"Unquestionably, it was going to be highly dangerous. Yet I felt it was quite natural to jump at the task. After all, if you don’t like action and excitement, you don’t go into police work. And, what the hell, I figured, nobody lives forever!"

— Elliot Ness (1903-1957), American Prohibition agent

Welcome to the Urban Jungle

If you’ve never played a role-playing game before...

**Urban Jungle** is a game about pretending to be someone else. You could take on the role of a dogged, hard-boiled detective, a foxy femme fatale, a spunky kitten from the sticks, or a desperate lone wolf with nothing left to lose. One player will be the **Game Host**, who is the director of our story. Like a narrator of an old-time radio drama, the Host will describe some situation to you, like “A man falls down, clutching his chest as he drops a package at your feet”, or “Suddenly, two goons burst through your door, waving guns!”

You and your fellow Players will be like actors, but you get to decide what your **Characters** in the story will do. Does your hero try to talk their way out of this problem? Do they let their fists do the talking? Or can you think of something even more exciting? After you and your fellow players describe what they do, the Host responds, and you go back and forth like this, making up your own story.

Just so we’re all on the same page, your character will be described by precise game terms. You’ll have **Traits** that measure your character’s ability to do things: physical, mental, social, etc. You’ll have unique **Gifts** that set you apart from other people, and you’ll have **Soaks** so you can take your knocks and come back for more. You and your fellows will have to work together to overcome obstacles, to accomplish your **Goals**, and to reap the **Rewards** of your success.

To add drama and uncertainty, we’ll be rolling **dice**. If your character is good at something, they’ll have lots of big dice for you to roll. If your character isn’t so hot... well, the odds won’t be in your favor, but you can still try. Do you do things the easy way, or do you push your luck? That’s up to you. And when Lady Luck isn’t your friend, you’ll have both your character’s force of **Personality** to push onwards, and the **assists** of your fellow players.

We’ve written the game of **Urban Jungle** to give you and your fellow players an exciting world of intrigue, drama, and tragedy to experience... and to experience it together. The only limits are your imagination. The most important rule is, **have fun!**
If you’ve played a computer role-playing game before...

With a tabletop RPG, instead of a computer, you have a human as a **Game Host** who presides over the action. Instead of pressing buttons, you just tell the Host what you want. Like a moderator on a forum, the Host decides what happens and what doesn’t.

Unlike a computer game, the Host can be creative and can talk with you to understand things better. There won’t be any invisible walls or indestructible doors closing off your progress.

**Urban Jungle** is a co-op game. You will work with your fellow Players to solve problems. Like a narrator of an old-time radio drama, the Host will describe some situation to you: “A man falls down, clutching his chest as he drops a package at your feet”, or “Suddenly, two goons burst through your door, waving guns!” You and your party tell the Host how you want your characters to respond. The Host then decides how the non-player characters will react, what rules are in play, etc. The game goes back and forth like this until you all decide that the session is over. (Which is usually after about 2 to 3 hours of real-time.)

You get things done by applying **Skills** to them. You get Skill dice by your **Traits**, which are your character’s vital statistics. Everyone has the attributes of Body, Speed, Mind, and Will. Your character also has unique Career, Type, and Species Traits, which can be mixed and matched. There's no classes in this game; you get better by improving your Traits, and by buying new perks like Gifts and Skills. You can re-spec your character between sessions, as much as you want, by **retraining**.

Some tasks can be overcome by **Rote** if your skill is high enough and there’s no pressure. Other times, you’ll have to roll **Dice** to see if you can do the thing... and how well you can do the thing.

**Urban Jungle**’s combat is turn-based. Everyone on your side will take a turn, then everyone on the other side will take a turn. All characters, both friends and foes, might have the ability to **counter** attacks, as a defense. If you shoot at somebody, they just might shoot back, even when it’s not their turn!

There's no hit points or life-bar in this game. Instead, every character has one or more **Soaks**. When you’re hit, you have to reduce the Damage to zero, or your character is incapacitated. Different characters will have different Soaks... and with different cool-downs. A tanking character will have powerful Soaks with quick cool-downs.... But a support character might need longer to recharge, and they might have to jump through hoops to do even that, such as having to run off and hide. Your characters will often suffer a debuff called **Panic** that prevents you from attacking; you’ll be forced to flee before you’re killed.

You earn **Rewards** and **Experience** by staying true to your character’s role, and by finishing quests. You don’t get XP by killing people... in fact, you’re more likely to get grief from the NPC authorities for wanton slaughter, and that isn’t something you need. The game setting is persistent, with no reloads from save-states — so don’t draw too much aggro at once, or you will get crushed by the mobs.

Since combat doesn’t help you level up, you’ll want to avoid getting into dangerous fights if you can... oh, and this game has permanent death, so if you get your character killed, they’re off to the graveyard and you’ll have to start all over again. Welcome to the Urban Jungle, baby.
If you’ve played a tabletop role-playing game before...

*Urban Jungle* is a game about anthropomorphic animals living in a fantasy world styled after early 20th Century America. You could take on the role of a dogged, hard-boiled detective, a foxy femme fatale, a spunky kitten from the sticks, or a desperate lone wolf with nothing left to lose.

Like most tabletop RPGs, our game has a single **Game Host**, who is the master of the ceremonies, and the rest of you are **Players**. The Host presides over the action and tells you what’s going on.

There’s no classes or levels in this game. Instead, you have seven attributes: four **Basic Traits** that everyone has (Body, Speed, Mind, Will) and three **Unique Traits** that describe your character’s Species, Type, and Career. You get better at things by raising your Traits. You’ll start with unique talents such as **Gifts** (special abilities unique to your character) and **Soaks** (resistance to damage).

This game uses polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, and d12) and it uses a lot of them. It’s a dice-pool system, so you won’t be adding the dice together — you’ll be counting successes. Most of the time, you need 4s or better… but if you’re dicing off against someone else, each of you rolls, and whoever has the single highest die will be the winner. There’s also a rote rule, so you don’t have to roll if it wouldn’t be interesting.

Combat is turn-based with sides: all of one side acts, and then the other side acts, until the battle is over. All characters, both friends and foes, might have the ability to **counter** attacks, as a defense. If you shoot at somebody, they just might shoot back, even when it’s not their turn!

There’s no hit points. Instead, every character has one or more **Soaks**. When you’re hit for damage, you have to reduce the Damage to zero, or your character is incapacitated. Different characters will have different Soaks, with different rules on how they work. A front-line combatant will have powerful Soaks that recharge easily… but a non-combat character will have few Soaks, and they ones they have may require them to do things like run off and hide, or wait a really long time. Your characters will often suffer a debilitating status called **Panic** that prevents attacking; you’ll be forced to flee before you’re killed.

You earn **Rewards** and **Experience** by staying true to your character’s role, and by finishing quests. You don’t get XP by killing people… in fact, you’re more likely to get grief from the NPC authorities for wanton slaughter, and that isn’t something you need. Since combat doesn’t help you level up, you’ll want to avoid getting into dangerous fights if you can.

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Dedication
To Karen K.
**Basic Rules**

**Assist:** when you help a friend claim bonus dice  
**Bonus:** an extra die for you  
**Botch:** a roll where all your dice came up “1”  
**Challenge:** roll your dice vs. 3; fours or better are successes  
**Character:** an imaginary person living in the fiction of the game world  
**Claim:** When you ask for a bonus or advantage after you roll your dice  
**Contest:** roll your dice vs. their dice, high roller wins  
**Declare:** When you say you’ll do something before you roll dice  
**Dice:** d4, d6, d8, d10, d12  
**Dwindle:** if this die rolls a 1, decrease its size  
**Favor:** re-roll one “1”  
**Game Host:** The one who controls all the non-player characters  
**Limit:** if your die has too many sides, reduce it  
**Negate:** make something not happen  
**Penalty:** an extra die for your opposition  
**Player:** Someone who plays the game, with one character.  
**Progress:** This will take several rolls before it’s done  
**Recharge:** This must happen before you can use the ability again  
**Rote:** don’t roll that challenge, just take ½ success per die  
**Rule of 4:** when you need to roll fours or better  
**Success:** a die that rolled higher than the target number  
**Tie:** When your best die is the same as the target  

Players, the Game Host, and Characters

One of the participants in the Urban Jungle game is the **Game Host**. Like a director of a movie or a play, the Host is the final authority of what goes on and what doesn’t. It’s the Host’s job to interpret the rules, in case of disputes. Everyone else is a **Player**.

**Each session begins with each Player describing their character**

Each Player controls one person in the story, called a **Player Character**. Player Characters are our heroes of the story, who right the wrongs, reward the good, and punish the wicked. (Or not, if they’re anti-heroes. More on that, later...)  
It’s easiest to do this from left-to-right, around the table, but the Game Host can choose whatever order they like.

Each Player reads off:  
- Their character’s Name  
  (“Brenda Cavalcanti”)  
- Their character’s Species, Type, and Career  
  (“Fox Sultry Libertine”)  
- Their character’s Motto  
  (“This ain’t no golden age.”)  
- Any Goals currently listed  
  (“For once in my life, do something that makes a difference.”)

These readings will help the Players get into character. It can also remind us what the story is about: their common Goals.

**The Game Host presents a situation, and the Players respond**

The Host is also the head writer. The Host presents a story: “The mysterious man drops off an unlabeled package”, or “The wealthy widow wants you to find her husband’s killers,” and the Players will have to deal with the problems. The Host presents the problem. The Players describe how they respond to the problem. The Host decides how the story changes because of what the Players did, and it goes back and forth, until the session is over.

The Player Characters will interact with other important people, who will be played by the Game Host, as needed. The main enemies in the story will be **Major Characters**. Characters with small, walk-on roles will be **Minor Characters**. Major Characters will have access to all the same fantastic powers and crazy stunts that the Player-Characters will have. Minor Characters will be ordinary people, often out of their league when forced to deal with Major Characters.
Declare First, Claim Later

The flow of the game is pretty simple. The Host tells the Players what situation is in front of their characters, and the Players say what their characters will do.

When you commit your character to do something, you declare what your character will do. Examples include, “I declare that my character will jump from the train” … or “I declare that my character will ask the sheriff if he saw anything strange” … or “I declare my character will shoot that guy.” (When you get used to the game, you might shorten this to, “I shoot that guy”, but you’re still declaring that your character is doing something.)

Once you declare something, you start an event in motion. Other characters will react to your declarations. For example, when you say, “I declare that my character will shoot that guy”, the Host might say, “That character reacts by shooting back!” Now the stakes are high and something bad could happen, but you declared you were shooting, so it’s time to see what will happen.

When the rules ask you to declare something, you are committing to something that might have serious consequences. Your character is spending money or resources that can’t be recovered. Or maybe your character is doing something violent, and someone might get hurt.

Also, declaring means you need to say what you’re doing before you do it. When you declare that you will shoot someone, you can’t later change your mind by saying, “But first, I run back in the house.” Once you declare, you’re committed.

Other times, you can claim a bonus or an advantage. For example, you might claim a bonus from a friend to help you with a task, or you might claim cover against bullets by hiding behind a tree. When the rules say you can claim something, you don’t have to declare it before you commit to an action; you can claim it after the fact. For example, if someone shoots at your character, and it looks like your character is going to be hit, you might claim cover from a nearby wall. You didn’t have to say you were hiding behind the cover first. Many special powers in the game let you claim some advantage after something horrible has happened.

In short: declare first, claim later. If you declare it, then your character is doing it. If you can claim it, you don’t have to say that your character is doing it until it’s necessary for you to do so.

Negate means it didn’t happen; Replay or Re-roll is a do-over

If the rules say you can negate something, that means you keep it from happening. If you negate part of something, then less of it happens.

For example, if the rules say your character suffers 5 points of damage, and you negate 2 of those points, then you’re only suffering 3 points of damage. Negating damage is the job of your Soaks, the abilities that keep you from going down in battle.

If the rules say that you replay something, that means you re-do everything you just did. Forget about what just happened — the replay is what we keep, for better or for worse. In case it matters, a replay doesn’t recharge anything that was spent or used up: bullets were fired, gifts were spent, etc.

If the rules say that you re-roll one or more dice, then you pick up those dice and roll them again. The new result stands. You’ll re-roll dice if you have Favor (p. 12) or if you use the power of Luck (p. 56).

Dice

The dice in *Urban Jungle* have four, six, eight, ten, or twelve sides. (The four-sided die can be a little weird. Most of them have the number on the points, instead of on the side, so when you roll it, you read the number on the top-most point.)

Dice are abbreviated as “XdY”, where X is a number of how many dice you need to roll, and Y is how many sides they have. For example, if the text says “roll 2d6”, then you will roll two six-sided dice. If the text says “roll d10, d4”, you will roll one ten-sided die and one four-sided die.

There are many kinds of dice

Every character will have Trait dice. These dice represent basic qualities of a character, such as the strength of their Body, the Speed of their reflexes, the alertness of their Mind, and the stubbornness of their Will.

Body, Speed, Mind, and Will are basic Traits. Every character has those four kinds of dice.

The Species, Type, and Career are unique Traits. One character might have the species of “Cat” while another is a “Dog”. Your character might be “Hard-Boiled” while someone else has a “Heart-of-Gold”. Someone might be a “Detective” while someone else is a “Mobster”, etc. Each unique trait gives you dice in different things.
Characters will also have *Skill dice*, to represent ability in a certain field. You might have Athletics dice to climb, jump and run. You might have Transport device to drive a car. You might have Shooting dice to use a gun, etc. You get most of your Skill dice from your Unique Traits.

Characters will gain all kinds of bonus dice from circumstances, from special training, from assistance from friends, etc.

**When asked, find your appropriate kinds of dice and roll them**

When the rules ask you to roll some kind of dice, check your character sheet for those dice and roll them.

For example, you might be asked to roll your Mind & Academics dice.

- First, find the Mind die listed on your character sheet. Mind is a Basic Trait. Every character has a Mind die.
- Then, find the Academics row on your character sheet, and look for any dice listed there. If you don’t have any Academics dice listed on your sheet, then you have none to roll. (You’ll be stuck just rolling your lonesome Mind die.)

Once you’ve got those dice gathered up, go ahead and roll them.

**Don’t add your dice together!**

In some games, you roll dice and add all the numbers together. But in *Urban Jungle*, you roll the dice and check the numbers. High numbers are better.

You’re going to compare your numbers to a target: either your opponent’s highest number or 3. Dice are like real estate: you want more of them, and you want them to be big.

**Die sizes can increase, can decrease, and can be limited**

When we talk about a die’s size, we’re talking about how many sides it has. A twelve-sided die has more sides than a ten-sided one, so we say a d12 is a larger size of die than a d10.

When you’re asked to *increase* a die, move it up to the next number of sizes. For example, one increase will change a six-sided die into an eight-sided. Two increases will make it a ten-sided, etc. If you increase a d12, there’s nowhere for it to go — replace an increased d12 with a d12 and a d4.

If you’re asked to *decrease* a die, then you make it smaller: a six-sided die becomes a four-sided, for example. A d4 that’s decreased is removed.

Sometimes dice will be *limited* in size. For example, if the text says “your dice are limited to d8”, that means no dice can have more than eight sides. If you were about to roll d10, d4, you’d have to reduce the d10 to d8, but the d4 stays the way it is … so you’d roll d8, d4 instead. Your dice can be limited by circumstances — for example, a character that carries a heavy burden won’t move as fast as someone who doesn’t. Your dice can also be limited by skill — for example, someone used to fast-moving Transport won’t have as much trouble while riding one … as compared to, say, someone who doesn’t have any of those skills.

**Rolling your dice vs. 3: Challenge**

For most things that your characters will do in the game, there’s no need to roll: walking across the street, buying things from a store, reading the newspaper, etc.

Sometimes, what you want to do in the game will be uncertain. Can you scale that cliff? Can you convince the porter that you lost your ticket and that he shouldn’t kick you off the train? Etc. In game terms, sometimes you will have to *roll a Challenge*. For example, you might want your character to climb over a wall. The Game Host rules that such a climb requires physical strength and training, so they ask you to roll your character’s Body Dice and Athletics Dice. Find your character’s Body Trait on your character sheet, and pick up the appropriate die. Then, find your character’s Athletic Dice and pick those up, too.

Sometimes, you might find yourself missing some dice. For example, every character has Body Dice … but not everyone has Athletics Dice. That’s fine; just roll the dice you do have.

On a simple Challenge, you need to roll your dice against a target. For example, if the text says you must roll “2d6 vs. 3”, then you would roll two six-sided dice, hoping to roll 4, 5, or 6 on at least one die.

“Rule of 4” means you’re rolling vs. 3, so fours or better are successes

In a challenge, you’re always trying to be a 3, so on most rolls, each 4 or better is a success. We call this the *Rule of 4*.

(This is different from a contest, where you’re rolling against someone else, and you might need to roll higher than 4.)
Basic Rules

9

If all your dice come up “1”, then you have **botched**

Sometimes, you roll the worst you can possibly roll. For example, you might roll 2d6, and the dice come up 1 and 1. If you roll all ones, then you haven’t just failed, you’ve failed in an epic manner — you have **botched**. You get part-way up the cliff and then fall and injure yourself… the porter calls for a policeman to arrest you, and there’s one standing right behind him… your strike at the creep not only misses, but you swing too far and stumble.

Botches are a lot more likely when you lack skill dice. For example, if a roll calls for Body & Athletics dice… but you only have a Body die to roll… well, that’s just one die, so your odds of botching are really high.

If none of your dice roll higher than the target, then you have **failed**

If you can’t beat your target, then you have **failed**. For example, if you roll 2d6 vs. 3 and your dice come up 2 and 1 then you fail the test. You scrabble fruitlessly at the base of the cliff, the porter kicks you off the train, the gangster dodges your bullet, etc.

If your best die is merely equal to your target, then you have **tied**

In rare cases, your best die is a **tie**. For example, if you’re rolling 2d6 vs. 3 and you roll 3 and 2 then your best die has tied the target.

A tie is a special case. Now it’s time to see if you have something to tip the roll to your side… or maybe you get a partial success. Maybe you climb the cliff, but you drop your pack in the process. Maybe the porter doesn’t believe you… but he’s willing to take a bribe. Ties should be unusual events that liven up the game.

Once again, it’s only a tie if your **best** die is a tie. For example, if you roll 4d6 vs. 3 and you roll 4, 3, 3, and 3… you have one success, not a tie.

Dice that beat the target are **successes**

Following the “2d6 vs. 3” example earlier, if you rolled your dice and they came up 5 and 2, then you have one die that beat the target. You have scored one **success**. You climb that cliff, you bluff your way past the porter, you stab the creep with your switchblade, etc.

If you rolled really well, you can score **many successes**. For example, if your dice came up 6 and 5, then you have two successes. More successes usually mean even better success. You climb the cliff faster, you convince the
porter to upgrade you to first class, you stab the ogre in a vital spot for more damage, etc.

Remember only dice that beat the target count as successes. For example, if you roll 2d6 vs. 3 and your dice come up 5 and 3... then you only have one success. The tie doesn’t count.

In our skill descriptions, you’ll read some discussion on how many successes you need to accomplish certain tasks.

One success might not be enough!

For a task that anyone could do, one success will be enough to win the challenge. Everyone has at least one die to roll, so everyone can get at least one success.

But some things will be impossible unless you have special training, unusual skill, or other advantages. For example, anyone might be able to change a tire, but not everyone can rebuild an engine’s carburetor.

Other times, a task has to be more difficult. If it only took one success to sneak into the vault, then banks would be burgled every day by common hoodlums with zero training. Obviously, getting into a bank vault is more challenging than just one success.

How many successes do you need?

Our rules contain many suggestions on how many successes you’ll need to accomplish a task. The Game Host may have to judge on the spot how many successes you’ll need. Here are some guidelines:

One success =

Something anyone could do

On almost any roll in the game, someone gets to roll at least one die, so one success represents something anyone could do, without any special training, knowledge, or tools.

Two successes =

Something a professional could do

To get two dice, you need some training in what you’re doing. Only someone who knows what they’re doing could score two successes.

Three successes =

Something a master could do

To get three dice, you need to have a lot of ability and you have to roll really well. Only someone who has exceptional training or knowledge could score three successes.

Four or more successes =

Something a well-trained team could do

Some tasks will need lots of successes and can’t be done without a lot of time, resources, and effort.

A bridge too far:

Not enough successes

The more difficult something is, the more successes it needs. After all, if anyone could just crack a safe, it would be pretty poor protection against thieves!

Sometimes, you’ll roll one success or more... but it won’t be enough. You might have known that before you got started, or you might learn that just when you’re going on. For example, you might have scored two successes to crack this safe... only to discover it’s a top-of-the-line model, and it needs three or more.

If you need more successes, you need to claim more dice

Remember that dice that can be claimed can be rolled after you roll. If you can call upon more resources, you might get more dice to beat a challenge.

Common ways to claim more dice include:

- Get an assist bonus from a friend. See page 13 for more details on assist.
- Use up your gift Personality, which lets you claim a d12 bonus on any roll appropriate to the situation. You can only use Personality once per game-day. See page 57 for more details.

Progress for Long-Term Challenges

Rome wasn’t built in a day. Sometimes a challenge will require multiple successes to get to the end. For example, rebuilding a car engine might take several hours, or even days. Some tasks will require long term Progress.

To make progress, the Game Host and the rules should tell you often you’re allowed to roll, how many successes you need each time, and how much each progress you’ll make with each success.

For example: to crack the safe by picking the right combination might require one roll every 5 minutes, a minimum of 3 successes on each roll, and each success is 10% of the way there.

If you roll 2 successes, you make no progress. If you roll 3 successes, you get (3×10%=) 30% progress. Another 7 successes and you’ll be done!

Examples of long-term Progress include:

- Crafting, where you build or repair a large project.
- Healing, where you work to get rid of a long term illness.
Don't roll, just do it:  
Beating a Challenge by Rote

Sometimes, your characters will be so skilled that they can make the difficult look easy. Instead of rolling a test, the game host may give you the option of taking your rote.

Instead of rolling vs. 3, just take ½ success per die

To take your rote, don’t roll your dice. Instead, you score ½ a success for every die.

For example, instead of rolling d10, d8, d4 vs. 3, you could use your rote instead.

Three dice × ½ success per die = 1 ½ successes. You’d beat any test that needs 1 success, but you didn’t score quite enough for 2 successes.

Rotes are appropriate for tests against a fixed target. For contests against other dice, it’s better to roll instead.

Rotes make the most sense for routine activities, such as driving an automobile or building a barn, where rolling multiple times would be tedious.

You can’t use rotes on Contests (when you roll vs. others’ dice) or when you have Penalties

That is, when you and your opponent roll off and the higher roller beats the lower roller. (What’s a contest? See below.) That would give the character with the highest dice a 100% chance of winning, and contests are for when it’s not clear who’s going to win.

Use Rotes to avoid rolling dice when it wouldn’t be fun to roll

The Game Host should use Rotes to speed the game along. For example, if a player just wants to change a tire (a roll that requires one success) and they already have two dice, don’t roll.

Likewise, the Game Host may require a roll of Mind & Transport to drive a car to an unknown destination… but once that Challenge has been passed, the Host may let the player drive back there, using their Rote. No one should be surprised that someone can find the same place twice.

And yes, you can combine rotes and assists. For example, let’s say there’s three of you, and you’re all competent (2 dice). Two of you can rote (getting two ½ successes, or 1 each) … and then you each give a d8 bonus to your task master. The task-master now has four dice, so they rote for four ½ successes. There, three of you can get two successes with a Rote. (Alone, each of you would only get one.)

Rotes will often be a good bet to win a challenge for long-term Progress. Of course you can do this, it’s just a question of how long it will take you.

Only roll dice when the outcome would be uncertain and interesting.

Rolling Your Dice vs. Their Dice…  
And May the Best Roller Win:

Contest

Sometimes, you won’t be rolling against a mere 3, but against an opponent’s dice. For example, you might want to shoot someone, and they might want to dodge. Or, you might be running away, and they want to catch you.

When you roll your dice against someone else’s dice, that’s called a contest.

In a contest, you have to roll higher than your opponent (and not just vs. 3)

Unlike a challenge, with a contest, you’re not rolling to beat just a 3. Both you and your opponent roll your dice, and then you each put forth your best number. If your number is higher than your opponent’s, you’ve won the contest.

For example, if you roll 7 and 5, and your opponent rolls 6 and 3… then you won the contest, because your 7 is more than their 6.

Just like a simple test, you can also score multiple successes. For example, if you roll 11, 7, 6, and 2 and your opponent rolls 5, 4, 4 and 1. Not only did your 11 beat their 5, but your 7 and 6 did, too. So you didn’t just succeed, you scored three successes!

A contest like this is best for one-on-one comparisons, where direct ability is being compared from one character to another. For comparisons involving lots of characters or long-term effects (infiltrations, chases, crafting), see our “Handbook” chapter.

A tie on a contest means both you and your opponent get a little win... and suffer a little loss.

If your highest die matches your opponent’s highest die, then you have both tied. Maybe your race results in a photo finish. Maybe you both negotiate a compromise. Or maybe you and your foe both shoot each other at exactly the same time.
Basic Rules

When it matters, in the case of a tie, all dice that tie count as successes for each roller. For example, if you rolled 5, 5, 4, and your opponent rolled 5, 3, 1 ... then you have two ties and your opponent has one. In this case, you scored two successes and your opponent scored one. More successes could break a tie, or they could mean you get the bigger piece. In the case of combat, more successes on a tie could mean that you and your foe both hit each other, but your attack was more dangerous.

If your opponent botches, you get an extra success!

If your opponent rolled all ones, then your opponent has botched. Not only do you win the contest, you earn one extra success.

Since your opponent rolled all ones, then all your dice that came up showing 2 or better are also successes. If they botch and you roll a lot of dice, you can score really big wins.

In the rare case where both you and your opponent botch, the result should be a group failure so spectacular as to be the subject of jokes for weeks to come. You and the Host should use your imaginations.

Re-roll one 1: Favor

Skilled characters don’t often botch an operation. A roll that has favor, such as a roll with Favorite Use, gets some insurance against a botch.

When your roll has favor, you may re-roll one die that came up 1. You only get to re-roll one die, so if you have a choice between two dice, pick the one that has the most sides. It rolls higher!

More dice for you: Bonuses

Sometimes, things are easier. Maybe the cliff has extra hand-holds to make it easier to climb. Maybe you’re skilled in fast-talking people. Or maybe you’ve caught the ogre off-balance. A common advantage in your favor will be bonus dice.

When you have bonus dice, just include them with your regular dice. For example, if you would normally roll 2d6, but you have a bonus d12, now you’re rolling d12 & 2d6.

If you have to declare that you have a bonus, you have to say you’re going to use the bonus before you roll. For example, if you declare that you’re going to aim at a target, then that grants you a bonus d8 to roll, but you had to say you were aiming before you roll.
If you can claim a bonus, you don’t have to say you were going to use the bonus until after you roll. You can roll the dice, and then if you don’t like the way those dice came up… you can just pick up the bonus die and roll that now, including it with your other dice. For example, if you can claim a cover bonus of d8, you don’t have to roll that cover die until after you roll your other dice. (Yes, since you can claim a bonus after you roll, you might be able to prevent a botch, simply by claiming a bonus die to roll. Even if that die rolls a 2… hey, at least it’s not a botch anymore!)

**Giving bonus dice to friends: Assists**

One character may try to assist another. For example, someone might give you a boost to climb the cliff, or they might distract the porter to accept your story about a lost ticket. Some activities might take a long time and use a lot of people. For example, many of you might question the locals if they saw anything weird about by the old mill, or you might all work together to fix a broken automobile.

One character can boost another character’s roll by declaring an assist. Declare one character to be the task master, and then one or more as assistants.

Each assistant uses the same kinds of dice they would roll if they were the task-master. For example, if the task calls for Mind & Craft dice, then that’s what the assistant rolls, too. Naturally, everyone will be rolling different amounts of dice.

**Win a Contest (a roll vs. 3) to give a bonus d8 to assist to a friend**

Each assistant rolls their dice vs. 3, just like a standard Contest. For each assistant that scores at least one success, the task master may claim a bonus d8.

It doesn’t matter how many successes the assistant scores — each assistant adds only one die.

**The Gift of **Team Player** raises the assist bonus that you give other people from d8 to d12.**

For other activities, like questioning the locals about weird goings-on, more hands may make lighter work. Players will often split into two or three groups: the assistants who make assist rolls… the task-masters who make the rolls with the bonuses from the assistants … and the minders, the characters who don’t have the right skills to participate, but they can at least watch out for any trouble.

**You might use the same dice to assist... or use different ones**

For many tasks, you use the same dice for an assist role that the friend is using to make the task in the first place. For example, if the professor is reading through the books using Mind & Academics, then you too might use Mind & Academics to assist.

However, you can also look for clever ways to use different kinds of dice to assist your friends. For example, you might want to help a friend use Speed & Evasion dice to sneak past a guard. You might have your character make a public disturbance to lure them away, rolling your Will & Presence dice vs. 3. By being way too obvious and by luring attention away from a guard, you give your friend an assist to not be noticed.

The Game Host and the Players should be creative and aggressive about finding ways to use their talents to assist one another.

**The Game Host may rule when and how many others can assist**

The Game Host may rule that any test can only have so many assistants. For example, fixing a broken bus could have four or more people... but maybe only two can work together to crack a safe.

Don’t use this assist roll for rolls to strike people in combat. Use the Tactics rules, instead, as described in the Combat section.

Removing panic and the like from other characters is called a rally, and that uses separate rules, as described in the Combat section. The game-mechanic of “assist” is specifically for offering a bonus to someone else’s skill roll.

**Anyone can assist... but a Botch ruins the job**

If you have at least one die to roll, you can attempt to assist a task. However, if you roll a Botch — that is, all of your dice come up ones — then you ruin the task at hand. Sometimes it’s best to leave a task to those who know what they’re doing.

**The Gift of **Team Player** prevents your botches from ruining the task at hand, when you are an assistant. (Now, you might still get hurt, but at least you didn’t screw up the job for everybody else.)**
To help a friend in a challenge that you won yourself, you can burn one of your own successes

Sometimes a task will require that everyone succeeds. For example, a cross-country trek may require everyone to pass an Endurance roll or become too tired to press on. Or a party of adventurers may need to sneak into a place, which requires succeeding on sneaky rolls. Maybe you and yours are being chased, and the only way to safety is for each of you to jump a gap between two skyscrapers’ rooftops.

In any task where a character has rolled more successes than they need to succeed, the Game Host may allow a character to burn one of their successes to give a d8 assist bonus to another character, if they can come up with a reason for it to work.

A character can only burn one success this way, so they can only help one friend once. However, multiple characters could try multiple assists. For example, both Tom and Dick could burn 1 success to each give a d8 assist bonus to Sally.

When burning one success on a challenge to help your friend, your Gift of Team Player would let you give a bonus d12 (instead of d8).

Examples of burning successes to assist others to beat a challenge

- After abandoning their broken flivver in the wastes of the southern dustbowl, George and Martha must hike to the next town. They must roll their Body & Endurance dice vs. 3 and score at least one success.
  
  Hearty Martha easily makes the roll with three successes, but frail George scores none.
  
  Martha’s player wants to assist George; she says she could give some of her water to George, or help carry some of his gear, or even help carry him part of the way.
  
  The Game Host agrees. Martha drops from 3 to 2 successes (still enough to pass) and George gets a bonus d8.

- Cecile, Cobb, and Timmy are trying to sneak into the garage to rescue Old Levi, but the place is crawling with gangsters who are on the lookout for those pesky kids. This caper is a severe challenge requiring 3 successes. All three of our heroes must roll their Mind & Evasion dice vs. 3 to sneak in.
  
  Cecile rolls excellently, scoring 3 successes. Timmy is also pretty good, rolling 2. Cobb, however, scores nothing.

  A failure on a sneaky roll like this could start a fight.
  
  Cecile’s player wants to assist Cobb; she says she could quickly tell him to “duck down” and “follow me” to a safer spot.
  
  The Game Host agrees. Cecile drops from 3 to 2 successes, and Cobb gets to roll an extra die. Luckily, that d8 comes up 7, which beats the target of 3 and gets Cobb only 1 success.
  
  However, things are complicated. The Game Host tells the players that they needed 3 successes to get to Levi unnoticed; a mere 2 successes on this challenge only gets them into the garage, where they can see Levi and his minders. Whether Cecile wants to blame Cobb for ruining their plans, or wants to just chalk this up to bad luck, is up to her.
Dirty Frank and Lightnin' Hopkins just screwed up the jewelry heist, and they are making a break for it in the Shaysen City skylines. The Game host says they need at least 1 success to leap from a high-rise window to a building down below, using Speed & Athletics dice vs. 3.

Dirty Frank makes the roll with two successes, rolling to his feet without breaking stride like it ain’t no thing. Lightnin’ Hopkins rolls all ones and botches! He takes a tumble out the window head first, for what could be his last mistake.

The Game Host tells Frank’s player that he could try to catch Hopkins. In game terms, Frank could burn one of his 2 successes to give Hopkins an assist bonus of d8… but he must make the decision quickly.

Frank’s player blames Hopkins for screwing up the job, and he doesn’t want to lose his great lead of 2 successes. Frank declines to assist and runs off. Frank has left his comrade in the lurch to enjoy his healthy lead.

**Assisting yourself**

Normally, you can’t just “assist yourself” if you’re the task master, but there are ways that you can make a job easier.

- **Planning**: The Game Host may let you make one roll to plan, and then roll that over as an assist bonus of d8... but he must make the decision quickly.

  Frank’s player blames Hopkins for screwing up the job, and he doesn’t want to lose his great lead of 2 successes. Frank declines to assist and runs off. Frank has left his comrade in the lurch to enjoy his healthy lead.

For a Challenge, the Game Host rolls any & all penalty dice

For example, if you suffer a d8 penalty, the Game Host rolls an eight-sided die. If you had a d12 and d6 penalty, the Game Host rolls those.

Your target to beat becomes the highest-showing die, or 3, whichever is higher

For example, if the Host rolled a 5, then you have roll your dice vs. 5 (and not 3). Only your sixes or better will count as successes.

If the Host rolls 2d12 penalty dice, and they come up 2 and 1 ... then you’re rolling vs. 3. Only your fours or better will count as successes, and it’s business as usual.

Yes, in effect, penalty dice turn a simple Challenge into a Contest. You’re now not just rolling vs. 3, you’re rolling vs. 3 and your opponent’s dice. (In this case, your opponent is the Game Host.)

Needless to say, having a penalty to a Challenge spoils any attempt to do it by Rote.

For a Contest, your opponent rolls any penalty dice as bonus dice

A penalty for you is just a bonus for them. For example, if you have a d12 penalty, then your opponent has a d12 bonus. Your opponent rolls an extra d12 to win the Contest.

Bonuses and penalties don’t cancel each other out. They just put more dice in the pool. A roll can get pretty crazy if you and your opponent have lots of bonuses and lots of penalties. Let the dice be cast!
I forgot something! What do I do?

Role-playing games are fast, furious affairs. It can be easy to forget things like that d12 bonus you have because of your Motorcycling gift, or that d8 penalty you had because you can’t see.

- If you forgot to claim a bonus die, just go ahead and roll it now. Claimed dice can always be added after you roll.
- If you forgot to declare an advantage or die, and you already rolled, it’s too late. When the rules say, “You must declare,” that means you must have stated your intention before any dice are rolled.

Many special abilities in the game have limited uses or other special effects, and thus you have to declare them before you roll. (A generous Game host might give each player one do-over, as they get used to the rules. It’s a game, and we play it to have fun.)

Uses and Recharges

Characters can become physically exhausted, mentally stressed, or socially over-exposed. In game terms, some abilities may require time periods of “cool down” before they can be used again, or they may require you to perform some task before you can use them again.

An instant ability always works, always when you need it

For example, if you have the Streetwise ability, you can claim a d12 bonus when working with criminal enterprises, and you may buy or sell high-risk illegal goods at better prices than others can. This ability always works and doesn’t need to recharge.

On your character sheet, you can cross off or otherwise ignore a “Use” box next to an instant ability.

A recharge ability lists a number, a slash, and a recharge

For example, an ability that says “1/scene” can only be used once per scene. An ability that lists “2/episode” could be used up to two times before the start of the next episode.

After using a recharge ability, mark the box to note that you’ve used it

This box stays marked until you can recharge.

Common Recharges

Here are some common recharges:

- 1/episode = You can’t use this ability again until the start of the next episode.
- 1/hide = You must successfully hide. That is, you must pass a challenge of Speed & Evasion vs. 3 and go a whole round without anyone spotting you. See the “Combat” section for more details.
- 1/hit = This ability recharges if you successfully attack or counter-attack someone. See the “Combat” section for more details.
- 1/peace = This ability recharges if you can go 24 hours or more without committing any violence, such as attacks or counter-attacks.
- 1/rally = A friend can recharge this by rallying you. You can also self-rally if you can take a recover action and be out of line of sight of all enemies.