



Verge
a fantasypunk game

by
Nathan Russett

www.PeriPlanet.com

The City

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Credits

Verge was created as part of the 24 hour rpg challenge;

<http://www.1km1kt.net/comunity>

Thorny border and other images from www.freevectors.com

All layout, writing and design by Nathan Russell
www.PerilPlanet.com

I would normally write a spiel about about my writing process and experience here. But now I have blog posts. I have reproduced them here.

15/4/09 - 10.30pm

24 hours of pain... begin!

I have decided to do the ridiculous. The stupid. I am going to commit to the 24-hour challenge again. And I am going to start tonight. Or, what's left of tonight, as it is already 10.30pm. Check out this thread at 1km1kt.net;

<http://www.1km1kt.net/community/showthread.php?t=1442>

I really didn't want to get into this tonight, but when the bug bite! The topic I have chosen is FANTASYPUNK. I have an idea and will keep you posted on how it goes.

16/4/09 - 10.30am

Half-Way Up or Half-Way Down

Okay, I am halfway through my 24-hour time allotment, but not anywhere near halfway through my game. I worked till 2.30am before getting to bed (4 hours sleep). I snuck in another hour's work before I had errands to run (kids are on school vacation, so they need to be distracted!), but am back at it now.

I spent about two hours last night putting together my page layout in InDesign. This is the way I start all my 24-hour projects. When I get the "look" right it helps me focus my energy on where I am going with the game. It also gives me time to process ideas and toss things around in my head. My setting is a kind of fantasy / western / Dickensian London, where intrigue, betrayal and violence boil over into every facet of life. I am writing "background at the moment but really need to get into the mechanics. I have some neat ideas for characters and I want to have a system for duelling (for swords and magic and gunfights). Hmmmm...

16/4/09 - 5.30pm

Less Than 5 Hours To Go

Okay, I worked until about 2pm, but then children and life intervened again. I have been back at it for about an hour and a half now (it's 5.30pm). Things are getting close - I am not sure I will make it. I have done character creation and have a firm idea about mechanics, but just don't know if I will get it all down on paper.

16/4/09 - 9.30pm

Done and... done... whew

Done. I didn't get everything I wanted done, but it's a playable game with character generation rules, game mechanics, GM advice, a few adventure ideas and some adversaries. I didn't get to magic, which it probably really needs. An equipment list and stuff like that is probably missing. But otherwise pretty good. I am particularly happy with the background material and setting stuff. I spent waaaay too long writing that stuff and trying to get the right feel to it all. I hope it comes across.

Nathan Russell, April 2009

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The City

The City. It has no name, not any more. Perhaps once it did, when there were other cities and a need to tell one from the other. But not any more. Now there is just the City, spreading from the black rocks of the coast to the blackened girdle of the Cage. The Cage - the great stone wall, eighty feet high and half as thick, that wraps around the city like a smothering blanket. It even stretches out into the bay, great bold arches, portcullis and nets that long ago broke the fury of the sea.

Nothing gets in. Nothing gets out.

There is no gate in the Cage - not on the landward side, at least. No reason for it. Beyond the walls, past the flame-swept pitch of no-mans-land, is the enemy. The Great Forest, realm of the Woodsmen and Bark Spirits. The Great Betrayers, who stole our peoples wealth and livelihoods and children. There is no reason to leave the City, to pass beyond the safety of the Cage, for outside is only death and misery.

Within the city death and misery are in abundance, too, but at least it's the kind a man can deal with himself, with his own two hands and wits and gun. With some cunning and some nous a fella can get by. With a crew of like-minded links he might even prosper. Of course, others have the same ideas and you have to watch your back. It can be tough knowing who is steel and who is wood, but you will figure it out in time.

What is the City?

The City is many things to many people, home, work, playground, passion, bastion and prison.

The City is old. Your grandparent's grandparents were not born when the Cage was built.

The City is huge. It sprawls in all directions, as far as the sea in the north and the Cage in the other three directions. The Iron Lords watch from their tall towers and rule the deep mines that delve beneath the streets.

The City is crowded. The population limits

were reached long ago, yet the people are still trapped within the Cage. Entire extended families huddle in single rooms, tower-apartments overflow and even the sewers have become refuge for those with nowhere else to go.

The City is strong. Everything is constructed from iron, steel, bone or stone. Walls are thick, doors are heavy, weapons are deadly. Nothing is made of wood.

The City is cold. Chill wind blows in from the coast and roars through the narrow streets, between the towers and beneath the bridges. Winter is the longest season in the City.

The City is hot. Furnaces burn night and day to warm the towers of the Iron Lords and work the raw materials that are burrowed from the earth. Firemen seek out illicit plant material and destroy it in gouts of flame while the walls of the Cage are daily lashed with liquid fire.

The City is beautiful. Graceful bridges and gantries span the space between towers, iron fretwork decorates every building and brightly colored banners are unfurled from the tallest buildings with the rise of every morning. Each banner, emblazoned with the mark of an Iron Lord, defiantly declares to those beyond the Cage that the city has survived another night.

The City is needy. There are too many mouths and not enough food. The farms strain to grow enough and the fishing fleet struggles to haul a worthy catch. The sailors blame the sea-hags, while the farmers speak of goblyn once again infesting the fungus catacombs.

The City is dangerous. With so many people living on top of one another, with so little to go around, tensions often escalate and blood is shed. Life can be brutal and short for those who live at the feet of the towers. For those of privilege, life in the breezes is just as dangerous, where political intrigue and treachery abound.

The City has secrets. Beneath the pavement, within the walls of the noblemen's towers, deep in the mines and in the darkest allies secrets are

made, kept and stolen. With so few resources in a city of so many, a constant whirlwind of intrigue and treachery is played out. Smugglers, fencers, businessmen and nobles move and counter move, using the populace as their pawns.

The City is haunted. Spirits are real and speaking their name gives them power. Druids commune with the city streets and paths. And the Great Betrayers howl at the walls.

The City is dark. Even on the finest days a thick smog muffles the city, smoke belching from a thousand-thousand fires, furnaces and flame carts. The sun never reaches the deepest corners or beneath the broadest bridges, making perfect homes for vermin and worse. Lamps Men work hard to ward off the darkness, but it is a dangerous and thankless job.

Who is Keeton?

The wind whips through the allies and avenues, carrying a half-heard name - a name perhaps cried out by some ignorant youth. A murmuring crowd stops silent in time to hear a single word, a name. Random graffiti on a long disused alley, or maybe on a Lord's front portal.

Keeton.

What does it mean? To who - or what - does it refer? These are questions that have remained unanswered for decades. The Iron Lords have ignored and suppressed where they could, but the name continues to appear.

If Keeton is a spirit - a nefarious machination of the City's timeless enemy - then every utterance grants it power. Some believe it is a password for one of the increasingly popular secret societies. If it is, what is their agenda, and why have they become so confident that they freely speak their secrets? Others fear it is the name of a provocateur, an anarchist, intent on causing trouble for the Iron Lords. Such an individual must not be allowed to inspire the people or capture their imaginations.

Obviously, whoever or whatever Keeton is, it is a threat to all that the Iron Lords and their forebears have built.

Who is the Great Betrayer?

An ancient enemy without fear or remorse or any understanding of the human condition. A terrible spirit without flesh or form or any weakness. Able to be and know and touch anything that a tree or log or timber beam can see or touch or feel, the spirit nearly tore the City down.

The men of the city cut and burnt the forest, hunting for the spirit, but to no avail. The Woodsmen were left without a home and the Bark Spirits without their mothers. They betrayed the men of the city and called on the spirit for vengeance. There was bloody war.

The Cage was built to keep the betrayers and their spirit lord at bay. All wood was banished from the city, compelled to the great bonfires that lit the night skies for weeks. The City dwellers found other ways to survive, a self-sufficiency born out of necessity, cut off from the natural world through their own self-imposed banishment.

Heretics say the City dwellers betrayed themselves, building a prison from which they could not escape. Believers still curse the Woodsmen and the Bark Spirits for their black-heartedness.

The City is always dark, claustrophobic and busy. People work around the clock, in the mines, boiler rooms and kitchens, on the walls of the Cage, on the tin fishing boats and in the catacombs. Smoke chokes the air, stains the walls and falls in a flaky precipitation.

The one's you really need to be watchful of are the Tower Men. , living their lives above the junk and grime and rust. If you see one of them or theirs, best be on the watch for wooden talk and double crosses. They always have an agenda, and treat street dwellers like tools, or vermin, or worse. Still, their tin is real and they always have plenty of it. Be careful is all I say.

Welcome to the Edge

Verge is a fantasy roleplaying game of action, violence, conspiracy, attitude and adventure. It is a game of little people in a big city, doing what they can to survive in a world where a lot more is going on than they are ever likely to know or understand.

Fantasypunk

This is a fantasypunk game. A fusion of elements from two often disparate genres of fiction, fantasy and cyberpunk. Fantasy is about magic, wonder, heroes, confrontation with age old enemies and the saving of a person, place or world. Cyberpunk is about high-tech gritty futures, moral ambiguity, confrontation with the new, anti-heroes, style over substance and looking out for yourself. Fantasy is often epic in scale, while cyberpunk is urban. In fantasy literature Good vanquishes Evil; in cyberpunk stories you can't tell the good guys from the bad guys.

This game posits a fantasy world where the past and future are equally bleak, where life is harsh and if you don't look out for yourself, no-one will. It is a world where spirits haunt the dark streets and magic is real, where attitude and style is as important as your ability with a weapon, and fortunes can be won or lost in the course of a single evening.

Premise

Stories in *Verge* take place in the sprawling, unnamed City, a place of corruption, need, secrets and misery. Enemies are everywhere - stalking the breezeways of the Iron Lords, lurking in the shadows of the labyrinthine streets and beating at the walls of the Cage.

Players take the roles of Vergers - men and women that live life on the very edge, in a city on the very edge. They do things and go places that most others wouldn't, all in the hope of earning some tin, a little respite, or redemption. They track down missing heiresses, destroy

infestations of goblin, track down sorcerers, suppress provocateurs and steal noblemen's secrets to sell to the highest bidder.

Style & Tone

Verge is dark, gritty, fast-paced and action-packed. It is about cool moves, witty one-liners, and facing off against odds that *will* kill you. The characters know that time in this world is short so are willing to take risks to get what they want. Death, double-crosses and betrayal are constant dangers, as are more insidious threats.

Magic is mysterious and dangerous, likely used to commune with the Great Betrayers. The Iron Lords have all the power and fight each other in secret wars for more. The downtrodden masses have nothing and do what they must to survive. These are desperate times and the characters are desperate people.

Everything is filthy - the streets, the homes, the people. Black is the new black, whether it is leather or canvas, iron, fur or flesh. Fashion is equal parts gothic and 18th century high fashion, with corsets, lace, doublets and tricornes being popular with men and women alike. In a city crammed to overflowing, the inhabitants work hard to be noticed, to leave their mark on the immovable world; piercings, tattoos, ritual scarring, hair and flesh dyeing and accessorising are all used to this end.

The City itself is dark, sinister and dangerous. It is one part fantasy melting pot, one part Dickensian London, one part Dodge city and one part Gotham. Life is hard and short and the streets claim the weak.

For inspiration on style and action, think of films like *The Matrix*, *Blade Runner*, *Sin City*, *Equilibrium*, *Judge Dredd*, *Deadwood*, *V for Vendetta* and *Dark City*. For the fusion of unlikely genres check out *Brotherhood of the Wolf* and *Sukiyaki Western Django*. And when it comes to fantasy and cyberpunk styles you need to reference *Underworld* and *Hellboy*.

The Look

The City

The City is a conglomeration of stone and iron buildings, each built tight next to or even on top of its neighbors. It's appearance has a lot in common with industrial-revolution London - overcrowded buildings, busy markets filled with people from all walks of life, smoke-stacks and chimneys like fingers pointing skyward, cobbled streets and narrow alleys. Plumbing is a problem and the refuse from the population has ruined the bay, and the sea beyond.

The most obvious departure from 18th or 19th century London are the towers and breezeways. The homes and bastions of the Iron Lords, the towers are massive stone edifices anywhere between ten and thirty stories tall. Towers belonging to the same noble houses, or their close allies, are connected by majestic bridges and gantries called breezeways. Short spans are often stone, but longer spans - some several city blocks in length - are iron bars, steel ropes and rivets. Some even operate like draw bridges, able to be raised to keep enemies at bay. Imagine London Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge and others connecting the tall, narrow castles that spread throughout the city.

Technology

Technologically speaking, the City is at about the industrial revolution stage too. Great coal-fired machines - called fire engines - run looms, printing press and are at the heart of many other factories. The City has long known the secret of iron and the great ironworks are heavily guarded by the Lords of the city. Gun powder is known but only the wealthiest citizens own firearms.

The City dwellers have been industrious in finding alternatives to wood. Bone - usually from the city's dead - makes passable implements and handles for all manner of things and skilled Bone Workers craft armor, musical instruments and weapons. Shell, steel, leather and glass are also used as replacements for wood.

Society

The people of the City live under a feudal system with a strict class structure and a culture akin to late 18th century France - just before heads rolled. The divides between the nobility, middle classes and poor are great. Animosity between the classes is common, but rarely comes to a head. Reputation is everything in the city, and people work hard to earn and maintain it. Matters of honour and duels are common.

At the very top of the social system are the Iron Lords, eight ruling families who make all decisions for the city. Decisions are supposedly made by consensus but the process is hardly transparent and politics is truly Machiavellian. The ruling families are attended by dozens of noble houses - distant relatives of one kind or another - who each vie for their slice of profits, resources or power.

The middle classes are made up of merchants, Firemen, artisans and wranglers. The wranglers organise the work parties and run businesses for their noble masters and are reviled most by the poor that they press-gang, cajole and threaten. Firemen are charged with the destruction of plant material - mostly weeds and debris that finds its way over the Cage, but occasionally nastier things - and have an honoured place amongst their peers. The Firemen are accorded the respect of knights and each guild carefully guard the secrets of their arsenal.

The poor get all the worst jobs - working the fungus catacombs, keeping the walls free of moss, preparing the dead for reconstitution. Only prisoners and the mine dwellers have it worse. Most mine dwellers, bred for labor, spend their lives beneath the city, toiling in the mines for coal and other resources. Dwellers are an oddity on the streets, something to be pointed at and feared in equal measure.

Characters

In Verge players take the roles of street-wise mercenaries, loyal retainers, troubleshooters, secretive sorcerers, agents provocateur, skilled second-story men and daring rogues.

Creating your character involves the following steps;

- Get your Concept
- Assign your Stats
- Determine your Edges
- Calculate your Traits
- Define your Agenda

Concept

Who is your character? What do they do and how do they fit into the City? Everyone has a role, from the lowliest fungus cleaner to the most prestigious Lord - what's your role?

Concepts that fit well with Verge include;

AGENT PROVOCATEUR: cunning, persuasive and secretive, provocateurs work to undermine the power of the nobles. An agent provocateur can come from any social class.

BREEZER: bureaucrats, skilled diplomats and petty nobles, breezers work within the world of the privileged. They broker deals between noble houses, hire retainers and hide paperwork.

CREEP: secrets are everywhere, and worth a fortune to the right person. Creeps are experts at getting information that others cannot, and finding things that don't want to be found.

DUSTER: bodyguard, strong-arm, streetfighter and hardman, the duster's body maps their life in scars. Some choose the life of a duster, most just fall into it.

DWELLER: short, strong and horrifyingly ugly, dwellers are rare sights outside the mines. But with perfect night vision and incredible endurance, they are equipped to deal with the harsh city life.

FIREMAN: burly, brave and determined, firemen are part guardian, part ghost hunter. They search out agents of the Great Betrayers and use cleansing flame to purify the city streets.

GLADIATORIX: warrior, hero, showman - the gladiatorix are the idols of the City. Arena combat is the entertainment of the masses and the gladiatorix are the stars.

STAR: lawmen and district sheriffs, stars are respected or reviled depending on where they go. Some are little more than lackeys for the Iron Lords while others genuinely fight for justice.

SPIRIT CHARMER: wise in the ways of the spirit world, the Charmer cuts deals with things best left alone in return for power and profit.

URCHIN: pickpockets, gossip-mongers and fences - if you need something, you best see an urchin. Their web of contacts is vast and their fingers deceptively nimble.

Your concept can be anything, but should hint at the kind of actions, adventures and incidents they might get involved in.

TIP: Players should discuss their concepts with each other so that characters fit with each other. It is just as easy to play games of Verge set entirely in the towers of the Iron Lords as it is to play out campaigns in the gutters. Talk about the kind of game you all want before choosing your concept.

EXAMPLE: Jack is creating a character that is going to be a part of a game set in the seediest parts of the City. He would like to play a character that has seen his share of action. A Fireman and Gladiatorix are obvious choices, but Jack decides to play a Duster. Thinking about it a little, he decides his character was a failed Gladiatorix who fell into a life of crime when his showbiz career didn't work-out.

Stats

Every character is defined by their *stats* - Strength, Wits, Grace, Attitude, Prowess.

STRENGTH: a character's physical fitness, power, constitution and wellbeing. It is a measure of their athleticism and is used for most physical actions.

WITS: a character's cunning, perception and wisdom. It is a measure of their mental faculties and is used for actions that require fast thinking or careful planning.

GRACE: a character's manual dexterity, coordination and fine motor skills. It is a measure of their finesse and is used for actions that require delicate movement or precision.

Attitude: a character's bearing, self-confidence and willpower. It is a measure of a character's presence and charisma and is used in social interactions.

Prowess: a character's skill at arms and overall ferocity in battle. It is a measure of their martial training and is used in all combat situations.

Each stat has a numerical value from 1 (terrible) to 5 (super-human). You have 15 points to share among your character's stats. No stat may be less than 1 or higher than 5.

EXAMPLE: Jack knows that his character will need a high prowess and strength. His least useful stat is likely to be wits. He uses this knowledge to assign his stats -

Strength (4)

Wits (1)

Grace (2)

Attitude (3)

Prowess (5)

Edges

Every good troubleshooter comes to the streets with at least a few advantages. In Verge we call these *edges*.

An edge can be anything that a character can derive some benefit or advantage from. It might be an object (like a weapon or tool) but does not have to be. An edge could be a person who taught the character something, a background that provides a tangible benefit, a belief system, or a contact that can provide information or gear. Example edges include;

- My Father's enchanted sword
- My trusty tool belt
- The dagger hidden in my boot
- My stylish clothes
- I barter with the Bark Spirits
- I believe in death before dishonor
- I believe it is better to run than fight and die
- I am the son of an Iron Lord
- I grew up in the sewers
- Reputation for being unkillable
- I am an escape artist
- I know everyone in the Old Quarter
- I am rich
- Handsome
- I take no prisoners
- People trust me
- The merchant guild owes me
- Dressed like a beggar
- Everyone underestimates me
- Everyone overestimates me
- I always have a weapon handy

You get to pick several edges for your character. Each edge you choose will either be a *reputation* or a *secret*. Reputations are things your character is known for, while secrets are advantages you try not to tell the world about. This might affect the way you use your edges during play and the way other characters react to yours.

Write down one or more edges. You have five points to share amongst these. You must have at least one reputation edge. The number of points you put into an edge determines how much of an advantage it can grant you during play. A 1-point magic sword will provide a much smaller advantage than a 3-point magic sword, for example.

EXAMPLE: Thinking about his character concept Jack decides on the following edges;

Reputations -

Nothing surprises me anymore (2)

Trustworthy (1)

Secrets -

Lead knuckle dusters (2)

NOTE: Edges can provide narrative advantages or mechanical advantages or both. It is up to the players and GM to negotiate what constitutes an appropriate edge.

Traits

Your character's state of health and reputation are both *traits*. These are values derived from a character's stats. They are likely to change throughout the course of a story.

HEALTH: this indicates how many injuries your character has taken, how much damage he has sustained. Your character's health is equal to their Strength stat +1.

REPUTATION: this is how well known your character is - their popularity or notoriety. It is "spent" during games to provide a character with special advantages. Your character's reputation is equal to their (highest stat - lowest stat).

EXAMPLE: Jack's character has a strength of 4, meaning he has Health (5). The character's highest stat is Prowess (5) and his lowest stat is wits (1). That gives him a Reputation (4).

NOTE: Yes, the reputation mechanic encourages players to do a little bit of min-maxing. Characters in this genre tend to be great at one or two things and awful at other stuff!

Agenda

Everyone in the city has an agenda - a goal or purpose that they strive to achieve. What is your character's driving goal? It can be anything, from a desire for revenge, to finding your lost love, buying somewhere better to live or proving your honour to your father.

Pick something interesting and dramatic. This is another opportunity to build your character's background, add some depth, and introduce ideas for play.

EXAMPLE: Jack hits on an idea for his character that he thinks fits the original concept quite nicely. He decides that his character's agenda is to "Get back into the arena." He wants to one day be a Gladiatorix, like he always dreamed.

Rounding Out

All that is left to do at this point is decide on a name for your character, fill in the details on the character sheet and write a brief description.

Name:

Concept:

Strength

Wits

Grace

Attitude

Prowess

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Edges

Reputations

Secrets

--	--

Traits

Health

--	--	--	--	--	--

Reputation

--	--	--	--	--	--

Agenda

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Description

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Notes

Playing

Characters find themselves embarked on a mission, or adventure. They are likely employed by an Iron Lord through one breezer or another, though they might also be chasing their own agendas.

Players can describe their character's actions as they wish.

Feats

Actions that are important to the story being told are called *feats*. They may or may not succeed.

When your character attempts a feat work out what stat they are using to accomplish the task. Use strength for physical actions; wits for thinking, searching or spotting; grace for dancing and pick-pocketing; attitude for talking, resisting pain or fear and looking good; and prowess for fighting.

You will roll a number of dice equal to the character's rating in that stat. Each die that comes up 4+ is a success. Most of the time you will only need one success.

The game master will decide how difficult the action is – how likely the character is to succeed at whatever task they are undertaking. Feats can be tricky, tough or hard. The GM will roll a number of dice based on the difficulty;

- Tricky 2 d6
- Tough 3 d6
- Hard 4 d6

Some actions might have higher difficulty values.

You and the GM roll your dice and check the results of each die. Discard results of 1, 2 and 3. Each result of 4, 5 and 6 is a success. Each success rolled allows the you or the GM to state one thing about the action undertaken.

Starting with the person who rolled the **most** successes, player and GM take it in turns to

“spend” their successes by making statements. If you and the GM roll an equal number of successes, the person that rolled the most dice makes the first statement.

Each statement should express a single idea, concept or fact. The very first statement should establish the success or failure of the task. You are not obliged to describe your action succeeding, just as GM's do not have to describe the feat failing. Decide based on the situation and what will be most interesting. Each statement made becomes **fact** and cannot be changed, though it can be modified by future statements.

EXAMPLE: Jack's character, Lucius wants to get into the window of a high tower. Lucius is hoping to find a clue to the whereabouts of his employer's missing nephew. Jack and the GM agree that this will be a strength feat. Lucius has strength (4) so Jack will roll 4d6.

The GM decides that climbing the very tall tower to the window is a Tough feat and will roll 3d6.

Jack rolls 4d6 scoring a 2, 3, 4 and 4 – that's two successes. The narrator rolls 3d6 scoring 2, 4 and 5 – two successes also.

It's a tie, but Jack rolled more dice so gets to begin. He makes the first statement, “Lucius scrambles up the side of the tower and makes it through window.”

The GM makes her first statement, “But the room is occupied by a large parrot that lets out a mighty screech.”

Jack responds with, “Lucius rolls to the side and hides behind the curtain.”

The GM makes her final statement, “you hear footsteps outside the door to the room.”

MODIFIERS

The following can change the number of dice that you or the GM roll.

CONCEPT: if the character's concept suggests some implicit benefit to the feat they are attempting you get an extra dice to roll.

EDGES: If your character has an edge that is somehow useful, appropriate or beneficial to the action being performed you get to roll an additional number of dice equal to the edge's rating.

AGENDA: if the feat is in direct pursuit of the character's agenda, you may roll an extra die.

FIAT: the GM may grant a bonus die for any other reason they wish. This might be a situational bonus, or a boon for good roleplaying or being a good player.

INJURY: characters are likely to suffer injuries as they go about their business. Each time they suffer an injury note it down. The narrator may "call" any injury that impedes the character. This allows the narrator to roll an additional die.

EXAMPLE: Lucius tripped and sprained his ankle earlier in the adventure. Jack has noted this down. Now Lucius is trying to flee from some Woodsmen he encountered in the catacombs. The narrator calls Lucius on his sprained ankle, and adds an extra die to the difficulty.

Once a narrator has called a goblin on an injury the injury is removed. It may not be completely healed, but it causes no further impediment to the character.

You may call on narrator characters in the same way, taking advantage of any injuries they suffer.

Reputation

Characters can "spend" their reputation points to improve their chances of success at an action. Spending a reputation point allows you to;

- Claim a single automatic success. Declare this instead of rolling. The GM still rolls her dice.
- Re-roll all of the dice. Declare this after a roll has been made.
- Heal a single injury - remove it.

Opposed Tasks

Character versus character conflicts use the same system. The GM uses an appropriate character stat instead of a difficulty rating.

Combat

Combat is simply a more advanced form of opposed task. Combat attacks are considered to occur simultaneously. Combat occurs in the following steps;

1. Players and GM declare intentions. Anyone can modify their actions at any point before dice are rolled.
2. Actions proceed in the most logical order. There is no real "initiative sequence" just logic.
3. All combatants gather their prowess dice plus any dice for modifiers. They divide them into attack and defence pools. This may be done secretly, if you wish to increase the tension. It may be helpful to have different colored dice for each pool.
4. All combatants roll dice. Attack dice pools are compared against relevant defence dice pools and actions are resolved like any other feat.
5. Successful attacks inflict injuries. The player makes statements about the kind of injury suffered. Extra success dice can be used to narrate additional injuries. Likewise, success dice can be used to defend against extra injuries.

INCAPACITATION: A character that has a number of injuries equal to their health rating is incapacitated. This might be unconscious or dead, but does not have to be. An incapacitated character can do nothing. They remain incapacitated until the GM decides otherwise.

Running Games

When running games it will be helpful not to plan too much ahead of time. The nature of the game allows players to have a lot of control over the people, places and events of the story. This is a good thing and should be encouraged! Here are some tips to keep things moving and help you enjoy the game as much as the players do.

Keep things simple.

Do not complicate your job by introducing lots of sub-plots or convoluted plot twists, or by creating piles and piles of notes. Players will do a magnificent job of complicating things themselves and will run off on tangents and red herrings that you never even dreamed. They will certainly add details and facts to the story that contradict any notes that you yourself have not established as fact through the course of play.

You are not the enemy

This may seem obvious, but is sometimes forgotten. Your role is to help guide the story in interesting directions, to help all the players tell an entertaining story. Sometimes you will portray the adversaries of the story, but you are not restricted to this role. You can give players hints and ideas on what to do and even use your successes to make statements that aid the characters – if you think this will lead to a better story.

Say Yes!

If players make suggestions or ask questions it is probably because they have an interest in what is going on or what is about to happen. They most likely have a cool idea that they would like to introduce to the story. Encourage this and confidently say “yes” to requests. This doesn’t mean you should let players get anything they want – especially if it doesn’t sit with the type of story and mode of play you are trying to encourage – but it does mean you should let players introduce elements into the story when the time is appropriate.

A lot of the time saying “yes” will lead to a feat roll – that’s great. It means that the players will do a bunch of the work for you. Make sure, however, you are clear on what they are asking for, so you can respond appropriately with any successes you might achieve.

Make rolls meaningful

Every time you call for a dice roll it should mean something interesting is going to happen, **no matter the result**. Don’t have players make feat rolls if you cannot think of anything interesting to happen, should you gain one or more successes. If a player asks to climb up to a window in a high tower and you cannot think of anything to happen, do not call for a roll – just let them climb up the tower and see what happens next.

Watch the facts

When players spend their successes to make statements, make sure they only make one statement per success. Usually it will be obvious how many facts a player is establishing, but listen out for statements that include words such as “and”, “while”, “with” or “also”. Most of the time a player will use these to clarify the fact they are establishing, but at other times they might be trying to sneak in an extra detail!

Reputation Points

Reward your players for good roleplaying, entertaining story elements and just plain having fun. Whenever a player does something that makes the game more enjoyable for you or the other players, or the story more interesting, reward them with additional reputation points. Give every character one reputation point at the end of every scene and at the end of particularly exciting encounters.

A character can never have more than 6 reputation points at one time, so encourage players to spend them!

Adventure ideas

Here are some ideas to get your games started. Pick one at random, mix and match, or just use them as a springboard.

The Lords Daughter

A nobleman's daughter has run-off with a street urchin. He demands her found and his honour repaired.

- Maybe she was kidnapped
- Perhaps other noble houses have heard and are getting involved

The Engine

A breezer hires the characters to steal a device from the Firemen's Guild in the Old Quarter.

- They aren't the only crew hired for the job
- The device isn't there, or isn't what the characters expected

The Package

A merchant offers a small fortune if the characters can get a package across the City before sunrise. Of course, everyone wants the package.

- The package is a person
- The package is dangerous or hostile or linked to the Great Betrayer

The Secret

The characters find themselves in possession of something valuable and seek to make a profit.

- The real owner turns up
- The characters don't really know what they have

Fall Guys

The characters have been set up, blamed for a crime they may or may not have committed. They must prove their innocence and find the real culprit (or their double-crosser).

- The characters must escape from prison
- The characters are accused of cavorting with spirits

Adversaries

Urchin

Strength Wits Grace Attitude Prowess

2	4	4	3	2
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Edges

Knows everyone's secrets
Don't turn your back on me

Health



She is filthy, toothless and old beyond all knowledge. She knows everyone and all their secrets and some say she is an oracle - she knows your questions before you ask them.

Duster

Strength Wits Grace Attitude Prowess

4	2	2	3	4
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Edges

Muscles like iron bands

Health



He is the bodyguard behind the merchant; the bouncer at the door. He won't tell any secrets - he doesn't know any - but he will stop you from taking any.

Bark Spirit

Strength Wits Grace Attitude Prowess

2	2	4	4	4
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Edges

Silent like the wind
Ancient hatred

Health



A rasping voice, talons like razors and eyes that burn like the fires that destroyed their home, the Bark Spirit is a terrifying sight to behold.

the wind whispers through the streets
who is keeton?

Verge
a fantasypunk game