

of Faith and Fear

The burning dice system - version 3.2

Quick overview

This ruleset aims to provide the best collective storytelling experience to veteran and newer players alike. Immersion is key and should be placed above all while playing. The rules should be easy to understand while still complex enough for semi-hardcore players to be fun and engaging. The gameplay is collaborative by nature.

This game is a heist-type table top role playing game (TTRPG). The players tell a story about characters in a dark fantasy city. They roll dice to randomly determine events in the story, usually their characters actions. To further their cause the players are accomplishing heists, called missions, and using their built up influence in the setting inbetween heists, a period called downtime.

Core mechanics are:

- 1) the differentiation between players and game master. Each player controls a fictional player character (PC) individually to influence the world on a mikro-level. All players control a fictional player faction (PF) collectively to influence the world on a makro-level. The game master (GM) controls the fictional worlds response to the players actions.
- 2) the conversation between players and the game master. This game is about collaborative storytelling. Everyone is in charge of the story. Differences in opinion regarding the story or the rules are to be resolved by a conversation including all players. To achieve an engaging and immersive experience is a group effort!
- 3) the differentiation between free play, missions and downtime. In the free play and missions, players get to play their PCs, interacting with the world directly. In the downtime the players get to control their faction, interacting with the world indirectly.

4) the use of six-sided dice (d6) to resolve fictional situations. They are most commonly rolled by players to determine the outcome of a PCs action in the fiction, called a players dice roll. The total number of dice available for something (eg. a players dice roll, a PC, all players, the GM) is called dice pool.

5) shifting power around by de- and replenishing dice pools. Whenever a PC performs an action the associated dice pool is depleted and the player gets to replenish another actions dice pool (redefining his PCs current capabilities). Futhermore, if an action is not successfull, the PCs dice pool gets partly depleted and transferred to the GMs dice pool. This is called „burning the dice“ and results in the players dice pool getting smaller while the GMs dice pool is growing larger throughout a mission.

Developers Note:

The players start every mission with a large dice pool while the GM starts with a small dice pool, giving the players a lot of options at the start and limiting the GM. Growing the GMs dice pool during a mission will increase his options while the available options for players shrink. This effectively ups the difficulty and stakes towards the end of a mission and puts pressure on the Players to complete their mission before too many dice are burned and the GM becomes very powerful. The goal is to achieve a natural pace for the game and increase the tension for the finale of each mission. It also engages the GM in the gameplay and gives him tools to actively influence the story.

Dice rolls

Dice rolls are used to randomly determine the outcome of fictional situations. The need for a dice roll arises out of the conversation the players and the GM are having about their fictional story. A dice roll is usually in order when something of interest to the story with an uncertain outcome presents itself in the fiction. Dice rolls are called by the GM. They halt the fictional story until they are resolved and determine how the situation unfolds.

Example: *Silvana describes her PC Ingerid trying to break into the Sheriffs office: She already successfully climbed the castles wall and is now prowling on the roofs slim ridge. While balancing her weight she spots an unbarred window just a bit outside her arms reach, perfect to break with little force. Silvana decides that Ingerid will attempt to jump through the window, entering the castle this way.*

GM rules: The level of uncertainty is enough to roll the dice and see how the story moves along. Neither the GM nor the player knows if Ingerid will be succesfull or not and entering the castle will futher the story in a meaningful way. The GM halts the story and calls for a dice roll to resolve the situation and see if Ingerid manages to enter the castle.

GM calls: How to judge situations

There are two main types of dice rolls: fortune rolls and player dice rolls: A player dice roll occurs when a player character (PC) attempts to influence the fictional story in a major way. The dice are rolled by the player who controls the PC. If the player dice rolls get challenged by the GM, both the player and GM roll dice. Fortune rolls are rolled by the GM.

There are no strict rules when a dice roll has to occur. It is entirely based on the GMs judgement to make the story interesting and engaging. The following template can be used to guide the GMs judgement:

- 1) Situations without uncertainty are not resolved using dice rolls but just with the GMs judgement. If there is no doubt about something being successfull or not, there is no point in randomly determining its success. This is usually an action that everyone (or no one) can successfully do. The GM might offer conditions or consequences though under which success can only be achieved.

Example: *Two cityguards have taken Ivar into custody and beaten him up. Spitting out one of his former teeth, blood running down his face, he decides on seducing them to let him walk freely.*

GM rules: These are the city councils personal guard, highly loyal and integrous. There is now way they are letting Ivar go. He might be able to make them laugh about him, but he risks taking another beating. Does he want to do that?

Cedric, Ivars player, accepts and describes his flirt attempt. The guards are amused. The GM decides that they will teach him another lesson: Don't try and persuade them ever again.

Example: *On her mission to break into the Sherriffs castle Ingerid successfully manages to jump through the window. She sneakes around the building, eventually running out of good luck and getting spotted. After a high intensity chase she finds herself on top of the main tower, circled by the Sherriffs finest men. Silvana, Ingerids player, decides that she would rather have Ingerid jump from the tower than falling into the Sherriffs custody.*

GM rules: Jumping from the tower is something everyone can do. However jumping and living to tell the story are two very different cases and Ingerids proficiency in athleticism does not come into play. The GM decides that there is no chance Ingerid can make it without getting severely harmed. Additionally he decides to roll a fortune roll to see if she survives at all.

Silvana accepts and Ingerid jumps from the tower, breaking her ribs and a leg in the process but luckily surviving.

2) Situations with uncertain outcomes, that do not influence the story in a meaningful way, should be resolved using fortune rolls. This could be a characters action that is important to the player for his PCs development or backstory. It could be an action done for comedic effect or storytelling. It could be an action done for background information or to foreshadow future developments.

3) Situations with uncertain outcomes, that do influence the story in a meaningful way, but are not subject to player character behaviour. This could be random events in the story or a non player characters (NPCs) reaction.

Example: *Whilst visiting a gambling den to find out vital information, Cedric decides that his PC Ivar cannot withstand his former gambling addiction any longer. Ivar leaves his party members to their task and joins some rogue soldiers in a card game.*

GM rules: Ivar is only succumbing to his gambling addiction and not trying to get information out of the soldiers. If Ivar wins or loses is not without doubt, but it won't move the story along much. The GM decides to roll a fortune roll to see how well Ivar gambles. Unfortunately the outcome is not good. When Ivar gets up from the table six hours later, not only are his friends gone, but he lost a small fortune aswell.

Example: *The party has located the possessed witches lair. They know two evil spirits are fighting over control of the witches mind, but they don't know which is in control of her right now. Additionally they don't know when the other spirit will regain power, forcing the witch to shapeshift. They enter the lair, prepared for the worst.*

GM rules: Rather than just deciding himself, the GM uses a fortune roll to determine which spirit is in control. Furthermore he rolls a fortune roll after every action to see if the power balance switches and the other spirit gains control over the witch. After two combat actions the witch transforms, forcing the party to adapt their strategy.

Example: *Prowling through an ancient library, Erik finds an old stone plate depicting the myths of his folk. Not able to carry the heavy rock with him, Erik decides to study it and learn more about his origins before he has to leave the library.*

GM rules: Erik studying his roots is certainly vital for his character and might lead to interesting things in the future but doesn't move the current story along much. The GM decides to use a fortune roll to determine how much knowledge Erik is able to obtain from the stone plate. Luckily the old scriptures are easy to decipher and Erik learns that his folk came from a far away place over the sea before they settled this land.

4) Situations with uncertain outcomes that are meaningful to the story and subject to player characters behaviour are resolved using a player dice roll. The most common case is any action that a PC takes to move the story along in a major way (called a player action).

Example: *Getting hunted through the Sherriffs castle, Ingerid tries to shake off her chasers by jumping out of a window, landing on the roof underneath.*

GM rules: The outcome is not only uncertain, but also meaningful to the story. If Ingerid manages to escape, she can probably hide or make her way out of the castle. If not she might get caught very soon. Also her jumping is subject to Ingerids behaviour, directly affected by her athletic action. The GM decides to halt the story and calls for a player dice roll from Silvana, Ingerids player.

Example: *Bad luck! Upon touching the stone plate, it shatteres! A protective curse must have been laid on the library, preventing anyone from stealing. The whole library begins to collapse and Erik runs for the exit.*

GM rules: Wether Eriks makes it to the exit in time or gets trapped in the collapsing library will influence the story in a major way. It also is not certain and directly affected by Eriks athleticism, making it subject to his behaviour. The GM again decides to halt the story and calls for a player dice roll from Derek, Eriks player.

The most important thing for the GM is to decide when a player dice roll is needed. Not every PCs action is subject to a players dice roll, especially not if the action is very simple, the outcome almost guaranteed or the behaviour is already covered by a previous player action. To explain this, revisit the first example:

Example: *Ingerid already successfully climbed the castles wall and is now prowling on the roofs slim ridge. While balancing her weight she spots an unbarred window just a bit outside her arms reach, perfect to break with little force. Silvana decides that Ingerid will attempt to jump through the window, entering the castle this way.*

Finding and walking to the castle wall is something everyone can do. Failing at these tasks will not only make the story implausible but also long and boring. Climbing up on the other hand is not guaranteed and a failure means that Ingerid will most likely have to find a different way in. A player dice roll is needed. Prowling on the roofs slim edge is also likely a player action, but can be covered by the prevoius climbing roll. The risk and reward involved is very similar and a new roll would only slow the game down.

Spotting the window is again something that everyone is guaranteed able to do. The next interesting situation is the jump in: Not only is there new risk involved, but also a success or failure moves the story along in a major way. Another player dice roll is needed.

More player dice rolls are not better and not every player action needs to be resolved with a player dice roll. The GMs responsibility is not to be a slave to the rules, but to make the story interesting and fun for his group! Judging when a player dice roll is needed will become second nature after some sessions.

Developers Note:

Player dice rolls are riskier, more complex and take longer to resolve than fortune rolls. Determining not every situation with a player dice roll helps speeding the game up and focusing the attention of players on the most important scenes where they get to roll the dice themselves. Using fortune rolls for less important scenes encourages the players to rollplay and work on their character development, since these actions can be quickly resolved, don't hold up the story and carry less risk.

Player dice rolls

Player dice rolls are the main tool to move the story forward in an interesting way and involve the characters in doing so. Every mission should focus around a few but important player dice rolls.

If a PC tries to influence the story in a major way by taking an action with uncertain outcome (called a player action), the GM will call for a player dice roll. This means the GM and the Player controlling the PC will enter into a conversation about the roll's conditions. If both agree on them the player will roll two to seven six-sided dice (d6). The GM will then judge the result and the player gets to describe his characters action as well as the worlds reaction, resolving the fictional situation.

The whole dice roll looks like this:

- 1) The player describes what his character wants to do in the fiction. This consists of two parts: The action his character wants to take and the goal he wants to achieve.
- 2) The GM decides if this triggers a player dice roll or will be resolved otherwise (by a fortune roll or GMs judgement). If a player dice roll is needed, the GM halts the story and calls for a player dice roll.
- 3) The GM then assesses the fictional situation for three components: The difficulty of the player action, meaning how likely is the PC to successfully do what his player described. The risk involved, meaning how dangerous is the situation and how likely will this risk manifest itself. And the effect of the player action, meaning if the PC is successfull, to what extent he will reach his goal.
- 4) Depending on these factors, the GM will offer conditions for the roll. He can give advantage or disadvantage based on difficulty, he can set wrong faces based on risk and he can set right faces based on effect.

5) The player can then decide if he wants to use further resources to influence the conditions of the dice roll offered. His party members can also decide if they want to use their resources to influence the player's dice roll.

6) If the player agrees to these conditions, he will then roll dice according to his PC's action rating. If he disagrees, he can try to reason with the GM or decline the action, try doing something else instead or letting another party member handle the situation.

7) The GM will judge the result of the dice roll. The player gets to describe the outcome based on the GM's judgement.

Example: *Two mercenaries manage to hunt down Ivar. They want to talk to him about the money he owes them. Ivar on the other hand is just coming back from a successful and lucrative mission. His party and him broke into a rich merchant's house to get some information on trade routes and steal everything not nailed down. Ivar does not want to separate from his riches and decides to fight the mercenaries for it. He dumps his loot into the alley and readies his sword. Cedric, Ivar's player, states: Ivar's goal is to get rid of the mercenaries and he wants to fight them using his sword.*

GM rules: This needs to be resolved with a dice roll. If Ivar tries to fight both mercenaries with his sword against their spears, he is at a disadvantage. It is going to be risky for him, so you are going to have wrong faces on one and two. Also against the heavily armored mercenaries a blow with the sword won't do much, so no right faces.

Cedric is not happy with these conditions: Ok, maybe Ivar doesn't take out his sword, but instead uses his pistol. Is that working better?

GM rules: Well if Ivar uses his pistols he is definitely bypassing their armor, maybe he can even take on a mercenary out with a single shot. Right faces on 6. Also since he has more range than the guards now, he can probably get one shot off before they reach him, so he is not at a disadvantage anymore. But his action does get riskier: If the mercenaries reach him he has no way to defend himself. Wrong faces on one, two and three.

Cedric thinks about these conditions but decides that Ivar would not risk getting injured here, possibly losing his spoils this way. Instead Ivar swallows his pride and decides to make a run for it.

GM rules: Running away is a good option here. Ivar only has his loot to carry whereas the mercenaries are going to get tired in their armor soon. Plus they have no ranged weapons so they can only harm Ivar if they hit him. The overall risk is low with wrong faces only on one. It's likely that Ivar can outrun them, so right faces on 5 and 6.

Ivar decides to make a run for it. Cedric rolls well and Ivar can successfully outrun the mercenaries.

Developers Note:

Having a dedicated conversation about the player dice rolls helps with slowing the game down for important moments and increasing the tension for each role since the stakes are clear. It also communicates to the player exactly how the GM thinks of the situation and helps him judge the risk and reward of his player action. Furthermore it engages the player and his team to think about employing additional resources and solving situations together.

Goal, means and action

Cornerstone of every conversation about player dice rolls and of assessing the difficulty, risk and effect of any situation are three things:

- 1) The goal: What does the PC want to achieve in this situation?
- 2) The means: What does the PC want to do in the fiction? Describe it!
- 3) The action: Which of his PCs current action ratings does the player want to use?

Only depending on these variables, the GM can accurately judge the situation. The goal and means are fully up to the Player. Even an unreachable goal might be attempted with the wrong means. The GM however is free to judge if and how the goal is reachable and how difficult and risky it is to do so with the proposed means. He should not judge an action as impossible easily, but try and allow as many actions as possible, even if the conditions for them are bad. Its the players decision if they want to take them!

Example: *Erik is caught in a fist fight with three nobles he insulted earlier. His player, Derek, decides that Erik wants to fight them off. Erik jumps at the first guy, trying to knock him out, using his fight action.*

GM rules: Erik is up against three guys, so at a disadvantage. Also his action is very risky and he probably won't manage to knock one of them out since the two other ones will just grab and hold him. Wrong faces on one and two and no right faces.

Derek does not want to take this risk and decides that Erik might not jump in empty handed, but put on his brass knuckles first. He still uses his fight action,, but now his goal is to cause as much pain as possible so one of the nobles flees, hopefully taking the other two with him.

GM rules: Erik is still up against three guys, but even against three guys he will get some blows off. With a brass knuckle they might be enough to break some bones, causing serious injuries. Erik is no longer at a disadvantage. Also seeing that he is armed now, once one of his opponents flees the other two will probably not stick around, so right faces on 6. But Erik will likely take a beating, so wrong faces on one and two.

Now Eriks plan is not to fight them off, but secretly place a key in one of the guys pockets which he later plans to use as evidence to have the noble arrested. Derek states Eriks goal and describes how he gets beaten up, but manages to slip the key in the nobles pocket, now using his dexterity action.

GM rules: Erik is still up against three guys but he is not trying to win the fight, so no disadvantage. His action is not easy though, so no advantage either. Also his action gets even riskier as he is getting beaten up on purpose, so wrong faces on one, two and three. But the nobles won't suspect someone risking personal harm to place an item on them, so his action will likely be very successful. Right faces on five and six.

Example: *Ingerid wants to quietly tinker with the lock at the merchants personal vault. Unfortunately, her dexterity action rating is currently empty. She does however have three dice in destroy. Silvana, Ingerids player, describes how Ingerid takes out her hammer and tries to knock the lock of the door quietly, using her destroy action.*

GM rules: Whist Ingerid doesn't use the best fitting action rating in this situation, her action still might work the intended way. But hammering at a small lock with the intend of opening it quietly is definitely a hard thing to do, so she's at a disadvantage here. Also the risk of getting spotted or making a loud noise is high, so wrong faces on one and two. And the chance of her getting just the lock of, leaving the rest of the door unharmed, is quite low, so no right faces.

Silvana says screw it. If we have only a small chance of getting in quietly, we might aswell come in swinging. Instead of breaking the lock Ingerid targets the vaults door with her hammer, using her destroy action, trying to break it down.

GM rules: Breaking down the door is difficult aswell, but the action is much better suited. While Ingerid might still not be able to do it in one blow, she'll definitely be able to damage the door heavily. But the risk of her getting spotted is higher since braking down the door will cause a lot of noise. She is at an advantage, but wrong faces on one, two and three and no right faces.

Developers Note:

Stating a clear goal, means and action not only helps the GM judge the situation, but also avoids misunderstandings at the table and helps in getting everyone on board with the PCs action. It also helps the player in setting the right expectations in the scene and thinking about how to move the story forward in an interesting way.

Quick overview: Success, Difficulty, risk and effect

The conditions are the GMs main tool to make sure the fictional situation is represented accurately in the players dice roll. They can influence how likely the player will achieve success, how much of his goal a PC is going to accomplish and if and how much risk materialises itself.

The player can either score a miss, a hit or a guaranteed hit. The difficulty indicates how likely the player is to achieve a hit or guaranteed hit, meaning that the PC performs the fictional action as described by his player. A hit is achieved if the player rolls atleast doubles (two dice show the same number). A guaranteed hit is achieved if the player rolls atleast two doubles. This means:

- 1) Miss: The PC doesn't achieve his goal (failure).
- 2) Hit: The PC may achieve some of his goal (partial success). The PC may achieve his goal (full success). Or the PC may achieve more than his goal (Great success).
- 3) Guaranteed hit: The PC achieves his goal (full success) or more than his goal (great success).

Most of the rolls difficulty is set by the PCs current action rating. However the GM can give an advantage or disadvantage, essentially adding or subtracting a die form the players dice pool.

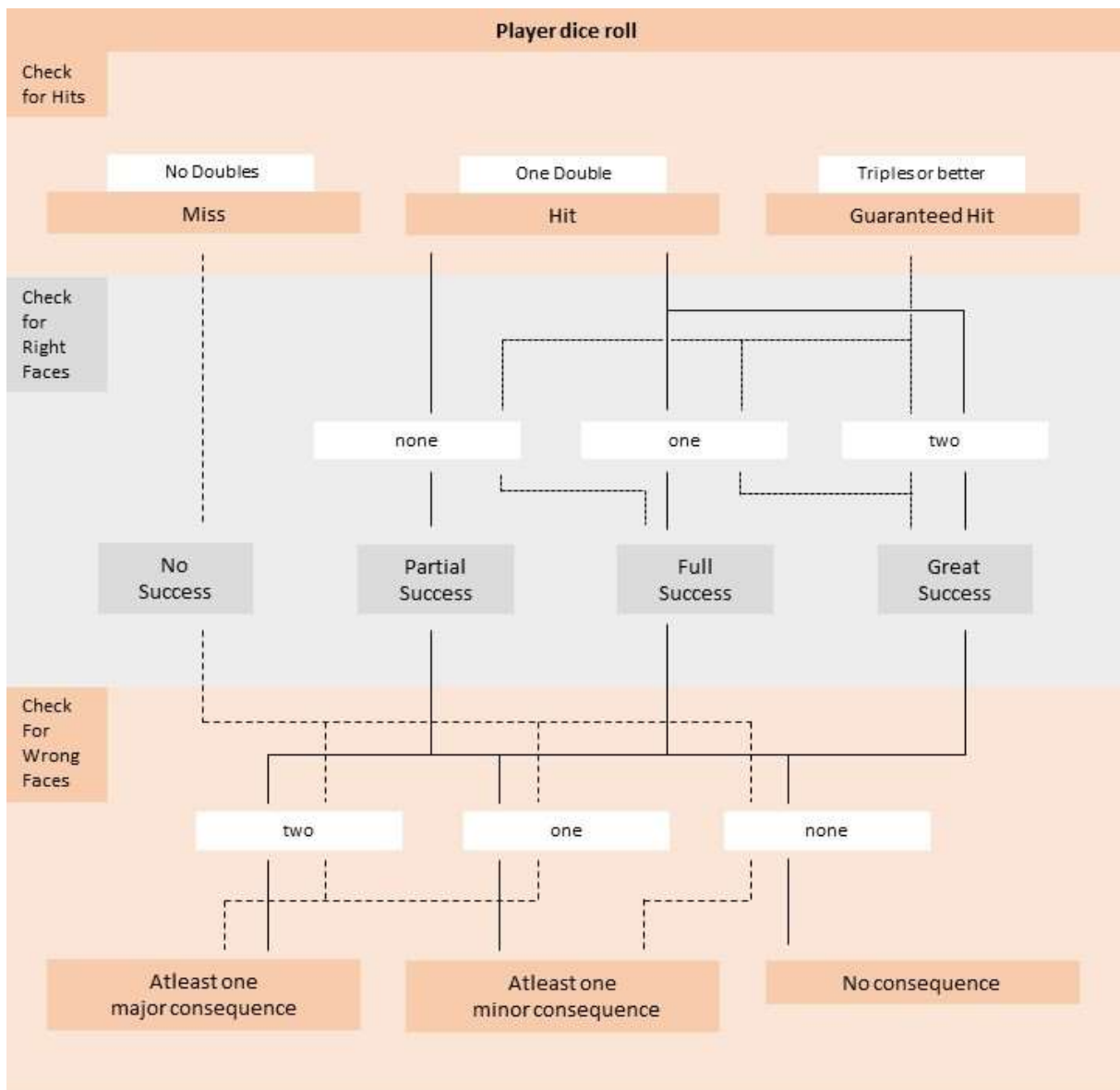
Even if the PC performs his action fully as the player described it, he might not achieve his full goal. How much the PC achieves of his goal is indicated by his effect. The effect level is determined by the number of dice showing a given number between 5 and 6 (called a right face). Which number(s) the dice need to be showing (5 and 6, only 6, none) is decided by the GM before each roll. For every time this number is rolled (a right face is showing), the players action is more impactful in the fiction:

- 1) No right faces: The PC achieves a partial success on a hit and a full success on a guaranteed hit.
- 2) One right face: The PC achieves a full success on a hit and a great success on a guaranteed hit.
- 3) Two or more right faces: The PC achieves a great success on a hit and guaranteed hit.

Not even a great success comes without a price. For every action a PC might suffer consequences. If and how many consequences are suffered is indicated by the risk involved. Risk materialises itself in a consequence every time a die shows a given number between 1 and 4 (called a wrong face). Which number(s) the dice need to be showing (1; 1 and 2; 1,2 and 3; 1,2,3 and 4) is decided by the GM before each roll. For every time this number is rolled (a wrong face is showing), the PC suffers one minor consequence in the fiction. The PC suffers always atleast one additional minor consequence on a failure. This means the PC will suffer the following number of minor consequences:

- 1) No wrong faces showing: No consequence on a success and one on a failure.
- 2) One wrong face showing: One consequence on a success and two on a failure.
- 3) Two wrong faces showing: Two consequences on a success or three on a failure.

Two minor consequences can be combined to a major consequence.



Example: *Ivars plan went great until he got punched in the face. Now he is running away from the Sherriffs men for paying back the favour and knocking out their sergeant. Just as he comes out a small alleyway onto the main street, a cart passes the entrance and blocks his way. Hearing the guards screams behind he, he decides to jump over the cart. His goal is to make it to the other side before the guards catch up to him and he uses his athleticism action.*

GM rules: The action does not seem overly difficult or simplistic. No advantage or disadvantage. There is some risk involved but not a lot, missing his jump would lead to the guards catching him. Wrong faces on one and two. The effect of him jumping over the cart would give him a great head start before the guards can start chasing him again, probably allowing him to outmanouever them or get lost in the croud. Right faces on five and six.

Cedric accepts and rolls five dice in total, giving him a six, two fives, a four and a two. This means he scores a hit and three right faces, achieving a great success. However he also suffers a minor consequence for the wrong face on two.

GM rules: Ivar succeeds fully in his action, managing to stall his chasers. He even gets two more things out of it for his great effect: He is able to fully shake off the guards and gets information on an interesting target for a new mission. But he also suffers a minor consequence: The guards have memorized his face and will keep looking for him.

Cedric is happy with this outcome and describes the story: *Ivar takes two steps back and exhales. Then he sprints forward, stepping onto a box for height and jumping elegantly. Just seconds afterwards one of his chasers tries to grab the now empty air, swearing loud and angrily. While flying over the cart, Ivar gets surprised: Are those not the exact same oriental carpets he was promised a fortune for? But he doesn't have much time to contemplate: He lands on the edge of the cart, jumping again, and makes it to the main street. His action pushes over the cart and a crate cracks open, spilling its golden spoils in the street. Within seconds a crowd blocks the alleways exit, fishing for coins while the merchant pulling the cart frenetically tries to defend his riches. Over all of this noise Ivar hears a very distinct voice: „We know you, Ivar Ivarsson! We'll find your sorry ass!“*

Developers Note:

Judging and resolving difficulty, effect and risk independent from one another helps upping the tension for the dice rolls and leads to more interesting results. Success comes often at a cost and the player is not guaranteed to achieve his full goal on most rolls. Consequences help to move the story along, especially on a failure or partial success, so rolling for the same action more than once is an unusual case. Having a separate effect level allows the GM to let players attempt actions that are very unlikely to be successful.

Difficulty: Action rating, advantage and disadvantage

Difficulty is used to influence how likely a success can be achieved in the fiction.

The main determinant of any action's success is the number of dice rolled. Since at least one double is needed for a Hit (and therefore a partial success or better), the likelihood of that happening keeps increasing with every die added to the player actions dicepool. The GM can alter the player actions dicepool directly by giving an advantage or disadvantage. If the GM gives an advantage, the player can add an extra die to his actions dicepool. If the GM decides on disadvantage, the player has to subtract a die from his actions dicepool.

The GM should keep in mind that most of the difficulty is already accounted for in the players current action rating. If the player can roll four dice this includes any minor advantage or disadvantage the character might have in the fiction. Only if there is an additional, very strong fictional reason to give an advantage or disadvantage the GM will do so. He will also communicate the reason to the players.

Example: *Erik wants to fight the Pirate captain, who he knows to be a superior duellist. Whilst he is tired and the captain is fresh, Erik still likes his odds. However, the Pirate Captain has a longsword against Eriks dagger and Erik is still wounded from an earlier encounter.*

GM rules: Erik's current dice stacked under his Fight-action are 4. These already account for the difference between his and the captain's duelling skills and bodystate. But the Captain has the longer reach and Erik is harmed on top of that. This is now enough to call for a disadvantage on Erik's part. His dice pool gets adjusted to three.

Example: *After hammering down the door the spoils of the merchant's vault are lying in front of Ingerid. The noise, unfortunately, has attracted unwanted visitors: The merchant's guards have swarmed Ingerid and she has backed off in the vault. With the guards blocking the entrance, Ingerid fears the punishment that will await her. She decides on trying to break free using a smokegranate she crafted earlier. She drops the bomb and tries to sneak past the guards, using the confusion to her advantage. In order to not breathe in the smoke, she covers her mouth and nose with a specially prepared cloth.*

GM rules: Ingerid's current stealth rating is 5. This gives a good indication of how likely she will be able to escape. The added confusion from the smoke bomb and the fact that the guards can't even breathe normally anymore are placing her on an advantage. She can add one die to her action rating, adjusting her dice pool for the action to a strong 6!

Developers Note:

Adjusting the player's dice pool directly helps communicating the GM's view on the fictional situation and warn or reassure the player of his action. It also raises the stakes and encourages players to think about placing themselves into advantageous situations or creating those via teamwork. It also helps balancing the game around the PC's strengths and weaknesses.

Effect: Right faces

The effect determines how much of his goal a PC will achieve on a hit or guaranteed hit, turning them into successes.

The player's effect is judged by how many of a given number between 5 and 6 show up on his roll. The number is set by the GM before the roll and is called a right face. For every time this number shows up, the action has more impact on the fiction.

There are three levels of success:

- 1) **Partial success:** A partial success is achieved if the Player rolled a Hit (one double) and no right faces. This means the PC achieves some of his goal in the fiction, but not all of it.
- 2) **Full success:** A success is achieved if the player rolled a hit and one right face. A success is also achieved if the player rolled a guaranteed hit and no right face. This means the PC achieves his full goal in the fiction.
- 3) **Great success:** A great success is achieved if the player rolled a hit and atleast two right faces. A great success is also achieved if the Player rolled a guaranteed hit and atleast one right face. This means the PC achieves his full goal in the fiction and gets something useful on top if it out of the fictional situation. As a rule of thumb, for every right face more than needed for a full success the PC should get something extra.

Right faces don't come into play if the player rolled a miss.

Whilst every action inherently carries some risk, not every action is suitable to reach the desired goal. This could be because the means the player described are just not very effective in the fiction. It could be because the player is using an unsuitable action rating to accomplish his action. It could be because the GM deems the goal to be too big to reach with just one action.

The GM does not have to offer a right face as a condition for a roll. Even unreachable goals can be attempted with ineffective means. By setting no right face the GM can allow those actions while making sure the likelihood of achieving the goal stays very low. The players can then decide to alter their fictional position by using additional resources or teamwork.

Example: *Ingerid seems to attract trouble! After a long night in the bar, the nightwatch finally drags her out into the street. They decide to throw her into a nearby river to cool her head off before arresting her, but in an unwatched second, she decides to make a run for it.*

GM rules: In this situation it seems highly unlikely that drunk-to-her-ass Ingerid can outrun the members of the nightwatch. Maybe she would have a better opportunity trying to bribe them, but as it is there are no Right faces.

Luckily, Silvana rolls four ones! A guaranteed hit, achieving a full success.

Silvana describes the situation: Without regard for her own safety, Ingerid sprints away, tripping over and falling down a very long stairway. She breaks a couple of bones, but the guards decide that this will be lesson enough and leave her alone.

Had Silvana only rolled doubles without a right face, she would have achieved a partial success. In this case Ingerid might be able to surprise the guards and get a valuable head start, but they would be right on her traces! She would need another roll to successfully escape them.

Example: *Through earlier scouting efforts Erik found out that the ambassador is in great financial trouble. He decides now would be a good time to swing some money around and get the charges against their party dropped.*

GM rules: Bribing the ambassador whilst he is desperate to honor his debt sounds like a very good opportunity to get what you want. Plus, the ambassador has a thing for young, blond Northmen! Right Faces on 5 and 6.

Derek rolls doubles, two fives and a six. A hit and great success with three right faces! This means not only is the ambassador dropping the charges, Erik also got some very vital information about another gang and a rare item from the ambassador's personal collection.

Example: *Ivar wants to climb up the keeps wall to reach the cells window and saw off the bars, freeing his imprisoned brother. Unfortunately, Ivar does not have a good current athleticism action rating, so Cedric wants to use Ivars's stealth action.*

GM rules: Stealth can be used to climb the walls, but it is going to take much longer than athleticism. Ivar probably will have to take more than one action to reach his goal. No right faces.

Ivar still wants to climb up the keeps wall. This time he has a sufficient athleticism action rating, but his brother is kept up in the highest tower.

GM rules: The action rating fits the action better now. But the distance Ivar has to climb is huge. He won't make that in one go and has to spend two actions to reach his goal. Again, no right faces.

Ivar has reached the window and is now trying to break the bars. Having not file at hand, all Ivar's got is his knife. Instead of filing the bars he has to try and loosen the mortar holding the bars in place.

GM rules: While chopping away with a knife at mortar is not difficult, it does not sound very effective either. Again, no right faces.

Fortunately, Cedric rolls a hit, so Ivar achieves atleast a partial success. The bars are giving in a little, but not yielding fully. With a feast of strength Ivar will probably be able to break them off.

Developers Note:

Separating if and how successful an action is by using effect and success levels allows the GM to better communicate his view on the fictional situation to the player. It also encourages the GM to let players attempt more actions, making the game less repetitive and more diverse. It encourages the players to think about teamwork and additional mechanics.

Risk: Wrong faces and consequences

Every PC's action inherently carries a risk. This risk may or may not realise itself if the PC decides to take the action. If the risk realises itself, it is called a consequence.

Much like right faces carry the opportunity, wrong faces carry the risk. A wrong face is a number on the die between 1 and 4. The GM will decide on wrong faces before the roll, however, there is always a wrong face on 1. Any time a wrong face shows up on a roll (a chosen number is rolled) the PC suffers a consequence.

The PC always suffers at least one additional consequence on a Miss, even if no wrong faces are showing. On a full success or great success, the PC suffers half of the normal consequences (rounded down).

As a rule of thumb situations can be judged as follows:

- 1) **Everyday situation.** This is a situation everyone might deal with and very little risk is involved. Walking away unharmed is mostly a given. Wrong faces only on one.
- 2) **Challenging Situation.** This is a situation most people won't encounter. There are medium levels of risk involved and walking away unharmed is not a given anymore. Wrong faces on one and two.
- 3) **Dangerous situation.** This is a situation almost no ordinary people will ever encounter. There are high levels of risk involved. Walking away harmed is mostly a given. Wrong faces on one, two and three.
- 4) **Deadly Situation.** Legends are told about the few that encounter death and live to tell the tale. There are maximum levels of risk involved and people usually don't walk away anymore. Wrong faces on one, two, three and four.

Example: *A giant werewolf is chained up in the yard of the castle. Ivar wants to set it free, creating a distraction for the guards to deal with. He flexes his giant muscles and attempts to rip the chains into pieces.*

GM rules: This situation seems very risky. Not only is it likely the guards might spot him and give alarm, but also no one knows if the werewolf will attack Ivar instead. Wrong faces on one, two, and three.

Consequences are divided into minor and major consequences. Minor consequences are less threatening and of low to medium intensity. Major consequences are very threatening and of high intensity. By default, the PC always suffers minor consequences. Two minor consequences can be combined into a major consequence.

- 1) Minor consequences can be: Lost opportunity, disadvantage on your next roll, harm, complication, escalating action.
- 2) Major consequences can be: Severe harm, serious complication, burning a dice.

The additional consequence the PC suffers on a Miss is added to the ones the PC suffers from the wrong faces. If he fails his action, he can suffer a severe consequence with just one wrong face showing.

GM rules: Cedric rolls his destroy action and gets two fours, a two and a one. This means Ivar can successfully rip the chains apart, but he also suffers two minor consequences for the two wrong faces. The GM decides that the guards will ring the alarm and the werewolf, drunken in rage, jumps on Ivar trying to rip him into pieces with his giant teeth.

Ivar needs to defend himself against the werewolf's bites and claws now. He uses his shield, trying to block the attacks and retreat, hoping the werewolf will focus on easier targets.

GM rules: Fighting with a werewolf is a deadly endeavour, which usually would earn wrong faces on one, two, three and four. But Ivar doesn't really try to wound the beast and only shield himself from its attacks. Therefore, wrong faces on one, two and three.

Cedric rolls his fight action, giving him two ones and two twos. A great success, but at a high price! Ivar would suffer four minor consequences now. The GM decides to combine two of them into a major consequence. Ivar suffers severe harm, a complication and disadvantage on his next roll.

Ivar manages to successfully defend himself against the werewolf until it loses interest and faces the guards. But his shield is broken, so he can't use it anymore. Also, the wolf managed to bypass his defense and his claws ripped Ivar's arm open. Severely bleeding from it, Ivar will be at a disadvantage on his next roll.

The GM should always foreshadow the risk involved to the players. Foreshadowing the amount of risk is mostly done by setting the conditions for the roll (wrong faces). Foreshadowing the type of risk is done by hinting at the type of consequence the PC might suffer. Both the amount and also the type of risk should be foreshadowed narratively.

Example: *The giant dog bared its teeth and growled aggressively before jumping at Ingerid, snapping at her lower body. She knows that beast has more than enough power to chew her leg right off.*

Here the type of consequence (harm) as well as the severity (major) are foreshadowed to Silvana, Ingerids player.

Eriks gold got stolen, but he is on the hunt! The chase seemingly ends on a rooftop with Erik cornering the thief. Before Erik can beat his belongings out of im, the thief jumps, landing on a boat that is passing the canal underneath. Erik is not willing to give up the chase but he knows if he fails this jump and lands in the water, there is no way he will find the thief ever again.

The type of consequence (lost opportunity) as well as the severity (minor) are foreshadowed to Derek, Eriks player.

On every miss the PC suffers, resulting in a Failure, the player has to burn a dice he used for his player action roll, making it unavailable in the future.

Developers Note:

Consequences are not used to punish the Player for a bad roll. Their task is to move the fiction along so the Players don't get stuck attempting the same action over and over again. This helps with pacing the game as well as creating tension and engage the players thought process on how to avoid them.

Challenged Rolls

The GM can decide to challenge a player's dice roll. In this case the player and GM both roll dice. A hit occurs if the player manages to roll more doubles than the GM.

To a challenged dice roll apply the same rules as to a regular player's dice roll. The player describes his PC's action and enters into a conversation with the GM about the dice roll's conditions. The GM assesses the difficulty, effect and risk involved and decides on wrong and right faces.

Instead of giving advantage or disadvantage, the GM can decide to challenge the roll. If he does, the player achieving a hit (and therefore a success or failure) is no longer just determined by the player rolling doubles. Rather the player needs to

- 1) still roll at least one double
- 2) and also roll more doubles in total than the GM

to achieve a hit. If the player rolls no doubles or an equal or lower number of doubles than the GM he misses, resulting in a failure. If the player rolls at least two more doubles than the GM, he achieves a guaranteed hit.

The player can now decide to agree to the challenged roll and/or use further resources or teamwork to boost his fictional position. If the player agrees, both the player and GM roll dice and the GM judges the result. If the player succeeds, he gets to describe the outcome based on the GM's judgement. If the player fails however, the GM gets to describe the situation.

Example: *Erik found out about a demon summoner and snuck in his lair to confront the very powerful magic wielder. He manages to interrupt a ritual, charging at the foe who readies his staff.*

GM rules: The demon summoner is one of the city's most skilled wizards. A fair fight might be very difficult for Erik, but a blow to the head will take out even the demon summoner. The GM challenges Erik's player dice roll (dice pool 4) with a dice pool of 5 of his own, reflecting the summoner's advantage. Because this is a very risky action even on a success, the GM decides on Wrong Faces for 1, 2 and 3. However since Erik is a skilled fighter himself, if he manages to succeed, his success will likely be great. Right Faces on 6.

By a miracle Erik manages to roll two doubles (1 and 3), beating the GM and achieving a full success. Erik pierces the demon summoner's heart with his sword, sending him back to the realm he once ascended from. In turn the summoner curses Erik with his magic, leaving him behind collapsing at the brink of death.

The GM can use between two and eight dice from his own dice pool. He can freely decide on the number he uses, bearing in mind that using the same number of dice as the player already ups the difficulty significantly. The GM's dice are burned after use.

Developers Note:

The Challenged Rolls serves as a way to increase uncertainty and tension and balance the game around the PCs strength and weaknesses. They also help with pacing the game, as the longer one mission goes on the bigger th GMs dice pool grows, allowing him to challenge rolls more often. They provide the players with a new challenge to overcome and focuses the attention on the most important and interesting dice rolls. Furthermore, they engage the Players in thinking about additional rules and ressources.

Dice pools

The burning dice system uses dice pools to indicate how likely to succeed a given players or GMs action is.

Dice pool refers to the total number of dice available for a given task or group. Some of the most important dice pools are:

- 1) The all-player dice pool: This is the total amount of dice available to all players.
- 2) The GMs dice pool: This is the total amount of dice available to the GM.
- 3) The PCs dice pool: This is the total amount of dice available to one player, controlling the PC.
- 4) The player action rolls dice pool: This is the total amount of dice available to a PC for one specific player action (the current PCs action rating).
- 5) The challanged rolls dice pool: This is the total amount of dice the GM chooses to challenge a roll with.

Example: *The GM decides to challenge a roll with 4 of his 12 dice.*

The GMs dice pool contains 12 dice. These are avilable for everything the GM wants to do. Once he takes 4 dice to challenge the roll, his challenged roll dice pool is 4. These are the dice available to roll on the challanged roll. Once they are burned, the GMs dice pool shrinks to 8.

When dice are burned from a dice pool this means they are taken out of the dice pool, effectively reducing the total amount of dice available.

Dice pools can be split up to form smaller dice pools:

- 1) The all-player dice pool (the dice available to all players) is split into the PCs dice pool (the dice available to one respective player). This means not every player can use every dice in the all-player dice pool. Each player can only use the dice available to his PC.
- 2) The PCs dice pool (number of dice available to one Player) is again split into the player action rolls dice pool (number of dice available for one action). Since the PC can only take one action at a given point in the fiction, the player can only use the dice available for this specific action for his action roll. The player can effectively only use a subset of his available dice at once.

Example: *Derek, Cedric and Silvana control 33 dice in total. Each of their PCs (Erik, Ivar, Ingerid) controls 11 dice. Ingerid wants to fight someone, using her fight action. Her current action rating for fight is 5. Silvana rolls 4 out of these 5 dice to attempt her player action.*

The all-players dice pool is 33. These are all dice theoretically available to all players. 11 of them are available for Silvana to use, since her PC Ingerid controls 11 dice. This is the PCs dice pool. Out of her PCs dice pool Silvana can use 5 dice for one fictional situation to fight. She chooses to use 4 dice, saving one for later. These 4 dice are the player action rolls dice pool. This means that out of 33 dice on total, 11 of them assigned to Silvana, she can use 5 of them at the same time, and she chose to use 4.

The GMs dice pool is not split up. The GM can control all the dice in his dice pool simultaneously (if no limit is set elsewhere). Therefore, the GMs dice pool is much smaller than the all-player dice pool at the beginning of every mission. He starts with 2 dice in his dice pool. Every dice the players burn end it in the GMs dice pool, growing it during the mission.

Developers Note:

Dice pools are introduced to give everyone a very quick and easy way to judge their power in any given situation. The players can easily judge the likeliness of their PCs actions and seeing how big the GMs dice pool is growing gives them an incentive and pressure to finish the mission fast, upping the stakes and tension towards the end of a mission.

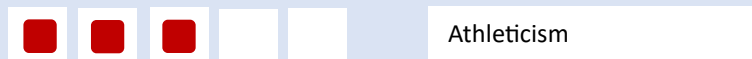
Shifting the Dice: Actions and player action dice pool

Actions determine in which way a PC can successfully influence the fictional story.

Every PC has the same actions. These represent the PCs toolbox to deal with situations in the fiction. When a player wants to alter the fiction his PC performs an action, called a players action. If this action influences the fictional story in a major way and its outcome is uncertain, the GM will call for a players action roll.

The amount of dice a player can use for his player action roll (the player action dice pool) is equal to the amount of dice his PC has stacked up on his character sheet next to the action he wants to perform (current action rating) plus two. The player does not have to use all of the available dice for his player action roll.

Example: *Ingerid has 3 dice stacked next to her athleticism action.*



Her current athleticism action rating is three. If Silvana wants Ingerid to perform an athleticism action, she can roll up to five dice, giving her a good chance for atleast on double.

The number of dice that can be stacked next to a action depends on the number of available spots. At the beginning of each mission the players decide how to distribute their dice amongst their PCs actions (determining their PCs initial capabilities). During each mission the players must redistribute their dice amongst their PCs actions, effectively altering their PCs capabilities. This process is called shifting the dice.




A shift in the dice occurs every time a player himself rolls a players action roll (challenged or unchallenged). The player picks up the number of dice next to the according action he wants to use on his character sheet. He then picks up two more dice: One from the general supply (two if he has an advantage, none if he has a disadvantage). The other one is picked up from the PCs exhaustion dice pool, giving him his total player action dice pool. These dice are used to roll his player action.

After the outcome has been judged by the GM and the player has moved along the fictional story, he returns all dice he picked up from the general supply pool to the general supply. Remaining are the dice he picked up from his character sheet. He burns the die from his exhaustion dice pool, adding it to the GMs dice pool. If he has to burn an additional die, he takes one of the remaining dice. The other dice are returned to the character sheet. They can be redistributed to other actions, but not to the action the PC just performed.





All dice picked up from the general supply have to be returned there at all times. They cannot be put in any PCs dice pool or the GMs dice pool.

Example: Ivar has 4 dice stacked next to his destroy action. Cedric decides this is a good opportunity to just break open the door his party tried to lockpick earlier. Ivar gets out his hammer and smashes the wooden planks.

Cedric decides to pick up three dice from Ivars's character sheet, giving him five dice in total for his player action. Unfortunately, he fails and Ivar is not able to break through the door. On top of that guards have been alarmed by the noise and are coming close.

	Athleticism	GMs dice
	Fight	
	Destroy	

Cedric now returns one dice to the general supply. Of the remaining four dice he burns two: his exhaustion die and an additional one for his failure. He now has two dice left to redistribute on Ivars's character sheet. Anticipating combat, he chooses to push his current fight action rating to four.

	Athleticism	GMs dice	
	Fight		
	Destroy		

Developers Note:

Shifting around the dice encourages the players to explore new playstyles and don't do the same thing over and over again, without making the characters powerful in everything. It leads to more explorative and creative storytelling, creating more dynamic and diverse situations. It helps the players to think about teamwork and rewards thinking strategically and planning ahead.

Burning the dice: Growing the GMs dice pool

Burning the dice means a transfer of dice between dice pools.

This occurs in two different ways:

- 1) Player's dice, that get burned, are transferred to the GMs dice pool. This reduces the all-player dice pool and grows the GMs die pool.
- 2) GMs dice, that get burned, are transferred to the general supply. This reduces the GMs dice pool, but doesn't grow the players dice pool.

One player's dice is burned when the player rolls a miss in a player action roll. This applies to challenged rolls as well. Two players dice are burned when the player suffers more than one consequence on a failure. If at any time more dice are burned than available in the action rolls dice pool, the player has to take the missing dice of his character sheet and burn them. He can choose freely which ones he takes off.

Dice taken from the general supply need to be returned there. They cannot be burned. The PCs dice pools get refreshed at the beginning of every new mission.

The GMs dice are burned upon use. He cannot keep or redistribute them.

Example: *Ingerid is trying to create a distraction for her party members. She challenges the bars undefeated champion to a drinking duel, even though he is known to chug three beers without blinking.*

Silvana, unfortunately, does not roll doubles and misses. She additionally rolled a wrong face and therefore suffers two minor complications. Ingerid gets a strong headache from the hooch and throws up on herself, earning a disadvantage on her next roll.

Silvana has to burn to die for the Failure and the extra consequence. If she had suffered only one consequence, she would have had only one die to burn. These dice get transferred to the GMs dice pool.

Example: *Ivar is wrestling with a giant ogre. The GM decides to challenge this roll with 5 dice.*

Cedric and the GM both roll dice and the GM rolls higher. Cedric misses and has to burn (at least) one die. However, the GM has to burn all of his five dice and return them to the general supply. He cannot use them again and his dice pool remains empty until the players burn dice again themselves.

Developers Note:

Burning the dice shifts the power in favour of the GM during the mission. Since players can't replenish lost dice, their overall dice pool gets smaller while the GMs grows. This creates a sense of exhaustion and resources running out. Additionally, it puts pressure on the players to finish a mission before the scale of power tips too much in the GMs favour. This naturally helps with tension and storytelling. It encourages the players to play together and strategically in order to avoid burning too many dice.

Exhaustion

Every character has an exhaustion bar (an exhaustion dice pool). It is replenished at every missions start and is used to take player actions as well as empower them. Additionally, the exhaustion dice pool is used for teamwork manouvers.

Exhaustion represents how far characters are able to push their body and mind in a given situation. This resource depletes and cannot be restored during a mission. Exhaustion dice are therefore always burned after use.

For every player action one die is taken from the exhaustion bar to roll with. The player can decide to burn dice from their PCs exhaustion bar for additional boni. Dice cannot be returned to the exhaustion bar.

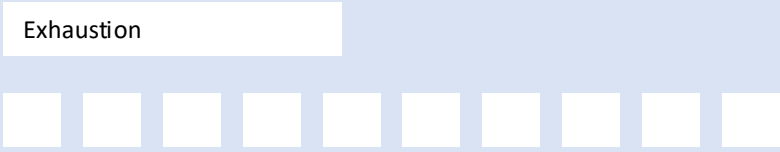
Example: *Ivar wants to break open the entrance to the sewer systems, enabling his party to sneak through the city effortlessly. He is lucky: When the party arrives at the entrance it seems someone else has already forced his way in, only losely securing the gate after themselves. The GM rules advantage.*

Ivars current action rating in deytroy is 3. Cedric, Ivars Player, picks up the three dice from Ivars destroy action. He picks up one die from Ivars's exhaustion bar for attempting the player action. He picks up two additional dice from the general supply: One by default and one for his advantage.

Cedric now rolls six dice and succeeds. After his roll he returns two dice to the general supply. He burns his exhaustion die, giving it to the GM. He then redistributes his three dice left into Ivars's character sheet, putting them into the stealth-action.

Example: *Eriks exhaustion bar has a maximum limit of 10.*

Exhaustion



Erik can take up to ten player actions this mission. If Eriks burns all of his exhaustion dice he will fall unconscious and drop out of the mission, joining his party again for the next one.

Developers Note:

The exhaustion dice pool helps balancing and pacing the game: First of all, burning a dice every player action guarantees the GMs dice pool to fill up, giving him more options to challenge rolls. Second, it also incentivizes each player to let other players take actions and share the spotlight in order to preserve their exhaustion dice for future use (and actions their PC might want to take in the future). This is especially true if one PC hasn't reached his exhaustion breakpoint of one segment yet. Third, it instills pressure on the players to end a mission before they can't take actions anymore and ups the narrative stakes as they watch their exhaustion bars emptying.

Exhausting yourself

Players can burn additional dice from their PCs exhaustion bar. This is called exhausting yourself.

Players can exhaust their PCs to empower their own action rolls. For every time a player exhausts his PC (burns a die from his exhaustion bar) he can roll this additional dice for his player action roll. It represents his PC pushing himself and putting more effort and energy into a given task. This comes at a cost however: Every time the PC exhausts himself for his own player action, he gains an additional wrong face.

Example: *Ingerid got caught by guards during one of her nightly adventures into the courts file cabinet. She needs to get out of there as quickly as she can.*

Unfortunately, Silvana didn't account for so many guards. While Ingerid's current fight action rating is good, her athleticism action rating is at a poor one, which gives Silvana only three dice to roll for her PC. She decides that Ingerid will muster every strength she has to get out of that situation.

Ingerid exhausts herself twice, giving her two additional dice from her exhaustion dice pool to roll with. Silvana rolls five dice in total now and succeeds. While Ingerid faces more consequences for the two two additional wrong faces, she is able to slide through the guards, sprint down the stairs and jump over the courts wall, getting herself out of trouble.

Silvana then returns one die to the general supply and burns the three dice she took from her exhaustion dice pool. This leaves her one die that she can return to her character sheet.

Developers Note:

Exhausting yourself allows players to succeed even when the odds are against them. It furthermore can be used to negate planning errors from players and give them the upper hand in critical situations. Since the players take a long-term cost for exhausting themselves it also raises the narrative stakes for the rolls that they deem important.

Teamwork manouvers

Besides empowering their own player action rolls, players can also exhaust their PC to empower their teammates dice rolls. This can happen in different ways, called teamwork maneuvers:

- 1) PCs can be exhausted to give one teammate an additional dice on one action roll. This is called an assist action.
- 2) PCs can be exhausted to give (up to) several teammates an additional right face on (up to) several of their action rolls. This is called a setup action.
- 3) PCs can be exhausted to perform an action with their teammates together. This is called a group action.

Assist action

Much like exhausting yourself to get additional dice for your own action roll, PCs can be exhausted to give additional dice to other players. This represents the characters helping each other in the fiction.

At any point in a conversation about a player action roll, an assist can be offered or asked for. If the two players agree on an assist, the assisting player describes what his PC does in the fiction to help with the player action. He then takes one die off his exhaustion bar, giving it to the player that is performing the player action.

The player can perform his action now with a larger dice pool. Once he is done and the result is judged, the player returns dice to the general supply. He then burns all of his exhaustion dice. This includes the assist die that he received earlier. This die cannot be recovered or given back to the assisting player. The player then proceeds to replenish his character sheets with the leftover dice.

Assisting someone, unlike exhausting your PC for your own roll, does not cost an additional wrong face. Every player can only assist any given action once.

Example: *The party is prowling across the city's rooftops, looking out for the gargoyles gracing the merchant guilds rooftop. When they finally see them, a big gap separates them and the merchants building. Ivar decides on making the jump, their mission rendered unsuccessful otherwise.*

Cedric and the GM begin discussing the rolls conditions. Derek offers that his PC Erik might assist the roll, taking some of Ivars Items to make him lighter. Cedric agrees to this and Derek takes on Eriks exhaustion dice, giving it to Cedric.

Cedric rolls and Ivar manages to jump successfully. They throw him a rope and not long after, everyone made it safe on the rooftop. Cedric returns his dice to the general supply and then burn his exhaustion dice, including the one he got out of Eriks sheet.

Developers Note:

Assisting other players allows for a better distribution of exhaustion amongst the team. It also enables strong dice rolls without only one person contributing, making the PCs and players work together and feel like a team. It enables everyone to chip in on important moments.

Setup action

Instead of giving a teammate more dice to roll, the setup action allows teammates to have an additional right face on their dice rolls.

Players can perform the setup pro- or reactively, meaning without any prior player action roll called or with a specific player action roll called. A setup action is performed like any other player action roll, with a few key differences:

- 1) The only result of a setup action (besides driving the story forward) is to add one right face to subsequent rolls
- 2) Setup actions always have atleast one right face on 6.
- 3) Setup actions don't have wrong faces, meaning at worst a minor consequence on a failure can be suffered.

To perform a setup action, the player describes what his character wants to do in the fiction. He then describes as his goal which kind of actions he would like to empower in the future. The player takes dice from the general supply, from his exhaustion bar and from his action rating and rolls them, just like a regular player action dice roll. The GM judges the result and the player describes the fictional outcome. Afterwards he burns (atleast) his exhaustion die and returns the rest to his sheet or the general supply.

A setup action has to be performed before any action that claims its extra right face. The setup actions effect lasts as long as it makes sense in the fiction, typically for one fictional situation.

Example: *Erik has decided to talk the greedy noble into funding new equipment for their crew. Unfortunately, he doesn't seem to be willing to part way with his hard inherited money easily.*

The GM rules that the nobleman is so attached to his coins that nothing Eriks says is gonna change that. He has no right faces, meaning a full success is not likely. Silvana hears this and decides that Ingerid wants to step in. She wants her to perform a setup action using her talk action:

Ingerid steps up and starts flirting with the noble. As it turns out he is not only greedy for money. Blinded by the affection he's shown, he is atleast willing to hear Erik out, for Ingerids sake.

Silvana takes 5 dice and rolls: 5,5,6,3,1. She achives a full success, meaning Ingerid is able to persuade the noble into hearing Erik out. He now has a right face on 6 for his player action roll. Usually, Ingerid would suffer a cinsequence for the wrong face on one (by default). However, setup actions don't have wrong faces, so she is fine.

Example: *The party has been searching a private courtyard without proper authorization. The owner's personal bodyguard, a giant and heavily armored ogre, is now blocking their path out. Cutting through that armor is not an option with their equipment.*

The GM rules that all fight actions have no right faces

Ivar steps up. With his hammer he wants to damage the armor, so that everyone else's blades can pierce it. He wants to perform a setup action using his destroy action.

Cedric rolls a full success.

Ivar manages to jump in range and deliver a few but critical blows to the ogre's armor. Whilst its not entirely destroyed, cracks and dents are appearing, indicating the weak spots.

The GM rules that all subsequent fight actions of Ivar's party against the ogre have a right face on six now.

Developers Note:

Setup actions are the only way to increase an action roll's effect. This incentivizes teamwork and staying together. It is also a way to perform an action deemed unfit by the GM. He can, in turn, offer no right faces on an action roll and rely on the party's teamwork capabilities to make it work. Furthermore, it can be used as a bargaining tool between players if they are divided about how to move the fiction along, again incentivizing teamwork and communication.

Group action

Group actions are used if several team members want to attempt an action together.

Everyone who wants to partake in the action's result burns one die of his exhaustion bar. Group actions are then performed like every player's action dice roll. All members of the group action and the GM discuss the group action's conditions. If they agree on conditions, everyone who wants to roll dice for the group action rolls his current action rating, just like he would for his own player action. The highest result, meaning the greatest success, counts as the result for the group action roll. Everyone participating in the group action is covered under this result.

It is possible to assist or provide a setup action for a group action, as long as it makes sense in the fiction. Aside from multiple people paying with exhaustion to participate, group actions are treated like normal player action rolls.

Example: *Erik broke open the rooftop window and now everyone is entering the merchant guilds headquarters. They sneak through some hallways until they finally find a window down to the inner courtyard. Since everyone wants to climb down there, they call for a group action.*

The GM rules that the dark and misty night is a good cover for their stealthy climbing attempt. He rules advantage for the group action. Erik and Ingerid both have good stealth skills, while Ivar has other strength. So, they decide that Derek and Silvana will participate and roll while Ivar will only participate in the group action. Everyone burns one exhaustion die.

Derek and Silvana take an additional exhaustion die, two dice from the general supply, since the GM had ruled advantage, and two dice of their own, giving both five dice. While Derek unfortunately misses, Silvana rolls doubles and a six, achieving a full success.

The party prowled down the courtyard wall, arriving at the bottom unspotted

Developers Note:

Group actions allow each player to put dice into his PC's actions he is interested in exploring without having to worry about being left behind. It also helps with pacing the game, since only one dice roll is needed to resolve the same situation instead of several. Lastly, it encourages players to work together and distribute their current action ratings evenly, as long as they have exhaustion to burn.

Actions

Actions determine how the PCs can influence the fictional story.

Actions are of a general nature. They describe not what a PC does, but more in which general way he influences the fiction. They bridge the gap between the PC's stated goal (the outcome of his action) and what the PC actually does (his means).

Choosing an action to perform gives some guidance of what might happen in the fiction. The same action might look very differently though, depending on what each player wants his PC to do.

Example: *Ingerid is caught by a guard while sneaking into the Sherriffs office. Since her current action rating in talk is quite good, Silvana decides that Ingerids best shot is to try and talk herself out of the situation.*

Even though Ingerid uses talk, what she actually does might look very different, depending on her means, and the GM might offer different conditions for every scenario.

Ingerid might try and reason with the guard to let her go in exchange for some money or a favor. She might try and convince the guard of her innocence. She might present a story of her being forced into breaking in. She could try and flirt with the guard or to intimidate him into letting her go. She could threaten the guard or burst into tears, hoping to exploit his emotions.

What Ingerid ends up doing is not determined by the action Silvana chose, but by Ingerids character. If she is fierce and brave, she will probably not try and reason but frighten the guard instead. If she is charming and seductive, she might offer him a favor to get her way. If she is manipulative and calculating, she would likely deceive the guard into thinking she is sent from a higher authority.

Developers Note:

Actions are incentivising the players to roleplay. The open design allows for all kind of flavour to be introduced into the game and each player can come up with signature ways for his character to perform actions. They help the player in exploring and developing a more complex character.

Actions in detail

There are ten different actions:

Dexterity

Athleticism

Stealth

Fight

Destroy

Perception

Talk

Deceive

Faith

Witchcraft

Of those ten actions nine are available to every player. Witchcraft is only available to those who choose it as a special ability.

Dexterity

Dexterity is performing a task with controlled movement.

You might craft a new item. You might slip something in someones pocket or steal something out of it. You might perform a cardtrick or tinker with a lock. You might operate a vehicle or mount. You might exhance something or hide it with a sleight of hand. You might forge some false copies of documents.

Athleticism

Athleticism is performing a movement with strenght or explosive power.

You might run through the streets, jumping over obstacles. You might swim or dive through the canals. You might climb a tower or wrestle an opponent. You might perform acrobatics or lift something heavy. You might break something sturdy or tackle someone. You might throw something far.

Stealth

Stealth is staying quiet and unseen.

You might hide from someone or traverse somewhere unseen. You might climb a building or sneak through the shadows. You might blend into a crowd or swim through a river quietly. You might ambush someone from behind. You might set up or spring a trap. You might shoot someone from range.

Fight

Fighting is combatting an opponent.

You might enter into a melee brawl with someone. You might fight someone with or without weapons. You might wrestle someone or punch with your fists. You might shoot someone from range, even without them noticing. You might ambush someone. You might enter a formal duel.

Destroy

Destroy is unleashing great force against something

You might break down a door or wall. You might smash a window, items or furniture. You might use explosives to blow something up. You might use acid or craftsmanship to break something quietly. You might set something on fire or freeze it. You might enter a melee brawl or punch someone brutally.

Perception

Perception is using your senses to pick up signals otherwise unnoticed.

You might listen at a door or wall. You might study someone closely, revealing their true intent. You might observe a situation or location, revealing hidden patterns. You might study something to obtain knowledge. You might connect the clues and gain insights. You might sense a hidden exit by feeling the stone. You might smell the poison or gas.

Talk

Talk is communicating with someone verbally or nonverbally.

You might speak to a person. You might seduce them, frighten them, intimidate them. You might sign them with your hands or facial expressions. You might write a letter or notice. You might leave clues behind or forge them.

Deceive

Deceive is misdirecting someone.

You might lie to someone. You might put on a mask or act like someone else. You might disguise yourself or try to fit in somewhere you don't belong. You might deploy fake evidence or forge it. You might evoke false desires in someone. You might perform a distraction.

Faith

Faith is utilizing someone's belief, including your own.

You might pray with someone. You might convince them in the name of greater good. You might frighten someone or anger them. You might inquisition someone. You might incentivise someone, for good or bad. You might compel someone to do your bidding.

Witchcraft

Witchcraft is bending the reality.

You might inflict harm on someone. You might read someone's mind or even control it. You might create an illusion or an unassable barrier. You might control darkness and light. You might evoke a wind or storm. You might talk to demons or ghosts. You might perform rituals or brew potions with dark powers. You might talk to the dead.

These actions are overlapping each other in part. They are not exclusive. Actions are used to highlight the key point of a PCs behaviour, not limit it. PCs may adjust their behaviour depending on what action they choose to highlight the actions core concept.

Example: *Ivar has had some troubles with a friend lately and decides to find out once and for all whether he can trust him or not. Cedrik decides that Ivar is going to talk to his friend, trying to figure out what is going on.*

Ivar can perform a number of actions to get from his means (talking to his friend) to his goal (figuring out whether he is trustworthy):

He could simply use the talk action, trying to strike up a verbal communication. He could intimidate or beg his friend. He could pay him or reason with him. The focus of all these actions is how the communication unravels.

He could also use the deceive action. During the conversation with his friend, Ivar could act like he knows more than he does. He could lie straight to his friend how he found out about his betrayal. He could offer fake evidence. In all of these behaviours Ivar is still talking to his friend. But the focus of his action is not the verbal communication anymore, but in which way Ivar misdirects his friend into telling him the truth.

Furthermore, Ivar could use the faith action. He could try to appeal to a common religion or shared belief. He could tell a powerful story of his belief, how he learned to always be loyal. He could confront his friend about his belief and how he is breaking it. Ivar could try and inquisition his friend, depending on his authority in a shared belief. Again, Ivar strikes up a communication, but the focus is now on how his or his friends faith influence that conversation.

Ivar could use the perception action. Whilst having a conversation with his friend, Ivar could try and study him for signs of nervousity or fear, indicating a betrayal. Even in this scenario both of them talk to each other. The focus shifts away majorly now, highlighting that the interesting part of the action is not necessarily the conversation anymore, but Ivars attempts to read his friends facial and verbal cues.

Ivar could use the witchcraft action. He could try and read his friends mind or invoke a feeling of guilt in his friend, incentivising him to spill the beans. There is still a communication aspect to the scene, but the way in which Ivar uses his power to compel his friend is the more interesting aspect now.

Developers Note:

The different actions are there to give the players some guidance and make suggestions on how to influence the fiction. Their purpose is to give the players a starting point for exploring how their characters would resolve a situation. Overlapping these actions allows players to experience scenes from a different perspective. A problem can always be tackled in more than one way and getting creative with these actions helps the players with discovering more about their characters.

Players best practices

Players best practices are there to help familiarize everyone with the concept of actions.

Especially for beginners coming up with the level of roleplay required can be challenging. But also veteran players from other system might find it difficult to adjust. The following list provides a guideline for everyone to make the most out of their actions.

- 1) Actions are not skills. They don't represent what a PC can do well or not in general. They are a way of telling how likely the PC is to influence the next fictional situation in a given way.
- 2) This incorporates more than merely a PCs skillset. It also factors in the difficulty and circumstances of a situation, the PCs current state of body and mind, the difference in skill between the PC and an opponent, the PCs relationship to someone, and more.
- 3) Rather than thinking of which action to perform, players should think about how their character would perform that action. The actions are designed very open and leave a lot of space for interpretation and flavour. Use that space to discover who your character is!
- 4) Furthermore, on paper, everyone can do everything equally well. This generally goes against the concept of specialized characters. However, just because someone can perform something well doesn't mean they have to. Sometimes not performing an action will lead to a more interesting story. Describe your characters struggle with not performing an action.
- 5) The actions are designed to experiment. If you like to perform your "standard actions" try to break it up! There is nothing wrong in having a favourite set of actions. But by doing something else once in a while you will learn a lot about your character. And if something really does not fit your vision of your character, describe how he struggles with it.
- 6) Encourage everyone else to take ations that don't fit their usual playstyle. You can have good odds for performing everything, so show us how your character adapts to new situations and uses their previous experience to their advantage.

Developers Note:

Actions are not used to show which specific skill a PC has. Actions are used to inspire the players which way of influencing the fiction will lead to the most interesting story. They give guidance to the players and allow them to explore and experiment without getting punished. These player best practices help players to get in the right mindset of taking risks and resolving situations in a less usual, but more interesting way.

Faith

Faith dice can be spent to influence the story beyond the laws of reality and time, based on every PCs character trait faith.

Players can spend one faith dice to:

- 1) bend the laws of reality. The PCs can perform “spells” based on their faith character trait. This works much like the witchcraft action. But where witchcraft is always dark power with a cost or twist attached, faith doesn’t have to be. It can be whatever the player chooses, as long as his PCs action is linked to his faith character trait.
- 2) alter what has already happened. The players can jump back to their PCs last action, provided nobody else has influenced the fiction based on the PCs action. They can attempt to resolve this situation again with their current skill set, as long as their new action is linked to their PCs character trait faith. The result may differ from what has already been established and will replace the old story.
- 3) influence the past, without altering what has already happened. For this the players can jump back to any point in the past, taking an action linked to their PCs character trait faith. However, they cannot change anything that has already been established in the fiction.
- 4) activate powerful special abilities.

Faith dice are not replenished after every mission and cannot be bought. With every advance the PCs take, one of their faith dice is replenished.

Example: *Ingerid is meeting up with occultists, trying to get information on her missing friend. When Ingerid talks to them, they tell her her friend has been corrupted by demons and vanished in the catacombs. She is not sure whether to believe them or not. Her faith “trust is earned, not freely given”, might suggest that she will be cautious, but Silvana feels that Ingerid really needs to know the truth in order to act accordingly.*

Silvana decides to spend one of Ingerid's faith dice. She describes how Ingerid's mind expands temporarily, being able to read the occultist thoughts and feelings. She rolls faith for her action, utilizing Ingerid's character trait faith, and succeeds. Suddenly she gets a very strong feeling of dishonesty. The occultists are lying!

Alternatively, Silvana decides that Ingerid's talk action might not have been the right approach. She spends a faith dice to jump back before the conversation happened. Silvana decides a better approach would be to deceive them instead, pretending to be a searcher, looking for answers and intimidating the occultist to give them. She makes it clear that she does not trust them and will prosecute them if they lie to her. Her deceive action is successful and the occultist tell her the truth.

Silvana could have also spent a faith dice to jump back even further in time. She cannot attempt to talk to the occultists again, since the conversation is already established in the story. However, she decides that Ingerid only uses the conversation to hide the fact that she is poisoning the occultists drinks. Since Ingerid would have never trusted them anyway, poisoning them will give her the leverage to get the truth out of them.

Developers Note:

Faith dice are used to allow every Pc a major moment to influence the story. It incentivizes the players to roleplay their characters faith and explore how it ties into various actions. It also gives the players the opportunity to feel powerful and explore more magic-like abilities of their characters without having to pick witchcraft as a special ability. Keeping faith dice sparse makes sure those moments don't get too regular and fit within the overall tone of the game.

Fear

Fear dice and checks are used to convey the horror the PCs face and give the GM narrative control.

Narrative control, by default, belongs to the players. They are the ones taking action. The GM can gain narrative control by imposing fear checks on the PCs. Whoever fails their fear check loses the control over his character to the GM temporarily.

Every PC has fear dice. They represent how well he can master his withstand his fears in the next fictional situation. When the GM calls for a fear check, each player whose PC is present in the scene has to roll his fear dice. A fear check is successful, when atleast one double shows up. A fear check is unsuccessful, when no double shows up.

The player receives a die from the general supply for their fear checks, just like for action rolls.

Fear checks can be called in dreadful situations. These include, but are not limited, to: The PC gets confronted with excessive violence and brutality. Someone exerts power over him. The PC gets confronted with unnatural forces, ghosts or witchcraft. Someone issues an ultimatum, frightens the PC, blackmails them or arrests them. Every situation where a PC might lose the control over himself is enough to call for a fear check.

Players can choose to not do the fear check, therefore failing it.

Fear checks cannot be contested by the GM. To impose a fear check on the PCs, the GM has to burn one dice from his dice pool.

Example: *Eriks witnesses how two of the sheriff's men start brutally beating up civilians to get answers to their questions. Erik knows they don't have answers.*

Fear



The GM burns one die from his dicepool and calls Erik to roll a fear check. Erik rolls 1, 1 and 2, managing to successfully withstand the frightening situation.

Developers Note:

Fear is used to convey and highlight the most oppressive, brutal and dangerous elements of the game. It makes the player afraid of failing this check and creates tension, knowing that consequences are about to come. The goal is to make the players feel what their PC feels.

Failed fear checks and narrative control

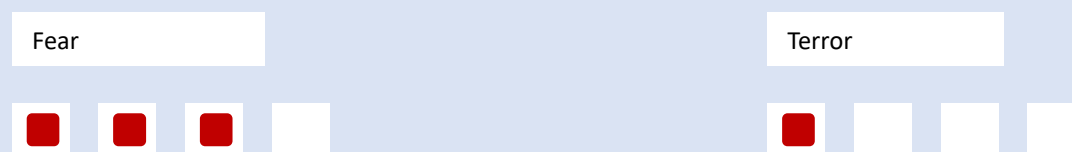
On an unsuccessful fear check, the GM gains narrative control over every PC that failed his check.

Narrative control means the GM gets to “play” the PC, make decisions for him and, most importantly, inflict consequences into the player(s) without a prior action roll. The GM also decides when he loses narrative control again to the player.

Players can avoid the loss of narrative control by using one of their fear dice. This dice is put into the terror bar. If there are no more fear dice left, PCs will automatically fail their fear checks.

Fear checks are not (only) used for frightened responses. Whilst there is always a dreadful situation at their core, they could invoke any other reaction from the PCs, like anger or sadness. Their point is to give the GM control over the PCs because they can't control themselves and lash out. They are not used to always make the PCs run away.

Example: *Ivar has been arrested and is now facing a searcher. Whilst he is hold by two men, the searcher demonstrates his new torture devices, slowly but surely getting ready to use them. Whilst the iron heats up in the fire, the searcher gets out a knife and starts to loosen Ivars's fingernails.*



Again, the GM burns one die and calls for a fear check. Cedric rolls three dice, but unfortunately is not able to achieve a success.

The GM suggests that the pain and the image of what is about to happen terrifies Ivar. The adrenaline gives him strenght and he is able to wrestle free from the two guards holding him and attacks, frightened out of his mind. The searcher reacts quickly though, piercing Ivar with the hot piece of metal as he jumps on him.

Cedric decides that this might be too much for Ivar. He spends one of his fear dice, transferring it to the terror bar, and settles on taking an athleticism action to escape. He rolls successfully and manages to wrestle free and jump out of the window.

Developers Note:

Giving the GM narrative control, taking away agency from the player, means that they will be afraid of failing the fear checks for the consequences they are about to suffer. The option of spending fear dice to gain back narrative control allows them to resist consequences they deem to harsh or unfit for their character. The cost, however, is high, since every other fear check will suffer from lower odds of success.

Terror

Terror dice are a resource for players to empower their dice rolls with a big cost.

Terror represents how far the PCs are willing to go to achieve their goals, especially when terrified.

Players can use terror dice by describing an especially violent, brutal or dreadful way in which they take their action, motivated out of fear. They can then add their terror dice to their actions dice pool. After their action roll, the terror dice are put back in the terror bar.

Terror means unleashing something especially frightening or terrifying. When a player performs an action with terror dice every other player in the scene has to make a fear check, at the GM's discretion. The GM does not have to burn a dice for a fear check when it is caused by a terror action.

Terror actions are always desperate. The situation is at least dangerous, meaning wrong faces on one, two and three. Most likely the situation is deadly, meaning wrong faces on one, two, three and four. NPCs will respond differently when facing terror actions, but no response will be without consequence.

The players can transfer fear dice into terror dice by describing how their PCs are terrified in a given situation. Those dice are then available for terror actions. They can not be transferred back into the fear rating.

Example: *Ingerid gets cornered by two guards that are dead set on killing her. She can defend several blows, using her fight skill, but the situation gets worse as she is fatiguing. Silvana sees no other choice than to tap into Ingerid's terror dice, leveraging her fear of losing her life.*

Terror



Ingerid has two dice in her terror rating, meaning she can up her actions dice pool by two. Silvana would like better odds, since failing the next action roll might mean the end to her character. She transfers one die from her fear rating to her terror rating. With two dice left in her fight rating this means she can roll up to seven dice now. She describes how Sivana, terrified for her life, unleashes savage force on the two guards, and rolls the dice. Fortunately, she succeeds.

Developers Note:

Everyone has the capacity to be a monster. Terror dice allow the players to tap into their PCs fears and harvest them for power. They pose the question on how far is the player willing to go to achieve his goal. They also confront the players with the reality that not only the environment, but also their PCs have a potential for great evil and violence.

Trauma

Traumas are a consequence for using terror dice, making permanent changes to the PCs.

Terror actions are not only frightening for everyone else, but also for the PCs themselves. Unleashing this much dread and horror changes the characters. Over time they get broken, realising they are just as evil as everyone else.

When terror dice are added to an action, there is a chance to suffer a traumatic condition. If a one shows up, a dice is added to the trauma bar. This is limited to one die per terror action. When this bar is filled, the PC gets a trauma, permanently afflicting his character.

Example: *Whilst Ingerid was able to successfully fight of the guards she unfortunately rolled a one with her terror action.*

Trauma



A dice gets added to Ingerids trauma bar. If this bar is full, Ingerid will suffer a trauma.

Developers Note:

Trauma serves as a consequence for using terror dice. They reflect the PC dealing with his dreadful or brutal action and his descend into madness when overusing his capacity for terror. They warn players of using terror dice by tying them to permanent and undoable changes for their PCs.

Character advancement

PCs grow more competent by earning experience points and character tokens.

Experience points are earned by the players through roleplaying their PCs actions and character traits. They are marked with dice on the player sheet. Character tokens are earned by the players through roleplaying their PCs fears, struggles and flaws. They too are marked with dice on the player sheet.

Every PC has access to special abilities. By earning experience points and spending character tokens, players can advance their characters, unlocking new special abilities.

Experience points

To advance his PC the player has to fill the experience track on his PCs character sheet.

Players can earn experience points in two ways:

- 1) They can earn experience points directly by roleplaying their PCs character traits: Faith, Goals and Instinct.
- 2) They can earn experience dice by roleplaying their PCs actions in a unique way. Experience dice can then be used to empower the next action or transformed into experience points at the end of each mission.

Faith

Faith represents in what a PC trusts, simplified in one sentence.

Every PC is defined by character traits. The first character trait is faith. Faith is something the PC is confident in, something he is sure of and has accepted as a truth. This could be religion, but it doesn't have to be. It can be any person, a concept or a thing. The players can decide freely what their PCs trusts in.

Faith is something that motivates the PC, gives him strength and drive, something that keeps him going against all odds. It could be a purpose or calling. A way of thinking or acting. A strong ethical stance (it does not have to be good). It could be a relationship, an object or a belief system.

Faith should be simplified to one sentence. A good structure is: "(PCs name) believes ...".

Faith can change over time. Players are even encouraged to evaluate their PCs faith to see if it still fits or if the PC has changed, changing his faith with him. Faith can be changed after every mission, but not during. The player should announce it.

By roleplaying their faith, showing how the PC trusts and relies on it, players can earn one experience point per mission. This is marked with a die on the experience point spot next to the faith section on the character sheet.

Example: *Ivar believes to never back down from a fight.*

When he gets challenged by a superior duellist, Cedric describes how Ivar first hesitates. He knows his odds are not good and fears for what might come if he accepts the challenge. But then his faith takes the upper hand. He is a warrior after all, and a warrior never backs down from a fight. Ivar jumps into the ring, accepting the challenge and the consequences it may bring.

By acting his faith, Cedric has earned an experience point for Ivar. He takes a die from the general supply and marks the experience spot next to his faith.

Faith can look very different for each character:

Erik believes as long as he has his talisman from home, nothing can defeat him.

Ingerid believes that trust is earned, not freely given.

Goals

Goals state what a PC wants to achieve, both shortterm and longterm.

Shortterm goals are written at the beginning of each mission. They state what the PC wants to achieve by going on the mission. This goal is separate from what the mission is about, but can (and should) be

linked to the reason for the mission. It represents what the PC himself wants out of the mission, not the party.

Longterm goals are written when creating a character. They state what the Pc wants to achieve over a medium or long time period. When they are achieved, the player comes up with a new longterm goal.

Goals should be simplified to one sentence.

Players can earn one experience point per mission by achieving their PCs shortterm goal. This is marked with a die on the experience point spot next to the goals section on the character sheet.

Players can earn three experience points by achieving their longterm goal. These are directly placed in the experience section of the character sheet.

Example: *Ingerid is on a mission with her party to rescue a captured friend from a rivaling gang. The party's goal is to free their friend. Ingerids personal goal is to find out wether her friend can be trusted or is a double agent. When she gets the chance to ambush the warden she does so, forcing him to tell her wether her friend has spilled the party's secrets or not.*

By doing so Ingerid accomplishes her shortterm goal, awarding her one experience point. Silvana takes a die from the general supply and places it on the experience point spot next to the goals section on Ingerids character sheet.

Instinct

Instinct represents an impulsive behaviour, that the PC falls back to when confronted with a challenge, an unfamiliar situation or something frightening.

Instinct can be something that the PC voluntarily does, but it doesn't have to be. It is usually a reaction out of fear or surprise. Instincts should somehow be visible in the PCs behaviour, so the environment can react to them.

Instincts should tell something about how the PC usually tends to resolve conflicts. They can guide the player to come up with more unique and signature ways to perform actions. Whenever a player is stuck for a reaction or is unsure what his PC would do in a certain situation he can draw from the PCs instinct.

Instincts should be simplified to one sentence. They don't represent the PCs behaviour as a whole. PCs don't have to follow their instinct at every time. They are just the starting point for the player to explore how his PC would react to a situation.

Instincts too can change over time. PCs develop and may outgrow their old habits, acquiring new ones. Instinct can be changed at the end of every mission, by announcing it to the GM and party.

By acting upon their PCs instinct players can earn one experience point per mission. This is marked with a die on the experience point spot next to the instinct section on the character sheet.

At the end of every mission, all dice marking earned experience are transferred to the experience track.

Example: *Eriks instict is to fight with his back against a wall.*

When Erik prowls through the merchant's mansion, he hears a voice whispering in the dark. Immediatley, he leaps through the room, reaching a wall and places his back against it, facing the room and searching for whatever made that sound.

By doing so Derek acts his PCs instinct. He is awarded one experience point. He takes a die from the general supply and places it on the experience point spot next to the instinct section on Eriks character sheet.

Again, Instincts can look very different depending on every character:

Ivars instinct is to act now, think later.

Ingerids instinct is to take a step back and breathe 3 times.

Developers Note:

Coming up with faith, goals and instinct forces the player to really think about who his character is. Establishing those character traits also gives players a good starting point, making following roleplay much easier. Earning experience for roleplaying character traits incentivizes and awards the player for fleshing out his character. Furthermore, it makes it easy for the GM to challenge those traits and put the character to a stress test. This provides more opportunities for the player to explore his character deeper.

Experience dice

Players can earn experience dice by performing actions in a way unique for their PC.

Whenever a player performs an action in a unique, signature way, that reflects on his PCs nature and character traits, they earn an experience die for this action. This die is placed on the first spot for the xp-dice, next to the action it was earned for. For every type of action the player can earn one experience die per mission.

Experience dice can be used to

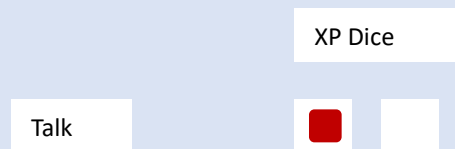
- 1) roll with the PCs current action
- 2) empower another action of the same type the PC performs during the mission

3) or be transferred to the PCs experience section when the current mission has ended.

When a player wants to use the experience die to empower an action, they again have to perform the action in a way signature to their PC. They can then add the XP-die to their actions dice pool. After the player action roll the XP-die is then placed on the second spot for the XP-dice.

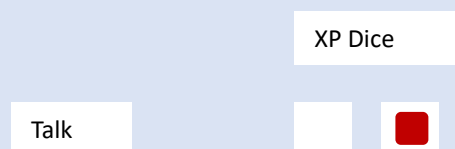
Experience dice cannot be saved for the next mission.

Example: *In order to pass the inspection, Ivar decides to bribe the ministry official. Whilst a simple offering for money could have sufficed, Ivar draws from his background, telling a story about growing up in poverty and equal chances for the oppressed. The official is moved by this speech, letting the crew pass for a small favour. This reflects on Ivars character trait since he is melancholic and, sometimes, lives in the past.*



The GM rules that Cedric has earned an experience die for the way he described Ivars talk action. Cedric places that die in the first spot for the XP-dice next to the talk action. He can't earn another experience dice for talk during the mission, but for every other action he can.

Later in the same mission, Ivar is spotted by a guard, who is pinning him against the wall, questioning his presence in the warehouse. Cedric decides this would be a good time for Ivar to have some extra dice to throw around, to not compromise the mission's success. Ivar again performs the talk action, threatening the guard with violence. Whilst he might not be in the best situation to do that, it definitely fits hits character since he is known to have an anger problem.



Cedric adds Ivars xp-die to his actions dice pool. After the roll he places the xp-die into the right spot for the XP-dice, next to his talk action. Every dice left on the first spot for experience dice is transferred to the experience section of the PCs sheet at the end of the mission.

Developers Note:

Experience dice are used to incentivize the players to roleplay their characters. They are awarded for how their characters perform actions, not which actions they are perform. Its up to the players to come up with a way to perform actions what reflects on who their PC is. Furthermore, it incentivizes the players to explore and perform as many actions as they can, since only one experience dice can be earned per action per mission. This leads to the players needing to think outside the box and to come up with more complex characters.

Character tokens

Character tokens are spent to aquire new special abilities.

Whenever a PC advances through by filling his experience track, he gets a new ability slot. By spending character tokens, the player can aquire a new special ability to fill this slot with.

Character tokens are earned by the player through roleplaying his PCs fear, struggle and flaws.

Fear

Fear represents something specific the PC is terrified of happening.

Fear, as a character trait, does not represent everything that might frighten or horrify the PC. This is what the fear dice are for. Instead, it is one very specific thing the PC will do everything in his power to prevent from happening.

Fears can be powerful and motivate the PC to act or they can be devastating, hindering the PC to take an action. It is up for the players to decide how their character will react to being confronted with their fear (as long as they have narrative control).

Fear could be being confronted with something terrifying. It could be the fear of losing something or someone valuable or personal. It could be fear of a specific situation or concept. Players can choose freely what their PCs are afraid of.

Fears can change over time, and should. They can be changed like faith or instinct after every mission by announcing it to the GM and party.

The players can earn one character token per mission by roleplaying their fear. They have to describe how their PCs are afflicted by their fears and how facing their fears weaknes the PCs. They also have to interact with their fears in one of three ways:

- 1) Players can deliberately fail their fear check, placing their fate in the hands of the GM.
- 2) Players can transform (atleast) one of their fear dice into terror dice.
- 3) Players can perform a terror action when facing their fear.

Earned character tokens are marked with a die next to the fear section on the character sheet.

Example: *Eriks fear is to lose his talisman from home.*

When Erik decides to duel the warden, he finds himself in a rather unpleasant situation. After an unusccesful fight action, he is pinned to the wall by the warden sword, unable to move. In panic he graspes his talisman, praying for help in a desperate situation. The warden notices this and laughs: "What do we have here? Is the little boy afraid without his religious toy?" He quickly swipes the talisman out of Eriks hand, throwing it on the ground. "What will the little boy do when I crush it?" he asks, smirking, while his foot slowly moves to destroy Eriks percious item.

Derek decides that Erik will fully panick and leash out, trying to defend his most valuable possession. He pciks up Eriks terror dice and rolls destroy. By performing a terror action when confronted with his fear, Erik earns a character token.

Struggle

Character traits are not only positive. Struggle represents how the PCs faith, goals and instincts can be a burden too, forcing the PCs to either abandom them or act against their own interests.

Oftentimes PCs will end up in situations where their faith, goal or instinct is put to a test. In this case the player has to make a decision. Does his PC follow through with what he believes, wants to accomplish or with who he is? Or does he act against it, betraying himself but making a smarter choice? Neither decision is necessarily wrong and most interesting is the struggle the PC goes through.

The player can earn one character token per mission by describing how their PC struggles with their choice and by acting against their character traits. The player earns a token for either

- 1) struggling with their fear, taking an action against what they trust in and think to be true
- 2) struggling with their goals, taking an action that makes reaching their goal significantly harder
- 3) struggling with their instinct, acting upon it allthough it causes trouble

Earned character tokens are marked with a die next to the struggle section on the character sheet.

Example: *When Ingerid talks to one of the sheriffs' men, he tells her about an opportunity to break into the forbidden harbour and steal valuable contraband. Ingerid is now challenged with whether she believes him or not. Her belief "trust is earned, not given" might suggest that she first wants to see proof of the guard's trustworthiness. Will she risk endangering herself and the crew by acting against her belief or will she miss out on a potential opportunity?*

If Silvana decides that Ingerid will pursue the opportunity against her better judgement and take an action to do so, she will earn a character token.

Ivars current shortterm goal is to find out why his informant is giving the crew less and less useful information. When he meets with him, the informant is trying to provoke Ivar, insulting him right to his face. Will Ivar react to this insult, starting a fight with the informant and therefore giving up on reaching his personal goal?

If Cedric decides that Ivar will act upon being provoked, he earns a character token.

Eriks instinct is to fight with his back against a wall. When he gets into a skirmish by the docks, Derek decides that Erik will move into a small alleyway, therefore being protected from both sides and his back. Unfortunately, he is also cornered there and unable to run away or use his agility as an advantage against the heavier armored opponents.

Derek plays Eriks instinct in a way that gets his PC deeper into trouble. He earns one character token.

Flaws

Flaws are limitations that every PC has.

Nobody is perfect and every PC has one (or more) things that hold them back. Flaws could be anything, from aversions to a specific race or character type to imperfections or a big scar. They could be bias or prejudice, a vice or addiction, a commitment to something or disgust. Its freely up to the players what their PCs flaws are.

Flaws are something that weaken th PCs, making them less competent. Players can earn one character token per mission by roleplaying their flaws. To do so, they describe how their flaw negatively influences their action. They also have to roll (atleast) on die less than they theoretically could for their action, actively limiting their own dice pool.

Earned character tokens are marked with a die next to the flaws section on the character sheet.

Example: *Ivars's flaw is his temper. Confronted with something upsetting, he stops thinking and starts acting without caution. When hes gets provoked by some guy at the bar he immideatley starts a fight. Blinded by his rage he throws himself at the guy without paying much attention to him and his surroundings.*

Whilst his current fight rating is four, cedric decides that Ivar will use only two of those dice since he does not think clearly about what he is doing and is not paying much attention to hes surroundings. For this he earns a character token.

Developers Note:

Character tokens are used to incentivize the player to engage with and explore the unpleasant side of his PC. The characters are antiheroes, after all, and not perfect. By doing so the player is rewarded, since more character tokens can be spent to aquire special abilites. It also helps the player to discover more about his character and leads to more complex and therefore interesting characters.