spells. Instead, let your players decide on their own what they can do, using the Magical Effect Skill. *This is a very powerful Skill and should be treated with all due care.*

MAGICAL EFFECT

Abracadabra.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may focus your will upon the universe to cause something to happen by your very presence of mind. Tell the GM what you want to do, and the GM will assign a Target number, Time to Cast, and MANA cost.

Chance of Success

WILL + Ability Level VS. Varies (see GM)

Time to cast: Varies (see GM)

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Very powerful effects may require players to pool their MANA.

GMs can find good suggestions for Target Numbers on page [Target Numbers, under running RTLB in the GM section]. Use the Spell list above as a good guideline for MANA costs.

GM Tips: Manipulating the World Around You

Since a player with Telekinesis can't really move things with her mind, a GM or NPC is probably going to have to move the objects for her. But that's only one example

A character with the ability to Shapeshift into a mouse isn't really going to be able to crawl through the heating vent; a GM is going to have to figure out how to handle this. Wards only work if there's someone around to explain what happens when someone tries to cross the magical barrier.

The more of a "High Magic" game you're running, the easier this gets – you can post a sign near the ward to explain it's effects, or just have the telekinetic player describe what he is moving, and ask a nearby player to handle it. But if magic is secret or hidden, a GM will be needed to handle the effects.

Remember: the more often a mechanic involves a GM, the less time you will have to run your game, answer players questions, and generally keep things from exploding. Keep this in mind when choosing which abilities to put into your game.

Alchemy

This is a simple, basic system for creating potions during an RTLB game. You will note that the Alchemy Spell assumes that potions will not be made during game; however, it can still be used with this Plug-In.

The Alchemy system presented here names specific ingredients for its formulae. While you are welcome to use the name and materials presented, you should feel free to change the ingredients and names as necessary for the genre.

Also keep in mind that many of the ingredients listed here are dangerous, if not deadly in real life. Do not actually *ingest* the ingredients listed here, and don't attempt to use the dangerous ones. Use item cards or simulate them with colored or flavored water, but don't try to make the players eat volcanic ash or drink blood or mercury.

As per the Alchemy Spell, the character may still start each game session with one potion per level of Ability. However, the Alchemist cannot start with potions more powerful than he could create in game with this system.

Using the Alchemy System

In general, a potion maps to an Ability. You can make potions to give characters Handicaps, Skills, Aptitudes, Psionic Abilities, Combat Maneuvers, Supernatural Abilities, and other Abilities from other Plug-Ins, including ones you create yourself (limited by common sense and GM say-so). The one exception is Spells. Rather than give the imbiber the ability to cast the Spell, the potion "casts" the Spell on the imbiber. That's how you can make healing potions, for example. There are no potions that allow characters to have extra Resources or to allow a character to cast a Spell. Example potions are given toward the end of this section.

This system only allows for potions of temporary duration, not for permanent potions, although potions which cast as Spells might have the effects of the Spell be permanent at the GM discretion.

Each potential potion costs a number of *Alchemy points* to prepare. These points are used to determine the MANA cost and ingredients used to create the potion. A potion requires at least three ingredients:

- *A Base Fluid.* The Base Fluid maps to a STAT. It can map to a Base STAT like Strength or an Advanced STAT like PSI.

- *An Activating Agent.* The Activating Agent maps to the Ability Type (Handicaps, Skills, Aptitudes, and so forth).
- *A Domain Ingredient.* The Domain Ingredient maps to the Ability Category (Influence, Information, Item Manipulation, Martial, Medical, and Miscellaneous).

Each ingredient adds one Alchemy Point to the potion. This means that most potions will start with a base of 3 Alchemy points for the three required ingredients. Some potions will require more ingredients, and there are other things that will add to the Alchemy Point cost of a potion. Keep track of the points; they will be important.

STAT	Base Fluid	Description
STR	Aqua Vitae	The so-called water of life can be found only from a hidden spring somewhere in the Florida peninsula.
DEX	Dragon's Milk	Finding a Dragon is difficult in itself; milking one even more so.
IQ	Aether	Not the gas that puts you to sleep, but the fluid that transmits heat and light between the stars.
WILL	Sanctified Blood	Getting blood is easy. Getting it sanctified is not. It is said that some Alchemical societies keep a Priest as a member for just this reason.
PSI	Yggdrasil Sap	The world tree grows in the area between earth and heaven. Its sap is the very thoughts of life.
MANA	Phlogiston	Phlogiston is very dangerous. It is, literally, liquid fire. When an object burns, all that remains is the ashes; what has burned away is the phlogiston.
SAN	Crocodile Tears	It is said that a crocodile cries when it eats, not because it feels remorse, but because it uses the tears the way we use saliva. This is, unfortunately, a myth.
*	Quicksilver	The mercurial nature of the fluid allows it be to used for any STAT but it counts as 3 Alchemy points, instead of 1.
∅	Distilled Water	This is used as the base fluid if the Ability used does not base itself off of a STAT (such as Luck).

The Activating Agent relates to the Type of the Ability used for the potion. Each Ability Type has its own ingredient. Note that there are no ingredients for Resources. Potions cannot be made which produce Resources; even magic has its limits. The Alchemist must add at least one dram of the ingredient to the potion. A dram is about 1/8 of an ounce. GMs should feel free to come up with new Activating Agent for new Ability Types developed for their own Plug-Ins.

Ability Type	Ingredient	Description
Aptitude	Manna	Not to be confused with that which powers Spells, Manna fell from heaven to feed the Israelites.
Combat Maneuver	Moliço Enki	The Sumerian hero Gilgamesh sought this underwater herb so he could live forever, but it was snatched from him by the serpent Urik.

Handicap	Ground Bezoar Stone	A bezoar is created in the digestive system of an animal. A bezoar stone is usually a kidney stone or gallstone.
Psionic Ability	Airborne Volcanic Ash	Ash from an active volcano, collected <i>before</i> it touches the ground.
Skill	Giant Squid Ink	These behemoths live at the very depths of the ocean and never come to the surface. They fire a cloud of ink as large as a ship when frightened.
Spell	Ground Wormwood	Wormwood is a fairly common plant, actually. It is used to make absinthe, an illegal beverage.
Supernatural Ability	Stellar Dust	The dust that, upon falling into the atmosphere, creates the Aurora Borealis.

The second ingredient, the Domain Ingredient, refines the Ability Type into a particular Category. There are six of these ingredients: one for Influence, Information, Item Manipulation, Martial, Medical and Miscellaneous.

The Alchemist must add at least one dram of the ingredient to the potion. That's 1/8 of an ounce.

Category	Ingredient	Description
Influence	Fruit of the Datura Plant	The so-called zombie cucumber can be used to make even the most hostile of people calm and pliant.
Information	Ectoplasm	The stuff spirits are made of.
Item Manipulation	Golden Apples of Hesperides	Stolen by Hercules as his 11 th Labour. Some say they were apricots.
Martial	Dried Pokari Sweat	The Pokari is a rare, mythological Japanese creature.
Medical	Phoenix Egg	The phoenix lays its egg and dies in a burst of flame. It uses its own ashes to warm the egg. In time, the egg hatches and the phoenix is reborn.
Miscellaneous	Mandrake Root	It is said that Mandrake Root will cure any disease. It is also said that the Mandrake will scream when you pull it from the ground. Don't believe everything you hear.

Once the ingredients are assembled, the Alchemist must calculate the *strength* and the *duration* of the potion.

Potions (other than ones that cast a Spells) have a strength equal to the Level of the Ability it provides. For example, if you wanted to create a potion that gives someone the Sprinting Aptitude at Level 3, it would have a strength of 3.

If the potion casts a Spell, then the strength of the potion is the sum of the Level and MANA Cost of the Spell. For example, a potion that casts Invisibility on a character at Level 2 that lasts for 6 minutes would have a strength of 5 (2 for the Level and 3 for the MANA cost).

For Abilities that do not have levels, the potion's strength is equal to the Character Points required to purchase the Ability (or that the player gets back from Handicaps). So a Potion of Illiteracy would have a strength of 7.

The *duration* is how long the potion lasts. It is calculated in minutes (minimum 5 minutes). If the Ability already has a duration, such as the Invisibility example above, then that *must* be the duration of the potion. Otherwise, the Alchemist is free to choose any duration she desires keeping in mind that longer durations add to the Alchemy Points of the potion. The character is always aware that he has been enchanted in some way, and is aware when the enchantment wears off.

The *total* Alchemy Points a potion costs to make is the sum of the points for ingredients (usually 3) + its strength + (its duration divided by 5, round down) – the alchemist's Level in Alchemy. Regardless of anything else, the *total* Alchemy Points can never be less than *two*.

The *time* it takes to create a potion in-game is the Alchemy Points times five minutes. It's casting cost is its Alchemy Points in MANA. The *complexity* of the Potion (used for Alchemy ID) is its Alchemy Points + the Level of the alchemist in Alchemy.

Because potions can be expensive in terms of MANA, players may stretch the time it takes to make them across multiple Game Periods. For example, a potion of 8 Alchemy Points takes 40 minutes to make and costs 8 MANA. The Alchemist could spend the 40 minutes making the potion in Game Period 1 and spend 5 MANA that Game Period. He could then spend 3 MANA the next Game Period to finish the potion.

Unlike rituals, other players may not contribute MANA to potions *unless* they also have the Alchemy Spell. They do not affect the Alchemy Points; they can only contribute MANA.

Potion Name:	Alchemist:
Effect:	
Base Fluid:	Activating Agent:
Domain Ingredient:	Alchemy Points
Strength: Level of Ability (+MANA cost for Spells)	
Duration: Alchemy Points = Duration / 5 (minimum: 1)	
Level of Alchemy Spell of Alchemist:	
Total Alchemy Points: (Ingredients + Strength + Duration – Spell Level)	
Time To Prepare: Alchemy Points * 5 minutes	
MANA Cost: Alchemy Points	
Complexity:	

Alchemy Points+ Spell Level	
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Potion Calculation Table. Permission is granted to copy and distribute.

Sample Potions

Potion Name: Potion of Strength	Alchemist:
Effect: Gives the imbiber the Power Hitter Aptitude a Level 5 for 10 minutes.	
Base Fluid: Distilled Water	Activating Agent: Giant Squid Ink
Domain Ingredient: Dried Pokari Sweat	Alchemy Points
Strength: Level of Ability (+MANA cost for Spells)	5
Duration: Alchemy Points = Duration / 5 (minimum: 1)	2
Level of Alchemy Spell of Alchemist:	2
Total Alchemy Points: (Ingredients + Strength + Duration – Spell Level)	8
Time To Prepare: Alchemy Points * 5 minutes	40 minutes
MANA Cost: Alchemy Points	8
Complexity: Alchemy Points + Spell Level	10

Potion Name: Potion of Truth	Alchemist:
Effect: Gives the imbiber the Truth Sense Skill at Level 3 for 5 minutes.	
Base Fluid: Aether	Activating Agent: Manna
Domain Ingredient: Ectoplasm	Alchemy Points
Strength: Level of Ability (+MANA cost for Spells)	3
Duration: Alchemy Points = Duration / 5 (minimum: 1)	1
Level of Alchemy Spell of Alchemist:	2
Total Alchemy Points: (Ingredients + Strength + Duration – Spell Level)	5
Time To Prepare: Alchemy Points * 5 minutes	25 minutes
MANA Cost: Alchemy Points	5
Complexity: Alchemy Points + Spell Level	7

Potion Name: Potion of Death	Alchemist:
Effect: Drinking this potion causes the imbiber to take 5 Red Stars of Damage. It casts Direct Damage: Red on the imbiber at Level 5 for 5 MANA.	
Base Fluid: Distilled Water	Activating Agent: Ground Wormwood
Domain Ingredient: Dried Pokari Sweat	Alchemy Points
Strength: Level of Ability (+MANA cost for Spells)	10
Duration: Alchemy Points = Duration / 5 (minimum: 1)	1
Level of Alchemy Spell of Alchemist:	4
Total Alchemy Points: (Ingredients + Strength + Duration – Spell Level)	10
Time To Prepare: Alchemy Points * 5 minutes	40 minutes
MANA Cost: Alchemy Points	10
Complexity: Alchemy Points + Spell Level	14

Potion Name: Love Potion #8½	Alchemist:
Effect: Drinking this potion causes the imbiber immediately fall in love with the nearest person of the opposite sex for 15 minutes. It gives the person the Delusional Handicap at Level 2.	
Base Fluid: Distilled Water	Activating Agent: Ground Bezoar Stone
Domain Ingredient: Fruit of the Datura Plant	Alchemy Points
Strength: Level of Ability (+MANA cost for Spells)	2
Duration: Alchemy Points = Duration / 5 (minimum: 1)	3
Level of Alchemy Spell of Alchemist:	6
Total Alchemy Points: (Ingredients + Strength + Duration – Spell Level)	2
Time To Prepare: Alchemy Points * 5 minutes	10 minutes
MANA Cost: Alchemy Points	2
Complexity: Alchemy Points + Spell Level	8

GM Tips: Ideas For Potions

Here are some ideas for props you can get to make Alchemy seem more real. Unless it says otherwise, don't actually let the players drink these things. Some are very dangerous and some just taste bad.

- **Dry Ice:** Dry ice is cheap and will keep in a cooler for a weekend. When added to a liquid, it produces a nice bubbling smoky effect (best if the liquid is hot). Be careful when handling dry ice; wear gloves and never, never ingest it.
- **Vinegar and Baking Soda:** These two common household ingredients will foam when mixed together. In fact, that's the kind of foam used in fire extinguishers. Again, don't drink this, if no other reason than it tastes awful.
- **Pop Rocks:** Put these in a liquid, especially a carbonated one, or vinegar. They will explode harmlessly. Pop Rocks are safe for most people to eat.
- **Fizzies:** These candies fizz like Alka-Seltzer when put in a liquid. They are not only safe to eat, but can make a great special effect if you put them in your mouth and let the fizzle drool come out.
- **Light Sticks:** Light sticks not only glow in the dark, but they glow during the day, too. Never, ever ingest a light stick. Even if it says it is non-toxic, the chemicals are often mixed with broken glass. And be careful if you cut it open. It contains broken glass.
- **Tonic Water:** Tonic water fluoresces yellow under ultraviolet light. And while it tastes unpleasant, it is potable.
- **Edible Kits:** If you are willing to spend a little bit of money, there are make-your-own chocolate, bubble gum, even edible slime kits out there. These are certainly safe to ingest, and don't your players deserve Alchemical chocolate?

Magic Items

The following Spells can be used to create and modify *magical items*. Magical items can cast Spells or add bonuses to the user's Abilities.

Info: Why A Special System For Magical Items?

Just like having uncontrolled magic can imbalance a game, allowing magic items without a thought to cost will also imbalance a game. As the characters acquire an arsenal of magical assistance, they have less need for their own Abilities, or for each other. The RTLB magical item system is designed to keep this from getting out of hand. As the following Spells are written, it's going to be extremely difficult for player characters to become expert enchanters – it takes too many character points.

Magic items can still be a part of the game, perhaps fashioned by Great Wizards of a bygone age, or by powerful NPCs. But again, allowing the players to create their own Magic Items can allow exponential growth in player power, one that a GM may not be ready for.

Suggestions For Limiting Power of Magical Items

Most magical items are given a certain number of uses when enchanted. Items cannot be recharged. When all the uses are gone; they must be completely re-enchanted. In the same way, characters cannot use their own MANA to power an item.

One additional way to keep magical item use in check is to force Handicaps on powerful items. For example, a lock pick that gives +4 to the Pick Lock Skill but also gives the holder a Compulsion to obey

the law. Or, a sword enchanted to give the wielder +3 to Close Combat but gives the user the Compulsion to Kill your Friends. Another possible limitation of magical items is as booby traps – imagine an item enchanted with multiple Handicaps, including a Compulsion: Always Be Holding This Item.

GMing Magical Items

Trying to figure out what an enchanted item does can be very GM intensive, as players ask questions and try experimentation. There are three ways to alleviate this logjam.

- Have a GM on hand specifically to handle magical identification and experimentation.
- Attach an envelope containing the item's enchantment to the item, and allow players to open it if they cast Identify on the item.
- Allow players to know what the item does out of character and trust them to discover this in character at a dramatic moment.

Enchanting Items

The following Spells all allow a mage to Enchant Items. Note that this Plug-in is separate from the base Magic Plug-In and the GM has to allow both; allowing Magic does not imply the allowance of this Plug-In.

Only characters that have the Enchant Item Spell can create enchanted items. Items can be enchanted with Handicaps, Skills, Aptitudes, Combat Maneuvers, Spells, and Supernatural Abilities. If the GM allows Plug-Ins that create different types of Abilities, the GM must approve those Ability types for magical items. The Caster must have the Ability desired and cannot enchant the object at a higher level than she has the Ability. Abilities without levels cannot be enchanted onto items.

Note that unless enchantment is enhanced or made permanent, all enchantments on the item go away at the end of the game period.

Finally, the item in question must relate in some way to the enchantment. For example, Sprinting could be enchanted onto a shoe or Library Use can be enchanted onto a book, but not vice versa. Jewelry, and wands are wild and any sort of enchantment may be placed onto them.

The Enchantment Spells

ENCHANT ITEM: CURSE ITEM

I placed the strange ring on my finger. The room started spinning and I could barely walk straight.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may enchant an item with a specific Handicap. Anybody carrying or wearing the item gains that Handicap at the level you specify. This Spell only lasts until the end of the current Game Period.

Time to Cast: Casting Cost in minutes # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: The Handicap and Level must be specified when this spell is cast. Casting Cost: MANA equal to the level being cast. If the Handicap does not have Levels, the casting cost is the Character Point cost of the Handicap. You may not enchant an item at a Level higher than your Level in Enchant Item.

Player Tips: Enchant Item Casting Cost Example

Amulet of Greed. Gives Compulsion to gain money at level 4. Casting Cost to enchant: Level (4) = 4. This would take 4 minutes to Cast.

ENCHANT ITEM: BASIC ABILITIES

As Ivan stepped forward to meet his foe, he could feel his enchanted blade vibrating in his hand.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may enchant an item with a bonus for a specific Ability. The person using the item in a challenge may add that item's bonus to his own Ability Rating for that challenge. If the wielder does not have the Ability, then the enchanted item grants that Ability at a Level equal to the bonus enchanted. This Spell only lasts until the end of the current Game Period.

Time to Cast: Casting Cost in minutes # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: The Ability must be specified when this spell is cast. It may be a Skill, Aptitude, Combat Maneuver, or a Supernatural Abilities. The number of challenges the item may be used for – win or lose – depends on the amount of MANA spent. After all the “uses” are used up, the item is no longer magical. Casting Cost: MANA equal to the bonus being cast times the number of uses. The Caster must possess the Ability to be enchanted at the level being cast on the item. You may not enchant an item at a Level higher than your Level in the Ability or higher than your Level in Enchant Item.

Player Tips: Enchant Item Casting Cost Example

Blade of Striking. Gives +2 to Close Weapons. 3 Uses. Casting Cost to enchant: Bonus (2) * uses (3) = 6. This would take 6 minutes to Cast.

ENCHANT ITEM: SPELLS

Tommy leveled his new wand of fireball at the wombat. It was payback time.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may enchant an item with a Spell. The wielder may cast the Spell using the level of Spell on the item, and without using his own MANA. This Spell only lasts until the end of the current Game Period.

Time to Cast: Casting Cost in minutes # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: Enchanted items have a specific number of uses, determined by the Enchanter when this Spell is cast. The casting cost is calculated as follows: the Level of the Spell enchanted onto the item + (the amount of MANA it would cost to cast the Spell at that Level * the number of uses of the item). You may not enchant an item at a Level higher than your Level in the Spell or higher than your Level in Enchant Item.

Player Tips: Enchant Item Casting Cost Example

Wand of Fireball. Casts Direct Damage: Red at level 5, using 3 MANA. 2 Uses. Does 3 Red Stars of Damage per use. Casting Cost to enchant: Level 5 + (MANA 3 * Uses 2) = 11 MANA. This would take 11 minutes to Cast.

ENCHANTMENT PERSISTENCE

Lucky for us I've been carrying around this talisman for years in case something like this happened.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may “lock in” *all* the Enchant Items on an item so that they do not vanish at the end of the Game Period, but remain until used.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS. 7 + number of enchantments on item.

Time to Cast: 15 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: If you fail the challenge, the MANA is still spent, and all enchantments on the item vanish! If successful, no *new* enchantments may be cast on the item. Casting Cost: 5 MANA per Enchant Items on the item *plus* 2 experience points or unused character points per Enchant Items on the item. You may not take this at a level higher than your level in Enchant Item.

Info: Experience Points?!?!?

Yup, if you want your magic items to stick around between games, you have to spend experience points on them, just as you would any permanent effect on your character, such as raising an Ability.

ENCHANTMENT PERMANENCE

Ever since I found the Helm of Knowledge 10 years ago, school has become much easier.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may create a self-powered item that lasts forever. The item may be used over and over again without running out of uses.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS. 9 + number of enchantments on item.

Time to Cast: 30 Minutes # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: The item must already have had Enchantment Persistence cast on it. If you fail the challenge, the MANA is still spent, and all Enchant Items on the item vanish! If successful, no *new* Enchant Items may be cast on the item. Casting cost: 9 MANA per Enchant Item on the item *plus* 4 experience points or unused character points per Enchant Item on the item. You may not take this at a level higher than your level in Enchantment Persistence.

HIDE ENCHANTMENTS

“I can’t be sure,” muttered the wizard. “It’s either a wand of summoning... or an enchanted swizzle stick.”

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may make it harder for someone using the Identify Spell to determine what Spells are on an item. For each MANA spent, add one to the item’s target value for resisting the Identify Spell.

Time to Cast: 1 minute # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: The Caster may not use more MANA than his level of Hide Enchantment. Hide Enchantment lasts as long as the Enchant Item on the item last.

LOCK ENCHANTMENTS

“It’s no use. The witch who made this pendant knew her stuff. I just can’t remove the curse.”

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may make it harder for someone to use the Remove Enchantment Spell on an item or person. For each MANA spent, add one to the item or target's challenge value for resisting the Remove Enchantment Spell.

Time to Cast: 1 minute # of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: The Caster may not use more MANA than his level of Lock Enchantment. Lock Enchantment lasts as long as the Enchant Items on the item last.

GM Tips: Putting Items Into Game

So, you've got this nifty item or ritual, but you aren't certain when and where to put it into play. Well, if it is important to the game, don't just give it to the characters, make them work for it.

Encode your rituals. Hide the location of important objects behind cryptic clues. Have it guarded by a monster. The payoff will be worth it.

The best solution isn't just to get your players to work for the item, but to get them to work together, pooling skills and knowledge.

Finally, a word of warning: don't hinge the plots or solutions of your game on one thing. If only the magic sword can kill the rampaging monster and a player throws the sword off a cliff, then you've got problems. Be prepared to handle different solutions and to bend your plot in the directions the players wish to go.

Sample Magical Items

Below are some sample magical items. This assumes that all Spells cast to enchant the items were successful. Note that powerful magical items need a lot of MANA. Normally, it takes a large ritual to gather enough MANA to create a powerful magical items.

Magic Sword

The wielder gets +2 to the next six attack challenges made using this sword.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Close Weapons Level 2 (6 uses): 12 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 5 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Total Casting Cost: 17 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Bow of Hunting

The wielder gets +2 to all attack challenges made with this bow. In addition, the wielder of the bow receives +2 to Alertness.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Ranged Weapons Level 2 (1 use); 2 MANA
- Enchant Item: Alertness Level 2 (1 use): 2 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 10 MANA + 2 Experience Points
- Enchantment Permanence: 18 MANA + 4 Experience Points

Total Casting Cost: 32 MANA + 6 Experience Points

Permanent Magic Sword

The wielder gets +1 to all attack challenges made using this sword.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Close Combat Level 1 (1 use): 1 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 5 MANA + 1 Experience Point
- Enchantment Permanence: 9 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Total Casting Cost: 15 MANA + 2 Experience Points

Gloves of Pummeling

The wearer gets +2 to all unarmed combat challenges made while wearing the gloves. In addition, the gloves allow the wearer to do 1 extra Yellow Star of damage on a successful attack twice per game period.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Unarmed Combat Level 2 (1 use): 2 MANA
- Enchant Item: Power Hitter Level 2 (1 uses): 4 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 10 MANA + 2 Experience Points
- Enchantment Permanence: 18 MANA + 4 Experience Points

Total Casting Cost: 34 MANA + 6 Experience Points

Boots of Speed

The wearer gains the Sprinting Skill at Level 3, for 10 uses. Also, she may add +2 to her defense against physical attacks 5 times.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Sprinting Level 3 (10 uses): 30 MANA
- Enchant Item: Dodge Level 2 (5 uses): 10 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 10 MANA + 2 Experience Points

Total Casting Cost: 50 MANA + 2 Experience Points

Magic Armor

The Armor has five uses. When activated, the wearer may ignore one Red or Yellow Star of damage caused by a hit in combat, and may do so on the next two hits in the same combat.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Tough Level 3 (5 uses): 15 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 5 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Total Casting Cost: 20 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Bracers of Defense

The wearer may ignore the first Red or Yellow Star of damage taken in a combat each game period.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Tough Level 1 (1 use): 1 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 5 MANA + 1 Experience Point
- Enchantment Permanence: 9 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Total Casting Cost: 15 MANA + 2 Experience Points

Spectacles of Research

The wearer may add 2 to all Library Use challenges.

Spells used:

- Enhance Item: Library Use Level 2 (1 use): 2 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 5 MANA + 1 Experience Point
- Enchantment Permanence: 9 MANA + 2 Experience Points

Total Casting Cost: 16 MANA + 3 Experience Points

Wand of Fireballs

The wielder may fire up to five fireballs, one per combat round, each doing 2 automatic Red Stars of damage to the target. After five uses, the item is useless.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Direct Damage Red Level 3 (5 uses at 2 red stars each): 23 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 5 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Total Casting Cost: 28 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Scalpel of Healing

The user may add 3 to any Surgery Challenges.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Surgery Level 3 (1 use): 3 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 5 MANA + 1 Experience Point
- Enchantment Permanence: 9 MANA + 2 Experience Points

Total Casting Cost: 17 MANA + 3 Experience Points

Sword of Justice

The wielder may add +3 to all Close Combat challenges when using the sword, but also acquires the Moral Code to Obey the Law at level 4 while carrying the sword

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Close Combat Level 3 (1 use): 3 MANA
- Enchant Item: Moral Code: Obey the Law Level 4 (1 use): 4 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 10 MANA + 2 Experience Points
- Enchantment Permanence: 18 MANA + 4 Experience Points

Total Casting Cost: 35 MANA + 6 Experience Points

Lucky Charm

Five uses. For each use the bearer of this charm may add or subtract 2 to any challenge involving him.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Luck 1 (5 uses): 5 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 5 MANA + 1 Experience Point

Total Casting Cost: 10 MANA + 1 Experience Points

Holy Water

Until the end of the game period, this water causes the first Supernatural Creature it touches to leave the area for 15 minutes. One use. The owner of the water must make a WILL + 5 vs. creature's WILL challenge for the use to be successful.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Minor Exorcism Level 3 + 2 MANA (1 Use): 5 MANA

Total Casting Cost: 5 MANA

The Book of Evil

A person researching using this book may add 4 to her Level of Area of Knowledge: Occult (either for Library Use Checks or for asking Yes/No questions of the GMs). However, the bearer of the Book of Evil receives Unlucky and Monster Magnet at Level 2 while carrying the book.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Area of Knowledge Occult Level 4 (1 Use): 4 MANA
- Enchant Item: Unlucky Level 2 (1 Use): 2 MANA
- Enchant Item: Monster Magnet Level 2 (1 Use): 2 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 15 MANA + 3 Experience Points
- Enchantment Permanence: 27 MANA + 6 Experience Points

Total Casting Cost: 68 MANA + 9 Experience Points

The Anarchist's Dagger

A powerful cursed item. Anyone touching or carrying this receives the Delusion: I must keep this Dagger at Level 2, as well as the Compulsion: Kill All My Friends at Level 3. Additionally, the bearer receives a +2 to any Close Combat challenges using the dagger. The enchantments are Hidden and Locked at Level 3.

Spells used:

- Enchant Item: Close Combat Level 2 (1 Use): 2 MANA
- Enchant Item: Compulsion to Kill Your Friends Level 3 (1 use): 3 MANA
- Enchant Item: Delusion Keep the Dagger on My Person: Level 2 (1 use): 2 MANA
- Hide Enchantments 3: 3 MANA

- Lock Enchantments 3: 3 MANA
- Enchantment Persistence: 15 MANA + 3 Experience Points
- Enchantment Permanence: 27 MANA + 6 Experience Points

Total Casting Cost: 55 MANA + 9 Experience Points

Sanity

Many horror games have the concept of *sanity*, watching the characters slip slowly beyond the bounds of reason or having a sudden, incomprehensible shock. This isn't surprising given that one of the foundations of horror is the idea that the world does not work quite the way the characters used to believe.

The Sanity Plug-In for RTLB creates a new Advanced STAT called Sanity (SAN) to represent the character's mental well being. An average human has a SAN of 4 (not 2, like the Base STATs). When creating a character in a game that uses SAN, it costs 0 points to start at SAN of 4. SAN can then be raised and lowered using the chart below. *After* character creation, XP can be spent on SAN at the same cost as other STATs (triple the new level + 3 XP). The upper limit for Humans for SAN is 6, just like the Base STATs.

SAN Level	Character Point Cost (Character Creation)	XP Cost To Raise To... (After Character Creation)
1	-18	N/A
2	-9	(from 1 to 2) – 9 XP
3	-3	(from 2 to 3) – 12 XP
4	0	(from 3 to 4) – 15 XP
5	3	(from 4 to 5) – 18 XP
6	9	(from 5 to 6) – 21 XP

*When creating a character with a SAN less than 4, the player receives extra character points, just like with Handicaps.

Temporary vs. Permanent Sanity

Just like with MANA, the Sanity STAT represents the total amount of Sanity the character starts with at the beginning of each Game Period. This is called *Permanent Sanity*. It is a representation of the character's overall stability. It does tend to slowly decay over the course of a campaign. After all, a character who has spent his life fighting undead horrors will not make normal dinner conversation.

During the course of a game, the character's Sanity can rise and fall. Seeing something particularly shocking, or learning a horrible new idea can cause a sudden drop in Sanity, while relaxing or coming to grips with the new reality might cause the character's Sanity to rise. The amount of Sanity a character has during any give Game Period is called *Temporary Sanity*.

For example, Doctor Beckwith is a character with a SAN STAT of 5, giving her 5 Permanent Sanity. At the start of each Game Period, she replenishes her Temporary Sanity back to 5. During one Game Period, she sees a shambling lurker which causes her to lose 2 Temporary Sanity. She now has 3 Temporary Sanity. She then reads the Book of Parham which causes her to lose 1 more Temporary Sanity. She then has a Temporary Sanity of 2. Luckily, that's all the Sanity she loses during that Game Period. Had she lost all her Temporary Sanity she would have gone Temporarily Insane (see blow). At the start of the next Game Period, she restores her Temporary Sanity back to 5.

For the sake of brevity, when any of the following rules or Abilities refer to Sanity, they are referring to *Temporary Sanity*. The rules will explicitly say if they are regarding Permanent Sanity; otherwise they are referring to Temporary Sanity.

SAN is like MANA in many ways. Damage stars do not affect Permanent or Temporary Sanity. Some Abilities do use SAN as a base STAT or target number. In this case, use your Temporary Sanity.

Finally, if your game uses MANA, you may spend two Temporary Sanity as one MANA for Spells, or spend one Permanent Sanity (lowering the STAT by one) for two MANA.

Raising or lowering ones Permanent Sanity does not affect the character's Temporary Sanity until the next game period, when the Temporary Sanity becomes equal to the new Permanent Sanity.

It is suggested that GMs give their players chits or counters to keep track of Sanity. There are Sanity chits available on page 97.

Info: Recap of the Start of Each Game Period

The following four things happen to your character at the start of each Game Period:

- Your character is healed one Star of your choice.
- All Uses for Abilities reset. Any Abilities that have specific things happen at the start of a game period (such as Addiction) also go off now.
- If MANA is used in the game, your character's current MANA returns to your MANA STAT.
- If SAN is used in the game, your character's Temporary Sanity returns to your Permanent Sanity (SAN STAT).

Sanity Checks

Sanity Checks are made when character encounter something particularly disturbing, like seeing a monster, or a particularly gruesome bit of carnage, or reading from the wrong tome of knowledge.

A Sanity Check is a basic challenge of Temporary Sanity + one die vs. a target number + one die. Damage Stars do not affect Sanity Checks. The usually result of failing a Sanity Check is the loss of one Temporary Sanity. We strongly advise never causing a character to lose more than 2 Temporary Sanity at one time.

One important thing about Sanity checks: win or lose, you never have to make the same one twice. After seeing a tentaculated horror, you are comfortably numb to their existence (even if you lost Sanity seeing it the first time). Seeing another tentaculated horror does not cause another Sanity check.

Players should roleplay losing the sanity, perhaps becoming catatonic for a moment, or running in fear, or dropping and crying, or some other genre-appropriate reaction.

GM Tips: Quicker Checks

Don't want the players to stop and roll dice when you want to surprise them with a monster? Remove the die roll. Give your monsters a base number and tell the players if their Sanity is less than that number, they automatically lose 1 Temporary Sanity.

GM Tips: Fright Checks

For games that do not use Sanity, or if you feel that Sanity loss is not appropriate, RTLB also has mechanics for Fright Checks.

A Fright Check is handled exactly like the Intimidate Skill. The player defends with WILL. Any Abilities used in defense against Intimidate are also used for Fright Checks.

If the player fails the Fright Check, the character gains a Blue Star of Fear that lasts for fifteen minutes.

Like Sanity Checks, Fear Checks should be roleplayed.

Insanity

Insanity should be a powerful fear for characters in a horror game. The danger is not just from without, but also from within as the characters struggle to come to grips with the horror without losing their grip on reality. Going insane can severely hamper a character or can be so intense that the character becomes unplayable.

Just as there are two types of Sanity in Rules To Live By, there are two types of Insanity: Permanent and Temporary.

Permanent Insanity is just that. The character can no longer function in daily life. The character is unplayable, fit only for the madhouse or sanatorium. Perhaps, with months – years even – of therapy, the character could again rejoin society, but even then with a very low Sanity and some new Handicaps. Permanent Insanity happens when the character's Permanent Sanity drops to zero. This is rather uncommon.

Temporary Insanity is much more common. It happens when the character's Temporary Sanity drops to zero. It lasts until the end of the Game Period. Once a character has gone Temporarily Insane, his Temporary Sanity can be raised back by normal Skills and Abilities, but he still suffers the lasting effects of the Temporary Insanity.

A character who is suffering from Temporary Insanity may only use her Martial Skills, and Combat Maneuvers, and none of the rest of her Abilities. The character is just too disturbed to concentrate on anything too complex. Handicaps are still functional for the character, too.

At the end of any Game Session where a character has gone Temporarily Insane, even if cured, the character must either lose one Permanent Sanity or gain a new Aversion, Compulsion, Delusion, or Dread Fear (see New Handicaps below) at the level of their Permanent Sanity. The player gains no XP for this new Handicap. (GMs may, at their option, allow other Handicaps like Combat Paralysis, or Overconfident). If the character went Temporarily Insane more than once during the Game Session, they gain both the Handicap and the loss of the Permanent Sanity. Loss of Permanent Sanity happens after spending XP, so a player could spend XP to gain a level of SAN before losing it due to Temporary Insanity.

Player Tips: Roleplaying Insanity

Most of you don't need tips in acting insane; for many of roleplayers, it probably comes naturally.

The obvious route is hebephrenic insanity. That is the classic crazy person running around leaving chaos in his wake. If you have a lot of energy, creativity and a willingness to be bizarre, this may be the insanity for you.

However, that is not your only choice. One of the best insane characters we've ever seen was an admitted cannibal. He moved slowly and deliberately and was always sizing you up. And you could tell he was cooking and eating you in his mind. It was very creepy.

Two suggestions to avoid are catatonic insanity – what fun is a LARP if you don't interact? – and violently insanity – you will probably be killed soon afterwards.

GM Tips: Psychotic Episodes

An insane individual is not entirely in control of his or her own mind. If you feel that a player is not truly roleplaying his insanity, you may cause him to have a psychotic episode. In a psychotic episode, you take control of the character and cause him as much trouble as possible. This should be done sparingly.

New Handicaps

CANNOT USE SAN FOR MANA

Mary just didn't have the wherewithal to join the ritual.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Cost, 1 Character Point

Effect: You may not spend SAN (Temporary or Permanent) for MANA.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This Handicap can only be taken if Magic is used in the game.

DREAD FEAR: _____

"Lord Strange heard the coyote howl. His face went white."

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: The first time each game period that you encounter your dread fear, you must make a sanity check. If you fail, you lose 1 Sanity.

Chance of Success

Temporary Sanity – Ability Level VS. 5

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per game period.

HIDEOUS VISAGE

The creature turned to face me. As the urges to vomit, scream, and run all overtook me, I fainted dead away.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: Your very appearance is frightening. The first time another character sees you, he must make a SAN check vs. 4 + your level. If he fails, he loses 1 SAN.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per character per game period.

Other Constraints: If the game does not have SAN checks, you can cause Fright Checks instead. This Handicap is designed for GM controlled monsters; please double check with a GM before taking this Handicap as a player character.

Player/GM Tips: I Look Unusual

We at RTLH HQ approve of costuming, prosthetics, and makeup to denote an unusual appearance. But sometimes they aren't available or are too expensive. (Hint: Go to Halloween stores the day after Halloween for bargains on props and costuming).

Players whose characters look wildly different than normal for that game may want to wear badges explaining what they look like.

For example, a character who has bright green skin, or is twenty feet tall may wish to wear a badge or sign explaining that so people could react appropriately.

Characters with Hideous Visage could also have the SAN or Fright Check information on the badge as well. For example, a sea monster might have a badge reading, "I look unusual. I am a 10' tall scaly green creature with tentacles. SAN check vs. 6."

New Skills

MEDITATION

Saki had been trained to remain calm and focused during her childhood in Japan.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may regain a point of Temporary Sanity that you have lost. You cannot regain higher than your SAN STAT.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS. Your Temporary Sanity

Time to use: 7 Minutes

of Uses: 1/Game Period

Other Constraints: You may not interact with other characters while meditating. You must spend the entire time meditating without speaking to another character or taking a game action. You may chant if you want, but cannot use the chant as a form of communication. If your meditation is interrupted, say by combat, you must start over from the beginning.

PSYCHOANALYSIS

This Skill replaces the one from the core rules.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may allow someone to ignore an Aversion, Compulsion, Delusion, or Dread Fear for the remainder of the game period.

Chance of Success

(Aversion/Compulsion/ Delusion)

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's WILL + Stoic + Handicap Level

OR (Dread Fear)

IQ + Ability Level VS Opponent's Sanity + Handicap Level

Time to use: 10 Minutes

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may only attempt this once per character per game session, regardless of effect. You cannot use this on yourself. This must be actively defended.

New Aptitudes

EXTREMELY STABLE

Dr. Pendrake had been studying the occult for ten years and had accumulated more fieldwork than any other surviving faculty member.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You are naturally good at keeping your head in horrifying situations. You may add your level of Extremely Stable to your Sanity for Sanity checks.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If the game does not have Sanity checks, you can use this to add to Fright Checks instead. If you lose all of your Temporary Sanity, you still go insane.

FUNCTIONAL INSANITY

He may have lost his marbles, but he still knows his stuff.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may still use all your Abilities even if you've lost all your Temporary Sanity. Subtract (5 - your level of this Aptitude) from your challenges.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: If you lose all of your Sanity, you still go Temporarily Insane, and suffer other results, such as gaining a Handicap at the end of the Game Session. If you do not act insane in some way, the GM may still give you a psychotic episode.

INSANE EFFORT

Wally closed his eyes and concentrated. He seemed to have the strength of ten men.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Cost: 2 Character Points

Effect: You may spend two Temporary Sanity to give yourself +1 to a challenge. You may spend one Permanent Sanity to give yourself +2 to a challenge.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may use this Aptitude several times for the same challenge. Remember that the highest total bonus you can receive to any challenge is 6, regardless of the total of the individual bonuses that comprise it.

New Psionic Abilities

These Abilities should only be included if you are also using the Psionic Plug-In.

DISGUISE TRUE NATURE

I don't get it. He looked like everybody else.

Category: Information Cost Type: Easy

Effect: If you have the “Hideous Visage” Handicap, you may use this Ability to appear normal. You may lower your level of Hideous Visage by 1 for each level of Disguise True Nature you have. This does not allow you a number of different disguises, only one that makes you seem human, the same human each time.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may drop and restart “Disguise True Nature” at will. While you are using this Ability, subtract 1 all Psionic Challenges you make. The “See Through Disguise” Skill does not work on Disguise True Nature. You cannot take this at a higher level than your level of “Hideous Visage.” You cannot take this if you do not have “Hideous Visage.”

HEAL SANITY

Dr. Markus was a world-famous Psychiatrist. He specialized in those difficult cases.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may calm the mad ravings of a deranged mind, including your own. You can restore 1 Temporary Sanity per use, up to the target’s current maximum Permanent Sanity, but not beyond.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent’s SAN

Time to use: 5 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may only attempt this once per target per game period. Your target MUST defend against this.

SEND HORRIFIC VISION

I had thought that I had seen it all, then I met Brad.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You drain 1 SAN from your target, showing him or her a vision of true horror.

Chance of Success

PSI + Ability Level VS. Opponent’s WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: Causes Backlash.

Supernatural Creatures

This Plug-In works hand in hand with the other supernatural Plug-Ins, Magic, Psionic, and Sanity. It creates a new type of Ability: *Supernatural Abilities*. Supernatural Abilities are among the most powerful Abilities in Rules To Live By. So powerful – in fact – that they threaten game balance.

Game balance is important for two reasons. First is perceived fairness. Players want to feel that their characters matter, and a character with Supernatural Abilities (known as a Supernatural Creature) can usually make more mundane characters worthless.

The second reason is pacing. Because supernatural characters are more powerful, they will tend to win challenges more often. This means that they can overpower the game and could cause a game to come to a premature halt.

RTLB attempts to foster game balance by making Abilities have a cost, either per level, or a single cost for the Ability. However, some Supernatural Abilities are so powerful that they defy this system.

One suggestion would be for GMs to not allow a mixed Supernatural Creature/mundane character game. Either make all the PCs one or the other. Or, if you allow Supernatural Creatures as PCs (for example, a game where all the characters were vampires or werewolves) also allow players to play mundane characters, but not vice versa.

A new Aptitude: Supernatural Creature has been created for GMs that want to allow mixes of supernatural and mundane characters. This is a small attempt at play balance in that players will have to pay more points to create a supernatural character and will have fewer points for STATs and Abilities.

If all of the characters in the game are supernatural – for example, a meeting of vampires – that Aptitude is not needed, but it is suggested that GMs allow the players to have 30 additional points in their STAT pool to build characters.

Being a Supernatural Creature

A supernatural character is one that has at least one Supernatural Ability. Some other Abilities also cause the character to become supernatural. Those Abilities will state so plainly. Having Psionic Abilities and Spells do not make a character supernatural.

Supernatural creatures tend to be feared and hunted by normal humans. GMs should keep that in mind if players request to play supernatural characters in games.

Supernatural STATs

This Plug-In does not create new STATs, but allows the base STATs to be higher for Supernatural Creatures. Supernatural Creatures may have a Base STAT higher than 6. Six is the highest a normal human can have in a Base STAT. A character with a higher base STAT is supernaturally powerful in that area.

STAT BONUSES

Characters that have STATs higher than 6 gain the following Abilities at the level of the STAT – 6. So if a character has a WILL of 9, she gets Impervious to Pain at level 3. She can always spend more points to raise the Ability higher than the free default.

Characters who have the Ability and then get their STAT raised may add the bonus levels to their existing Ability.

STAT	Bonus Ability
Strength	Power Hitter
Dexterity	Sprinting
IQ	Logic/Deduction
WILL	Impervious To Pain

Animals

Note that animals are the exception to the Supernatural Creature rule. They often have STATs higher than 6 and can have Supernatural Abilities, such as Preternatural Speed, naturally.

There is a section for animal Abilities a bit later on. Characters who take an animal Ability, but would not normally have that Ability (like Claws), are considered supernatural creatures. Animals that have

STATs or Abilities beyond what would be found in nature would also be considered Supernatural. Check with the GM to be sure.

GM Tips: Dark Secrets and the Supernatural

Dark Secret, level 5: “My character is a vampire, hated and feared by all humanity. If his secret were discovered, he’d be hunted and killed.” Cool! 15 character points!

A warning to GMs: be careful with Dark Secrets for supernatural creatures. The above example is meaningless if the entire game takes place in a Vampiric society. In that case, a Dark Secret that the character was not a Vampire would be worth more points.

Make sure that the Dark Secret is something that would hurt the character in play, something she wants to keep away from other characters in the game. Otherwise, the Handicap is meaningless.

New Aptitudes

SUPERNATURAL CREATURE

Vlad surveyed the room. He hoped he would have no trouble blending in.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost: 10

Effect: You may have Supernatural Abilities and Base STATs higher than 6.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Supernatural Abilities

ANAEROBIC

Marshall rivaled Houdini with his derring-do. He once stayed underwater for two weeks.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Cost: 3

Effect: You do not need to breathe. You can neither asphyxiate nor drown. You are immune to all inhaled poisons or diseases.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You may always choose to breathe if you wish. You must breathe to talk.

AURA OF: _____

All conversation stopped as Mrs. Fell entered the room.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You generate a particular mood, influencing those around you. All those within a certain range must succeed in a (WILL – your level) vs. 5 challenge to do anything contrary to your mood. The range is 3 steps per level. Your own Aura does not affect you. You may project this Aura as often as you desire, and may turn it off if you choose.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You choose your mood at character creation time. It can be as general or as specific as you desire, but that is set at character creation time as well. It is suggested that you wear a badge explaining the effects of your Aura. Your Aura does not affect characters whose lives are being directly threatened.

DAMAGE REDUCTION: _____

Strang stabbed at the giant rat creature several times to no effect. Maybe he just needed to find the right knife.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You take your level less damage from weapons made from the specified substance (or from the type of weapon specified).

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

DRAIN LIFE

The thing touched Yuri. I could see him wither.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may feed on others by draining them of their life force. When you do damage using any Ability, you may remove half as many Damage Stars from yourself as you did damage in the Attack (round down). If the Spells rules are in effect, you may do your damage to your target's MANA draining them of that much MANA and gain MANA equal to half the amount you drained, rounding down.

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

IMMUNE TO DISEASE

I've never been sick a day in my life. Why do you ask?

Category: Medical Cost Type: Cost: 8

Effect: You are immune to all physical diseases, from tooth decay, to the flu, to ebola. You may still have mental diseases, such as Aversions and Compulsions. You can still be harmed by physical damage, but your wounds never get infected.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You are still susceptible to diseases caused by magic, psionics, and supernatural sources.

IMMUNE TO PHYSICAL ATTACKS

Perhaps there was a reason why Jack was always so confident in the boxing ring.

Category: Martial Cost Type: Cost: 12

Effect: You may only be harmed by Spells, Psionic Abilities, and Supernatural Abilities. You take no damage from other Abilities.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: You also take damage from magical, psionic, and supernatural items.

INCORPOREAL

Joey paused and then walked through the wall

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Cost: 16

Effect: You may become incorporeal at will and pass through objects. While in this state, you cannot be physically touched, but you may not hold any items.

Time to use: 1 Combat Round

of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: While Incorporeal, you gain the Immune To Physical Attacks Ability. Your clothes become incorporeal when you do (but important items and jewelry do not).

LIMITED OMNISCIENCE

Toran the Overseer figured into nearly twenty religions on his homeworld.

Category: Information Cost Type: Cost: 13

Effect: You intuitively know things. Everything you know out of game, you also know in-game.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: The GM can always say that you do not know something for the purposes of plot. You do not know meta-information, such as, "We are only playing a game," or "We're in someone's basement, not the sewers of Paris."

NO SANITY LOSS

How was it that Percy was always able to keep his cool?

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Cost: 7

Effect: You do not lose SAN under any circumstances.

Time to use: Instantaneous # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This also means you cannot use SAN for MANA.

OMNIEATER

Mmmm, plutonium is my favorite!

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Cost: 5

Effect: You may ingest anything as long as it is in bite sized chunks. You take no damage from what you ingest. Whatever you eat is completely digested and irretrievable in 12 hours. You are immune to all poisons.

Time to use: 1 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

POSSESSION

The spirit moved around the room. Suddenly Rachel's demeanor changed completely.

Category: Influence Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You may completely take control of your target. You must be touching your target for this to work. If you are incorporeal, you must be occupying at least some of the same space as your target.

Chance of Success

(WILL or PSI) + Ability Level VS. Opponent's WILL

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Once per character per game period

Other Constraints: The duration of the possession is 5 minutes per level of Ability. An Exorcism will drive the possessor away.

PRETERNATURAL SPEED

It was upon me before I had time to think!

Category: Martial Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may take one extra action during a combat round.

Time to use: Instantaneous

of Uses: Your ability level per combat.

Other Constraints: You may not take more than one extra action per combat round. You may do this for as many rounds each combat as you have levels in this ability.

RAPID HEALING

Francis was visited by Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine. Since then, he's never been sick a day in his life.

Category: Medical Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You heal one extra Star at the start of each game period for every level you have of Rapid Healing. Also, you convert your Yellow Stars to Red Stars five minutes after combat ends, instead of ten.

Time to use: 5 minutes # of Uses: Unlimited

SHAPESHIFTER

Noir concentrated and quickly changed into panther-form.

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Very Hard

Effect: You have a number of different forms into which you can change. For each level of this Ability, you may create one additional form. Treat your other forms as separate characters built under the same rules as your primary character. You may not transfer character points from one form to another. XP can be spent on any form. Any damage you take in one form stay for all your forms.

Time to use: 2 Combat Rounds # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: It takes 2 Combat Rounds to change forms. GMs may regulate the conditions under which you can shapeshift (for example, you only turn into your alternate form when angry and it only lasts for ½ an hour). All of your forms must have this Ability at the same level. All forms of a shapeshifter are supernatural creatures.

Supernatural Bestiary

Supernatural Creatures and monsters are very genre specific. The ones presented here are examples, and GMs should feel free to modify them or create new creatures for their own LARPs. To save space, we have not listed base combat abilities, and summarized them at the top. Because Supernatural Monsters often have unusual combat abilities, we have included damage charts for them (see the Damage Chart Plug-In for more info).

Dragon

STR: 10	Unarmed Combat: 10	Close Weapons: 10
DEX: 7	Dodge: 7	Thrown Weapons: 7

IQ: 5	Library Use: 5	Hit Points: 18
WILL: 8	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	
PSI: -	MANA: 15	SAN: -

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Compulsion: Hoard Treasure	2	WILL	6	5
Large	4	Dodge	3	
Fierce	2	STR	12	WILL
Forceful Punch				
Claws/Fangs				
Natural Armor	3			
Fireball	5			

1d10	1	2	3	4	5
Result	1R	2R	2R	3R	3R+1Y
1d10	6	7	8	9	10
Result	4R	4R+1Y	4R+2Y	6R	7R

Dwarf

STR: 6	Unarmed Combat: 7	Close Weapons: 11
DEX: 6	Dodge: 6	Thrown Weapons: 8
IQ: 5	Library Use: 5	Hit Points: 12
WILL: 6	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	
PSI: -	MANA: -	SAN: -

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
AoK: Mining	2	IQ	7	Varies
Mechanics	2	IQ	9	Varies
Weird Science: Mechanics*	1	IQ	8	Varies
Power Hitter	2			
Magic Resistance	2			
Night Vision	Cost 3			

Use normal human damage chart.

*See the Weird Science Plug-In.

Elf

STR: 5	Unarmed Combat: 6	Close Weapons: 9
DEX: 6	Dodge: 7	Thrown Weapons: 7
IQ: 6	Library Use: 6	Hit Points: 11
WILL: 6	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	
PSI: -	MANA: 4	SAN: -

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Sprinting	2			
Night Vision	Cost 3			
Healing Spell	1			
Haste	2			
Sense Magic	1			

Use normal human damage chart.

Ghost

STR: 3	Unarmed Combat: 3	Close Weapons: 3
DEX: 5	Dodge: 5	Thrown Weapons: 5
IQ: 4	Library Use: 4	Hit Points: 7
WILL: 4	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	
PSI: 5	MANA: 5	SAN: 4

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability	Defend

			Rating	vs.
Aura Of: Fear	3			
Incorporeal				
No Sanity Loss				
Possession	2	PSI	7	WILL
Invisibility	5			
Televerse: Ghosts	2	PSI	7	WILL
Telekinesis	2	PSI	7	Varies
See Invisible				

Use normal human damage chart.

Minor Daemon

STR: 8	Unarmed Combat: 7	Close Weapons: 11
DEX: 6	Dodge: 6	Thrown Weapons: 8
IQ: 6	Library Use: 5	Hit Points: 14
WILL: 6	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	
PSI: -	MANA: 8	SAN: -

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Hideous Visage	3	4	7	
Fierce	2	STR	12	WILL
Claws/Fangs				
Anaerobic				
Immune to Disease				
Preternatural Speed	2			
Tough	1			
Force Wall	5			
ReflectSpell				
Create Item:				

1d10	1	2	3	4	5
Result	1Y	1Y+1R	2R	3R	3R+1Y
1d10	6	7	8	9	10
Result	4R	4R+1Y	4R+2Y	5R	6R

Vampire

STR: 9	Unarmed Combat: 10	Close Weapons: 9
DEX: 7	Dodge: 7	Thrown Weapons: 7
IQ: 5	Library Use: 5	Hit Points: 17
WILL: 8	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	
PSI: 7	MANA: -	SAN: -

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Achilles' Heel: Wooden Stakes	1			
Allergic: Sunlight	5			
Aversion: Garlic	5			
Aversion: Holy Symbols	5			
Addiction: Human Blood	1			
Anaerobic				
Drain Life	2	WILL	10	WILL
Immune to Physical Attacks				
Preternatural Speed	3			
Shapeshifter	1			
Night Vision	Cost 3			
Claws/Fangs				

Impervious To Pain	1			
Seduce	5	IQ	7	WILL
Mind Shield	2	PSI	9	
Telecompulse	2	PSI	9	WILL
Stun	2	PSI	9	WILL

1d10	1	2	3	4	5
Result	1Y	1Y+1R	2R	2R+1Y	2R+2Y
1d10	6	7	8	9	10
Result	4R	4R	3R+2Y	4R+1Y	5R

Vampire as Bat

STR:	4	Unarmed Combat:	4	Close Weapons:	-
DEX:	7	Dodge:	8	Thrown Weapons:	-
IQ:	5	Library Use:	5	Hit Points:	10
WILL:	6	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>			
PSI:	-	MANA:	-	SAN:	-

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Paws				
Allergic: Sunlight	5			
Aversion: Garlic	5			
Aversion: Holy Symbols	5			
Claws/Teeth				
Supernatural Creature				
Drain Life	2	WILL	10	WILL
Shapeshifter	1			
Night Vision	Cost 3			
Tiny	1			
Preternatural Speed	4			
Sprinting	4			

1d10	1	2	3	4	5
Result	ø	ø	1Y	1Y	1R
1d10	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1R	1R+1Y	1R+1Y	2R	2R

XK-249 Killer Robot

STR:	8	Unarmed Combat:	8	Close Weapons:	8
DEX:	5	Dodge:	5	Thrown Weapons:	5
IQ:	3	Library Use:	3	Hit Points:	20
WILL:	8	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>			

Weird Science

Weird Science is the study of the bizarre and supernatural from a scientific standpoint. Weird Science is a subset of science fiction, but not all science fiction is Weird Science.

Even modern day science can be weird. For example, as of this writing, scientists have created a monkey that glows green and a goat whose milk can be used to create spiderwebs. That's Weird Science.

Attempting to define Weird Science is a lot like attempting to define art: you know it when you see it. Weird Science is esoteric; it isn't available to the common man.

PSI:	-	MANA:	-	SAN:	-
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Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Anaerobic				
No Sanity Loss				
Psi Resistance	5			
Natural Armor	1			
Immune to Disease				
Power Hitter	2			
Ranged Weapons	3	DEX	8	Dodge
Stoic	4			

Has a built in Laser Gun.

1d10	1	2	3	4	5
Result	2R	2R	3R	3R	4R
1d10	6	7	8	9	10
Result	4R	5R	6R	7R	8R

Zombie

STR:	7	Unarmed Combat:	7	Close Weapons:	11
DEX:	4	Dodge:	6	Thrown Weapons:	6
IQ:	1	Library Use:	1	Hit Points:	12
WILL:	5	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>			
PSI:	-	MANA:	-	SAN:	-

Abilities				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defend vs.
Compulsion: Eating Human Brains	3	WILL	2	5
Limp	6			
Slow Reflexes	2			
Hideous Visage	1			
Psi Resistance	3			
Anaerobic				
Immune to Disease				
Impervious to Pain	2			
Venom	1			

1d10	1	2	3	4	5
Result	1Y	1R+1Y	2R	1R+2Y	2R+1Y
1d10	6	7	8	9	10
Result	3R	1R+3Y	2R+2Y	3R+1Y	4R

Weird Science should make one worry. It could have ethical considerations; it could be dangerous. Creating nanotech robots to disassemble things into their component molecules is Weird Science. This is highly dangerous if left unchecked.

Weird Science is often unethical. A consortium of Italian Scientists announced that they plan to try to clone human beings. They have been denounced as unethical for a number of reasons (not the least of which is that they will create many mistakes on the way to success. Scientists destroy failed clones of animals, but is it ethical to do that to humans?)

Weird science does not have to be silly. It just has to be disturbing. Using people as medical or psychological experiments, for example, can produce very disturbing results. A Skinner Box was Weird Science at its time; putting a human in one is disturbing. Likewise the Stanford Prison experiments were Weird Science.

Weird Science does not have to involve humans. Genetic Engineering of plants and animals is Weird Science, even though it's happening today. Modern Artificial intelligence is not Weird Science, but it will be once computers can display emotions or reason at a human level. Attempting to communicate with primates or dolphins is on the edge of Weird Science, but it will definitely be Weird Science if researchers attempt to change the primates and dolphins with drugs or genetic engineering.

This Plug-In attempts to handle all sorts of Weird Science. It only has one new Skill, but then has a new set of mechanics to create Weird Science gadgets.

Character Creation

Weird Science does not add a STAT; therefore, no extra points are added for character creation if Weird Science is used.

The Weird Science Skill

WEIRD SCIENCE: _____

Frankenstein? Hah! A rank amateur.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You have an understanding of a specific scientific discipline far beyond those of your so-called colleagues. You may repair Weird Science gadgets in your category. You may also create new gadgets, but your Ability will be at -2 for that challenge. You may ask 1 yes/no question about your area of Weird Science per game period.

Chance of Success

IQ + Ability Level VS Gadget Complexity

Time to use: Varies # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: May require specific parts/tools. Choose a specific scientific Skill as your discipline in Weird Science. You may not have a higher level in this Ability than the chosen Skill. See the section, Creating a Weird Gadget, below. If the GM answers, "I don't know," to a yes/no question, that question does not count as one of your uses.

Info: Hey, What Happened to All The Skills?

Rules To Live By Supernatural had four additional Skills in the Weird Science section, and two new Handicaps. Why were they removed from this Plug-In?

They were wrapped into the core rules system. You can find all six of those Abilities in the Handicaps and Skills lists in the players section.

Creating a Weird Gadget

Parts is Parts

A *gadget* refers to any sort of thing built from Weird Science, even if it is a reanimated body. Gadgets are made from *parts*. The more powerful or exotic the gadget, the more parts it requires. All gadgets require at least one of each the following types of parts (these can be actual props or item cards):

- (PS) Power Sources (or transformer if using a wall socket).
- (I) Input Devices (knobs, dials, a keyboard...).
- (W/C) Wires and Connectors.
- (O) Output Devices (monitor, speaker, blinking lights...).
- (X) Odd Parts (a Jacobs ladder, a transthermal transducer, the shining trapezohedron...).

Parts can be obtained from junkyards, scientific warehouses and by cannibalizing normal things, like televisions and blenders. Item Source is a handy Resource for weird scientists.

Keep the parts together when you create a gadget. If your game uses item cards, the cards for the parts should be kept together in an envelope attached to the item card for the gadget.

Part Quality and Degradation

Every part has one STAT: *Quality* which ranges from 0-5 (with 0 being unusable and 5 being in perfect condition). However, as a gadget is used, it wears on the parts that comprise it. At the start of each game period, for every part in a gadget, you need to check to see if that part *degrades*. You only need to do this for parts already comprising a gadget. If they have not been used, they don't degrade.

This is done by rolling one six-sided die for each part. If the die roll is greater than the part's Quality, the part degrades. Lower its Quality by one. If a part degrades to 0, the gadget is broken and needs to be repaired. Broken gadgets cannot be used, and the parts within no longer degrade. Likewise, gadgets which are not yet finished do not have parts that degrade and cannot be used.

GM Tips: Spectacular Degradation

At your option, you could enact the rule of spectacular degradation. If a part's Quality reaches 0, then the gadget fails spectacularly. All remaining parts lose 2 Quality. The gadget billows out smoke and may even explode. It explodes if more than half of the parts are at Quality 0 after all the degrading is done. It does 2 Red Stars damage to all characters in the same room as the gadget. The exact time of the explosion is at your discretion, but is usually wherever the character happens to be at the start of the game period.

Using the Weird Science Skill

Players with the Weird Science Skill may attempt to do *one* of the following actions per Game Period:

- **Repair two degraded parts.** It takes a half-hour to repair a degraded part. Make a Weird Science challenge to repair the part. The target number is 3 + its current Quality. If successful, add 1 to the Quality of the part (not higher than 5). Parts with a Quality of 0 cannot be repaired, and are essentially garbage.

- **Attempt to replace one part in a gadget with another part of the same type.** It takes a half-hour per part to replace it. At the end of the half hour, make a Weird Science challenge. The target number is the sum of the Qualities of the two parts. If the challenge fails, reduce the Qualities of both parts by 1. If it is successful, then replace the part.
- **Work on building an entirely new gadget.** Building gadgets takes a bit of time, usually more than one Game Period. See the section on Blueprints below for more information. Continuing to build a gadget created in a previous game period counts as the character's action for this game period.

Weird Scientists may spend Sanity (if the applicable Plug-In is used) to make their work go faster. They may spend two Temporary Sanity or one Permanent Sanity to perform an additional action in a game period. They may keep doing this as long as they have Sanity to spend.

When repairing or building a gadget, you must spend at least the first fifteen minutes near the gadget role-playing working on it. Afterwards, you may leave the gadget, but time spent using any other Ability, or in combat, does not count toward the time spent working on the gadget.

For example, Valerie is in the middle of building a machine that will automatically mend wounds. It will take a total of 3 hours. Two and a half hours into it, Valerie is called away to do emergency surgery. The surgery takes 15 minutes. When Valerie comes back to the gadget, she still has a half hours' work left to do.

Any player may, at any time, destroy a Weird Science gadget for any reason (destroying a gadget physically may require a Strength challenge). If you wish to cannibalize it for parts, first make a Weird Science challenge with the Target Number being the number of parts in the gadget. If you fail, reduce the Quality of all the parts of the gadget by one.

Blueprints

As stated previously, gadgets are built with parts. The instructions for the number of parts of each type and how these parts work together is called a *blueprint*. You must create a blueprint for every gadget you wish to build. The blueprint will show exactly how many of what parts are needed and the Target Number used to build the gadget or replace a degraded part.

Adding more parts to a gadget will not make it work better, nor will replacing parts of one type with parts of a different type. However, if a gadget requires, say, 3 parts of a specific type and the weird scientist uses 5, the gadget will still work as long as at least 3 of those parts are functional. The other two are backup parts in case something fails.

You need to have a GM approve your blueprints before you start using them to create gadgets. To produce a blueprint, go to the GM and explain what the gadget should do. The GM should consider how difficult and powerful the gadget would be and have you make a Weird Science challenge (see GMing Weird Science below). This challenge is not the same one made when building the gadget; it is a test to see if the character can figure out how to build the gadget.

If you fail the challenge, you cannot figure out quite how to make the gadget and cannot try again that game period. You can try again next game period. If you succeed, the GM should fill out a blueprint sheet (also in the GMing Weird Science section) and give it to you.

If you happen to find a blueprint, you may go to the GMs to attempt to do research to find out what it does. Library Use and Weird Science can be used for this. GMs should keep a list of Blueprint IDs and what they do (see GMing Weird Science section again).

You may spend a Temporary Sanity (if the Sanity Plug-In is used) to give yourself +1 to any challenge involving Weird Science. More than one Temporary Sanity can be spent on the challenge.

Collaboration

Characters can work together to build a gadget as long they all have Weird Science Skills that are relevant to the gadget in question. The character who is the team lead for the gadget is called the *Builder*. The Builder must make the blueprint creation challenge alone. However, for the actual gadget creation, any players involved may collaborate.

Collaborators may split up the time that it takes to build a gadget as the see fit. For example, take a gadget that takes twelve hours and 3 people are working on it together. They may split up the hours equally, four hours each. Alternatively, one could work eight hours and the other two could work two hours each. Or, any other combination as long as the total hours worked equals twelve. They can work at the same time, reducing the actual time it takes to build.

When it is time to build the device, the Builder adds each other player's Ability Level to her Weird Science Ability Rating for the final challenge. These mechanics are explained further in the next section.

For example, Tony and Theresa are working together and Tony has an IQ of 5 and a Weird Science of 2 (Ability Rating of 7), and Theresa has an IQ of 6 and a Weird Science of 3 (Ability Rating of 9). If Tony were the Builder, the total would be 7 (Tony's Ability Rating) + 3 (Theresa's Ability Level) or 10. If Theresa was the Builder, the total would be 9 (Theresa's Ability Rating) + 2 (Tony's Ability Level), or 11.

GMing Weird Science

Producing a Blueprint: Start by determining how powerful the gadget is. Does it give the player a tremendous advantage? Does give the character powers and abilities far beyond other characters in the game? Does it affect a large group or only one character at a time?

If it won't greatly imbalance the game, start with one of each part. That's the minimum number of parts allowed to build a device, one of each part. As the power and complexity of the gadget grows, so should the number of parts.

The base target number to create the blueprint is the number of parts. So if a gadget requires 7 parts, the player would have to succeed in a challenge of IQ + Weird Science vs. 7 to start building it. Keep in mind that players cannot collaborate on this challenge, so the average weird scientist will have an Ability Rating of around 4-6.

Target Number	Description
1-2	Trivial
3-4	Easy
5-7	Average
8-9	Difficult
10-11	Very Difficult
12+	Nearly Impossible

Once you have determined the number of parts, fill out the blueprint (see below). Give the gadget a code and write that code, along with a description of the gadget, in a book especially set aside by the GMs for that purpose. The GM blueprint reference book can be used later when other players try to find out what the gadget does, or if another GM needs to know in a hurry. Note that a gadget doesn't have to do exactly what the inventor wants; it can have unexpected side effects.

GM Tips: Possible Side Effects

Here is a list of potential side effects you can assign to a device. You can assign them either at the blueprint stage, the building stage, or both.

- **Too Large:** Device is too bulky, too heavy
- **Too Small:** Device is a model, ineffectively small
- **Noisy:** Device makes a lot of noise when used
- **Fumes:** Device gives off clouds of smoke (obscures vision, or smells bad)
- **Injures User:** Device causes injury to the user of the device
- **Bad Targeting:** If used on a target, device has a good chance of affecting a different target.
- **Chance of Exploding:** If device fails to work, it may explode, injuring all within a certain radius
- **Unstable:** If device fails to work, it may fall apart back to its component parts.
- **Slow Activation:** Device takes a longer than expected continuous effort to turn on.
- **Needs Attention:** Device cannot operate without a mechanic fixing it continually.
- **Limited Lifespan:** Device cannot stay unused for long. Will only work for a limited period after construction.
- **Environmental Vulnerability:** Device fails to work when in contact or presence of some substance or condition (examples: When wet, when hot, when cold, when electrical devices are in area, in darkness, in sunlight, when around loud noises, when around magnetic fields)
- **Needs Substance:** Device needs some unexpected consumable substance in relatively large quantities to use. Examples: coal, lubricant, seawater, fresh water
- **Fragile:** Device can be disrupted by virtually any attack. Also easily sabotaged.
- **Slow:** Device moves much more slowly than expected
- **Difficult to Control:** Device reacts semi-randomly to attempts to control its operation.
- **Fewer Uses:** Device has fewer effective uses than normal
- **Short Duration:** Effect of using device lasts for less time than expected.
- **Lessened Effect:** Effect of using device is less than expected.
- **Needs Power:** Device must be unexpectedly tethered to an external power source (boiler, the electrical grid, etc.)
- **Unwanted Side Effect:** Use of the device produces some other unrelated but generally undesirable effect on the user.

The blueprint form has a section for each type of gadget. In each of these sections, enter the number of parts of that type the gadget requires.

Blueprints also have a time factor. A typical gadget takes 30 minutes per part to put together. So a gadget with seven parts would take 3½ hours to build. However, you can assign a time factor to modify the build time.

The target number for building the gadget is the number of parts plus or minus a difficulty. The difficulty is there to give you a fudge factor in case you want the device to be easier or harder than pure mathematics would allow.

Building the Gadget: First, ascertain that the builder (the inventor, or the leader of a team of inventors) has all the parts necessary. Next, have the Builder make a Weird Science challenge. The challenge is the Builder's Weird Science Ability Rating + the Skill Levels in Weird Science of all the other members of the team of inventors vs. the target number specified for building on the blueprint.

If the builder fails the roll, you have three choices.

- You could just have the builder come back next game period.
- You can add an additional part requirement to the blueprint. This effectively adds 1 to the difficulty of the gadget and requires an extra half-hour of work to build.
- You could allow the gadget but tack on another side effect or two.

Don't forget to note what the gadget does and any side effects in the GM blueprint reference book.

Degrading Parts: This can and should be done by players. Remind them of this when they build new gadgets, and at the start of each Game Period. At the start of each Game Period, every player should roll one six sided die for every part in every gadget he has created. If the roll is higher than the part Quality, then the Quality of the part drops by 1.

Some special parts might never degrade. If item cards are being used, that should be written on the item card for the part.

Repairing Low Quality Parts: The target number to repair a part is 5 + its current Quality. If successful, add one to the part's Quality. A part's Quality cannot go higher than 5.

Replacing Parts: The challenge to replace a part in a gadget is the same for building the gadget itself.

An Example

Margaret is trying to build a weird gadget. She has an IQ of 6 and a Weird Science: Mechanical of 2. She goes to the GM and says that she wants to build a 6 foot tall hydraulic robot servant.

The GM considers this and asks a few pointed questions. How smart will it be? Smart enough to take orders, but not capable of independent thought. Can it fight? Not very well. It is strong, but slow and clumsy. The GM considers this, and decides the robot is not that game unbalancing. However, the GM makes it clear to Margaret that the robot must be played by an NPC she will provide.

The GM decides it is a difficult task and references the chart. He decides on a target number of 9 to create the Blueprint. Margaret must roll her Weird Science Ability Rating of 8 vs. a 9. She rolls a 4; the GM rolls a 3. They tie, but ties go to the "wiener" (the side with the smaller number before the roll), and Margaret wins.

The GM now fills out a blueprint for the robot. The robot is big, so it must have many parts. The GM decides it needs: 3 Power Sources/Transformers, 2 Input Devices, 5 Wires and Connectors, 3 Output Devices, and 4 Odd Parts. Since the GM did not specify any particular odd parts, any odd parts may do.

Margaret needs a total of 17 parts. Therefore it would take 8 and ½ hours to build and has a target number of 17 for the challenge to build. The GM decides to add a Time Factor of ½ hour (to round up to an even number of hours) and does not change the difficulty. Margaret needs to spend 9 hours

building the device, although she only needs to spend 15 minutes of each game period actively roleplaying building the device.

The next day, Margaret comes back with a fully built robot. She now has to make a challenge of 8 vs. 17. The only way she can succeed is if she rolls a 10 on a 10 sided die and the GM rolls a 1. Unfortunately, she fails the challenge.

The GM decides to add a couple of side effects to the device. He decides to make it noisy and slow, and notes that in the GM blueprint reference book. He then tells Margaret that she can try again in a half-hour. Margaret goes to find some assistance and comes back a half-hour later.

This time, she's brought Clint and Joel. Clint has an IQ of 6 and a Weird Science Electrical of 2. Joel has an IQ of 5 and a Weird Science Physics of 3. Clint's Skill is relevant to building a giant robot, but Joel's is marginal. The GM decides to allow Joel.

Margaret now has to make a challenge of 8 (her Ability Rating) + 2 (Clint's level) + 3 (Joel's level). That's a 13 vs. a 17. That's a little risky. Margaret, Clint and Joel decide to increase the odds. Margaret and Clint each spend two Temporary Sanity for a +1 each. Joel spends one Permanent Sanity for a +2.

The challenge is now 17 vs. 17, even odds. Margaret rolls a 6 and the GM rolls a 2. Margaret won and the robot is now fully functional. The GM creates an envelope for the parts and writes them a card for the robot. He also gives a contingency envelope to Margaret to give to whomever plays the robot when they activate it. Inside it reads, "you are slow and noisy. Roleplay this." Margaret will find out about the side effects when she activates the robot.

Regardless, of activation, the robot will start to degrade at the start of the next game period. Margaret will have to roll a six sided die against the Quality of all 17 parts.

Blueprint

Note to publisher/editors. The blueprint should have entry field labeled:

- (PS) Power Sources.
- (I) Input Devices.
- (W/C) Wires and Connectors.
- (O) Output Devices.
- (X) Odd Parts.
- Blueprint ID:
- Time To Build (typically 30 minutes per part)
- Target Number To Build (typically the total number of parts needed)
- Notes
- GM Mark

I can provide a sample from old copies of RTLB: Supernatural, but they look really awful. Thanks.

Creating Your Own Plug Ins

The time will come when you will want to create your own systems of mechanics for your LARPs. LARPs are often specialized and there may be things in your game world that require more detailed mechanics. Sometimes you just need to create a new Ability; sometimes you need a set of Abilities, and sometimes you need to create a whole new way of doing things. In general, however, you only want to create new systems of mechanics because they are necessary for your LARP. Mechanics, especially simulated ones, are intrusive, and you want to avoid unnecessary complexity.

RTLB is simple and flexible and is built to adapt to nearly any genre or system. However, when creating something for Rules To Live By, you should keep the following RTLB Ideals in mind.

- **Limit Intrusions on the Game:** Keep your mechanics simple, easy to understand, and as quick *or* in-game as possible. You don't want to stop the game frequently to roll dice. That interrupts the roleplaying.
- **Keep it Simple:** LARPs are real-time. Unlike a tabletop roleplaying game, or a computer game, you cannot pause the action to work through the mechanics or read a reference manual. This doesn't mean you should have simplistic mechanics, but that they should be clear and easy to understand. **And**, you should avoid information overload on your players. Often, people who are new to LARP can be intimidated by the whole situation, and even experienced players can be intimidated by the amount of information that usually has to be learned quickly. Adding a complex set of game mechanics on top of that can be overwhelming.
- **Math is Hard:** Well, better put: math on the fly is hard. At its core, RTLB has a few simple numbers to remember. Ability Rating – Stars + Die Roll. Then add in bonuses and environmental factors, and suddenly you're juggling 3 or 4 numbers in your head at once, during what can be a very stressful situation. And the rest of the game is waiting for your number... In general, when you write systems, you want to have simple addition of single digit numbers, and only throw in subtraction when absolutely necessary. Avoid anything tougher. Yeah, I know *you* can handle it, but you want to write your mechanics so that all your players can deal with them in real time, and that means limit your math. To sum up: math done before runtime is ok; math during runtime is bad. Math during combat is awful.
- **Avoid Reference Tables:** Again, LARPs are real time, and you want to avoid anything that people have to look up during the game, especially during combat. It slows the game down for everyone.
- **No Rerolls:** This is the one hard and fast rule that has never been broken in the RTLB ruleset. Rerolls take more time away from the game. A long enough chain of rerolls can drag a simple challenge out for quite some time. So, while this is really a sub-rule of Limit Intrusions, it is important enough to mention by itself.
- **Remember Game Balance:** RTLB has many checks in play to balance Abilities. You can limit the number of uses, make the Cost Type Hard or Very Hard, have the Ability cause damage to the user, make it cost chits of some sort or more. Don't make your new Abilities more powerful than the ones that already exist without giving them balancing drawbacks. Otherwise, why would your players choose the base Ability in the first place?
- **Use the System:** Ability Rating + die roll vs. Target Number + die roll. Your players already know the system. Use it whenever possible.
- **Roll High:** In general, higher is better with die rolls. Switching back and forth often can be confusing to players.

- **Focus on Roleplaying:** Even with the most fiddly mechanics, you should still give your players a chance to roleplay their actions. The more you can focus on roleplaying, the more your mechanics will work with the game.
- **Explain Your Mechanics:** Make sure that your other GMs can run your mechanics, and – in the best of all possible worlds – so can your players.

GM Tips: But, But *You* Break the Rules

Yes, yes we do. We break the rules *all the time*. The medical mechanics have reference charts. Alchemy and Weird Science can be a little complex. The ORCS has math. These so-called rules, are more like guidelines. You can probably get away with breaking one, maybe two of them and still have a good workable system.

Keep in mind, this isn't a list of rules. They are ideals, things to strive for. And no matter how far you strive toward perfect, sometimes you have to compromise. Our systems are still elegant and useable, but no system is perfect. The ideals given here are guidelines. Follow them as closely as you are able and you'll make good Plug-Ins that will work well with RTLB and enhance your LARP.

Types of Plug-Ins

There are essentially four types of Plug-Ins.

- **New Quick Rules.** These are things like contingency envelopes, or point blank rules. They usually take about a paragraph to describe and aren't that complex.
- **New Abilities.** These are new Skills, Handicaps, and other Abilities from types that already exist. You could even create a whole series of these Abilities, like Combat Maneuvers.
- **STAT/Abilities.** This is a new STAT (or many new STATs) and a series of Abilities based on the new STAT. Sometimes this also includes new or modified Abilities of other Types. This Plug-In will also deal with the new rules for the STAT. Magic, Psionics, and Sanity all fall into this category.
- **New Systems.** This is an entirely new system with its own rules and mechanics, based on or tied to the core RTLB rules. Weird Science, the advanced healing rules, and the One Round Combat System are all new systems.

Creating a New Ability

First consider what your new Ability represents. One reason to make a new Ability is to allow players to do something that they cannot already do with one of the current Abilities. Another reason might be to break a current Ability out into different parts because that Ability will be useful in your game and you want people to be able to specialize.

Also keep in mind how to balance your Ability. If it is very powerful, then make its Cost Type Hard or Very Hard. Don't forget the other checks and balances, like limiting the number of uses or causing damage or inconvenience to the user. See if you can find an existing Ability to use as a template.

For example you may decide to run a LARP set on a pirate ship and you want to have mechanics for ship to ship combat. You may want to break out Navigation/Cartography and Operate (Ship) skills into smaller sub-Abilities, like combat maneuvers. And you may wish to add a new Skill: Artillery Weapons, to handle the cannons.

Artillery Weapons is very similar to Ranged Weapons, so we can use Ranged Weapons as our template. There may be a lot of cannon play, but we want people to be fairly proficient at the Skill, so we'll keep the Cost Type as Easy.

The target, however, is the other ship, not a specific person. We had discussed earlier that we might break out Operate (Ship) into different maneuvers. Let's say that we created a maneuver called Come About, a defensive maneuver to avoid being hit by enemy cannons, akin to Dodge, but for a ship. That would be the Target Number of the Artillery Weapons Skill.

We will also need to deal with other constraints, such as how often the cannon can be fired. It might take one round to load it and another to fire it. We'll also need to take into account if the cannon can hurt people. And it might be nice if doing this were dangerous work. It sounds like this Ability would work well with a damage chart (we'll assume ten-sided dice). Now, of course, we're getting into the amount of damage a ship can take, but the easiest thing is to treat them like characters and give them Hit Points and Damage Stars. A ship is *disabled* when it takes its Hit Points in damage. It is *sunk* when it takes double its Hit Points in damage.

Thus, the new Ability becomes:

ARTILLERY WEAPONS

'The Ironside's to port! Ready the cannons... Fire!'

Category: Martial Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may use artillery weapons.

Chance of Success

DEX + Ability Level VS Target Ship's Pilot's Come About Ability Rating

Time to use: 2 Combat Round # of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: It takes one round to load the cannon and one round to fire. If you roll a 1 on your challenge roll, make another die roll. If it is a 1 or 2, the cannon has misfired. Treat it as a hit on your ship (roll on the chart below).

Damage Chart:

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Result	1Ys	1Ys	2Ys	2Ys	3Ys	4Ys	4Ys+1Rc	2Ys+2Rs+2Rc	4Rs+2Rc	5Rs+3Rc

Ys, Rs = Damage to ship; Yc, Rc = Damage to crew.

Obviously, this Ability is really part of a larger system of Abilities. Creating the ship-to-ship combat Plug-In is beyond the scope of this book and is left as an exercise to the reader.

Creating a STAT/Ability System

Creating Your own STATs

When creating a set of Abilities tied to a new STAT, one of the first things you need to do is consider that new STAT. It is strongly recommend that you do not remove the four base STATs (Strength, Dexterity, IQ, and Will). They are necessary for play balance and removing them would necessitate changing a number of Abilities.

However, adding a new STAT is a fairly easy practice. Keep in mind the following guidelines when creating a new STAT.

- The new STAT should be something that cannot be easily covered by the existing STATs. Further, it should have a definite game effect, purpose, and meaning.
- Try to keep it in line with the existing STATs, if possible. For example, the base STATs range from 1-6 and an average person has a 2. Try to keep it that way for the new STATs as well; however, it is understood when such a thing cannot easily be done.
- Make sure to give players additional character points if you create a new STAT. A good rule of thumb is 9 points in the STAT pool and 9 points in the Ability pool. That lets the player buy the STAT at 2 and buy some new Abilities. Tweak these numbers if you want the STAT to be more common or powerful.

Again, these are guidelines. We don't completely adhere to them in all our Plug-Ins or examples. They are good rules of thumb, but should be able to be broken if your system calls for it.

Status: An Example

The example of a Status system will flow throughout the rest of the Creating a STAT/Ability System section. It is based on the Status system from the recent LARP campaign, *Brassy's Men*. *Brassy's Men* was set in the highly stratified society of Victorian England; however, these mechanics could be used for any LARP setting where status comes into play. This is not an exact representation of how Status was used in *Brassy's Men*; it has been simplified and modified for the purpose of explanation.

Status determines a number of things. A character with low status cannot hold an office or enter certain areas of the game without escort. Likewise, a character with high status stands a chance of being attacked or robbed if he enters some of the poorer areas of town. Finally, it is a scandal if two characters of very different statuses become romantically involved.

If a number of plots in your game revolve around romance and trying to gain prestige (or causing others to lose prestige) then Status could be a very important STAT. You could also link Status to character goals: "You want to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, a Status 8 Position."

You have created a definite game effect for Status, one that isn't covered with the base STATs. Now it is time to explain the different levels of Status in the game. You will note that Status goes from 0-10. We attempted to start with a Status that ranged the same as other STATs, but found we wanted a higher degree of variation.

The *Upper Class* (Status Level 7-10) includes all of the aristocracy, from Queen Victoria to the newly knighted. They are literate and educated and must buy at least one level of Fine Arts, History, or the generic Library Use. Members of the Upper classes are also members of the Church of England, at least publicly. Exceptions are very rare, and must be approved by a GM.

- Status level 10 includes Monarchs and Heads of State such as Queen Victoria or President Grant. Players may not start at level 10.
- Status level 9 is made up of other royalty, Lords Spiritual, and certain Lords of State including the Prince of Wales, and the Lord Chamberlain of Great Britain. Players may not start at level 9.
- Status level 8 includes all the Peerage as well as higher members of the clergy, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury. The holder of the title has a seat on the House of Lords. This is the highest starting Status players may take.

- Status level 7 is made up of the lower nobility; Knights and Baronets as well as the sons and daughters of peers who do not have titles of their own. This status is also for moderately higher ranking members of the clergy, such as the Bishop of London.

The *Middle Class* (Status 4-6) is comprised of the broadest selection of characters, from the wealthy owner of coal mines, to the country parson, to the valet. They may be literate, depending on their background and/or profession, or they may buy the handicap: illiterate.

- Status level 6, the upper middle class, includes well-off shopkeepers, businessmen, magistrates; basically, anyone who is doing very well in their occupation of choice. This is the lowest status a character can have and still be a Member of Parliament.
- Status level 5, the middle class, is made up of teachers, shopkeepers, household servants, some members of the clergy, etc. This class contains the largest assortment of occupations.
- Status level 4, the lower middle class, contains members of the middle class who are just starting out, not doing well, or are rumored to have a scandalous or criminal background or lifestyle. Some members of the lower nobility who have been to debtors' prison may also fall in this class.

The *Lower Class* (Status 0-3) is comprised of the impoverished and the fallen. Poor immigrants, vagrants, criminals, and some streetwalkers make up this class. If the character started life as lower class they start with the handicap: Illiterate (any exceptions must be cleared with a GM.)

- Status level 3 includes unskilled coal miners and factory workers, cab drivers, common sailors; anyone in a low paying and and/or unhealthy occupation.
- Status level 2 includes those without a home or regular income; beggars, streetwalkers, street rats, and drunks.
- Status level 1 is made of criminals who can be arrested on sight if seen by a policeman; known murderers, pickpockets, etc.
- Status level 0 is anyone wanted for treason or foreign nationals known to be working against the crown. This status level requires conviction through a trial or an act of Parliament to achieve. Most likely anyone of this status will be in disguise.

Having thoroughly defined our new STAT and its meaning, we can move on to a system of Abilities for it.

Modifying Already Existing Abilities

One of the most important things to do when using a modified version of RTLB is to keep the players informed. Write down the changes and allow easy player access to them. This will help keep confusion to a minimum.

In the last section we created a new STAT called Status. There are several Abilities this new STAT could potentially affect. Here are a few Abilities affected by Status and an explanation of how they could change.

Handicaps

- **Dark Secret:** This one is perfect for modifying Status. If your secret is made public, you lose the Handicap, but you also lose its level in Status.
- **Poverty:** At first glance, this handicap would seem to be tied to Status. That is, a low Status = Poverty. But, suppose a character's starting money was based on her starting Status. Poverty and

Wealth would then affect that starting money. This way, players could start out with high Status characters that were still relatively poor.

Skills

- Disguise: This could also be used to disguise Status, to allow you to pretend to be a lower or higher status character. You cannot attempt a Status change higher than your level in Disguise. For example, if you are of Status 5, and you have a Disguise of 2, you can attempt to Disguise yourself from levels 3-7.
- Intimidate: Status could also be used as a base STAT for Intimidate, allowing higher Status characters to intimidate lower Status characters.

In general, you wouldn't expect Status to affect things like Aptitudes, or Spells (if that Plug-In were used).

Creating Entirely New Abilities For Your System

We discussed this in the earlier section entitled, Creating a New Ability. Here we are focusing on making your new Abilities thematic for your system. For example, all of the new Abilities in the earlier Plug-Ins related to the base idea of the Plug-In in some way. If you have two divergent ideas, try to make them two separate Plug-Ins that work with each other, the way Sanity and Magic do.

It is easy to modify the Abilities that already exist. Creating new Abilities is a bit harder. As always, players should be made aware of any new or modified Abilities.

Before creating a new Ability, see if there is a way to change another Ability to do what you want, rather than create more Abilities. For example, with Status you may want to give characters the ability to disguise their Status, so lower status characters could enter high status areas, and vice versa. An entirely new Skill called "Disguise Status" *could* be created, but it's easier to tweak the Disguise Skill instead. See the previous section for tips on modifying Abilities.

One mechanic that has not yet been created is changing a character's Status within the game. In this particular case, two Skills could be created, one that raises Status and another that lowers Status.

Raising Status would simulate the ability to – for example – Knight somebody. But lowering Status is more complex. It could just involve a die roll, but it would be more fun if a formal rumor and scandal system were set up in the game. This is how we did it in *Brassy's Men*. Characters could get blackmail material on other characters and they could use the formal scandal system to lower another person's Status.

A bulletin board for scandals could be created, and a rumor system would be needed for distributing scandalous information. Players could post the scandals on the board and then the targets could have a set time to try to squash the scandal. If the scandal is still there, then the die is rolled to see if Status is lowered.

This leads to two potential Abilities. One is the ability to Scandalize someone using that mechanic. The second is a defense against scandal. In general, we try to do this with all ways that players can use RTL to affect each other. For every form of "attack" there is a defense, even if the "attack" is something like detecting lies.

At first glance, we could put attacking someone's Status in either Category: Influence, or Miscellaneous. But, because scandalizing someone would not control that other character, per se, and because things like Charisma probably shouldn't affect scandal, Scandalize should fall under Category: Miscellaneous.

Scandal has a profound effect on other characters, but it is a thing want to happen frequently, although not constantly. Characters should be careful lest they fall prey to a scandal. We decided to make Scandalize Easy and give the target an hour to respond to the challenge. And to keep it from happening frequently, we declared that you could only scandalize a character once per game session per level of Ability.

SCANDALIZE

“I say, did you observe the shocking behavior Lord Grey exhibited last night?”

Category: Miscellaneous Cost Type: Easy

Effect: You may scandalize another character. If you succeed, your target will lose 1 level of Status (without gaining the respective XP).

Challenge: Status + Ability Level vs. Opponent’s Status

Time to Use: See Constraints

Number of Uses: Once per Game Session per Level

Other Constraints: We have a special system for scandal. This will not be just a simple challenge. Your ability to Scandalize will depend in part upon your current Status.

Now that we have created the Scandalize Skill, we need to consider a defense against scandal. There are many ways we could have gone with this: Resources who were friends who could put in a good word for you, a sharp tongue Skill that would let you defend yourself well against charges, even Supernatural Abilities that made people think the world of you and not believe any scandal.

We did, in fact, have many of these in the game and they were made part of the Scandal system. But we wanted to have something innate to the character that could keep them safe from scandal. And innate Abilities tend to be Aptitudes. We called ours *Propriety*.

Further, we wanted it to be rare for people to be immune or have a strong defense against scandal. We wanted all the characters to fear the ever-present specter of scandal both for the Victorian feel of the game, and because we wanted scandal to have some bite to it.

Therefore, we not only made Propriety a Hard Aptitude, we restricted it to only certain characters, ones who’s histories lent themselves to an air of propriety. All in all, only about 10 characters in the game ended up with Propriety.

PROPRIETY

Lady Bedford practically defines what is proper.

Category: Influence Defend Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You are known for your virtue and propriety. You may add your level of Propriety to your defense against Scandal challenges.

Time to Use: Via Scandal Mechanics

Number of Uses: Unlimited

Other Constraints: This Ability will only be given to players on a case by case basis depending on their character history.

The scandal mechanic Plug-In leads to ideas for a number of other Abilities:

- Rumormonger, an Ability that allows characters to create new rumors.
- A mechanic for removing scandals from the board.
- A Skill to Raise Status
- Resources that are affected by Status

However, this is just an overview and an example to explain how to make your own systems of Abilities tied to STATs. More information about the Brassy's Men campaign and game world can be found online at the Interactivities Ink website, <http://www.interactivitiesink.com>

Creating An Entirely New System

Sometimes you need to enhance your game with an entirely new set of rules, above and beyond the RTLB system of Abilities. For example, the Surgery and Wounds Plug-in came about when a GM wanted to simulate triage in his LARPs and make surgery more exciting and risky. Creating your own systems can be difficult and time consuming and is only suggested for experienced GMs. On the other hand, the only way to become experienced in creating game mechanics is to create game mechanics. Just make sure to test them before unleashing them on your players.

System creation is so complex and far reaching that entire books could be – and have been – written on the subject. We will try to summarize some of the concepts into a few pages, but that may not do the subject justice.

One strong tip we can give for people who wish to create their own live action roleplaying systems is to play games. Not just live action roleplaying games, play any games you can: board games, card games, tabletop roleplaying games, computer and video games. You never know when a good game mechanic will pop up at you.

Likewise, frequent game design web sites like The Forge (<http://www.indie-rpgs.com/forum/>) or RPG.net (<http://www.rpg.net>). Talk to other designers and learn from them. Playtest your systems, even if it is just a few of you playtesting in your basement before bringing your systems to the game. Ideally, you should blind playtest your systems by handing a copy of the rules to a group of people and having them run your system without your supervision. Blind playtesting may not be necessary for a one shot LARP for 30 people, but it is a necessity if you want to publish your games.

Like the previous section, this section will rely heavily on example. In this case, we'll be discussing a prospective system for voodoo for your LARPs. We will only be giving an overview of the system and it will be simplified and incomplete, but it will serve as a good example for how to create a new system of mechanics and tie them into RTLB.

Much of the advice from previous sections still holds true for entirely new systems. Try to use the basic challenge if at all possible. Limit rerolls. Make your system representative of what it is simulating. Give a roleplaying aspect. Remember, the focus of LARP is interaction, and if your mechanics take away from interaction they are robbing people of the game.

An Example: Voodoo

Rules To Live By provides a flexible, generic system for magic and the supernatural. However, there are as many types of magic out there as there are cultures or legends. And they are all different. Oineromancy is different from Enochian is different from Shamanism and so forth.

You may wish to create your own supernatural systems to mimic existing “real world” systems, or you may wish to create new fictional systems of magic. For example, you may set the game in a far away galaxy where warrior-priests channel the cosmic flow.

When actually creating a new system, you should try to flavor existing Spells and Abilities first, and only create new ones when absolutely necessary.

The term Voodoo conjures up pictures of zombies shambling down the street, and of old women pushing pins into small, handmade dolls. That is voodoo as Hollywood sees it, and certainly zombis and dolls are part of voodoo, but not all.

Voodoo is not only magic, it is a religion. It involves offerings, spirits (both ethereal and alcoholic), charms, altars, dancing, and prayer.

The complexities of voodoo cannot be easily described in a few paragraphs or even a few pages, but here is a quick overview.

First, there are the Loa. They are the mystical spirits who guide, listen to, and play with humanity. They are very, very powerful. They should be worshipped, praised, placated, respected, and often feared. They are not gods, but demigods, ancestral spirits with distinct and vivid personalities. A follower of Voodoo usually honors many Loa, but almost always has one that he especially serves.

There are more Loa than one can count, each with their own overlapping domains. In special ceremonies led by *Houngans*, (male priests) or *Mambos* (female priests), the practitioners of Voodoo call down the Loa in order to speak to them, or ask them for favors. During this time, the Loa *ride* (possess) one or more of the participants and act through their *horses*. When someone is being a horse for a Loa, her personality is completely suppressed; she will not remember the experience.

Voodoo charms are known in America as *gris-gris*. A person could have a gris-gris for any reason; the use is defined when the charm is made. A gris-gris is usually made from a number of esoteric ingredients – clay, dust from gravestones, spit, chicken bones, and so forth – and contained in a cloth bag worn around the neck.

Some gris-gris are meant to be used upon others, and will be in the form of a cloth bag to hide under someone’s pillow, or a powder to scatter on their path, and so forth. Some are meant to be ingested, and are more like potions.

Gris-gris are often worn as wards or protection, but there can be ones to make someone fall in love, or even come to harm. Houngans and Mambos can make gris-gris, but the real specialist is the *Bocor*, or sorcerer, a Voodoo magician who “serves with both hands” (deals with both helpful and harmful magic).

As for harmful magic, Hollywood has made it clear that there is nothing better than the Voodoo doll. This concept did not originate with Voodoo, and is not part of Haitian Voodoo. In New Orleans, it was used for both healing and cursing. The doll is a type of sympathetic magic in which whatever happens to the doll happens to the target.

The doll is made in the form of the target using some of the target’s hairs or clothing or some item close to the target. Sympathetic magic is very important in Voodoo. Things that look like or seem like other things can take on their power or can be used as a conduit.

Finally, there is the Zombi, a lifeless servant brought back from the dead. Some say that the Zombi is not a revived corpse, but is a living human ensorcelled with special chemicals and herbs. Only the Bocors know for sure.

Thus, there are four separate sub-systems for Voodoo:

- The Loa: Worshipping, speaking with, and being possessed by these supernatural spirits.
- The Gris-Gris: Creating charms and their effects.
- The Voodoo Doll: Sympathetic magic.
- The Zombi: Raising the dead, or creating servants from the living.

All four of these could be represented by straight RTL B Abilities from the magic Plug-In, or you could create your own systems for them. You could even have a combination, making your own system for worshipping and speaking with the Loa, and then using the alchemy and enchanted objects systems for the Gris-Gris and the Voodoo doll.

The Loa

It is always easier to use existing Abilities than to create new ones. You can use Spells already in the Plug-In for many of the Loa Abilities.

Speaking to the Loa in general could be done using *Communicate With Spirit*. It could be called a *Govi Ritual* (the “govi” is a special pot into which the houngan or mambo calls the presence of the Loa so that they may ask the Loa questions) and would use the exact same rules as the existing Spell.

Typically, Loa possession happens during a ceremony and is not always the sole goal of the participant. The participant does not remember what happened while possessed; instead, the Loa speaks to others through the possessed individual.

While this could be simulated by using a variant of the *Communicate with Spirit* Spell, it might work better as its own system. You could set up a set of rules governing how to make the ceremony, what sacrifices would be needed, and what Loas may appear. In Voodoo, this ritual could be called a “service,” a “ceremonie”, or a “mange Loa” (feeding the Loa).

There are many different Loa. You could create a chart which links Loa to assorted elements and a die roll. When the ceremony starts, you could secretly roll a die and determine which Loas would appear. The players need to have the materials on hand to placate the Loa. They also must sing the Loa’s song and perform a dance for the Loa or it would be worse for them. Naturally, if you need a specific Loa for plot purposes, you can always choose to eschew the chart, but it’s a good mechanic for the random Loas that tend to show up during a ceremony.

Example Chart:

Roll	Name	Description	Dance	Song	Offering
1	Aiya Wedo	Rainbow Loa, lady of the sky, mother-Loa. Wears all colors in flowing garb; moves lightly and dancingly.	Raise hands to the sky and lower them to the earth three times	“Aiya Wedo, here are your children, hey!”	A rainbow scarf.
2	Azaka	The Loa of farming and peasantry. Dresses in blue denim, with a straw hat. Acts like a shrewd farmer sometimes, like a bumpkin at others.	Shake left hand, then right hand	“Cousin, Cousin, coming to market with his basket”	A basket of fruits and vegetables.
3	Baron Samedi	The Loa of death, justice, sorcery and sorcerers, and the graveyard. Wears formal wear with top hat,	One step forward, back, left, right	“Cross of Jubilees, Cross of Jubilees! I am innocent!”	Cigars and rum.

		sunglasses; smokes a cigar. Generally genial and courtly.			
4	Damballa	Patriarch, father-Loa, head of the Rada “family” of Loa. Damballa is a snake.	Stand in place and wriggle	“Damballa, we are all angels, oh oh oh!”	A mouse or small rodent.
5	Erzulie	The Loa of femininity, desire, sensuality. Wears pink, lots of jewelry. Acts vain; never seems to be satisfied.	One hand on hip, other in hair; sway seductively	“Grande Erzulie Freda, it’s not magic, it’s luck that you have!”	A kiss.
6	Loco-Attiso	The Loa of traditions, temples and priests. Wears priestly robes; acts solemn. Smokes a pipe and carries a stick.	Spin around to the left, then the right.	“Loco-Attiso, we are here, agoyeh!”	A holy book.
7	Ogun	The Loa of war, smithcraft, making things, rulership. Wears red, military outfits. Carries a saber. Acts arrogant.	Dance in a place while pumping right fist in air	“Ogun, oh! Ogun Badagris who asks for flags! Ogun, oh!”	A sword.
8-9	The Ghede	The Loa of death, regeneration, sexuality (especially male) and other appetites, and mischief. Wears black clothes (gravedigger), sunglasses, carries a shovel; smokes cigarettes. Talks in a nasal voice; makes trouble.	Hands on hips, pelvic thrusts	“Ghede is a fine fellow; he is dressed in black, he is going to the palace.”	More cigars and more rum.
10	Papa Legba	The Loa of the crossroads, travel, opening and closing doors, communication; a trickster. An old man, in tattered clothes; moves slowly; acts friendly but plays tricks.	Hop from left foot to right foot three times	“Papa Legba, Atibon Legba, open up the gate!”	A key.

Info: Voodoo Resources

If you are interested in more detailed information on Voodoo, there are many good reference works available. Start with Divine Horsemen by Maya Deren and work from there. Voodoo in Haiti by Alfred Metreaux is also a classic, and there are some good Web resources out there.

In general, use your judgment. Sensational material (stories of human sacrifice and orgiastic rites, etc.) is probably nonsense; books from the earlier part of the 20th century are particularly bad on this matter. However, if you are running a cinematic or horror campaign, these practices may be appropriate for your games.

Additionally, keep in mind that Voodoo is a religion. You may decide to play this up in you game by forcing a Houngan, Mambo, or Bocor to take a Moral Code to serve their patron Loa. There is no reason why a character couldn’t serve more than one Loa, although that would mean more Handicaps.

As part of the Moral Code, each Game Period, the character must perform one task per level of Handicap as required by the Loa. If the character worships faithfully, then the Loa will be more receptive (gets a bonus to contact the Loa), but if the character is neglectful, she may find herself unable to contact the Loa or may get a different, hostile, Loa instead.

For example, Stacia is playing a worshipper of Aiya Wedo whose symbol is the rainbow. She might have Moral Code: Serve Aiya Wedo at level 3, and she would have to perform 3 tasks for Aiya Wedo each Game Period.

As a GM, you could create a list of common tasks for each Loa and let the player choose, and then have special tasks for special circumstances. Some examples for Aiya Wedo might be: place a gem of bright color on her altar, use a crystal to create a rainbow in a room (show off the rainbow), nurse a baby, give wise and useful information, research something for fifteen minutes, make love, and so forth. The longer the list of possibilities, the more freedom the player has. And you should be on the alert for other ways that Stacia's character could honor Aiya Wedo and count those as well.

Gris-Gris

Creating a Gris-Gris is very similar to enchanting a magic item. You could use Enchant Item Spells as a basis for a Create Gris-Gris Spell.

You would want the Create Gris-Gris spell to be Loa based. For example, if the Spell referenced Azaka, the Loa of farming and the village marketplace, the player could only create charms relating to those areas.

As part of this subsystem, you would have to do some work ahead of time to decide what would and wouldn't be acceptable to specific Loa, and decide how much MANA it would cost to make a particular gris-gris. Some examples of gris-gris' effects for Azaka might be a bonus to IQ or Haggle, a protection from diseases, and an affinity to plants (maybe giving the character Alien Language: Trees).

However, you could also create an entirely new system for Gris-Gris akin to the alchemy system, where you have a number of different ingredients, each tied to one or more Loa and each which has a different effect on the Gris-Gris.

If you really wanted to get fancy, you could hide the information of what components do what and which are for which Loa and allow the players to learn more throughout the course of your campaign, either through experimentation and research or by being taught by Non-Player Characters.

For example, Shelly is playing a character who wants to make a Gris-Gris to protect her from disease as she is going to be visiting a plague colony later in the day. Azaka is one of Shelly's patron Loa, and she knows that willow bark, and aloe are ingredients that both are tied to Azaka and deal with sickness and healing. She doesn't know what to use as protection, but attempts to use a pumpkin seed. The GM then can determine if the Gris-Gris works.

So, what are some things you would want to take into account with such a system? This is above and beyond play balance and other things mentioned in previous sections.

- Partial successes. What happens if the player gets most of the ingredients right but some wrong? What happens if all the ingredients are correct, but the patron Loa is wrong? What happens if the caster doesn't put in enough MANA? Can a player correct for insufficient ingredients by spending more MANA?
- Super success. What happens if the player gets everything correct and puts in way too much MANA or too many ingredients?
- Plot failures. What happens if a player needs to make a Gris-Gris for a plot, but cannot or fails to make it correctly? This is less of a system consideration than a plot consideration, but you may wish to have a way to make emergency Gris-Gris.

- Shelf life of the system. How long will it take the players to figure out the system in the game. What happens to their research when they do? Will players be too powerful if they know everything about the system? Will they be bored?

Voodoo Doll

The voodoo doll is a special kind of magical item that is enchanted to affect a specific character. Again, this could be done with a variant on Enchant Item. However, as a GM, you could add some specifications. For example, the Caster might need a doll in the likeness of the target as well as some of the target's hair or personal belongings.

A voodoo doll typically causes pain to the target. As a GM, you will need to determine the exact amount of damage, perhaps making it relative to the amount of MANA the target pays. You'll want to keep in mind play balance. There are already Spells that cause direct damage, but they require a declaration of combat and that the Caster can see the target. Voodoo dolls tend to be long distance, and do not require a declaration of combat.

Keeping all those factors in mind, the simplest thing would be to create a new Spell. Sometimes a new subsystem doesn't need entirely new mechanics.

ENCHANT VOODOO DOLL

Come little one. A bit of hair, a button in place there. And now you shall do my bidding.

Category: Item Manipulation Cost Type: Hard

Effect: You may enchant a doll to cause damage to a target. For every 2 MANA you put into this Spell (not higher than your level), your target takes 1 Blue Star of Pain.

Time to Cast: 10 minutes

of Uses: Unlimited.

Other Constraints: Requires a doll in the likeness of the target, some hair or a personal possession of the target, and a number of pins. After enchanting the doll, each pin placed in the doll cause the pain, up to your level in the Spell. Pain and enchantment last until the end of the game period or until the doll is destroyed.

So, what do you need to prepare for with Voodoo dolls? This is above and beyond play balance and other things mentioned in previous sections.

- How do other Enchant Item Spells affect the Voodoo doll? Do worshipping specific Loa aid or hinder in the creation of a Voodoo doll?
- Is there any defense against a Voodoo doll? What happens if the creator of a Voodoo doll dies or falls unconscious after casting the spell?
- What happens if someone puts enough MANA into a Voodoo doll to cause another player to fall unconscious for the rest of the game period? Are there other examples of abuse that we haven't mentioned here?

Zombis

At first glance, it may seem that there are no existing Spells for the creation and control of zombis from corpses. Certainly, the Exorcism Spell can be used as a sort of "Turn Undead," but there does not seem to be a specific spell to create a zombi.

But with a little creativity, the Create Item: _____ Spell can be modified to create a zombi. All you have to do is require a fresh corpse and other ingredients and the Spell practically creates itself. There is no need to create a special system.

If the zombi is actually a living character under the control of the zombi master, then the Spell is closest to Alchemy. You would have to define ingredients and give specific effects for the zombi potion.

However, turning a living human into a zombi might be a good candidate for its own system. The zombi master may have to perform a number of steps to zombify a specific character.

1. First, produce a voodoo doll of the character.
2. Second, administer a specially prepared concoction to the target. This concoction could be created using the alchemy system. The concoction simulates death and the victim is buried.
3. Next, perform a specific rite that allows you to take control of your zombi. This involves stealing the zombi's soul and replacing it with a minor Loa.
4. The stolen soul is kept in a jar in a secret place specified by the zombie master.

All of these steps can be fleshed out and given details. This would be a process that could take several episodes of a campaign, or several game periods of a one-shot campaign.

What other things must be taken into consideration? This is above and beyond play balance and other things mentioned in previous sections.

- What happens if the zombi master makes a mistake, or dies halfway through the process? How many zombis can the master control at once?
- Can someone be cured from being a zombi? Can someone interfere with the zombification process? What happens if the soul jar is found and the soul released?
- Can the zombi master work with others or is it a solitary activity?

To Conclude

There are several issues that this section has not touched. How does Voodoo interact with other forms of magic? What are the specifics of Loa worship? Are there other Abilities that would fit into a voodoo system?

Again, this has been an overview. When you come up with a complete system, you should try to have answers for most any questions that come up, or give people a way to decide their own answers for questions you might not have thought of. And try collaboration. You'll find that being able to bounce your ideas off a person or two will strengthen your systems and give you solutions you might not have thought of on your own.

GM Tips: Using RTLB With Wildly Different Mechanics

It is possible to merge RTLB with completely different game mechanics, for example having a live-combat segment in your game. It just isn't easy. Instead of *merging* the mechanics with RTLB, you need to *convert* RTLB to your mechanics system and then convert back when done.

For example, with the aforementioned live combat system, you could have the players have hit points equal to their RTLB hit points, and have their swords do a standard 3 damage (4 if they have Power Hitter). Afterwards, all damage they take is converted to Yellow Stars. That's a pretty simplistic conversion; you can make it more complex although keep in mind that you want all the complexity of

conversion to happen before the game starts so you don't hold people up while they try to figure out how many hits they can take.

For another example, let's say that you decide to use a system of guesswork similar to the game *Mastermind* to represent chemical analysis. You could tweak the parameters, such as the number of times the player can guess, or the pool of potential chemicals, based on the player's RTL B Abilities. The system can still stand on its own internally, but you have interfaced it to RTL B ahead of time.

Quick Reference

The Start of Each Game Period

The following things happen to each character in the game at the start of each Game Period:

- Natural healing. You are healed one Star of your choice.
- All Uses for Abilities reset. Any Abilities that have specific things happen at the start of a game period (such as Addiction) also go off now.
- If the Magic Plug-In is used in the game, your current MANA returns to your MANA STAT.
- If the Sanity Plug-In is used in the game, your Temporary Sanity becomes equal to your Permanent Sanity.
- If the Weird Science Plug-In is used in the game, you must check for part degradation.

GAME MASTER'S CHECKLIST

- Determine what type of game you're running.
 - Is it a "one shot" game or a campaign game (with continuing characters and experience points)?
 - Will you design the characters or will the players?
 - Will you have NPCs who work for you, or will all the characters in game be players who have autonomy?
 - Decide how many players you want, and how long you want the game to last (1 evening, a weekend, etc.).
- When you write the game, don't worry about writing rules. Just flesh out the plots, characters and events of the game.
- Apply the game mechanics. Give STATs and Abilities to all the characters you've created. Develop the items. Determine which Abilities will be used in the game. Invent/modify abilities and STATs as needed.
- Determine the starting amount of money for characters in your world. Determine the prices for items the characters can buy.
- Determine how many game periods the game will be. An evening game is normally one period. A full day game could be 2 or 3. Game periods affect healing, ability uses, handicaps, experience points, and so forth.
- Prepare to run. Assemble your assistant GMs and NPCs. Choose a place to play. Invite your players. Get your props, cards, play money, or other materials in order. You will need Stars, Unlucky and Overconfident Badges, dice, and may want stickers for pickpocketing.

- If necessary, have players build their own characters. Talk to them to outline their in-game goals, so you can evaluate them for experience points (in campaign games). If you wrote the characters, get them out to the players before the game so that they can prepare.
- Arrive early; budget at least an hour for setup, more if your game is longer than four hours. Issue your players their character sheets, items, information, between game action results, and other materials. Be prepared to answer questions.
- Run the game. That's all handled in the rest of this book.
- Award experience points. Have players update their character sheets. Get all personal possessions back to their owners. You may want to keep the copies of the updated character sheets.

Quick Combat Guide For Combat Moderators

Initiating Combat

1. A player points and says, "Combat," loudly and clearly.
2. If necessary, pause the game to:
 - A) Get a GM (if necessary)
 - B) Get character STATS and Abilities.

Organization

1. Say: "Please note where you and your neighbor (or target) are standing now."
2. Check players for STATS/Abilities. On a case by case basis, determine whether to send them for their materials, or whether it is possible to run them from the information on hand. Do this as quickly as possible.
3. Have people return, and keep them in roughly the same place as they started.

Round 1

1. Instigator declares his or her action.
2. Instigator resolves his or her action.

Subsequent Rounds

1. Count WILL order, starting at 1 and going to 6 or more. Toward the end of the combat, you can make people declare by merging WILLs: WILL of 1 or 2, WILL of 3 or 4, and so on.
2. When you announce a WILL, players who wish to do anything that affects another character raise their hands. Players who wish to move, just move. (Ties are resolved by DEX order, then by rolling a die). Do this for each player for each WILL.
3. All players resolve their actions simultaneously. Note that hand-to-hand and close combat attacks automatically fail at this point if the player is not close enough to touch the target with the weapon used.
4. Damage takes effect after all actions have been resolved.
5. Unconsciousness and/or death occurs after damage is taken.
6. All players who wanted to leave the combat, and are able to do so, are out of the combat.
7. Combat ends when no players declare attacks or plan on declaring attacks.

After Combat

1. Check for “out of game” factors that may be delaying real time movement (for example: the player of the kindly doctor is in the other room changing out of his monster costume)
2. Determine if anyone will die if not first aided. Have them start their ten minute death count.
3. Be there to observe healing in progress, and determines if everyone can be, and has been, treated.
4. Be there to handle post combat questions and actions (for example, looting, or arresting participants).
5. Determine if any disposition is being made of any corpses, blood etc., and if it is important, mark the area (item card or prop for corpse, indicator for blood, bullet holes, etc.).

Note to the editors: This was the previous character sheet. Please edit as you see fit.

Character Sheet

Player Name: _____

Character Name: _____

STR:	Unarmed Combat:	Close Weapons:
DEX:	Dodge:	Thrown Weapons:
IQ:	Library Use:	
WILL:	<i>These Skills default to the STAT to their left.</i>	
MANA:	PSI:	SAN:

Handicaps				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defends vs.

Resources				
Name	Level	STAT	Ability Rating	Defends vs.

ITEMS:	
MONEY:	INCOME:

Online References

Please feel free to make use of these online resources to help you write LARPs.

- **Interactivities Ink Web Site:** Free LARPs to download, advice from the authors or RTLB, resource links, and more. <http://www.interactivitiesink.com>
- **RTLB Online Database:** You can download a set of web pages and a database for running LARPs using RTLB. Available at <http://www.interactivitiesink.com/larps>
- **LARPA:** The Live Action Roleplayers Association. They have free LARPs, pages of advice, and a message board. <http://www.larpaweb.org>
- **Other Message Boards:** The following web sites have lively discussions about LARP. Shade's Larp List: <http://www.larplist.com> RPG.net: <http://forum.rpg.net>

Changes From RTLB 1.0 to 2.0

This is a summary of all the changes to the core Rules To Live By System. It does not include new Plug-Ins or changes to existing Plug-Ins (formally called Optional Rules).

- Basic Human STATs now go from 1-6, with a human average of 2.
- There is now an Advanced STAT called Hit Points, which is the sum of your Strength and Will. You go unconscious when you have as many Damage Stars as your Hit Points, and you die when you have double the number of Red or Yellow Stars as your Hit Points.
- Likewise, Ability Levels range from 1-6.
- There is now a limit on bonuses that can be added to a challenge. The largest bonus is 6, which means the highest your number can be before the die roll is 18 (6 STAT + 6 Ability Level + 6 Bonus).
- Character Points have been separated into pools. The STAT pool typically has 60 Points, and the Ability Pool typically has 70 points. You may move unspent points from your STAT Pool to your Ability Pool, but not vice versa.
- There are now 5 Cost Types (formerly called Difficulties) of Abilities: Very Easy, Easy, Hard, Very Hard, and Static Cost.
- Many Abilities have been modified, added, and removed. Check the Ability list to be sure.
- Running combats has not changed, but it has been clarified and each round has been broken into distinct phases.
- Blue Stars no longer count toward death.

- RTLB is now designed for dice of any size, although we suggest d10s or d6s.

Glossary

Ability: A specific thing that a character can do that most other characters cannot. Some Abilities can be shared by many characters.

Ability Level (RTLB): Most Abilities in Rules To Live By have a numeric value. The larger the value, the better the character is at that Ability. This number is called the Ability Level.

Ability Rating (RTLB): The Ability Rating of an Ability in Rules To Live By is calculated by adding the Ability Level to the appropriate STAT.

Advanced Statistic (RTLB): Rules To Live By allows GMs to create new STATs for their games. One such STAT is “Hit Points,” which is part of the core Rules To Live by system.

Adventure Style: A style of LARP characterized by a unified party of player characters going on adventures and interacting with the environment.

AGM (Assistant Game Master): A person brought on to help run the game. Typically the AGM had little to do with the writing or design of the game.

Base Statistic (RTLB): Rules To Live By has four base stats: Strength, Dexterity, IQ, and Willpower.

Between Game Actions: In a campaign game, between game actions are things the characters may do between the episodes. These are usually written down and sent to the GM, who processes them and returns a written description of the results. This fosters continuity between events and gives the illusion that the characters exist in their world while the game is not going on.

Between Game Event (BGE): A Between Games Event is an official gathering of campaign players to interact in-game between the Game Sessions.

Between Game Period (BGP): A period of time between Game Sessions. Players perform Between Game Actions during BGPs. It is possible to have one or more BGPs between two Game Sessions.

Blue Sheet: See Information Sheet.

Campaign: A series of LARP games in which the players play the same characters throughout the series with continuity between the episodes.

Cast: Cast characters are usually written by the GMs and have limited autonomy. They are usually used to advance a plot or to add atmosphere. Cast characters are usually used in Adventure Style games.

Casting: The assignment of players to their roles. In some games, the players are all given characters by the GMs; in others, the players create their own characters.

Challenge (RTLB): Most Abilities in Rules To Live By are resolved by means of a challenge. The challenge is resolved by taking the Ability Rating, subtracting any Damage Stars and adding a die roll and comparing that to a target number plus a die roll. The side that is higher wins the challenge.

Character: Characters are the parts played by the participants in a LARP. They are fictional personas that are part of the game world, much like characters in an improvised play.

Character Sheet: A written history of the character. Sometimes also contains STATs and Abilities.

Combat Moderator (RTLB): A player or GM assigned to handle organizing the combat rounds and keep the combat flowing smoothly.

Combat Round (RTLb): In Rules to Live By, and many other simulated combat games, combat is split into rounds to allow ease of player action and GM organization.

Continuity: When writing a LARP, it is important that the different information given to the players all be correct. For example, if John is told that Mary is his best friend and Mary is not told about John, confusion will result. The continuity of the game should be considered in both the history and information given to the players.

Continuity Check: To edit the character sheets, information sheets, and other game materials in search of errors and misinformation. This is usually done by the writing group in the weeks before the event is run.

Damage (RTLb): In Rules To Live By, and some other simulated combat systems, damage is handled by a numeric result. In RTLb, characters subtract 1 from each of their base STATS for every point of damage they have.

Damage Star (RTLb): Rules to Live By uses adhesive stars as a method of keeping track of damage and as a visual display of how hurt the character is.

Dice Shaker (RTLb): A device used to hold one's dice so they don't get lost in a LARP.

Episode: A single game that is part of a campaign.

Experience Points (XP): Additional Character Points given after a Game Session. Experience Points can be spent to buy of Handicaps or raise the levels of STATS and Abilities.

Floor GM: See AGM.

Game Central: A location in the area where the game is run that the GMs use to organize and run the game. A headquarters for the game.

Game Master (GM): One of the people in charge of the game. The Game Master adjudicates rules, plays minor characters, and gives information about the world. Often the game master is also the writer.

Game Period: Some longerLARPs divide their game time into blocks called game periods. A weekend long game might have 5 game periods: Friday night, Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, Saturday evening, and Sunday morning. A game period can be used to restrict uses of special abilities. For example, many RTLb Abilities may only be used a certain amount of times each game period.

Game Session: In a campaign game, one discrete episode of the LARP. For a standalone LARP, it is the entirety of the event.

Genre: The style of the game, an overview of what it is about in a few simple words. Popular genres include: science fiction, Lovecraftian horror, medieval fantasy, and vampire.

In Game: Part of the game world. Something that is "in game" exists within the world of the game, as opposed to out of game things that do not. For example, in a game set in the Victorian era, a television is probably out of game.

Information Broker: A character in the game whose responsibility is to trade or deliver information. Note that this responsibility may not be in game. The duty of being an information broker may fall to the player, rather than the character.

Information Sheet: Written information about the game world given to the players. Information sheets typically contain writing about something too general to give to only one player, but too specific to give

to the entire group. Examples include: history of a particular culture, information about a secret society, or instructions to a group of players about a preplanned event.

Isolation Scenario: A game in which the characters are not allowed to leave and which help cannot be summoned. Usually found in the horror genre of LARPs.

Item Card: Simulated combat LARPs sometimes use index cards to represent items in game. An item card usually has the name of the item it represents as well as a short description printed on the card. The players should treat the item card as if it were the actual item it represents.

Item Complexity (RTLB): The item complexity is the target number for a challenge for an RTLB Ability that affects items, and requires a challenge. For example, to pick a lock, you must make a challenge vs. the lock's item complexity.

LARP: Live action role playing.

Live Combat: A style of LARP where dangerous activities, such as combat, are simulated in as realistic a manner as safely possible. In a live combat game, the player must touch his target with a padded weapon in order for his character to hit the target.

Mechanics: The method by which the rules of the game are adjudicated. The mechanics are the ways dangerous or abstract activities are carried out. For example, the mechanics of a system to simulate an election may involve players playing a quick card game, or the mechanics of the combat system may involve the players playing rock/paper/scissors to see how their characters do in the fight.

Metagame: Outside the game. Discussions about the game. Metagaming may involve an out of game discussion about how to resolve an in game issue.

Monsterring: Being Cast. See Cast. This term is often used by groups where all of the cast characters are monsters there to fight the player characters.

Non Player Character (NPC): Characters that are not player characters, usually short roles. See Cast.

Offline: A player who is temporarily not in game.

Out of Game (OOG): Not a part of the game world. Something that is "out of game" does not exist within the world of the game, as opposed to in game things that do. For example, a newsletter with a map to the site of the next episode of a campaign might be out of game, but it might list rumors that are in game.

Pivot: The important part of the plot that the players need to do to resolve the situation. For example, if the players need to collect pieces of a map to find a treasure, the pivot is the assembling of those map pieces.

Player: A participant in the LARP who portrays a character, like an actor in an improvised play.

Player Character: If the LARP were a play, the Player Characters would be the starring roles. Some LARPs can have hundreds of Player Characters; the ones in this book have – on average – seven. Sometimes the GM writes the histories of the player characters and sometimes they are written by the players.

Plot: An interactive story in which the characters participate. There are two styles of plot: the first places the characters in a situation to which they react, the second places the characters in a situation they must resolve.

Plot Hook: A section of character history from which a writer can create a plot.

Plug In (RTLb): An optional ruleset or system of mechanics which works with the core RTLb rules.

Railroading: A poor method of plotting where the characters are moved from plot point to plot point without any decision making on their part. Named for train tracks; the train can only follow the tracks with deviation spelling disaster.

Rulebook: A book given to all the participants of the event. It usually details not only the systems and mechanics in play, but also a general background and introduction to the world for all the players.

Run: To cause the LARP to happen. A LARP in progress is said to be in runtime.

RPG: Roleplaying game. A game in which the participants portray characters.

RTLb: Rules To Live By. A genre independent live action roleplaying system. RTLb is ™ Interactivities Ink, Limited.

Simulated Combat: A style of LARP where dangerous activities, such as combat, are simulated in an abstract manner. In a simulated combat game, the player must use an abstract system, such as cards or dice or rock/paper/scissors, for her character to hit the target.

Stars (RTLb): See Damage Stars.

STATs (RTLb): Rules To Live By has four basic statistics used to measure the character's strength, dexterity, willpower and intelligence. These STATs are numerical and a higher number equals a greater proficiency in the STAT.

Storyline: See Plot.

System: An organization of rules used to adjudicate things simulated by the mechanics of the game. A system is essentially a set of mechanics. Systems are either described by their collective name, such as Rules to Live By, or by what they are used for, such as "combat system."

Tabletop RPG: A roleplaying game typically played around a table, with the players describing what they do to the GM and the GM giving the results.

Target Number (RTLb): The Target Number is the number the player is trying to beat in an RTLb challenge.

Tech Crew: Workers in the LARP who do the gruntwork, building props and scenery, sewing costumes, cooking food, and other immensely valuable and underappreciated jobs.

Theater Style: A style of LARP characterized by player characters interacting mostly with other player characters, often in a political situation.

Virtual Location: A place in the game world that has no physical representation in the real world. For example, the game may be *set* in New York City, but *held* in someone's basement. There is no place to represent, say, the Statue of Liberty, so it is a virtual location.

World: The setting of the game. The world doesn't have to be an actual world, it could be, London of 1874, or Mike Young's Room. The world of the game includes its history, geography, politics, and all the other descriptions of setting.

Writer: The author – or group of authors – of a LARP. Often the writers also are the GMs.

About the Authors

Sandy Antunes

Sandy Antunes is a freelance writer, RPG designer, and astronomer. Author of numerous books, articles, adventures, and 10 years of rpg.net opinion columns, Sandy has run live action games on both sides of the Pacific. The oft-run tabletop-or-larp “Priceless” is Sandy’s favorite. Sandy is co-author of “Roleplaying with Kids” (2007, Technomancer Press).

Dave Coleman

Dave comes from a long background in table top RPG creation where he earned rave reviews for pretty much everything he ran. He comes to RTLB following a stint as an occasional writer and GM for the 1936:Horror campaign. Dave is the resident expert on engineering, science, inventions, and sarcasm. He has been studying game mechanics for years and lent his expertise to improving RTLB to its second edition.

John Kilgallon

John has been heavily involved in both playing and game mastering LARPs, both theatre style and live combat, since 1994. Some time in mid-1996, he feverishly began work on a single LARP rules system that could be used for many different types of games. His motives were purely selfish: memorizing different rules for each new game was overtaxing his tiny brain! Quickly realizing how big this project was becoming, he quickly availed himself of the considerable game writing talents of Mike Young and the game industry savvy of Sandy Antunes, and Rules to Live By was born.

As the self-appointed Guardian of RTLB Purity, John spends a great deal of his time frantically assaulting his partners with last minute rules “improvements.” John lives a quiet life in Maryland with his wife Valerie and two daughters Mary and Rachel. He certainly hopes lots of folks write and run RTLB games, so that he can play them all.

Mike Young

Mike Young started playing LARPs in January of 1989. He wrote his first LARP about six months later, and has gone on to run some of the largest and most well-known theater-style games in the Maryland/Virginia area. Mike has had several of his smaller LARPs published in the pages of Metagame magazine, and has sold The Galactic Emperor is Dead to Skotos, Inc. (www.skotos.net) to be run online. His most recent LARP project, Brassy’s Men, brought in players from across the United States (as far away as Massachusetts, Florida, and Seattle), and from Canada.

Mike tried to minor in weirdness in college, but got his application into the Interdisciplinary Studies department too late. They loved the idea, though. Mike collects assorted eccentricities, or maybe they are just naturally drawn to him. Mike’s proudest achievement is that he has had two of his entries in the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Writing Contest published in their Dark and Stormy Night series of books. Mike has been named LARP Guest of Honor at Origins and won the first Iron GM LARP competition held by The Live Action Roleplayers Association.