



MODULUS

MODULAR ROLEPLAYING SYSTEM

# Credits

## ***Creation & Design***

Brettwick Gordon & Jeff Rathman

## ***Contribution***

Laura Gordon

## ***Editing***

Laura Gordon

## ***Logo & Cover Design***

Jason Camp

## ***Cover and Interior Art***

Joseph Arnold

## ***Colorist***

Christine Le Blond

## ***Layout***

Brettwick & Laura Gordon

## ***Playtesting***

Laura Gordon, Josh Hay, Brandon Mintkin, Jeff Rathman & Kim Stone

[www.PowerLunchGames.com](http://www.PowerLunchGames.com)

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# About This Book

Following the completion of Athia I told Jeff we should make a generic roleplaying game. His immediate reaction was to ask “Why?” We both knew those kinds of games had their problems, and I thought all the more reason to design something different. Modulus was born out of running countless games where other systems just didn’t work. We needed something that played up the things that were important for our game and played down everything else. We needed a system that could help reinforce the themes and feel we wanted for our games, without bogging us down with countless rules that would never come into play. We needed something simple, fast, and yet could be as broad and specific as we needed it to be. It had to be something flexible, where creativity was king. So, we wrote this.

## Rule #1

Never let the rules get in the way of having a good time. This is your game. Feel free to use some, none, or all the information contained herein. Use what you like and nothing more - just keep your players in the loop as to whatever changes you’re making to your own games. Plus, the whole idea of Modulus is to make things your own. By all means, do so. If you are running the game, you make the rules. It is that simple.

## With Thanks

Where does one begin when thinking of all the people who played some part in getting us to where we are now. Family, friends, coworkers, and countless others have played a part. They all deserve their own specific acknowledgements, and I hope we’ve told each one of them how grateful we have been for their support. But let’s talk about you.

For some reason you’re reading this. It could be because we handed you this book, you found it online, or maybe even stumbled upon someone else’s copy. We want to thank you for giving some small piece of your time to give this a read. I hope it is every bit as entertaining a read for you as it was for us to write. Enjoy!

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# Introduction

Welcome to Modulus. What we have put together here is a simple, fast to play, easy to learn, easy to integrate system that is both entertaining and versatile. Modulus is a highly malleable, highly adaptable roleplaying mechanic system that can be played as is or inserted into any genre or world based on the story or theme you want to portray. Ever had an idea for a game, a world, or a story but weren't sure what mechanics to use in implementing it? So have we, thus the birth and creation of Modulus.

## What is a Modular Roleplaying System?

Modulus is a Modular Roleplaying System. At its essence, Modulus is a system with a basic set of rules you can build upon to make a unique set of mechanics for your game. We believe that a system should play up what is important and play down what isn't. Modulus allows you to make things as complex or simple as you want - with additional rule sets for those particulars to your game that you want to have mechanical representation. Think of Modulus as a set of building blocks. We provide you with a set of blocks to start with, and you can build all sorts of things with those blocks - and sometimes that's enough. If you want more, or have something special you're trying to build, you just introduce a few different blocks to your set and away you go. We believe in simplicity and consistency, but that doesn't mean you can't build something unique. No rule set is one size fits all, which is what inspired us to make a simple system that you can then add to and build upon to create a set of mechanics that'll play to the feel you're hoping to have for the game you have in mind.

## When to Use the Modulus system

There are times when you have a game or a world in mind that is either unique or you don't otherwise have another system you could apply it to. This might be the ideal time to consider using the Modulus system. However, by reading these rules you may be inspired to build a system from the ground up which plays to your group's particular interests. Since Modulus at its roots is a light system, it helps keep the

players focused on the game itself and not on the rules. The basic Modulus system is quick to explain, easy to understand, and you can have characters on paper ready to go in a matter of seconds.

## **Rule #1**

All these rules are suggestions, and your Game Master (GM) has final say in all interpretations or applications of the rules. Feel free to take those rules that you like, dismiss those that you don't, and/or write your own exceptions to these rules as fits your game, world, or group. Though the rules laid out here are written to make things fair and consistent, it is impossible to account for every contingency in any given game. This is where we defer to your GM's judgment. The GM has the greater sense of the story, world, or encounter – and thus why they hold the ability to bend the system and its rules to better fit the game they're running.

## **When to Reach for Dice**

...when there's a chance of failure. Depending on your game, the characters in your stories might be completely capable or incredibly inept. If a player has created a world-renowned pianist, and must play piano in a particular scene for your game, do you want him to have to roll? Would failure be important? If he's on center stage being judged by the music elite for his musical chops, maybe having them roll is a good idea. If he's killing time on an unused piano in the back room of an antique restoration shop to lift his companion's spirits, maybe it's a waste of time to have him reach for dice. Simply put, ask yourself if failure is important to the story. Just because you can roll doesn't mean you should.

Understand the big picture. It makes sense to reach for dice when the drama is high, when the risks are great, or when failure can create all sorts of additional roleplay, but you should also understand that when you're reaching for dice that your players are never guaranteed to succeed. The Modulus system is rather simple. It uses six-sided dice (and many of them depending on how many make up the pool for a roll). You only need a single six (6) from the roll of your dice pool to succeed. So, it is very easy to assume that if you have enough dice,

you are automatically going to succeed. Use the following table when considering the likelihood of a character's success:

<b>Probability of Success</b>	
<b>Number of dice being rolled</b>	<b>Chance to roll at least one 6</b>
1	16.67%
2	30.56%
3	42.13%
4	51.77%
5	59.81%
6	66.51%
7	72.09%
8	76.74%
9	80.62%
10	83.85%
11	86.54%
12	88.78%

Good judgment is often enough to know when success and failure will add to the game you're running.

## **Our Thanks**

We'd like to thank you. Yes, you. If you have a copy of these rules in your hand and are reading this paragraph amidst everything else in this book, we'll assume you're here for a reason. Thanks for taking the time to give this a read - perhaps even to consider using it for a game you're running. Even if you've just been handed this because someone you know is going to be using these rules for a game they're planning on running, we really appreciate you giving it a read.

So, here's to you! Thank you.

# Terms

There are two major terms that need to be understood when it comes to the Modulus game: Module and Twist.

**Module:** A module is an additional set of rules that can be applied to the basic Modulus system. They allow you to add custom mechanics to your game to help play up certain capabilities for the world or its characters.

**Twist:** A twist is a modification to a specific rule. This might affect the basic rules of the game, or the rules for a specific module. Twists further allow GMs to tweak the system so that the most important elements of their game come through mechanically.

Aside from those two major terms, the following are a few others that pop up throughout the Modulus system:

**Character:** Also known as a Player Character (PC), or the characters that the players control and play throughout the course of the game. This may refer to a person, a vehicle, a group or whatever will represent each “character” in your game.

**Check:** A roll of a die pool to determine whether a character has been successful in performing a specific task.

**Expended Die/Dice:** Refers to any die or dice that are removed from play after they are rolled - meaning that they’re the opposite of kept dice.

**Game Master (GM):** The individual running the game for the rest of the players.

**Kept Die/Dice:** Refers to any die or dice that are kept after they are rolled - meaning that they’re the opposite of expended dice.

**NPC:** Non-Player Characters are characters that are controlled by the GM as either antagonists or other subjects in the story of their game.

**Pool:** Refers to both a selection of dice to be used in a particular fashion, and the total dice a player collects to roll a check.

**Round:** A measure of time, typically during combat, where the characters take a defensive and offensive action.

**Success:** Any single six (6) rolled on any die used for a check.

**Trait:** A defining aspect of a character that allows them to utilize their traits pool for a check.

**Trait Pool:** A collection of dice the player may roll for any check that uses the character's trait.



# Part One: Basic System

The basic rules for Modulus stem from three modules: the fate die, trait dice (from a character's selection of traits), and session dice. Dice are selected or combined to form a pool, and these pools are then rolled to determine if a character is successful in a particular task. This roll is called a check. Let us begin with why you're even reaching for the dice before we talk about which dice you should be using.

## Checks

Checks are used to put a random element into a character's probability of success. By asking for a check, GMs can add a bit of tension or randomness to their games. Checks are simple, the GM asks for a particular check (usually defining what exactly the character or characters are checking for) and the players then roll whatever dice might be applicable for their character.

Checks are commonly made up of three kinds of dice: a character's fate die, trait dice, and session dice they'd like to expend. The combination of these dice is known as a pool. Additional Modules may allow for additional dice to be added to a check.

In Modulus the players are the only ones making checks. They are always attempting to determine if their character is successful. The GM has no dice, and therefore makes no checks. This means that Antagonists in the game are successful until the characters succeed in their checks to thwart them (see Part Two: Bringing Everything Together for further information).

If any die in the pool a player has rolled for their character comes up a six (6), their character is successful in their task. If no die has a six (6) on it, the character has failed. Following the check, successful or not, a player may have expended dice in that check that aren't returned to them (as described in further modules).

## Trying Again

When a character has been unsuccessful on a given check, they might immediately think that they will just try again. In some cases, this may be reasonable (such as a character practicing their free throws on a basketball court), however this is typically the exception rather than the rule. If a character could attempt to pick a lock repeatedly, it would only be a matter of time before they unlocked the lock. Just because you want to lift your car over your head doesn't mean that so long as you try all afternoon that you'll do it. As such, we employ the following rationale when it comes to retrying a failed check: you may attempt the check again as soon as your current circumstances change. This is a broad way of saying you've failed, get over it, so do something else to improve your likelihood.

## The Fate Die

The fate die represents your character's chance to attempt anything. So long as whatever you are attempting is possible (like jumping a 20-foot gap from rooftop to rooftop or convincing your teacher to improve your grade from a B+ to an A-), you will get to roll your fate die. Your fate die is always a single die but represents the possibility that your character could be successful in anything they attempt.

Make sure the die you select for your character's fate die is distinct and stands out from any of the other dice you'll be using for your game. Since the fate die is a single die, this could be any die the player or GM selects (provided it is a standard six-sided die).

The fate die is a kept die, meaning that after you roll it you get to hold onto it. It is not expended, thus can be rolled again and again for whatever other checks might come up over the course of the game.

## Trait Dice & Traits

Characters have five traits: a mental, a physical, a societal, a vocational, and a recreational trait. Any time a player is asked to make a check they refer to their character's traits. Any applicable trait allows the player to include their trait dice in the check. Players will explain to their GM how or why their character's trait applies to the



check, and if found suitable the GM will allow that player to add their trait dice to their pool for the check.

A character's mental trait expresses their keenest psychological characteristic, their physical trait expresses their keenest physiological characteristic, their societal trait expresses their keenest social characteristic, their vocational trait encapsulates their calling in life, while their recreational trait encapsulates where they spend their free time. A trait might be broad like *Athletic* or specific like *Strong*. It's best if these traits are summarized with single words, but this doesn't preclude a trait's usefulness. Players can use any term to describe their character's traits but should always verify with their GM for final say. In some instances, GM's might even provide a list of specific traits for their players to choose from.

The use of an applicable trait adds four dice to the player's pool of dice. Trait dice are kept dice, meaning that after you roll them you get to hold onto them. They are not expended, thus can be rolled again and again for whatever other checks might come up over the course of the game that apply to your character's traits.

## Is It Inherent?

Traits can be used in many ways, and in many instances. Players and GMs should keep one thing in mind when asking themselves if a given trait is applicable in any situation, and that is, 'Is what the character is attempting to use the trait for inherent to that trait?' One might suggest that their character's physical trait of *Dexterous* means they can outrun someone, but does being Dexterous inherently mean one is fleet of foot?

## Final Say

As mentioned in Rule #1, the GM has final say in any matter as to whether a character's trait applies towards a particular check.

## Examples of Using Traits

Let us assume that the game may have left a character struggling to bypass a locked door. The GM asks for a check for the character to bypass the door, and the player decides to offer up her character's

*Fireman* profession as an applicable trait. The player proposes that firemen are trained to break down doors to rescue people from hazardous situations and that bypassing this door should be something they'd be capable of doing. The GM agrees and the player then includes their trait dice for the check.

In another example the characters have found themselves at the edge of a raging river they need to cross to distance themselves from a pursuing enemy. The GM asks for a check related to swimming or river crossing, and the player decides to offer up his character's *Scholarly* mental trait as applicable. The player proposes that his character knows everything there is to know about swimming and can thus cross the river. The GM disagrees as crossing rivers isn't inherently part of being scholarly.

As a creative use of a trait, a player finds himself wanting his character to assist in the demolition of a building. Because his character has a profession of Architect, he argues that he would know the best possible places to set the explosive charges. Though this certainly isn't an inherent application of the Architect trait, the GM decides to rule in favor of the player as this is a creative and viable use of his trait.

## Example Traits

Example traits for each of the five trait types are provided, but these are examples only and should not constrain your players' creativity for their own character. Traits listed with parenthesis () should be specific, such as Hockey for (Sport).

### **Physical Trait Examples**

Athletic	Old
Brawny	Resilient
Coordinated	Robust
Fast	Quick
Fat	Small
Flexible	Steady
Gorgeous	Striking
Graceful	Strong
Lithe	Tall
Nimble	Tireless

### ***Mental Trait Examples***

Alert

Brave

Composed

Consistent

Driven

Educated

Faithful

Honest

Loyal

Observant

Optimistic

Reliable

Sincere

Stoic

Tenacious

Tolerant

Trustworthy

Understanding

Willful

Witty

### ***Societal Trait Examples***

Admirable

Adaptable

Alluring

Charismatic

Cultured

Discerning

Eloquent

Empathetic

Entrepreneurial

Famous

Friendly

Intimidating

Leadership

Patriotic

Popular

Respected

Romantic

Scrupulous

Trustworthy

Wealthy

### ***Vocational Trait Examples***

Actor

Artist

Bartender

Businessman

Construction Worker

Doctor

Engineer

Farmer

Fireman

Janitor

Journalist

Lawyer

Musician

Mechanic

Policeman

Priest

Scientist

Soldier

Teacher

Truck Driver

### ***Recreational Trait Examples***

Cooking

Cycling

Dancing	Linguistics/(Language)
Diving	Martial Arts
Fashion	Photography
Fishing	Running
Gambling	Sailing
Gardening	Sewing
Horseback Riding	Skiing
Hunting	Travel
(Instrument)	(Sport)

## Session Dice

Sometimes a player really wants to be successful with a particular check, other times less so. Session dice are the means for players to increase the likelihood that their characters will be successful. Players begin each session with a set of session dice given by the GM. These dice can be added to any pool the player has for any check. They represent the ebb and flow of luck, skill, and circumstance.

Unlike the fate die or trait dice, session dice are expended. Any time session dice are added to a check, those dice are expended and removed from play for the duration of the session. However, as their name would imply, at the beginning of each new game session players have their session dice pools replenished.

## Number of Session Dice

Each time you gather to play the Modulus game, each player begins with session dice given by the GM. Depending on how involved your game might be (such as the expected number of checks made in a session), or how long your sessions typically run, that number of dice can vary. A general rule of thumb is 10 session dice per hour of play. This is only a suggestion, and GMs may find that based on the number of checks players are making in a typical gaming session they require a different number of session dice. Some games will be higher in conflict (such as surviving swarms of zombies), others far less so (such as a political or romantic themed game). The more conflict and checks the players are forced to make, the faster they'll burn through their session dice. Feel free to adjust this number as needed.



# Part Two: Bringing Everything Together

## Characters

Now that you have a general understanding of the dice and checks, let's look at who will be using them. Namely, the characters. Characters begin with a concept - who or what that character is. Concepts might be anything from a world-renown author, an aspiring Everest climber, or a disabled veteran. With a concept in mind players can better design their character, understand their capabilities, and determine their traits.

With just five traits to distinguish and define a character it is important to distill one's concept into what is most important. The mental trait of a character is the standout characteristic of their psyche. This might be something that relates to their personality, their mental faculties, or even their observational capabilities. Terms like *Creative*, *Knowledgeable*, or *Perceptive* are all mental traits. Mental traits encompass a great number of possibilities so give it a good bit of thought before picking the trait or traits that most define your character.

The physical trait of a character defines the key distinction in that character's physiological make-up. It could be something very basic like *Tough*, or more esoteric like *Lithe*. It will be up to the player to explain how their physical trait applies to any given check, but keep in mind that anything might be applicable so long as your explanation justifies it.

The societal trait of a character zeroes in on the character's connection or acumen within society at large. It might be something specific to the character like, *Charismatic*, or more social, like *Renowned* or *Wealthy*. There are any number of possibilities to choose between when selecting a societal trait that best represents the character's greatest affinity, either personally or situationally.

The vocational trait of the character is perhaps the easiest to define. *Doctor, Lawyer, Soldier, Accountant, Guitarist, or Hacker* are all examples of a vocational trait a given character may have. Vocational traits don't have to be reflective of one's current profession. They might be from an earlier part of their life that they spent more time in, or perhaps their trait just isn't a paid profession. They represent and encapsulate the best of the characters' skill sets, regardless of how successful they might be in society.

The recreational trait of the character reflects something they have always done. *Cooking, Woodworking, Painting, Investing, Camping* and *Snowboarding* are all examples of a recreational trait a given character may have. Recreation traits aren't indicative of everything a character might have skills in, talent with, or knowledge of. They are merely representative of something the character has always found themselves doing, or otherwise had an affinity for.

Statistically characters are simple, but their use is only limited by their player's creativity. Stick to broad traits over specific ones. *Palliative Care Technician* might be an actual job in the medical industry, but going with *Doctor* or *Hospice Worker* might be more fruitful when attempting to justify the trait for a given check.

Finally, characters in Modulus don't have to be people. It's possible to use the Modulus system where the characters are an entire nation of people, spaceships, or perhaps post-apocalypse cars. They would obviously use different traits than that of a character that was a person, but all of that can be done with a simple twist (see Part Three: Modules & Twists).

## Pools

A pool is a collection of dice that the player brings together to make a check. Pools can be combinations of any number or type of dice. When the GM asks for a check, and a player wishes or is forced to comply, they create their pool for that check. The player includes the following:

- Their fate die
- Their trait dice, if the GM agrees their character's trait is applicable in this check

- Any number of session dice the player wants to expend

These dice combine to form their pool for the check and are rolled collectively. Again, any single six (6) on any die results in the character being successful.

Following the check, any expended dice in the pool are then removed from play.

## Types of Checks

There are a few different options GMs have when asking players to make checks. Though the first of these, basic checks, will be the most common throughout the game, protracted checks, time limit checks, and contested checks may provide additional means to test a character's capabilities. These options are just examples of any number of possible checks that can be incorporated and may provide GMs the means to make various encounters, events, and obstacles even more compelling.

### Basic Checks

The basic check is used to determine if a character is successful in a single endeavor. If the player rolls one or more sixes (6), their character is successful in their task. If they roll no sixes (6), the character has failed. A basic check could be for something very specific, like picking a lock, or it could be broader, like breaking into a warehouse. It is up to the GM to explain the task, endeavor, or act the character is presented with, and the basic check's result will determine whether the character completes all involved activities.

### Protracted Checks

Some things attempted by characters are bigger than others. A protracted check can be presented to one or more characters attempting to complete an involved task. Forging a sword, building a doomsday vehicle, or winning a race might be a perfect excuse to have the players attempt a protracted check. The GM will decide how many successes will be necessary to complete the protracted task. The characters involved will make repeated checks until they eventually meet or exceed the number of checks necessary. For example, if the



characters are building the doomsday vehicle, the GM might give the players an opportunity each day to roll to build or continue to build the vehicle. The GM has decided the vehicle will be completed once fifteen (15) successes have been rolled. This will give everyone a sense of how many days it takes to build the vehicle. Each six (6) rolled is added to a running total. Once the characters have 15 or more successes, they've built their vehicle. In the example of a race between players, the same might be true, where the GM is looking for 15 successes and the first to reach the total crosses the finish line first.

## **Time Limit Checks**

There are other times when the characters are limited in the time to complete a task. With this type of check, the GM determines how many successes need to be rolled and in what timeframe, and the character or characters can all contribute successes each round until they're either successful, or time is up. Perhaps the characters are stuck behind a locked door, and the room is filling up with water. They have a complex task in bypassing the door and must get past it within four rounds or the room will be full of water. The GM decides that the characters need six successes and have four rounds to roll them.

## **Contested Checks**

Another example of a complex check is a contested check against an antagonist. Though antagonists never roll, we instead use their rank to determine how many successes they roll on each check. Therefore, a rank two antagonist will always have two successes in whatever contest they're involved with. Therefore, if a character was competing against a rank one antagonist in a dueling pianos contest, the player would have to roll two or more successes to outperform the antagonist. One success for the player would result in either a tie in the competition, or that it continues until there is a winner determined. These contested checks are also good for chases, with the characters gaining (or losing) ground the more they're able to surpass the automatic successes of the antagonists they're chasing (or running from).

## Player vs. Player

The GM doesn't roll dice, as antagonists are successful in their tasks until thwarted by the characters. Therefore, should a player seek to force their character's will on another character, the players of those characters will need to make a contested check. Each player builds their pool (which is recommended to be done secretly) with the approval of the GM when adding their trait dice. Both players make their check, and the following order for resolution is followed (in the event of a tie at the first step, the next is followed to resolve, and so forth):

1. The player with the most successes prevails.
2. The player with the most successes in their trait dice prevails.
3. The player with success on their fate die prevails.
4. Add the die totals up, the player with the highest total result succeeds.

## Antagonists

Every game has obstacles for the characters to overcome. Sometimes these obstacles might include puzzles, or harsh environments, and sometimes it includes NPCs. Since the GM doesn't have any dice or die pools, their antagonists carry on with their endeavors successfully until the actions of the characters stop them. This means that if an antagonist in a story (say a thug) was going to mug a character, they would successfully do so unless the player of the character being mugged wanted to stop it. Attempting to stop or alter an antagonist's plans is likely to require a check, but if the player is successful with their check their character will have stopped, or at least delayed them. How the thwarting of antagonists is played out is left to the player's intentions for their character and the narration of the GM.

Antagonists are typically ranked from one to three. This ranking has no bearing on the antagonist other than as it pertains to combat. A rank one antagonist is a relatively mild antagonist, whereas a rank three antagonist is exceedingly deadly. An antagonist's rank is directly correlated to their capabilities in combat, and determines both how much damage they deliver, and how much damage they can withstand.



# Combat, Wounds, & Health

There are times when conflict spills over into violence. In these moments one needs to determine who goes first, who is successful, and what the results for success or failure are. The rules for combat in Modulus are simple. Each antagonist in the combat has a ranking (typically from one to three) which determines how difficult they are to stop as well as how punishing they can be to the characters. In a round of combat the characters will have a defensive check and an offensive check, although these may be in different order depending on the initiative.

## Initiative

Combat begins by determining initiative. Initiative determines who takes their offensive or defensive actions first. When multiple characters are in the same combat, all characters will take their defensive or offensive actions at the same time. Initiative is determined in the following order:

1. Who has the drop on who? If the antagonists have the drop on the characters, the characters will begin the round by taking their defensive actions first. If the opposite is true, the characters will begin the round taking their offensive actions first.
2. If both sides have somehow met under neutral circumstances, the players collectively decide whether their characters will take their defensive or offensive actions first.

## Surprise

Sometimes one side (characters or antagonists) has taken the other completely unknowing and surprised. If the antagonists have surprised the characters, the characters immediately take wounds equal to the total of all the antagonists' ranks. The characters then begin the round taking their defensive actions. If the characters have surprised the antagonists, they immediately take a free offensive action before starting the first round of combat (beginning with their offensive actions).

## **Antagonist Ranks, Actions, & Wounds**

Antagonists work to a specific end. This might be to capture the characters, kill them, or even escape from them. During the round the antagonists will achieve those ends unless otherwise thwarted by the characters.

A rank one antagonist requires one offensive success to defeat. Whether this means the character is attempting to kill them, incapacitate them, or simply disarm is left up to them. Additionally, a rank one antagonist will do one wound to a character each round unless stopped, avoided, or absorbed by the targeted character's successful defensive action.

Each point of ranking for an antagonist is equal to the number of wounds they can do in a round (to one or more characters - up to the will of the GM) and represents the number of successes the characters need to defeat them.

For example, a rank two antagonist faces off against two characters. Both characters and the antagonist all are armed with pistols. It is determined the antagonist has the initiative and goes first, firing at each of the characters. Since the antagonist has the initiative, the characters begin the round on the defensive, taking their defensive actions first. As a rank two antagonist he will be delivering one wound to each of the characters as he takes a shot at them both (one wound for each rank). The first player of a character being shot at wants to dive out of the way of the incoming gunshot and spends their defensive action making a check to dive behind a nearby car. The second player of a character being shot at wants to make a check to show their character is too tough to be stopped by someone the likes of this antagonist. If successful in their checks, the first character dives behind the car and remains unharmed, while the second guts out a shot that results in little more than a Hollywood flesh wound. If either character fails, they take a wound. It is also possible for this rank two antagonist to do two wounds to a single character, as opposed to attempting to do one to each character. If this antagonist were rank one, he would only be able to do one wound to a single character. Finally, if the antagonist were rank three, he could do three

points to a single character, or two to one character and one to a second character.

## **Groups of Antagonists**

Sometimes characters face off against a group of antagonists. The GM then determines what that group is made up of (for example three rank one antagonists and one rank two antagonist). Determine initiative or surprise as normal, and the GM should note which rank antagonist is targeting which character (or characters). Successes then whittle down their numbers until either the antagonists or the characters are defeated.

## **Defensive Actions**

Wounds delivered by antagonists are automatic unless the character is successful in their defensive action. Defensive actions might include dodging an incoming punch, blocking a sword swipe with a shield, being so tough as to take the punch without flinching, or diving out of the way of a spray of bullets. So long as the characters are successful, they avoid the incoming damage - avoiding a single (1) wound for each success (6) they roll in their pool. Multiple points of damage may be incoming from multiple opponents, so long as the characters score an equal number of successes (or more) to the total incoming damage, they avoid that damage. Damage exceeding the defensive successes is allocated by the GM to the characters.

## **Offensive Actions**

Stopping, killing, or otherwise defeating antagonists require offensive actions to do so. Characters must achieve successes equal to or greater than the rank of their targeted antagonist to be successful. Offensive actions might include pinning an opponent to the ground, killing them with a knife thrust through the heart, or disarming them such that they're forced to surrender. Players should specify their offensive action and the outcomes they hope to achieve when successful. Each success (6) a player rolls for their character's offensive action will thwart one rank of antagonist. Therefore, it would take two successes (6's) on a player's check for their offensive action to thwart a rank two antagonist in a single round.

## An Example of Combat

Two mercenary characters have been discovered and are being set upon by a group of armed gunmen. There are five rank one gunmen after the characters, led by a rank two antagonist. The characters have bunkered down in an abandoned shack as the gunmen arrive. The GM decides that the characters have the initiative and may make checks for their offensive actions first. For argument's sake, each character has the mercenary vocational trait, and rolls a pool consisting of their fate, trait, and a couple session dice. The first player rolls one success and decides to eliminate one of the rank 1 gunmen. The second player rolls three successes and decides that he's killed the rank two antagonist and one of the rank one gunmen (spending two of his successes to take down the rank two antagonist and using the remaining one to take down another rank one gunman). At this moment, there are only three rank one gunmen left - who are of course shooting at the characters. This means that there are 3 wounds headed the character's way unless they are successful in their defensive actions. One player offers to attempt to avoid two of the incoming wounds, leaving just one for the other character to attempt to overcome. Each player builds their pool, again with their fate die, applicable trait dice, and as many session dice as they'd like. Each success they roll negates an incoming wound - symbolizing just how successful the antagonists are in their efforts to injure the characters. Each player ends up rolling their defensive check without any successes, leaving one character to take two wounds, while the other takes one. Moving into the second round the characters are back on the offensive and attempt to shoot the last three remaining gunmen. They put together their offensive check pools and then roll. With a combined three successes between them, they're able to shoot down the last three remaining gunmen.

## Health

When a character takes their third wound, they are down and out of the fight. This is a sort of "three strikes and out" rule. Downed characters are incapacitated, barely conscious (if at all), and hovering at death's door. Should a character who is down take one more wound, they are dead. Being down is that barrier between a wounded character and a dead character. Once the fighting stops, they can get back to their feet while having their three wounds. As an example, a

rank three antagonist delivers all three wounds in a round to an otherwise unharmed character. That player then marks their character as having suffered three wounds. If they take any further wounds they will be down. When down, any additional damage they take will kill their character. When the combat is over, the character can get to their feet, but still have three wounds. Wounds do not affect character die pools.

Wounds may be healed with a check (subject to GM approval for appropriate traits, equipment, time, etc.), each success healing a wound point. Wounds are also healed at a rate of one point per night's bed rest.





# Part Three: Modules & Twists

What makes Modulus unique is that the basic mechanics of the game can be expanded upon or modified to help GMs create the exact “feel” they’re looking for in their games. They do this using modules and twists. Modules are completely new rule sets that expand upon the existing rules of the game. Twists are small tweaks, exceptions to rules, or simple changes to rules that offer minor impacts to play towards the “feel” a GM might be looking for in their game. The examples given below are, by no means, a complete list of every possible module or twist. These examples can be used as written or can be modified to better cater to the kind of game you wish to run. Consider these examples as inspiration for developing your own modules and twists for your Modulus game.

## Modules

Sometimes you’re looking for more to add to your game, such as magic, unique items or weapons, or perhaps a means of character improvement. All of these can be done by adding one or more modules to your game. Modules often mean bringing more dice and/or more rules into your game. It will mean you will have more to keep track of. It also means that more dice might alter the general probabilities of success if you hand too many of them over to your players. Exercise a bit of caution when adding Modules to your game as their benefits for your players and their characters can add up fast.

## Twists

Sometimes you’re just looking for a small adjustment to the rules - something to help you play something up in your game. By adding a twist, you can add fun little rules that allow players and characters to do more in your game. Twists can add up fast and need to be made clear from the start of your game. Be aware that since twists aren’t often represented by dice on the table that you’ll have to ensure your players are always applying them to their characters, checks, or the game in general.

# Core Rules

The following is a list of twists you can add to the core rules of your Modulus game.

## Fate Die

These are some twists on might add to the use of the fate die:

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Critical Success
<b>Description</b>	There is the possibility of having extraordinary successes beyond just being successful in one's task (as determined by the GM).
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>6's:</b> When a player rolls a success (6) on their Fate die, it is a critical success for their character in the task they're attempting. <b>Lucky:</b> In high stress situations, the GM rolls a die, and any player getting that same number on their fate die results in a critical success.

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Fate's Blessing
<b>Description</b>	Rolling well on one's fate die can have a positive effect.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Boon:</b> A result of a six (6) on the fate die allows a player to add one die to their session pool. <b>Bounty:</b> A result of a six (6) on the fate die allows a player to keep all session and community dice uses in their pool.

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Fate's Cost
<b>Description</b>	Rolling poorly on one's fate die can have a detrimental effect.

<b>Rule</b>	A result of a one (1) on the fate die cancels one of the successes rolled. If no successes were rolled this may result in a critical failure.
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## Checks

These are some twists one might add to checks in Modulus:

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Purchased Successes
<b>Description</b>	This twist allows for players to “purchase” a successful result rather than rolling a check for their character.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Session Dice:</b> The GM can ask for an expenditure of session dice in place of a check. This way a player can simply expend a number of dice from their pool to grant their character a guaranteed success. Dice expended are lost.</p> <p><b>Community Dice:</b> Like the session dice variation above, the player can expend community (or perhaps a combination of session and community) dice in place of rolling a check. Dice expended are lost.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Costly Successes
<b>Description</b>	To add a twist to any check, if the player rolls more 1’s in their die pool than 6’s something bad also happens.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Gear Degradation:</b> More 1’s than 6’s results in a piece of equipment being degraded in accordance with the Degrading Gear Twist.</p> <p><b>Doubt:</b> Though the character was successful they’ve convinced themselves it was a fluke, and this may add to their stress level or overall fear (see the Specialty Mechanics Module’s Negative Statistic Variation).</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Critical Failure
<b>Description</b>	There is the possibility of blowing a check completely.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>No Successes and a 1:</b> When a player receives no successes on a check, and there is at least one 1 rolled, it is a critical failure.</p> <p><b>No Successes and a 1 on your Fate Die:</b> When a player receives no successes on a check, and there is a 1 rolled on their fate die, it is a critical failure.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Extended Checks
<b>Description</b>	Rather than a check being successful with a single success, the check requires more.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Multiple Successes:</b> To be successful the GM may require a number of successes to be met or surpassed, offering multiple checks to complete the task, to better depict the task taking longer and longer to accomplish.</p> <p><b>Multiple Successful Checks:</b> Likewise, rather than just looking for a total number of successes on a check, the GM may require a number of successful checks to complete the task.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Contested Checks
<b>Description</b>	Player vs. Player checks are more involved.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Wagering:</b> The initiating player wagers how many session (or session and community dice) they will wager to make the check. They can then be countered by the other player with less dice. This goes back and forth until there are no more wagers. The player making the last wager rolls, and if successful (a 6 is rolled) their character wins. If failed, the other character wins.</p>

	<b>Wagering Expanded:</b> As wagering above, but after the initial check is failed, it offers the other character the chance to roll their last wager. If they're successful, they win. If both have then failed, the result is a tie.
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<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Reroll Ties
<b>Description</b>	Rather than going down the checklist to resolve Player vs. Player ties, you simply have the players reroll their checks with the same dice.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Leave it to Fate:</b> The players just roll their fate die with the highest result winning the check.

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Cooperation
<b>Description</b>	More than one character can attempt the same task.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Applicable Trait:</b> Any character with an applicable trait working to assist a character making the check, can loan one (1) trait die to the character rolling the check for each applicable trait.</p> <p><b>Pooled Checks:</b> All characters attempting to help one another roll their checks, needing a total number of successes equal to the number of characters attempting the task.</p> <p><b>Shared Session Dice:</b> A character can offer any number of his session dice to the player making the check to reflect his character assisting them in the task.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Multi-Tasking
<b>Description</b>	Each check is a separate action, but there may come times when a player wants to do more than one thing at a time.

<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Dividing Pools:</b> Prior to rolling, the player divides their pool, designating which new pool applies to which action they are attempting.</p> <p><b>Dividing Successes:</b> After rolling, the player divides their successes, designating which applies to which action they are attempting.</p>
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## Traits

These are some twists one might add to character traits:

<b>TWIST</b>		
<b>Name</b>	Number of Traits	
<b>Description</b>	You may want a different number of traits for your characters, as few as one single role or archetype the character represents, or a longer list of characteristics.	
<b>Rule</b>	The number of trait dice added to the die pool for a check is modified by the following table:	
	<i>Number of Traits</i>	<i>Number Trait Dice</i>
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8+	8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	More Than One Applicable Trait
<b>Description</b>	Players can have more than one applicable trait to add to their die pools for a given check.
<b>Rule</b>	The player can add one additional trait die for every other applicable trait to the check.

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Related Traits
<b>Description</b>	Rather than deciding whether a given trait is inherently applicable to a check, this rule is to broaden the use of traits to allow for players to add half their trait pool to a check for something that isn't inherently related to their trait, but where their trait may still afford them a better than nothing bonus. For example, a policeman making a check relative to a legal matter. Though they are not lawyers, they have a reasonable sense of the law.
<b>Rule</b>	Instead of adding their standard trait dice on a check, the player may add half the value of their trait (round up) to the check for something that may be indirectly related to the trait they're suggesting might apply to the check.

## Session Dice

These are some twists pertaining to the session dice of Modulus:

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Kept Session Dice
<b>Description</b>	Rather than all used session dice being lost, players can keep some of those dice.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Successes:</b> Any session die that is a success (6) is kept. All other unsuccessful results from session dice are lost.</p> <p><b>1's:</b> Only session dice that roll a one (1) are lost. All other session dice are kept.</p>

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Incremental Rolls
<b>Description</b>	Rather than selecting the number of session dice the player wants to roll prior to rolling, they can add dice as needed.



<b>Rule</b>	After rolling, the player can roll one session die after another until their check is successful, their session dice are expended, or they choose to stop rolling.
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<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Scene Dice
<b>Description</b>	Rather than all session dice being given to the players at the start of the session, these dice are doled out over the course of the game.
<b>Rule</b>	The players earn dice at each impactful scene of the session. Unspent dice are kept for use later in the session.

## Health

These are some twists relevant to the health system of Modulus:

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Damage
<b>Description</b>	Allocating damage to characters can be more specific.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Targeted Damage:</b> Before rolling their defensive checks, the GM will tell each player how much damage is targeting their characters. Rather than the characters collectively getting more successes than their enemies, they each need to roll successes equal to or greater than the damage specifically targeting their character to be unhurt.</p> <p><b>Continual Damage:</b> There may be instances where characters take ongoing damage, such as standing in a cloud of poisonous gas, being poisoned, or standing in front of a broken steam pipe. Characters will need to defend against a point (or more) of damage each round while in the circumstances of the continual damage.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Dynamic Health
<b>Description</b>	Not all characters take the same number of wounds.
<b>Rule</b>	Rather than each character having three (3) wounds they can withstand before being down, they have four (4) wounds if they have a trait that relates to them being sturdier. Wounds can also be related to an attribute or combination of attributes (such as Strength + Willpower) giving a character the number of wounds they can suffer before being downed.

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Injuries
<b>Description</b>	Being wounded has a cost.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Physical Impact:</b> When wounded, the character suffers a penalty to their physical trait equal to the number of wounds they have.</p> <p><b>Broad Injuries I:</b> When wounded, the character suffers a penalty to their die pools equal to the number of wounds they have.</p> <p><b>Broad Injuries II:</b> When wounded, the player reduces their trait pool by one for each point of injury they take. When down to their last die, they are down, and any subsequent damage will kill them.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Extended Recovery
<b>Description</b>	Recovering from extensive injury takes time.
<b>Rule</b>	A character needs one week of rest to heal one wound. This week of rest might be shortened by one day per success on a check relating to someone's treatment or nursing of the character.



# Additional Rules

The following is a list of modules and twists you can add to enhance your Modulus game.

## Community Dice

To create a sense of fleeting capability for the group, community dice are used by all the players over the course of the game session. They also add an interesting collective means for players to augment individual weaknesses or play up high drama moments with increased likelihood of success.

MODULE	
<b>Name</b>	Community Dice
<b>Description</b>	You add a pool of expendable dice to the center of the table, which can be used by your group of players.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Base:</b> The community dice pool is an additional pool of expendable dice (separate from session dice) accessible by all players for the game session. The number of community dice is set by the GM.</p> <p><b>Group Session Dice:</b> Replacing session dice with community dice may encourage the players to plan and cooperate when using their dice.</p> <p><b>Encounter Dice:</b> Rather than using a large pool of community dice throughout the session, GMs use an encounter pool. When the “big moment” arrives, GMs add a selection of dice in the center of the table for all to use. When the encounter is over, remaining dice are lost.</p>

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Starting Community Dice Pools
<b>Description</b>	Determining how many community dice are available for the session.

<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Random Pool:</b> Each player rolls their Fate Die; their combined total is the number of community dice that are used for the session per hour.	
	<b>Per Player per Hour:</b> The number of community dice available for the session is based upon the following:	
	<i>Number of Players</i>	<i>Starting Community Dice/Hour</i>
	2-3	4
	4-5	5
	6+	6

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Refreshing Community Dice Pools
<b>Description</b>	Determining when the community dice available refresh.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Per Session:</b> Each game session starts with a full set of dice available in the community pool.
	<b>Per Day:</b> The community dice are replenished with the start of each new day in the game.
	<b>Per Story:</b> The community dice are all there is for the duration of the story/quest/campaign/etc.
	<b>Rewards:</b> The GM will add dice to the community dice pool whenever he feels the characters have earned the reward (roleplaying well, completing a significant task, reaching a certain part of the story, etc.).

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Kept Community Dice
<b>Description</b>	Rather than all used community dice being lost, players can keep some of those dice.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Successes:</b> Any community die that is a success (6) is kept. All other unsuccessful results from community dice are lost.

	<b>1's:</b> Only community dice that roll a one (1) are lost. All other community dice are kept.
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<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Play Nice
<b>Description</b>	Rather than the community dice being open for everyone to use as they please, they must get permission first.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Mother May I?:</b> Players must get permission from the group before using community dice. <b>Gift of Dice:</b> Instead of asking for permission, players ask if they can get any help. Community dice are then handed to the player by other players at the table.

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Restraint
<b>Description</b>	There are limits to using community dice.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Maximum Dice:</b> The GM sets a maximum number of dice that can be used from the community dice pool for any single check. <b>Diminishing Returns:</b> Players can take a maximum number of dice (say 5). Each subsequent time they use community dice their maximum number of dice is reduced by one, to a minimum of one.

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Community Dice By Trait
<b>Description</b>	There is a community die pool related to one or more traits.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Core Traits:</b> There are five community pools, each related to a trait (mental, physical, societal, vocational, and recreational). Only dice from the appropriate pool can be added to a trait roll.

	<p><b>Specific Pool:</b> The community pool is tied to a specific trait, resource, etc. (like magic, power, chi, fuel, oxygen, evil temptation, etc.). Using it may have consequences (on failed checks, when 1's are rolled, when the pool runs low, etc.).</p>
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<b>MODULE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Consequential Dice
<b>Description</b>	You add a pool of expendable dice to the center of the table, which can be used at any time by your group of players, but with consequences if they do. This pool of dice could be related to stress, dark powers, temptations, vices, pushing things to the extreme, allowing for second attempts on failed checks, etc.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Bad 1's:</b> Any 1's rolled with consequential dice cancel successes.</p> <p><b>Bad 6's:</b> 6's are still successes, but barely, or with unintended consequences or costs.</p> <p><b>Bad Failures:</b> If a check is failed when using consequential dice, it goes horribly wrong (examples are losing session dice, being injured, etc.).</p>

## Expanded Characters

The basic character for Modulus might not be comprehensive enough for the kinds of games you're looking to run. The following modules and twists expand upon that basic character to allow you to enrich the characters and their capabilities in your games.





## MODULE

<b>Name</b>	Attributes
<b>Description</b>	Rather than starting with the five basic traits (mental, physical, societal, vocational, and recreational), your characters have attributes. You will determine what those attributes are (Agility, Charm, Endurance, Intelligence, Perception, Strength, etc.), and how many points the player can distribute between them. Attributes have a minimum score of 1 and a maximum set by the GM.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Attributes Only:</b> As the basic traits of Modulus add four (4) dice to a pool, GMs give points to players based upon 4 times the number of attributes they have listed for characters. For example, if the GM ascribes 6 attributes for the characters, players begin with 24 points to distribute between those attributes (with a minimum of 1 per attribute). This variation assumes there will be no additional talents for a character. The points assigned to an attribute represent the number of dice available when making a check with that attribute.</p> <p><b>Attributes and Talents:</b> If the GM is looking to have a combination of attributes and talents for characters, they should lower the starting attribute points for character creation to perhaps 2.5 times the number of attributes they have listed for the characters. The goal is to keep the average pool between attributes and talents to a total close to 4.</p>

## TWIST

<b>Name</b>	Talents
<b>Description</b>	Characters have a list of talents (abilities, skills, etc.) in addition to attributes.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Talent Points:</b> Along with their list of attributes, characters also possess a list of talents as determined by the GM. Players distribute skill points between the list of available talents. Pools are determined as a

	<p>combination of an attribute and a talent (for example, rolling perception and firearms to determine if someone is carrying a concealed weapon, or rolling intelligence and firearms for a weapon smithing check).</p> <p><b>Derived Talents:</b> For each point players put into an attribute they can then add a talent for that attribute. For example, if a player has put 3 points into their character's charm attribute, they can then select three talents underneath that attribute. They choose to add fast talking, fashion sense, and negotiation. When rolling a check with a character's listed talent, they add one die to their governing attribute.</p>
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<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Aspects
<b>Description</b>	A more colorful twist on attributes might be for players to list out aspects of their character - roles, capabilities, or aspects the character will fill within the game.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Beginner, Intermediate, &amp; Expert:</b> Players will select two beginner aspects, two intermediate aspects, and two advanced aspects for their characters. Pools for beginner aspects add 2 dice, intermediate add 4, and expert add 6.</p> <p><b>6-1:</b> For the characters 6 aspects they list them in order from the aspect they are best at to the one they are least capable of. Their placement on the list corresponds to pool bonuses from 6 to 1, highest and best at, to lowest and barely capable at.</p>

<b>MODULE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Specialty Mechanics
<b>Description</b>	You might be looking to add a special something to your characters that has a specific rule in the setting where your game takes place. This specialty might be related to Discipline, Chi, Fame, Fear, Heroism, Humanity,

<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p>Luck, Mana, Sanity, Willpower, etc. This specialty has its own impact on the characters and their mechanics as pertains to your game.</p>
	<p><b>Trait:</b> The specialty is a trait added to the character with a starting number as set by the GM. These are treated as kept dice that pertain to specific checks related to the specialty.</p>
	<p><b>Pool:</b> The specialty is a pool of additional expended dice that can be used in the game. This pool is specific to each character.</p>
	<p><b>Points:</b> The specialty is not represented with dice but is instead a set of points that can be spent, one for one, to add successes to a check. An example of this might be the specialty trait of Willpower or Heroism. Players begin with points (or these can be earned as the game is played) as defined by the GM.</p>
	<p><b>Negative Dice:</b> The specialty is assigned a number of dice by the GM for a roll. An example of this might be stress, fear, or anxiety. A result of a one (1) on the specialty die cancels one of the successes rolled. If no successes were rolled, this may result in a critical failure.</p>
<p><b>Negative Statistic:</b> The specialty is not represented with dice but is instead a set statistic that represents a negative character aspect. An example of this might be stress, fear, or anxiety. Players begin with this statistic as defined by the GM. For every 10 points accrued in this statistic, it cancels a success on each check.</p>	

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Specialty Karma
<b>Description</b>	Success and Failure are tied to karma. This twist applies to the Trait or Pool rule variations of the Specialty Mechanics module.

<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Good Karma:</b> These dice might be nothing but beneficial, adding only their successes without offering penalties for failed checks or rolling 1's.</p> <p><b>Bad Karma:</b> These dice may be penalty dice, where 6's will not count as successes, but 1's will subtract successes. Failed checks with 1's on dice from this bad trait can have catastrophic effects.</p>
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<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Auto-Successes
<b>Description</b>	<p>This twist applies to the Points rule variation of the Specialty Mechanics module.</p> <p>Players begin with a pool of these points that can be spent one for one to add successes to a check.</p>
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Only Avert Failure:</b> Players can only spend these auto-success points to keep from having catastrophic failures. If the rules include twists to allow 1's to cancel successes, this twist can allow players to spend their auto-success points to have enough successes to be canceled by 1's to avoid critical failures.</p> <p><b>True Heroics:</b> Characters auto-successes points can be used following a failed check to make it successful by spending a single point or can spend the point prior to the roll to automatically succeed and forgo the check.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Diminishing Pools
<b>Description</b>	<p>This twist applies to the Pool rule variation of the Specialty Mechanics module.</p> <p>The specialty is represented by a number that decreases throughout gameplay. As it decreases (perhaps by failures or critical failures) it represents the maximum number of dice that can be rolled in a check.</p>

	It might represent how tired someone is becoming over time, how afraid, or how sane they are.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Individual Number:</b> The diminishing pools number is specific to each character.</p> <p><b>Communal Number:</b> The diminishing pool's number is not specific to each character and instead is a number for all the characters collectively.</p> <p><b>Always Ebbing:</b> The pool only decreases and does not increase through the course of the game.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Energy Pools
<b>Description</b>	<p>This twist applies to the Pool rule variation of the Specialty Mechanics module.</p> <p>The specialty also has a direct relation to a finite amount of capability. These dice are all added to checks relative to this specialty, but always lose one die after the check (succeed or fail). When the pool is expended, the character is out of energy pertaining to the specialty.</p>
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Daily Energy Pool:</b> This energy pool is related to something like thirst, hunger, restfulness, etc. When depleted it can be refilled when the character drinks, eats, or sleeps.</p> <p><b>Supernatural Pool:</b> This energy pool is related to something esoteric, and when depleted may only be replenished under special circumstances. It could represent supernatural power that when tapped represents how the character is out of power, mana, chi, etc. It can also have a detrimental effect on the character should it ever be depleted completely.</p>

## TWIST

<b>Name</b>	Replenishing Specialty
<b>Description</b>	<p>This twist applies to the Pool, Points, or Negative Statistic rule variations of the Specialty Mechanics module.</p> <p>The specialty can be replenished throughout the game through time, achievement, or sacrifice.</p>
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Doing Good:</b> The character might have a duty, goal, virtue or calling. When the character does this good act, some or all their specialty pool or points are replenished.</p> <p><b>Doing Bad:</b> The character might have a compulsion, habit, vice, or weakness towards something. When the character does this bad act, they might gain one point or negative statistic towards their specialty.</p> <p><b>Fulfillment:</b> By achieving a certain goal or milestone in the story, doing surprisingly well at a given point, or for creative roleplaying, etc., the GM can award some or all their specialty pool or points to the player for fulfilling a specific task.</p> <p><b>Time:</b> The specialty is replenished at a certain time or point within the game (sunrise, the half-way point, between sessions, etc.).</p> <p><b>Success on the Fly:</b> Characters can also earn points throughout the game by rolling excessive successes (3+ successes on a check).</p> <p><b>Reduce Negative Statistic:</b> The value of a character's negative statistic is reduced when reaching certain milestones in the story, creative roleplaying, etc. (at the GM's discretion).</p>



## Expanded Health

The health system for Modulus can be expanded to allow for more damage or locations where that damage is applied to the character. The following are a few examples of modules and twists that can be applied to a character's health.

MODULE			
<b>Name</b>	Health Tiers		
<b>Description</b>	There are now degrees of injury that a character can suffer.		
<b>Rule</b>	Rather than taking three points to be down, characters possess more health tiers - each delivering a greater consequence to being injured. Recovery time is also extended depending on severity, with Incapacitated or Downed characters recovering to the tier above after the fight's over and they can be tended to. The number of health tiers, wound penalties, and recovery time are tailored by the GM. An example is given below:		
	<i>Damage Taken</i>	<i>Wound Penalty</i>	<i>Recovery Time</i>
	1	Scratched: None	1 Day
	2	Battered: Pool -1	3 Days
	3	Wounded: Pool -2	1 Week
	4	Injured: Pool -3	2 Weeks
	5	Maimed: Pool -4	1 Month
	6	Incapacitated: Down	1 Month
		Dead: Character killed	n/a

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Broader Health Tiers
<b>Description</b>	Rather than proceeding from one tier to the next with each point of damage taken, characters have points at each tier, and when they've taken enough damage equal to or greater than that tier, they start taking points in the next tier.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Trait Related:</b> Characters have 3 wounds they can withstand at each tier before proceeding into the next.



	<p><b>Attribute Related:</b> Points of damage a character can withstand at each tier are related to an attribute or combination of attributes (such as Strength + Willpower) giving a character the number of wounds they can suffer before proceeding to the next tier.</p>
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## Gear

Sometimes you want to add weapons, equipment, armor, or vehicles to your game. The following are a few examples of modules and twists that can be applied by adding gear to your game.

MODULE	
<b>Name</b>	Gear Dice
<b>Description</b>	Sometimes gear is a fixed and constant part of your character or the environment. Gear dice work, in many ways, like a trait or even fate dice for the character.
<b>Rule</b>	Anytime a character is using their gear they add a die to their dice pool. This additional die may represent body armor, a medical kit, a motorcycle, a pistol, or even a lockpick set. Dice from multiple pieces of gear can be combined, such as a die from both a rifle and a high-power scope to shoot a target at distance.

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Degrading Gear
<b>Description</b>	Gear doesn't last forever. Guns run out of ammunition, lockpicks break, cars fall apart, or space suits run out of oxygen. Eventually the character finds their gear no longer useful.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Consumption Rating:</b> Gear has a consumption rating that defines its number of uses. The GM decides under what conditions a piece of gear gets consumed (whenever they fail on a check using the piece of gear, anytime the gear die rolls a 1, or perhaps anytime they roll a 1 on their Fate Die using their gear). When the

	<p>character has used the last consumption point for their piece of gear, it is no longer useful (a pistol is out of ammunition, the golf club is bent, all the pain meds are used up, etc.).</p> <p><b>Lose a Die:</b> Rather than having a consumption rating, the gear offers more than one die to be rolled. Whenever a piece of gear would otherwise be consumed (failing on a check using the piece of gear, anytime the gear die rolls a 1, etc.) the player loses a die from that piece of gear.</p>
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<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Improving Gear
<b>Description</b>	Gear can be improved, such as driving a large nail through the end of a bat or adding a scope to a rifle, or perhaps adding a morphine syrette to a medical kit.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Improved Consumption Rating:</b> The improvement to the gear adds to the durability, uses, or capability of the items by adding the number of uses to the gear's consumption rating. The GM decides how much to add to the consumption rating.</p> <p><b>Adding a Die:</b> Improving the gear increases the number of dice that it adds when used. When that piece of gear would otherwise be consumed (failing on a check using the piece of gear, anytime the gear die rolls a 1, etc.) the player now has one additional die from which to lose from that piece of gear. Note that this twist can also be used to represent bigger pieces of gear (a hospital operative vs. a medical kit, a machine gun vs. a pistol, a jackhammer vs. a sledgehammer, etc.).</p>

<b>MODULE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Gear Pools
<b>Description</b>	Sometimes a piece of equipment can add another pool of dice for the player to use whenever using that piece of gear. This pool works in many ways like session dice but can only be added when that piece of gear is being utilized for a particular check.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Kept Successes:</b> Any successes (6's) rolled with the gear dice are returned to the gear pool.</p> <p><b>Must Use:</b> Anytime the piece of gear is being used, a die from the gear pool must be added to the die pool for the check. Thus, eventually, the gear can no longer be used (runs out of fuel, ammo, oxygen, etc.).</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Replenish Gear
<b>Description</b>	Gear can be replenished, such as by adding ammunition, fuel, batteries, oxygen, oil, etc.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Replenish Pool:</b> Gear pools can have dice added to them whenever the GM finds appropriate. Additionally, gear can be improved in the same fashion, by adding additional dice to the gear pool.</p> <p><b>Improve Pool:</b> Gear can be improved in the same fashion, by adding additional dice to the gear pool.</p>

<b>MODULE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Greater Gear
<b>Description</b>	Sometimes a piece of equipment can make a far greater impact on others or the environment.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Set Successes:</b> Rather than successes being calculated by the number of 6's rolled on a particular check the piece of gear offers a set number of successes regardless of the result of the check. For

example, a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) may do five (5) points of damage on a successful check.

**Bonus Damage:** A piece of gear might add to the number of successes, if successful, on a character's check when using it. This might be a simple bonus of one (+1) but is added to the total number of successes for any check using that piece of gear.

## Chases

Many games offer characters the ability to chase down or evade their pursuers. The following are a few examples of modules and twists that can be applied to add chases to your game.

### MODULE

**Name** Pursuit & Evasion

There are times when a character is being pursued or attempting to avoid being caught. At the start of the chase the GM sets the range that the chase begins at, and the range at which the chase ends (with you evading your pursuers or the bad guys getting away). Chases can start at any range, but closing or distancing from your enemy requires multiple successes. Only the player rolls a check to pursue or evade. Each round the player rolls their check, and the number of successes equates to the rate at which the character moves (either to close or evade).

**Description**

For pursuit, this number is subtracted from the starting range plus the bad guy's movement rate. If the result is zero, you have caught the bad guy. If the result is the range for the chase end, the bad guy gets away.

For evasion, this number is added to the starting range and the bad guy's movement rate is subtracted to give the current range. If the result is the evasion range, then you have gotten away from the bad guy.

For example, you are running away from an enemy and the GM starts you at a range of one and sets the range for the end of the chase to five. You roll two successes

<b>Rule Variations</b>	and can move the range between you and the bad guy to two for the next round, $1 + 2 - 1$ . In the second round you roll four successes, moving the range between you and the bad guy to five, $2 + 4 - 1$ , resulting in you evading from the enemy.
	<b>Normal Rate:</b> The movement rate at which antagonists close or distance themselves from the characters is one each round.
	<b>Faster Bad Guys:</b> The movement rank of the antagonist determines how quickly they close or distance themselves from the characters. A rank two antagonist will gain or close ground at a rate of two, while a rank three will gain or close ground at a rate of three.

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Chase Restrictions
<b>Description</b>	Sometimes there are circumstances that inject additional difficulties during a chase.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Obstacles:</b> Things like navigating unfamiliar city roads or obstacles require additional successes to overcome. Each obstacle that needs to be overcome requires one additional success. Failure on these checks can mean the characters end up in a dead-end street, or that an obstacle has stopped them to the point they can't continue to evade or pursue.</p> <p><b>Vehicle Degradation:</b> As with Gear degradation, vehicles that do not successfully navigate tight streets or circumvent obstacles may take damage.</p> <p><b>Group Maneuvers:</b> Having a group may allow others in the group to attempt to overcome any obstacles for the whole group. Examples include having a co-pilot be the navigator or grabbing the steering wheel to swerve around the lamppost at the last second.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Obstruction
<b>Description</b>	There are times when characters want to attempt to make it harder for the bad guys to get away or catch up. Making an obstruction during a chase gives characters the ability to close or distance themselves faster.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	The player wants to do something during the chase to slow or stop their pursuer or the people they are chasing, like pulling over a stack of boxes, toppling a fruit cart, throwing something at the bad guy's feet, or tossing money up into the air on a crowded street. The GM sets the number of successes necessary to be successful. The player must roll both a success to distance themselves from their pursuers, and successes equal to the number set by the GM. If successful, the player distances themselves one range plus two times (2x) the difficulty set by the GM for the maneuver.

## **Powers**

Some games may include the use of supernatural powers. These may include magic, divine intervention, superpowers, or other mental or paranormal capabilities. The following are a few examples of modules and twists that can be applied to add supernatural powers to your game.

<b>MODULE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Magic
<b>Description</b>	Characters have the capability of creating or producing desired outcomes using incantation, ritual, accessing hidden power, etc. The GM assigns the number of dice to use for magic pools. Magic pools are often exclusionary, and cannot be combined with Fate, other Traits, Session, or Community dice.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Magic Traits:</b> Characters may have one or more magic traits. Examples might be Shadow Magic, Fire Magic, Illusions, Mind Magic, etc. This Trait has a set pool of

kept dice, much like the other traits the character possesses.

**Magic Pools:** Characters have a Magic Pool, from which they can use dice to attempt magic effects (these dice are expended). This pool is general and allows for any kind of magic effect to be possible.

## MODULE

**Name** Powers

**Description**

Characters have superhuman or paranormal capabilities. These may be superpowers, ESP, mentalism capability, or mutations. The GM assigns the number of dice to use for power pools. Power pools are often exclusionary and cannot be combined with Fate, other Traits, Session, or Community dice.

**Innate Powers:** Some characters may have innate abilities, such as breathing underwater, seeing through darkness, hearing whispers from beyond the grave, etc. These powers are noted on the character but do not have pools or values associated with them. They are considered “always on.”

**Rule Variations**

**Power Traits:** Characters may have one or more power traits. Examples might be flight, super strength, telekinesis, etc. This Trait has a set pool of kept dice, much like the other traits the character possesses.

**Power Pools:** Characters have a power pool which they can use to attempt tasks associated with their power (these dice are expended). This pool reflects the fleeting nature of the character’s power. Examples might include energy blasts, shape shifting, power absorption, technopathy, etc.





<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Expanded Magic/Powers
<b>Description</b>	As most magic or power is exclusionary of other dice, this twist allows players to add additional dice to their pools for magic/power checks.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Fate Dice:</b> Players can include their Fate Die when rolling magic/power checks.</p> <p><b>Trait Dice:</b> Players can include their Trait Dice when rolling magic/power checks.</p> <p><b>Session Dice:</b> Players can include any Session Dice when rolling magic/power checks.</p> <p><b>Community Dice:</b> Players can include any Community Dice when rolling magic/power checks.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Greater Magic/Power
<b>Description</b>	Any magic/power check is to determine whether the character was successful in creating their desired effect. Perhaps magic/power is even more capable should the player roll more than their initial success or seek to do more than one thing at a time.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Added Effects:</b> Each additional success on a magic/power check results in greater effects. Players describe what else their magic/power does in addition to their initially planned effect.</p> <p><b>Divided Pools:</b> Players can divide their magic/power pool to accomplish additional or perhaps a greater scope than their initial desired effects.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Used Magic/Power

<b>Description</b>	When using pools for magic/power, dice are used or lost in a different fashion.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Lost Successes:</b> The only dice lost from the pool are successes.</p> <p><b>Auto Successes:</b> The dice of the pool represent automatic successes and are expended when used.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Renewing Magic/Power
<b>Description</b>	When using pools for magic/power, dice pools are renewed in a different fashion.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Daily:</b> Pools are renewed at a rate determined by the GM each day, typically after a character rests.</p> <p><b>Environmental:</b> Pools are renewed when the character draws magic/power from an environmental source (ley lines, elements, the cosmos, etc.).</p>

<b>TWIST</b>		
<b>Name</b>	Difficult Magic	
<b>Description</b>	Using magic is very difficult and requires extensive practice and diligence to get the expected results.	
<b>Rule</b>	Instead of a single success, multiple successes are needed depending on the difficulty level of the desired effect.	
	<b>Difficulty</b>	<b>Capability of the Spell</b>
	+1	For each effect the spell has
	+1	For each increment of range from the caster beyond touch (nearby, close, distant)
	+1	For each person affected by the spell
+1	For each increment of area the spell affects, beyond tiny (small, medium, large, huge)	

	+1	For each minute the spell lasts, beyond the first round
	+1	For each wound the spell does to someone

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Dangerous Magic
<b>Description</b>	<p>Magic is chaotic and can go bad quickly if not controlled. This twist is used with the Difficult Magic Twist. Once the difficulty for a magic spell is determined, that number is used to then determine the number of failures (any roll of 1) which will cause the spell to fail catastrophically.</p>
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Equal Scale:</b> The number of failures needed is equivalent to the difficulty of the spell.</p> <p><b>Tipping Point:</b> The more difficult the spell, the easier it is to epically fail. The number of failures needed for catastrophic results is 10 minus the difficulty of the spell (so if the character is attempting to cast a spell of difficulty 4, they would need 6 failures (any roll of 1) to cause the catastrophic failure).</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Magic/Power Resistance
<b>Description</b>	<p>When magic/power is used against characters, the players can make a check to avoid the effects.</p>
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Standard Checks:</b> Players roll an applicable trait from their character plus their fate die, success means they have resisted or otherwise avoided the magic/power. They may include session and/or community dice, if available.</p> <p><b>Magic Traits &amp; Pools:</b> Those characters capable of magic/power may include their magic trait or pool dice when making a magic resistance check.</p>

# Antagonists

Some antagonists possess unique capabilities, be they magic, means, or innate powers. More complex and interesting antagonists can be created using the following modules and twists.

MODULE	
<b>Name</b>	Antagonist Capabilities
<b>Description</b>	Antagonist capabilities add flavor and potential to the story. Some of these capabilities may afford the antagonist an advantage in combat. When in combat antagonists are limited in how many capabilities they can use. Antagonists can only use a number of capabilities in combat equal to their Rank, thus a Rank 2 antagonist could use both of their capabilities once, or one of their capabilities twice. The GM has final say as to what the limits and advantage of an antagonist's capabilities are while in combat.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Inherent Characteristic:</b> These are characteristics that are inherent to all antagonists of a similar type. For example, all vampires are ageless from the moment they are made a vampire.</p> <p><b>Empowered:</b> These are capabilities that an antagonist may additionally have based on their age, rank, or other factors (such as genetics). For example, a vampire that has lived for hundreds of years may be able to turn into a vampire bat.</p>

TWIST	
<b>Name</b>	Combat Capability Limits
<b>Description</b>	In instances where an antagonist's capabilities offer a specific benefit in combat, what mechanical (if any) benefit applies to the antagonist may need to be limited in combat.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<b>Duration:</b> An antagonist's capability is limited in duration to a number of rounds equal to their Rank.

	<p><b>Removed Successes:</b> An antagonist's capability is limited in reducing the number of character successes by their Rank.</p> <p><b>Targets Affected:</b> An antagonist's capability is limited in the number of targets they can affect based upon their Rank.</p>
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<b>MODULE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Alternate Damage Location
<b>Description</b>	Antagonist capabilities may damage something other than a character's Health.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Trait:</b> When a character suffers damage, the amount taken is removed from their trait.</p> <p><b>Pool:</b> An equivalent number of dice for damage taken may be removed from a character's pool.</p> <p><b>Tier:</b> Damage may be taken from an expanded health tier.</p>

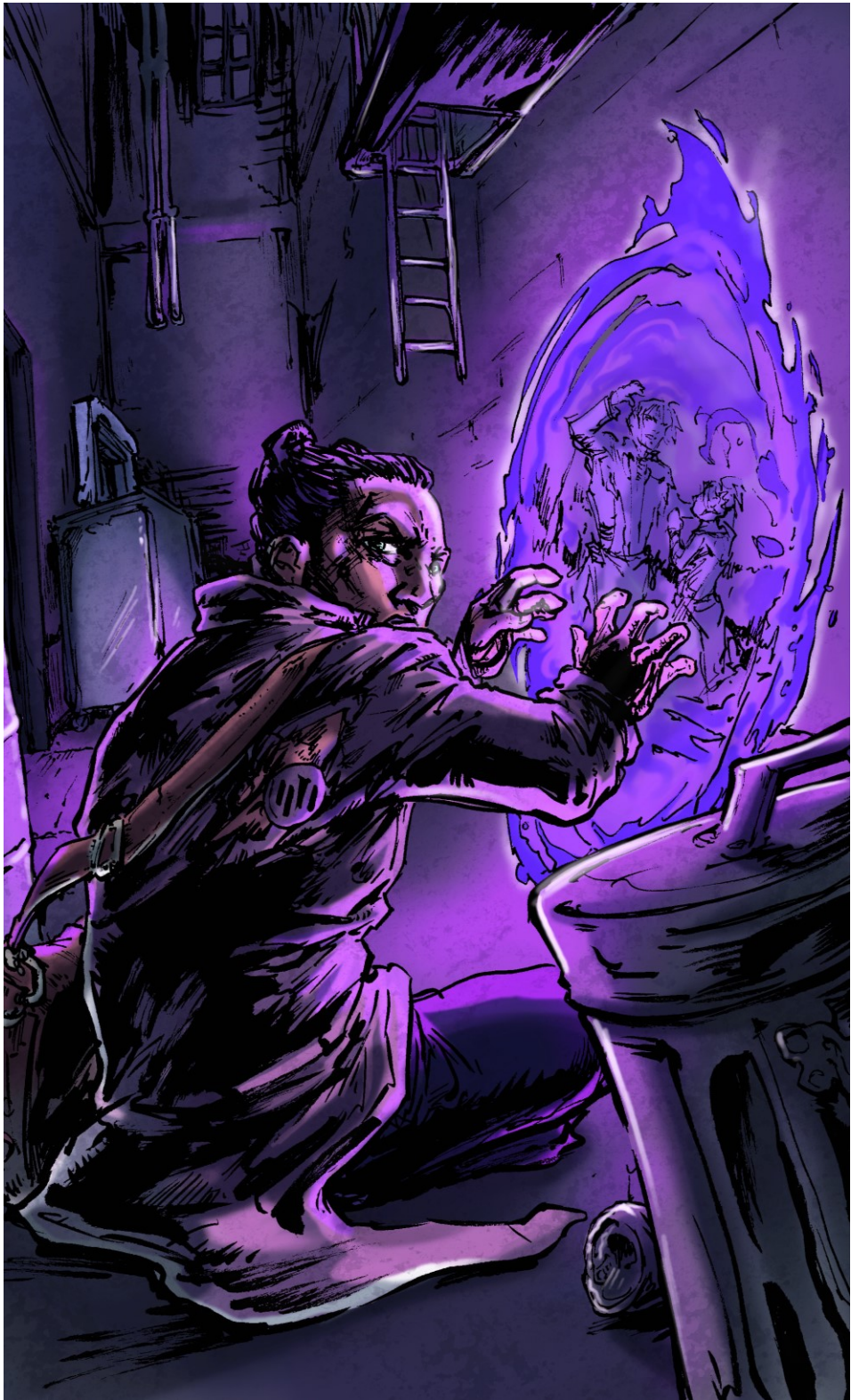
## Rewards

As a means of character advancement or as an experience system, reward dice can allow GMs to provide the players a way to have their characters improve over the course of the game. The following are a few examples of modules and twists that can be applied to add rewards to your game.

<b>MODULE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Added Dice
<b>Description</b>	As characters advance, they gain additional dice to one of their character's capabilities or pools.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Added Fate Die:</b> Each time a character advances, they gain an additional fate die.</p> <p><b>Added Trait Die:</b> One, some, or all trait pools of a character increase by one.</p> <p><b>Added Session Dice:</b> The character starts each session with additional session dice.</p>

<b>TWIST</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Tracking Trait Use
<b>Description</b>	Rather than gaining reward dice at set instances, characters advance throughout gameplay.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Tracking Successes:</b> Character trait pools increase after achieving a designated number of successes with that trait.</p> <p><b>Tracking Failures:</b> Character trait pools increase after failing a designated number of checks with that trait.</p>

<b>MODULE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Experience Pool
<b>Description</b>	As characters advance, rather than gaining additional dice to one of their characters' capabilities they instead gain a separate pool. These pools may have their own rules or circumstances of use - different than the normal session or community pools.
<b>Rule Variations</b>	<p><b>Individual Pools:</b> Each player gets an additional pool, much like a session pool, to use at their discretion.</p> <p><b>Community Pool:</b> Rather than having their own separate pools, the players gain a community pool of dice they can use whenever they see fit.</p>



# Part Four: Game Building

Ultimately, everything up to this point has explained the options and possibilities of what you can utilize in building your own Modulus games. But how exactly does one go about it? In this chapter we'll walk through taking a concept for a game world and fleshing it out mechanically to play up the things most important to its theme and feel. We'll begin with the world concept and then run through how you might build out a system for that concept.

## World Concept

Whatever your inspiration, you're going to have a concept of the world in which your players are going to build and play their characters. Any concept is possible, from the players playing animated cartoon characters drawn forth into the real world, to ace pilots navigating the stars, to shipwrecked Bronze Age warriors washing up on distant shores. Consider what you believe is most important to emphasize the world and themes. It might even make sense to draft out the top three things you'd like to see emphasized in the system, that you believe will lend itself best to helping create a feel and atmosphere for your players when creating and using their characters.

## The Keepers

For our game building example, we're calling this game and the world therein: The Keepers. The world concept is this: There has been, for ages long gone, a secret society that has monitored and managed the magic of the world. Though the game takes place in modern times, it can be set at any point throughout history. Magic is powerful and difficult to control, and those who unlock its potential put themselves and the world at large at great risk. The Keepers are a secret organization who can see magic for what it is. They call this "the Sight". As such, they see and can manipulate the ley lines of arcane power. The alteration of these ley lines is known as Weaving and can bring about incredible magical effects. However, to the unskilled, tampering with these ley lines of unimaginable power can result in a



catastrophic outcome - sometimes bringing forth horrible creatures from dark worlds. This is why the Keepers are always looking for those rare few who have developed the Sight but are otherwise unaware of their secret organization. To those who have somehow tapped into the world of the arcane, they are offered a choice: join or perish. The Keepers' tie to magic affords them the ability to sense when someone else has developed the Sight, and so they seek them out to make their offers. Those who refuse are hunted down, and their powers stripped from them, but those are not the only ones who gain their attention. Since time immemorial, the Keepers have tracked down magical beasts, either stripping them of their magic or banishing them from this world to that of the arcane aether itself.

From the above world concept, we have determined to make the following three aspects our primary focus for the system we're going to build:

- Use of magic
- Cost of using said magic
- Capabilities of the Sight

Aside from the above, the characters will otherwise be regular people in a regular world. The three focuses above are what separates them from the others in our world.

## **Keeper Characters**

For the characters of our Keepers game, we're going to use the core rule for traits. Each character will have mental, physical, societal, vocational, and recreational traits. Players will choose each of those traits, as pertains to their character concepts. As laid out in the core rules, each trait affords a player four dice to their pool when rolling anything inherent to their traits.

Each character will also possess the "Sight". Though this capability isn't a trait per se, trait checks could be related to it as required by the players or GM. Simply put, the Sight is the character's ability to sense and see magic for what it is. One twist that we'll add to it is this, so long as a character has at least one unused die in the magic pool (see below) they still have the Sight. If their magic pool runs empty, they lose their connection to magic until that pool is refreshed.

We will keep the core rules for wounds, each character having three before they're killed or otherwise out of the fight. Since characters are most likely to deal with conflict using their magic, we're not going to include any weapons or gear rules - gently nudging them in the direction of keeping to their magic if possible.

## **Keeper Modules and Twists**

We're going to be using the Magic Module, with the Magic Pools Variation. We've decided to give each character 20 dice per day. We also are adding the Renewing Magic/Power Twist so that this pool renews whenever the character rests, regaining 3 dice for each hour of rest they're able to get (up to a maximum of 20).

Rules for the use of Magic will use the Difficult Magic Twist, as in keeping with the theme of The Keepers, magic is difficult to control. When using magic, players first determine the difficulty of the spell they are attempting to weave using the Difficult Magic Twist. However, we are also using the Dangerous Magic Twist with the Tipping Point variation to represent how bad things happen whenever magic is used. Because magic is difficult and dangerous, it can take an extended timeframe for casting, thus the Extended Checks twist with the Multiple Successes variation will also be used.

To help keep track of the road to success and failure on magic checks, we use the character sheet as a guide. Once the difficulty for their magic has been determined, that number is noted on the character sheet. As magic checks are made, the player places their successes first on the difficulty number they are attempting, then additional successes are placed to the left of that number. For example, if the difficulty for the spell they're attempting to cast is a 4, the player's first success is placed over the number 4 on their character sheet. Their next success would cover the 3, etc. Once the player has covered all the numbers from their difficulty to and including the 1, their spell goes off.

Likewise, 1's are placed on the character sheet, beginning with the number just to the right of the difficulty of the spell. Each additional 1 rolled is added to its right. For example, if the difficulty for the spell they're attempting to cast is a 4, the player's first 1 is placed over the number 5 on their character sheet. Their next 1 would be placed on the

6, then the 7, etc. If they get all the way to covering the 10 with a 1 result, their spell fails catastrophically (explained below).

We're going to use the core rules for Session Dice. Session Dice can only be used to enhance checks that are not magic related. We are also going to add the Community Dice module, but with the Expanded Magic/Powers Twist. So, community dice can be used to enhance any check, including magic checks.

## **The Keepers Rules Summary**

The Keepers uses the Modulus Core Rules with the following modifications:

### **Modules:**

- Magic, Magic Pools Variation
- Community Dice

### **Twists:**

- Extended Checks, Multiple Successes Variation (magic checks)
- Expanded Magic/Powers, Community Dice Variation
- Renewing Magic/Power Twist, Daily Variation
- Difficult Magic
- Dangerous Magic, Tipping Point Variation

## **The Cost of Magic**

Finally, since we've mentioned in our world concept that there are magical evils in the world, we need to explain how and why. The reason the Keepers exist is because magic is exceedingly powerful, and those attempting to wield it without training are doomed to fail catastrophically. Whenever someone catastrophically fails at magic, they release some form of magic power into this world. When users of magic draw that energy from the beyond, it always garners the attention of something on the other side. These creatures, called Fiends, are drawn to this, looking for a way to escape their world and enter ours. A Fiend is successful in that endeavor whenever someone catastrophically fails at their magic. Fiends can take many forms and are often powerful creatures. Unlike the magical world they are from, there is something in this world that is far more compelling for them - human energy. They seek to drain that energy, causing people to become lethargic, cranky, apathetic, violent, or even suicidal. Thus,

the Keepers are always looking for anyone dabbling with magic. They want to keep control over that magic, preventing Fiends from entering the world. This is why Keepers are compelled to either get gifted people to learn the proper means of casting magic, or to see that they are no longer able to do so.

## Antagonist Casting

Since it is possible for characters to come across other denizens capable of, or otherwise attempting to cast magic, we need to add one more rule to the game. Antagonist NPCs who are casting magic get successes each round equal to their rank. These successes can be offset by the PCs by their offensive or defensive checks - essentially countering each of the antagonist's successes with their own.

## Character Sheet

Finally, we need a character sheet. The Keepers isn't horribly complex, needing only a place to record the character's five primary traits (Mental, Physical, Societal, Vocational, and Recreational). Following that, we need a tracker for successes and failures when a character is attempting to weave a spell. The sample sheet could be as simple as:

The Keepers									
Name									
Mental									
Physical									
Societal									
Vocational									
Recreational									
Spell Difficulty Success/Failure Tracker									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



# Part Five: Sample Roleplaying Games

The following are two examples of roleplaying games one could create using the system, modules, twists, and even inspirations based upon those mechanics. These example roleplaying games include both a write-up of the world, and its unique take upon the Modulus system. They can both serve as a roleplaying game for you to play and enjoy, as well as show you a couple of takes on utilizing the Modulus system for your own game ideas. Enjoy.

## DAMNATION

A post-Rapture Survival Horror setting

### World

It's been one year since it happened - assuming my math is right. I remember getting out of my car and nearly forgetting the picture I'd brought to get framed to hang in my office. It seems such a trivial thing now, worrying about having something hanging on your wall. There were the usual people in the parking lot outside the craft store. I remember an old lady struggling with her key fob while her car alarm was going off, another couple loading their infant into the child seat in the back of their car, and the general crowd heading in or out of the store. I leaned back in to pull the cardboard tube holding the rolled-up picture that had sat for two years before I finally brought it here to get framed when it happened. One quick flash.

It's strange how I regret not seeing it that second it happened. I would have liked to have been staring right at someone when they left. I wonder what that must have been like. To be right there with someone one second, and then a flash of light and... gone. That's what it was, though. I don't think anyone knows exactly how many disappeared. Half maybe? Imagine half the people in the world, in an instant, gone. They just blinked away.

There was a sound, faint, like a tone made up of a thousand notes all at once. It sounded distant, like it was coming from all around me. Everyone was stunned. That old lady was gone, and so was the father and child from that couple putting their kid into their car seat. It took a solid second or two before any of us even comprehended what had just happened. Then came the freak-out, the yelling and screaming. No one knew what to do, but we could all tell what had happened was real just by the looks on everyone else's face. Then, while confused and completely taken aback, that's when everything got dark.

An eclipse maybe? Clouds? I can't really remember. The sky buzzed, and the air seemed to fill with electricity. Then the ground shook. The earth split, as if under pressure. Dark hollows appeared, and from them came the cries the rest of us would come to fear for the rest of our lives. From the darkness below came creatures so foul they're indescribable to an innocent mind. They poured out by the hundreds, pouncing upon those of us who were left. They would wrap their many limbs around their victims, tackling them to the ground, and...

At the time none of us knew what was happening, what these things were, let alone what to do. It was every man for themselves. I call them demons. Some call them hunters, others just call them the nameless. They're drawn to one thing - us. Someone once told me that they're here for those of us left behind, to feast upon the remaining souls turned away by God. One by one they snatch us up, ambushing us. Whatever they take leaves us as nothing more than baseless, mindless creatures. Whether it is our souls, or sentience, or our very minds, those attacked are but shells of their former selves. I call them soulless.

One by one the demons feasted upon those that remained, leaving mindless zombies. It was chaos, and we ran, scattered, and did our best to disappear. We were all prey.

The soulless became hungry, caring only for their base instincts: eat, drink, fornicate. To think the demons our only worry would prove a grave mistake. The soulless were drawn to us, hungry for our flesh. Like zombies they overwhelmed fences, doors, windows, and bite by bite devoured every living person they came across. Those who dared venture outside were hunted by the demons. It was as though they

could smell our souls - they were drawn to it. They would appear out of nowhere, swooping down upon us, and strip all by life from those they caught.

And so, time passed, and less and less of us survived. Demons turned upon one another, with the stronger draining the captive souls of their brethren. Many of the soulless starved, and therefore hope remained. Maybe we could outlive this hell on earth. Maybe the soulless would all die off? Maybe the demons would kill each other off until there were only a handful left?

These are the hopes that those of us who were left behind live for.

## **Damnation Rules**

Damnation uses the Modulus Core Rules with the following modifications:

### ***Modules:***

- Health Tiers
- Community Dice, Base Variation
- Specialty Mechanics, Trait Variation
- Gear Dice

### ***Twists:***

- Fate's Blessing, Bounty Variation
- Degrading Gear, Consumption Rating Variation
- Cooperation, Applicable Trait Variation
- Kept Session Dice, Successes Variation
- Starting Community Dice Pools, Random Pool Variation
- Refreshing Community Dice Pools, Rewards Variation
- Alternate Damage Location, Trait

### ***Dice Pools***

Damnation uses both session dice and community dice. Players receive the standard 10 dice/hour for session dice at the start of each game session. To determine the number of community dice, each player begins the game by rolling their Fate Die. Add the players' results and begin with the total rolled in community dice and update every hour.



## ***Character Traits***

Characters in Damnation utilize the core five traits (mental, physical, societal, vocational, and recreational) plus one new specialty trait:

**Spiritual Trait:** The spiritual trait is slightly different from the usual traits for characters in that it doesn't have a descriptor (such as 'quick' for one's physical trait). The spiritual trait is both a depiction of the characters devotion to something larger than themselves, but also a reflection of their own tangible, metaphysical spirit. This trait is primarily used when dealing with Demons and demonic power. This trait uses the same number of dice (4) as the core traits.

## ***Health***

As a reflection of the risks and dangers of the world at large, characters in Damnation use Health Tiers.

## ***Gear***

The survival horror genre wouldn't be complete without the addition of gear, equipment, and weapons. Each piece of gear adds an additional die to the character's die pool when applicably used. Gear degrades over time, however, and this is represented by a consumption rating. Newer gear would have a higher rating (such as 3 or 4), with used gear having lower ratings (such as 1 or 2). Anytime the player rolls a 1 on their gear or Fate die, their gear loses 1 from its consumption rating. When the last point is lost, the gear becomes unusable (out of fuel, out of ammo, it breaks, etc.).

## ***Demons and the Spiritual Trait***

Demons are other worldly, supernatural, perhaps even divine in some twisted, perverse fashion. All checks Character's make pertaining to Demons are made using their Spiritual Trait. This is to reflect that all interactions with the Demons are always a test of one's faith and conviction.

Likewise, anytime Demons use their demonic power the character defends using their Spiritual Trait. This means that if a Demon is attempting to control a character to run out of hiding and draw out their companions, the player would need to roll their character's Spiritual Trait to defend against that impulse. Since Demons are Rank

3 antagonists, it would also mean that the character would need 3 successes in the defensive check to overcome the impulse.

### ***Demons and Damage***

Any time a character fails a defense check against a Demon, they take that damage to their Spiritual Trait. Exceptions may be made when the GM makes clear that the damage to the character is physical (thus to be applied to their Health). Demons are always attempting to devour, defeat, or overcome the character's soul. When a Character's Spiritual Trait is reduced to zero, they have become one of the Soulless.

## **Non-Player Characters (NPCs)**

### ***Soulless***

The moment the Demons poured forth from the fissures of Hell, they immediately attacked. They pounced upon their victims, either tearing them apart, or sucking out their very souls. What remained was a base and near-mindless creature. Those whose souls have been devoured by the Demons are known as the Soulless. They wander the earth, driven by their basic instinct to survive. Their minds are barely present, with no sense of self, no memory, and no means to communicate. They hunger, always in search of food, and consider anyone they come across as a viable meal. They will even turn upon themselves, devouring the weak to survive. They will wear anything when cold, strip bare when hot, and have even been known to attempt to perpetuate their own.

The Soulless are no longer people. They are zombie-like husks that terrorize, hunt, and ravage. They often group together and are drawn to sound and light. Some have lost cognitive ability to open a door or ascend a flight of steps. A scant few seem more capable, retaining an understanding of the most important skills of their previous lives. All it takes is one to do something for the others to follow suit, and the larger the mob the more likely and more dangerous that becomes.

Soulless are typically Rank 1 antagonists, but mobs can be Rank 2 or more.

## ***Demons***

Embodiments of pure horror, Demons that now plague the earth are nothing short of terrifying. Where they came from is unknown, save for the cracks in the earth itself that seemed to have spawned them. They are the manifestation of hate, malice, and viciousness. Just to lay eyes on one is nearly a sentence to be left as Soulless. Some say their appearance devours the light, leaving them horrific black beasts. No two are alike. Some are truly monstrous, with countless arms or legs, scampering about in the blink of an eye. Some are eerily human, bipedal, and intelligent. They are everything imaginable and yet nothing comprehensible.

They seem to sense those who remain by their souls. They are driven to devour a human's very being, if not rid them of their lives. This ability to sense souls seems somewhat limited, some say that only when they see into your eyes do they know whether you are one of the few living souls remaining. They also seem to have command of the Soulless, directing them, using them to flush out their prey. They are powerful creatures, some of which exhibit supernatural capabilities.

Demons are typically Rank 3 (or possibly more) antagonists.

## ***Other Survivors***

Just because there are those who have survived to this point doesn't mean they are friendly. Resources are limited, and a can of beans might mean the difference between life and death. Those other survivors in the world are a cautious lot, wary, and exceedingly defensive of what they call their own. Trust is hard to come by, and as such most that have survived to this point want to keep their time and exposure to other survivors to a minimum. That is, unless they are out of resources themselves. Then desperation may lead them to beg and plead, or perhaps even become violent to get what they need.

Survivors may be alone, or perhaps in small groups. As time has gone on, only those who have survived up to this point together would have any reason to remain together. Everyone was scattered, families were torn apart, friends killed, and when the worst of all imaginable evils was set upon them, often it was everyone for themselves.

Other Survivors are typically Rank 1 antagonists, but groups could easily be Rank 2 or more.

## **Plot Ideas**

Here's just a few plot ideas one might consider when putting together a Damnation game:

### ***The Signal***

The players receive a faint signal on their radios. It's a loop, running in the middle of the night. Perhaps they need to get somewhere to receive the signal better and hear the full message? When they do, they learn that it's a message that repeats. The voice of the message says that they monitor a specific channel live every day within a set timeframe. Unfortunately, that time is in the middle of the day, when the signal is too weak for them to transmit. They'll need to head east or west. Eventually they're able to talk with those that left the message and learn there is a community that is inviting survivors to a remote island away from the Soulless and the Demons.

### ***PHUCT***

Happy and cozy in their base of operations, it appears that the characters had been found by a Demon. Summoning all the nearby Soulless, the Demon unleashes hell on the characters, driving them from their home. Now they're on the road, being pursued by a Demon, desperate to find some new safe-haven to restart their lives - if they manage to survive.

### ***In Need of Help***

While minding their own business, the characters are approached by someone desperate for help. They need food and shelter, offering up everything they have in exchange. Only after welcoming them in does the other shoe drop. They have been pursued by a group of survivors hell-bent on having them handed over. Do the characters dare defend the one they've welcomed in, and at what cost? Do they hand them over, perhaps only to see an execution unfold in front of them? Perhaps things aren't what they seem at all...

# Character Sheet

Damnation			
<b>Name</b>			
<b>Mental</b>			
<b>Physical</b>			
<b>Societal</b>			
<b>Vocational</b>			
<b>Recreational</b>			
<b>Spiritual</b>			
<b>Health Tiers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Scratched (No Penalty - Recover in 1 Day) <input type="checkbox"/> Battered (Pools -1 / Recover in 3 Days) <input type="checkbox"/> Wounded (Pools -2 / Recover in 1 Week) <input type="checkbox"/> Injured (Pools -3 / Recover in 2 Weeks) <input type="checkbox"/> Maimed (Pools -4 / Recover in 1 Month) <input type="checkbox"/> Incapacitated (Out of Fight / Recover in 1 Month) <input type="checkbox"/> Dead (Character killed or made Soulless)		
Gear			
<b>Item</b>		<b># of Uses</b>	
<b>Item</b>		<b># of Uses</b>	
<b>Item</b>		<b># of Uses</b>	
<b>Item</b>		<b># of Uses</b>	
<b>Item</b>		<b># of Uses</b>	



# Bulls in China Shops

If chutzpah, machismo, moxie, firearms, and kung-fu had a baby - but as a roleplaying game setting.

## World

It's 1985 in the big city, but tucked away in Chinatown, Little Tokyo, or you know... where that mix of Korean restaurants, shops, and markets are. That's where the magic happens, where superstition and tradition collide with magic and mystery. Where crime bosses, gang leaders, and ancient noble houses rule supreme. Anything can happen here and does. And when it does, because it will, someone's got to step up and be the hero.

And by hero, I mean the one who gets conned, or maybe paid, to head straight into the lion's den. That's where things usually go sideways. Next thing you know you're surrounded by hundreds of ninjas, led by Siamese twin henchmen, controlled by this totally beautiful but completely evil sorceress who's about to turn your four best friends into the vessels to bring about the Sì Xiōng - whatever that is. Yeah, it's that kind of world. It's a world where bravado trumps skill, where attitude is king, and a well delivered one-liner might just save your ass. And by your ass I mean the one covered in torn, button-up 501's with a bandana tucked in the pocket, sitting below that graphic muscle-shirt. So, get off it and put on your trucker hat.

Big hair meets big egos, ancient civilization clashes against modern manner, and somehow you can't help but get mixed up in it all. Dark things are happening down dark alleys, where ancient shopkeepers sell strange creatures to aspiring nefarious shoppers, headed back to dark homes. Next thing you know you've got these goddamn Luan-bird things all over the apartment, and though they said it was to hunt out the snakes in the building, they're now in your kitchen eating your corn flakes. Oh, and did I mention this was all part of some sort of plot to scare away the tenants so the developers can bulldoze the building and put in some sort of fancy hotel?

Don't get me wrong though, that old guy in the trinket shop knows a few tricks, and so long as you promise to take his nephew with you, he might even lend a hand. Sometimes it's neighborhood against neighborhood, city block against city block. There's the Tong and the

Fang, and the Triads and the Yakuza, or the Syndicate and the Kkangpae. Some thugs flip balisongs wearing shades at night, others push pens in shiny suits in high-rises. Crime lurks around every corner, but it's always something more than that: ancient rituals, lost artifacts, evil monsters, or bloody revenge. It's a mess down here. The question is, are you hero enough to handle it?

## **Bulls in China Shops Rules**

Bulls in China Shops uses the Modulus Core Rules with the following modifications:

### **Modules:**

- Community Dice, Group Session Dice Variation
- Gear Dice
- Pursuit & Evasion, Faster Bad Guys Variation

### **Twists:**

- Critical Success, 6's Variation
- Cooperation, Pooled Checks Variation
- Starting Community Dice Pools, Random Pool Variation
- Chase Restrictions, Obstacles and Group Maneuvers Variations
- Obstruction

### **Dice Pools**

Bulls in China Shops uses community dice instead of session dice. To determine the number of community dice, each player begins the game by rolling their Fate Die. Add the players' results and begin with the total rolled in community dice and update every hour. Players may cooperate using pooled checks.

### **Gear**

Each piece of gear adds an additional die to the character's die pool when applicably used as noted in the Gear Dice Module.

### **Chases**

When the shit hits the fan, you may find yourself barreling out of the bar and down a dark alleyway to escape ninjas. Chases are conducted in accordance with the Pursuit & Evasion Module using the Faster Bad Guys Variation. But with every good chase scene there are things that can get in the way, represented by using the Obstacles Twist and the



Chase Restrictions Twist with the Obstacles and Group Maneuvers variations. In addition, players can fight back against the ninjas using the Obstruction Twist.

### ***Absurdity Die***

The GM, as well as each player, has a special die different from the rest of the dice on the table. This die is the Absurdity Die. Anytime the group is involved in a Check, players award that die to the player they think is having their character do the most absurd thing (not to include their own character).

### ***Riffing***

When a player decides that their character is doing something based upon something another character is doing, this is known as Riffing. For example, Brandon has decided that his character is going to throw Jeff's character at the bad guys. Wanting to Riff on that, Laura states that she is going to use Brandon and Jeff's antics as a distraction to allow her character to sneak past the bad guys. When Riffing, GMs decide what the order of the Riff is, having the first player roll their Check, and if successful, passing any excess successes (6's), onto the next player in the Riff. In the example above, Brandon makes the initial Check to throw Jeff's character. If Brandon is successful, Jeff needs to make a Check to survive the throw. Should Jeff then be successful, Laura can make her check to attempt to sneak past the bad guys. Should Brandon get two successes in his check, one die (the excess success) is then passed onto Jeff for his Check. Jeff adds the extra die to his Check, then rolls. If he rolls three successes, two dice are then passed onto Laura to add to her Check. If there are three or more Checks in a Riff, and everyone in the Riff is successful, no players lose any of their expended dice.

### ***Raising the Stakes***

Sometimes you really need to be successful. In those times, Players can Raise the Stakes. Players indicate they want to Raise the Stakes by stating not only what they are attempting to do, but also what the consequences of their failure means. Based on those consequences, GMs can award between one and three additional dice to the Check. If the Player fails, they then suffer the consequences they had stated earlier.

## ***Invincible***

Characters in Bulls in China Shops don't die. If their Health is reduced to zero, they are out of the fight. If all the characters end up out of the fight, the scene ends, only to begin anew elsewhere. This is where the characters find themselves tied up, imprisoned, or perhaps just waking up in the hospital.

## **Non-Player Characters (NPCs)**

### ***Thugs, Gangbangers, and Ninjas***

Oh yeah, they're out there. Bad guys, criminals, miscreants, hoodlums, whatever you want to call them, they're around every corner. Sometimes they wear uniforms, colors, logos, or tattoos. Other times they are only identifiable by their deviant intentions. Whatever the case, they don't respond well to reason. Yeah, go ahead and try to talk them down, but if I was going to crap in one hand and punch a dude in the face with the other, I'd rather just punch a dude. Just sayin'. They come in all forms, from organized to independent, calculated to idiotic, capable to incompetent. One thing is common though, their attitude. They all seem hell-bent on throwing down at the slightest excuse, and none of them are especially willing to give in once the violence starts.

Now some of these baddies are armed to the teeth, from knives to swords, pistols to machine guns. Some are huge dudes capable of ripping your arms off and beating you with them, others are just hoping to cave your skull in with a baseball bat. They're all minions though, whether they are an ancient clan of ninja, or a group of professional hitmen. Your job is just to get on the dance floor with them and show them your moves.

Thugs, gangbangers, and ninjas are typically Rank 1 antagonists, and rarely are Rank 2 or beyond.

### ***The Super-Powered***

There's always that one guy (or gal) - maybe a pair - like those hot sister henchmen who fight together and specialize in distracting their targets with acrobatic skills or unbelievable cleavage, while the other sneaks around behind you and slits your throat. Maybe it's some magic dude

with the ability to be faster than humanly possible or that can charm you if you dare look him in the eyes. Or maybe it's just that creepy kid who's been possessed that lures you in thinking you're lending a hand, then turns on you just as you're within arm's reach and starts biting your face off. I hate those! Whatever they might be, they're out there - and they usually indicate you're on the right path to stopping whatever nefarious plan's going on.

These are the "Super-Powered", exceptional creatures of strength, cunning, and ass-whooping. Sometimes they don't even make sense: ancient wizards, sexy vixens, giant muscle-heads, you name it. These are the ones who are often behind the thugs, gangbangers, and ninjas, and are the gatekeepers to bosses running things from the background.

The Super-Powered are typically Rank 2 antagonists but can be even higher depending on their capability.

### **Monsters**

The third group are those things that aren't even from this world. Maybe it's a giant golem that got summoned - something that doesn't eat, sleep, or bleed, and who keeps on coming after you no matter what you do. They might be a horde of ancient devils pouring forth from a portal opened by an elaborate ritual. They might even be living shadows serving a powerful master, appearing, and disappearing seemingly out of nowhere. Everything imaginable, but more often unimaginable, falls into this category.

Nothing about monsters is predictable, which includes whether they're bad guys at all. Now I'm not suggesting walking up to the giant orb of fang-filled mouths and hoping to have a reasonable conversation, I'm just saying that it's not impossible. Monsters have their own motivations, and unlike us normal people, it's usually not money or fame they're interested in. That have this nasty propensity to want flesh and blood, turning people into slaves, or devouring their very souls.

Monsters can be nearly anything, from Rank 1 antagonists to Rank 3 or possibly more.

## **Plot Ideas**

Here's just a few plot ideas one might consider when putting together a Bulls in China Shops game:

### ***Uncle!***

It's your niece, twice removed - on your father's side. She's gone missing, and you're the only one the family can turn to. So, you do what you can, poke around, and it sounds like your niece isn't the only one who's gone missing. Then, right about the time your gumshoe efforts start panning out, what do you know? They all return. But something's not right. Dammit, turns out all those missing kids have been put under some sort of spell by some sort of evil sorceress. Apparently, they've been "compelled" to find some sort of lost artifact that this sorceress needs to take over the world. Well, good thing you're on the case!

### ***The Ritual***

Word is, deep in the underbelly of the city, a group of elders have unearthed the final piece to a ritual that will not only summon forth an ancient dragon but give them complete command of it. That's where you come in. No one summons dragons in your town without your say-so. Apparently, these elders are hoping to use the dragon to defeat their enemies, but at what cost to the rest of the city? So now you're involved, caught between stopping the elders and deciding how they can then enact their revenge. And of all the people these elders are looking to stand up against, it's the damn syndicate. Maybe the dragon's not such a bad idea after all?

### ***Business is War***

Old man Wang's business got tossed again last night, and you're the only one in this damn town who seems to have had enough. They've been extorting all the small business owners for "protection" money. So now you've decided to turn the tables on them, and that's when things get messy. Now the gangs are taking it out on everyone, including your own family. So, you go to send a message, the kind that gets messy, but out of nowhere you're cold-cocked on the back of the head. Next thing you know you wake up in this fancy place where some guy in a suit's trying to talk sense into you. They are planning to take

control of the city and you can either play ball or be made an example of. Good thing you brought that hand grenade.

## Character Sheet

Bulls in China Shops	
Name	
Mental	
Physical	
Societal	
Vocational	
Recreational	
Health Tiers	<input type="checkbox"/> Grazed (You got this) <input type="checkbox"/> Rattled (Now you're mad!) <input type="checkbox"/> Wrecked (Out of the Fight)
Gear	
Item	
Item	
Item	
Item	
Item	

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