



Chapter 3: Combat

The combat rules presented are not intended to mimic a real fight, but rather a more cinematic engagement. Some elements of real-time fighting are included (i.e., both the attacker and defender must roll their dice representing their attack and parry) as well as some flamboyant special moves one might only see on the big screen (represented by Special Combat Maneuvers). Combat can run from deadly knife-fights to legendary encounters with horrific monsters. The style and pacing of combat is up to the GM, but the root of all combat actions in the Earth of the Fourth Sun RPG can be summed below...

Simple Combat

Step One: Determining Initiative

Every combatant rolls a number of dice equal to their Mind Attribute and adds their skill rank in the weapon they are using during the combat round to the number of successes gained on the roll. The person with the highest number gets to go first, followed by the second highest, etc. There may be modifications to the initiative based on the size and weight of the weapons being used, as well as tactical advantages.

For example, Rolph has a skill of 6 in the Spear and a rank of five in his Mind Attribute. He rolls a total of 3 successes for an initiative score of 9. His opponent, a desperate outlaw has a skill of 4 in the Club and a Mind Attribute of 2, rolls no successes for a total initiative score of 4. With his score of 9, Rolph wins initiative and can act first during combat.

Step Two : Attack!

The combatant that rolled highest during the initiative phase can attack first. A character has a dice pool equal to his skill in his weapon. He can roll up to that many dice in a single combat round. Once rolled, the dice are subtracted from the dice pool; when the dice pool reaches zero, the character can no longer perform combat maneuvers that round.

Rolph will have a dice pool of 6 because of his skill rank in the spear.

To attack, the player simply states who he is attacking, and rolls as many dice from his dice pool as he wishes. He should then count the net number of successes.

Rolph's player tells the GM that he is attacking the bandit. Rolph's player decides to roll 4 dice. After rolling he has 3 successes and 1 blank, for a net of 3 successes. He has used up 4 of his 6 dice for this combat round.

A character only gets to attack once during a combat round.

Step Two(Simultaneous): Parry!

At the same time the winner of initiative gets to attack, the defender can try to parry the attack. Parrying can not be declared after the attack dice are rolled, only during the attack roll itself. A fully successful parry can negate the entire attack! From his dice pool, the defender can use as many dice as he wishes to parry the blow. Every success rolled negates an attack success. Parry dice are also subtracted from the dice pool.

When Rolph decided to attack, the GM decided that the bandit will use 2 dice to parry. While Rolph's player is rolling his attack dice, the GM rolls the outlaw's parry dice. The GM rolls 1 success, negating 1 of the 3 successes rolled by Rolph's player. Rolph now only has 2 successes against the outlaw.

Step Three: Armor?

Armor defends the character from damage. Some armor is so strong as to always soak up some damage, other armor types may still allow some damage to penetrate. Many armor types do both. Armor is listed as a value: X/Y. The value X is the amount of successes the armor always negates, the Y is the number of dice the player can roll for his armor. Every success rolled negates an attack success.

The bandit is wearing light leather armor which has a value of 0/1. After determining the outlaw's parry successes, the GM rolls 1 die for the outlaw's armor. He rolls a success. This then reduces Rolph's attack successes from his current 2 successes to a measly 1 attack success against the bandit.

Step Four: Damage!

If there are any attack successes left after armor and parrying has been applied, then the attacker hits and damages his opponent. The attacker does 1 LP of damage for every action success that gets through the armor and the parry. In addition to the damage caused by the character's skill, every weapon does a variable amount of damage.

Rolph's attack was successful, even though his opponent deflected some of the damage by both relying on his armor and by parrying. Spears inflict an additional 1-8 points of damage when they hit. Rolph's player rolls eight dice and receives six successes. He adds to this the 1 success that penetrated his opponent's defenses, for a total of 7 Lifepoints of damage against the outlaw.



Step Five: Next in line...

The combatant who rolled second highest during initiative can now attack. Steps 1-4 are repeated until all combatants has had a chance to attack. Then a new round begins, and all involved re-roll their initiative.

Now the outlaw can attack Rolph. The bandit has 2 dice remaining in his dice pool with which to attack, while Rolph has 2 dice reserved for his parry. It is possible that the both the bandit and Rolph may roll 2 successes; this will indicate that Rolph has parried the attack, and will not receive any damage this round!

Advanced Combat

Advanced combat builds on the simple combat sequence presented earlier. It adds more options and complexity, but as with all rules, the GM has the final say on what's to be used.

Time and the Flow of Combat

Time is indeed relative, especially during combat. Each combatant gets an amount of time to perform his actions. The time increments are called **rounds**. How long is a round? The maximum range of a round is set at 20 seconds, although any action that takes more than 10 seconds creates a penalty against the character.

If the character wishes to perform actions that run longer than 10 seconds he opens himself to **attacks of opportunity**. So if a character wishes, he can make an attack against 5 separate targets, rushing madly about swinging his trusty blade. Even the most skilled swords-

Time during combat...

man will find it hard to attack 5 times with more than 2 dice for each target, and so by rushing his time and spreading his attack thin he runs the chance of not inflicting any damage at all, as well as opening himself up to attacks of opportunity from his fellows.

If an action will take more than 20 seconds, then the action of the character will carry through to the next round. A character who is already performing an action during the beginning of the combat round receives an extra +5 on his initiative. But if his action runs long the next round, then the combatants can once again gain an attack of opportunity.

For example, during a combat round Rolph decides to remove and string his compound bow to fire an arrow at an aerial target. The GM decides that this will be an extended action, and will take longer than 10 seconds. Because he is breaking the flow of combat, any enemy that has not yet attacked and has dice in their dice pool can make an attack of opportunity against Rolph. If no enemy decides to attack, then Rolph gets to attack. Time is advanced to the end of the 20 seconds, and the next combatant can now perform his action.

The Flow of Combat: Attacks of Opportunity

Combat is a fluid thing. The ebbs and flows of attack and counterattack are being calculated and readjusted second-to-second. But when a character performs a long action, or some action that breaks this flow of combat, then his opponents have the chance to respond to this action that precipitated the change.

An attack of opportunity is a special attack that can be made against a combatant that breaks the flow of combat. To make an attack of opportunity, a combatant must have some dice in his dice pool, and must not have made an attack previously during the combat round. Attacks of opportunity occur during the period of time between 10 to 20 seconds in which the extended action takes place (the character gets the first 10 seconds free to perform actions uninterrupted; this may not be realistic but it adds to the cinematic atmosphere of combat). If an attack of opportunity causes damage then the action trying to be performed is terminated. A character may dodge the blow and if the dodge maneuver is successful he may still perform the original, intended action. If the character has a weapon ready and dice in his dice pool, he can still parry if he chooses, even if an attack of opportunity is made against him.

Example: Rolph's enemy gets to make an attack of opportunity while Rolph readies his bow. During his 'free' action period, the GM tells Rolph that he has managed to pull his bow from it's case, and has his bowstring ready. While Rolph places his string in the bow's notch a low goblin makes an attack. If it is successful, then Rolph's action is halted, and must use part of his initiative during the next combat round to finish stringing his bow.



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Actions that break the flow of combat

- ĩ Single non-attacking actions that take longer than 10 seconds
- ĩ Moving longer than X feet (including retreating, moving and attacking, attacking then moving, and charging to attack)
- ĩ Changing from melee to spell combat after initiative
- ĩ Changing from spell to melee combat after initiative
- ĩ Readyng a crossbow
- ĩ Attacking more than 2 opponents
- ĩ Using the Foci of Gestures or Materials in spellcasting

Advanced Combat and Dice Pools

How well a character can perform in battle is based on his skill rank in his weapon. This is then translated into dice. A character gains one die for every rank in his weapon. If a character has a master rank, he does not get an additional die; he instead receives a bonus for certain icons rolled on his dice. A character with a higher skill has more dice and hence is allowed to perform more actions during a combat round.

The player keeps all of his dice together in a single pool. This represents the maximum potential actions (attacking and parrying) that a character can perform. The player may use his dice however he sees fit, either attacking or parrying. Each time he uses a die from his pool, it is gone until the next combat round.

The attacking and parrying ability is not decided before combat, but rather during combat. The player does not have to tell the GM or other players what is character is doing (except announcing any Special Combat Maneuvers before the attack roll is made), nor does he have to separate his dice pool into attacking dice and parrying dice. A character is expected to adapt to his enemy.

A player can remove dice from his large pool creating smaller pools. For example, the player may remove from his 6-dice pool 3 dice, leaving a 3 dice pool. He can then attack 2 opponents during his initiative phase for 3 dice each. Each **pool** of dice is equivalent to a single attack. Modifiers to an attack affect the whole pool of dice at once, not each and every die within the pool.

Initiative

In combat, the person who gets to attack first has the advantage. It is possible to kill or immobilize an opponent outright without taking any reciprocal damage. A character does not have to attack, and may hold his action during his attack round. A character with a held action may attack only after an opponent finishes his initiative. If a character has not attacked by the end of the round, then he forfeits his attack for that combat round.

When declaring initiative, the player must only declare what type of action he is taking (melee, magical, physical, or using a Power). He must state what weapon (or spell College or Power Sphere) is being used, but does not have to necessarily state who the target is.

Initiative is based on both physical skill and

intelligence and perception. There is also luck.

The base initiative is equivalent to the character's skill:

ĩ **Melee Combat** (using any weapon or bare hands) uses the skill rank in the weapon being used. Master ranks are counted double.

ĩ **Spell Combat** uses the College rank of the spell, but is reduced by each Foci used: Gesture (-2), Voice (-1) and Materials (-3). Master ranks in the College are doubled.

ĩ Any **physical noncombat activity** including maneuvering uses the Body rank

ĩ Any single **Power** use uses the Spirit Attribute rank +5

If the player changes his actions from what kind of initiative he rolled, his opponents gain an attack of opportunity.

For example, if Christy started the round by rolling initiative using her skill in the mace and then changes her weapon during combat to that of a shortbow (or to spellcasting, or to running away, etc.), all opponents can declare an attack of opportunity against her.

Combat initiative also depends on enough mental acuity to acknowledge and take advantage of small errors that an opponent makes. There is also a degree of luck in being able to spot such an opening. **Therefore, a player roll dice equal to his character's Mind Attribute and add the result to his initiative. A net number of skulls DOES decrease his overall initiative score.**

As an example, the Sadist has a rank of 6 in the College of Conjurations and a Mind Attribute of 6. For a conjuration spell's initiative, the Sadist's player will roll six dice; he will add to this amount his six renks in Conjurations, for an overall initiative range of 0-12.

If two creatures have the same initiative score, then the tie is broken with the combatant with the highest skill going first. If the skills are also equal, then the tie-breaker goes with the highest Mind Attribute.

Animals (natural and unnatural) receive a bonus to their initiative score based on their speed, aggressiveness and raw strength. For animals and other foes, the initiative given is the total amount (do not add additional dice for their Mind attribute). Animal attacks such as claws are considered to have a weapon length of ẽSmallí, while biting and crushing attacks are considered to have a length of ẽNoneí. If a dog attacks a character who is wielding a spear, the spear should hit the dog long before the dog bites the character. Unless, of course, the character trips or does not have his spear pointed just right (low luck roll on the d10) or is just incompetent (low skill level).

Modifying Initiative

Both the weapon's length and it's maneuverabil-



ity can alter the initiative score. Length of the weapon is important only if the combatants have different length weapons; a character with a longsword (size medium (M) weapon) who is attacking a low goblin wielding a scimitar (size M weapon) would not have any initiative bonus based on length, but would have an advantage if the goblin was rushing against him armed with only a small dagger. During a normal combat, the *person with the longer weapon receives the bonus to his initiative.*

The maneuverability of each specific weapon can add to the initiative score. Small, light weapons add more than large and bulky weapons. Each weapon has a bonus of 0 to +5. Table < > has a listing of each weapon's

Player A Wpn Length	Player B Wpn Length
L	a) none: +3 initiative
	b) S: +2 initiative
	c) M: +1 initiative
M	a) none: +2 initiative
	b) S: +1 initiative
S	a) none: +1 initiative

bonus to the initiative score.

There are some situational modifiers to the initiative score. These are *estackable*; each adds to any other bonus that the character may receive.

Finally, those who are faster and more maneuverable than their opponents have an advantage in initiative. If a character's movement rate is more than 1 than his opponent, he gains a +1 to his initiative.

For example, Jocelyn has a movement rate of 3, her opponent has a rate of 1. Since she has a rate greater

Table X: Situational Modifiers to Initiative Score

* Note that the modifications are cumulative.

Action	Modification of Initiative Score
Dodged the preceding round	-3 plus -1 for every die rolled
Attacking from concealment	+2
Attacking while invisible	+8 to +5 depending if targets are aware
Surprising the target	+1 to +5
Encumbrance	-1 per 10 lbs over max weight
Stunned condition	-10
Performing a long action	+5
Other	-10 to +8 at GM's discretion

than the opponents +1, she gains a +1 to her initiative.

Melee Combat: Weapons

Melee combat involves two combatants attacking one another with either their bare hands or some close-

Alternative Rule:

The GM may decide to forgo any dice rolling for initiative to speed up combat. If so, then simply add the character's Mind Attribute to his Skill rank to decide combat sequence.

contact weapon. Table < > has the list of standard melee weapons, which includes each weapon's damage dice and any other special information.

Each weapon is given a variable amount of damage. This is the additional, arbitrary amount of damage the weapon can inflict on an opponent. Some weapons may deliver more damage than others, and certain weapons have some additional benefits and abilities.

Melee Combat: Using an Unfamiliar Weapon

If a character uses a weapon that he does not have any skill ranks in, then certain penalties are incurred. First, the character may only make an attack at a value of his highest weapon skill -2. The weapon skill used is only the base level; no specialties are to be used.

For example, if Corin found a magical club that will damage spirits, but he can not normally use a club as a weapon skill. Corin does have the training in the use of long-bladed weapons at a rank 4, so he can only use 2 dice to add to his combat pool.

A second penalty is that no damage is dealt from Action Successes; the only damage dealt is that from the damage dice. Even if Corin struck with 5 successes using an unfamiliar weapon, his magical club will only impart the damage that all clubs do, and Corin loses the extra 5 points of damage derived from his successes.

Finally, a person unfamiliar with a weapon has the disadvantage of each skull rolled counting double! If Corin rolled one success and one skull, then the attack would be unsuccessful, and the one skull in excess would cause some damage to his new magical club. People unfamiliar with weapons may still inflict some damage, but they are usually a liability to both themselves and others.

Weapon Damage

The amount of damage inflicted during a combat round depends on how successful the attack was (based on the character's skill) and how lethal the weapon was (compared to other weapons). Skill inflicts direct damage: each rank of skill equals one die that a character can roll when attacking; each success rolled on the die inflicts one LP of damage. The lethality of a weapon is reflected in its additional damage dice. This damage dice is an additional amount of Lifepoints of damage caused by the weapon. In other words, the damage done is equal to the amount of net successes plus whatever amount of damage was rolled on the damage dice.



Weapon damage (and the damage dice) is only calculated after the opponent's parrying and armor has been taken into account. If the parrying and/or armor reduces the successes to zero, there is no damage inflicted, and a damage die is not rolled.

Finally, a character can choose not to inflict any extra damage by returning his blade or pulling his blow. This only works for slashing weapons or blunt-trauma weapons.

Skulls rolled during the Damage Dice

Net skulls rolled on the damage dice do not take away Successes to hit. If there are a net number of skulls on the extra damage dice, the attack will still do damage, but the damage is only equal to the initial amount of successes. The net number of skulls is translated into damage to the weapon itself. Every 5 LPs of damage inflicted to a weapon lowers its quality by a single grade.

For example, Ten Red Turtles attacks with his staff, and has a net number of 4 successes. His opponent did not parry, nor has any armor. When his player rolls his 6 dice for damage, he gains 2 net skulls. The attack was successful (and delivered 4 LPs of damage), but the staff hit a sweet spot, and gained 2 points damage to itself.

A Closer Look at Attacking and Parrying

There are two main actions that a character may perform with his weapon. One is to **attack**, causing damage to his foe. The other is to **parry**, using his weapon to deflect or block the attack of his opponent. A character can make one set of attacks during a round, but may parry as often as he has dice to do so. Each success from an attack will deal one Lifepoint of damage. Each success from a parry will negate one Lifepoints of damage.

How well a character attacks or parries depends upon several factors such as how skilled the character is with the weapon (his rank in his weapon skill), how many dice he has allocated to the action, how well he rolls the dice, what kind of defenses his opponent may have, and how lucky his opponent is.

Making an attack is simple: the player gets a group of dice together (called a *pool* of dice), the number of the dice equalling his skill rank in the weapon. The player then chooses how many of those dice he wishes to use for his attack. The more dice that are used, the more likely that the player's opponent will be struck and will take damage. After rolling, the number of successes are counted. If there are a net number of successes, then the attack might have caused some damage. To see if damage occurred, a player must first see if his opponent has parried the attack.

Each pool of dice equals a single attack against a single target. A character must choose how many dice he wishes to use to attack each opponent before initiative is determined. The character can modify his dice

Weapon and Armor Quality

Rolling skulls while attacking denotes damage done to the weapon itself (or to armor, if defending); see page < > for details. Each time a weapon or armor receives a total of 5 skulls it is reduced by one quality grade. Although most armor and weapons are of average quality, they may be as high as superior to as low as damaged. If a damaged weapon is reduced by 1 quality grade it is broken beyond repair. The quality of the weapon or armor is reflected in the amount of damage it absorbs or deals. Penalties are not cumulative; going from average to damage armor results in a -2/-2 not -3/-3.

- **Damaged** quality weapons and armor typically sell for 1/3rd the normal price. A damaged weapon has a damage die 2 classes less (i.e., a damaged long sword has a damage die of a d4). Damaged armor has a -2/-2 penalty.
- **Poor** quality weapons and armor sell for 2/3rds the normal price. The damage die for poor weapons is 1 class less. Poor armor has a -1/-1 penalty.
- **Average** equipment sells for the normal price, and has the listed damage die.
- **Excellent** quality weapons and armor sells for 200% the normal value. An excellent weapon has a damage die 1 class higher than normal. For example, an excellent longsword would have a d10 for its damage die. Excellent armor has a 0/+1 bonus.
- **Superior** quality weapons and armor sell for 400% higher than the normal value. A superior weapon deals damage as an excellent weapon, but delivers an extra 2 LPs of damage. Superior armor has a +1/+2 bonus.

Only a armorer with Master Ranks can make and repair Excellent quality armor and weapons. If a piece of armor or weapon is repaired by a poor smith (GM determined) then the weapon loses one grade of excellency. If a damaged weapon or armor loses a grade of excellency it becomes broken and/or nonfunctional. Certain magical metals further increase the damage that a weapon can take before being reduced in quality grades.

pool (and hence his attack) against an opponent by using special combat maneuvers.

Making a parry is simple: a character can use his dice from his dice pool, allowing him to use his weapon defensively.

For example, if Torin had 8 dice in his dice pool,

Max Parry (Max dice rolled)

Weapon Size	S/M/L weapon
S	0/-2/-4
M	-2/0/-2
L	-4/-2/0

and decided to attack with 6 of them, he would have only 2 dice which can be used to parry. After rolling the parry dice, each parry success negates one attack success.



An important thing to remember is that **the parrying maneuver may only be declared before the attack dice are rolled**. There is no *wait and see* approach to parrying; after the attack dice have been rolled, it is too late for the defender to try to parry the attack. Parrying occurs at the same time the attack occurs- the defender rolls his parry dice at the same time as the attacker rolls his attack dice.

Neither the attacker nor the defender have to tell the other how many dice they are using to attack or to parry with. This unknown factor illustrates the uncertainty of the combat arena.

As another example, suppose Fulfith and Torin both have a weapon skill (longsword) of 8, and therefore each has a pool of 8 dice to split between parrying and attacking. They are not wearing armor, and Fulfith has a higher initiative score...

- *Fulfith attacks first. He rolls all eight dice (an all-out attack). At the same time, Torin defends and rolls his three parry dice. Fulfith rolls 4 successes and Torin rolls 3 successes. Because each parry dice negates one success, Fulfith has only one success, but it is enough to cause damage. His attack with his longsword will do 1 Lifepoint of base damage, plus the number of successes when rolling his 8 damage dice.*

- *Torin is only slightly wounded from the exchange, and can now perform his attack. He rolls his 5 attack dice and receives all five successes! Since Fulfith can not parry, and is not wearing any armor, he will take 5 +8d LPs of damage from Torin's sword.*

A character can not parry attacks that he can't detect (attacks made from a blind-side, from darkness, or any other surprise situation). A character may only parry thrown missile weapons (such as javelins and spears). Missile weapons from slings or bows may not be parried. Certain animal attacks may not be parried, as well as certain physical magical attacks. To parry attacks from a spirit may require a specially enchanted weapon imbued with the magics of the Sphere of Spirit.

Some weapons, because of their size, are limited to the number of dice that can be used for parrying. For example, a dagger can not parry large weapons like a hand-and-a-half sword very effectively. In like regards, a large weapon like a two-headed battle axe can not parry a knife as well as it can a longsword.

Armor and Shields

One of the best ways of preventing damage is by using of armor and shields. Unlike parrying, which keeps an enemy's weapon from actually *striking*, armor and shields *absorb* any damage done. Armor may absorb enough damage so that the weapon can not penetrate the armor to inflict it's damage die.

Some types of armor *automatically* absorb damage, while other armor types have the *potential* to absorb damage. When describing armor in game terms, it is written as a fraction (X/Y), where X is the amount of damage that is automatically absorbed, and Y is the variable amount absorbed. For each rank in the Y category, the player can roll one die. Each success means that one additional LP of damage was absorbed.

For example, Justin has a set of magical armor, with the listing of 1/3. He is hit with a fireball that had the Limitation Damage Lessened by Armor. The fireball does 6 LPs of damage. His armor automatically negates one LP of damage, and after rolling three dice (the Y amount), he has two successes. This allows his armor to absorb a total of 3 LPs of damage. Justin now rolls vs. his Magic Resistance to see if the remaining amount of damage actually affects him.

When rolling for the variable amount of damage absorbed by armor, an excessive number of skulls reduces the effectiveness of the armor. For every 5 skulls, the armor's quality is reduced by one grade. If Justin already had 3 skulls of damage against his average grade armor, and then rolled another 3 skulls, he will have a total of 6 skulls against his armor. This will lower his armor's quality from average to poor. Poor armor has a penalty of -1/-1, so Justin's overall armor effectiveness has been reduced from 1/3 to 0/2, and he still has 1 skull towards the next rank of damaged!

Unlike the parrying skill, armor can defend it's wearer from any physical attack, from any angle. A

shield, however, may only defend against a certain number of frontal attacks, based on it's size.

Armor's drawback is it's encumbrance. Encumbrance has two penalties. First, it lowers the initiative score, causing the character to attack later in the round. Secondly, it decreases Body-based skills by a factor of how much over her maximum she is. For example, Rachael is wearing heavy chainmail, and carrying a tower shield. Her Body is a 4, and after totaling the weight of her equipment and looking at table <x>, she finds that her encumbrance will cause her to roll 2 less dice when performing any dexterity-based action, including attacking with her longsword. Either she needs to lighten up or she needs to hit the gym!

Optional: Armor Types vs Weapons; Damage Reduction

Not only will armor protect a character from receiving damage, but it will further reduce the amount of damage inflicted. The materials from which the armor is made of is the deciding factor for the damage reduction. Damage reduction is a decrease in the rank of the damage die. For example, a longsword (slashing weapon) does 8d additional damage. Heavy chain has a -3 rank shift against weapons. So the damage dice goes down to 5d. The ability of armor to change the damage die is:

No armor	no reduction
Leather	no reduction
Chain	-1 reduction
Brigandine, Metal	-2 reduction

Shields no reduction

*Strange metals may further reduce the damage die; for example, the Overworld metal **airu** will have another -1 reduction to the damage die.*



Many animals in the Earth of the Fourth Sun do not have a parry die, but their speed and natural ability equates to some form of protection. This is represented by many an animal having at least 0/1 for their armor. For example, neither bats nor wolves have a superior armor, yet each has their own means of protection. A wolf cub develops means of attacking and dodging that equate to a degree of protection from damage, while a bat uses it's speed and flight maneuverability the same way.

Using Multiple Weapons in Combat

Using two weapons in combat requires a special combat maneuver (see page <X>). The secondary weapon is called the offhand weapon. Attacking and parrying with the offhand weapon are two different special combat maneuvers. The offhand weapon can not used to attack or parry multiple targets, only a single one.

Multiple Attacks and Multiple Parries

An attacker can attack as many opponents as he has dice. If a player has 6 dice, then he can attack 6 different targets with 1 die each. Or he can concentrate his attacks, using all 6 dice against one target, or 5 dice against one target and 1 die against a second. Each pool of dice (even if it's a single die) counts as a single attack. All attacks take place during the character's initiative. If a player decides that his character will attack more than 2 creatures, then his action will break the flow of combat, and will allow opponents to make an attack of opportunity against him (see page < >). If the attack of opportunity is successful, then the character can not perform any more attacks during his initiative.

For game-balancing reasons, **a character can only attack one opponent once during combat.** This means that a character can not roll 10 dice pools of 1 die, causing 10 damage dice against an opponent. It also means that a character can only use one Special Combat Maneuver against a single opponent each round. If the character has the Special Combat Maneuver of Offhand Weapon Attack, he can direct both weapons against the same target. Since he is already using a Special Combat Maneuver, he can not declare another one that round.

There is no limit to parrying other than that the parry roll must occur before or during the attack roll. A character with a rank of 6 could parry 6 attacks made against him, with each parry consisting of a single die.

Armor is taken into account each time an attack is made. Therefore there is a big disadvantage in a character dividing his attacks amongst well-armored foes.

Attacking Inanimate Objects

Sometimes it becomes necessary to damage or destroy an inanimate object. If a character is under a non-stress situation, it becomes a matter of time before the object is damaged enough to become inoperable (even a prisoner with a metal spoon and 40 years can carve rock); however a character with a metal sword can not pierce a granite wall. For objects to pierce metal or stone requires special construction or engineering, or some magical property. A weapon designed for specific destruction of an object (e.g., heavy chisel for the iron chains) the LP value is 1/3 the normal.

Each object below has a number of 'LifePoints', which is the amount of damage it must take before the object is rendered inoperable or damaged...

ITEM	LPs
Rope, Thin hemp	3
Rope, Thick hemp	5
Rope, Thin silk	5
Rope, Thick silk	8
Giant spider web	10
Door, Wooden Avg	15
Door, Wood, Thick	20
Door, Reinforced	30
Lock, Delicate	2
Lock, Heavy	5
Leather straps	4
Glass vial (thick)	1
Bag, Lg. and heavy	2
Bag, leather	4
Thin iron chain	15

For example, if Justin has the special combat maneuver of offhand weapon attack for his dagger, then during a combat round he can make an extra attack against a single target at a rank equal to his skill in the dagger.

Skulls During Melee

In the Earth of the Fourth Sun, attacks generally are successful unless they are deflected by either parrying or by the use of armor. Hence, combat is quick and dangerous. However, there is always a chance of a miss-blow, or a character damaging his weapon, himself, or a friend nearby. In game terms, this occurs when there are more skulls rolled than successes.

Skulls represent damage done to the weapon itself; nicks, stresses, and weakening of metal and welds. In game terms, each skull in excess contributes to the gradual weakening of the weapon. When five such skulls are reached, the weapon is reduced by a quality grade, and the damage die that is rolled is lessened.

For example, Kristin is rolling for her character, and receives 3 net skulls. She marks this next to her weapon on the character sheet. Later, she is attacked by a stone gholum, and her weapon is further reduced by 4 skulls from it's impact on the creature. She has accumulated a total of 7 skulls- her weapon is reduced by one quality grade. Instead of using a d6 for the damage die, she can only use a d4.

The weapon will be reduced by another quality grade if it receives 3 more skulls or 3 points of damage to it.

If a character rolls a skull while parrying, then not only was the attempt unsuccessful, but the weapon is further reduced in effectiveness. The skulls rolled in excess are added to the weapons running total.

For example, if Kristin later tried to parry with her damaged longsword, and rolled three net skulls, then her longsword would have acquired another 5 total skulls.



This would further reduce the weapon's quality grade by one.

Weapons can be repaired by the use of the *Repair Weapon* skill. Each success rolled negates one skull. It takes 5 successes to increase a weapons quality grade, and a weapon can not be repaired to a quality grade higher than the one it had initially. Weapons can only be repaired by one quality grade unless the character has access to a forge and blacksmith tools.

Missile Combat

Missile weapons are designed as a penetrating attack at close to medium targets, and to assault lightly armored foes at a distance. Missile weapons are quite deadly at close range (especially the heavy crossbow and the Southern Longbow). To reflect the lessening amounts of damage that occurs as the target's distance increases, a bow or other missile weapon will have a different damage die based on range.

Hitting a target at a distance not only deals less damage, it is less likely to succeed. To show this, each distance increment lessens the amount of dice that can be rolled during the attack.

Table <X> shows the penalty to attack and damage based on range and other factors.

Weapon	Damage Dice Modifier	Attack Dice Modifier	At-per range (per 10')
Dagger			
Hand Ax			
Javelin			
Spear			
Shortbow	per range (per 10')		
Longbow			
Crossbow, Light			
Crossbow, Medium			
Arabesque			

Missile Rate of Fire

To attack with a missile weapon, roll all the dice for that weapon at once. There can only be a single pool for a missile weapon- they can not be divided into smaller die pools. Each attack roll represents the firing of one missile.

For example, if a character has the skill of Longbow at a rank of 8, he can not subdivide the score into two dice pools of 4 dice each. He must always roll all 8 dice (equaling a single attack) every time he attacks with the bow.

Readying and shooting a bow weapon does not break the flow of combat. Readying and shooting a crossbow (during the same round) does count as breaking the flow of combat, and can be disrupted.

Mastery Levels

A character who has a weapon skill at a Master level can use the sword icon rolled on a die as two successes. The number of icons that can be used is equal to the mastery level.

For example, if Brittany has Longsword 3/2M, she can roll 3 dice and count any two swords rolled as 2 successes each (for a total of 5 possible successes).

For game-balancing and fairness, a character can only count mastery successes once per rank per combat round.

As an example, Jen's character has mace at a rank of 6/3M. She rolls 4 dice to attack and has 2 mastery icons and 2 regular successes, for a total of 6 successes. Later during the round she parries an attack and rolls a single die, receiving another mastery icon. Her parry will deflect 2 successes. Finally, with her last die, she again parries another attack made against her. She rolls another master icon, but since she has already used 3 dice as mastery icons, she must use this master icon as a regular success.

Special Combat Maneuvers

Just about any true warrior has some tricks up his sleeve to help him gain the edge in a combat situation. Perhaps it is a special twist of the blade during a parry, or perhaps a well practiced counter to a common sword technique. These special tricks are called **special combat maneuvers**. There are many such maneuvers and counter maneuvers that a character may acquire, but only a few are available to a starting character. Receiving a special combat maneuver requires special training and practice, which is reflected by having each maneuver cost Character Points. The amount of Character Points depends on how hard the maneuver is to learn.

Declaring Special Combat Maneuvers

Since special combat maneuvers do not (normally) affect initiative, they can be declared any time, as long as they are declared before the dice are physically rolled for either an attack or parry. There are, of course, some expectations to this rule, each handled under the maneuver itself. A player must allow time for his opponent to declare if any counters (to his special combat maneuver) will be used.



Dice Pools and Special Combat Maneuvers

When a character declares a special maneuver, then the attack roll (and all dice that are rolled with it) is that maneuver. If the maneuver fails for any reason, the attacking player loses all dice in that pool for that attack. Each attack pool can have only one Special Combat Maneuver associated with it.

For example, Rolph's player has divided his overall dice pool of 9 dice into 3 dice pools (of 3 dice each) for attacking. He chooses to use a **dishonorable strike** with one of them. When he begins his attack with his pool of 3 dice and declares a dishonorable strike, then the three dice that he is rolling are considered to be the dishonorable strike. If his opponents **counters** his special combat maneuver (using the special combat maneuver of '**counter dishonorable strike**'), Rolph then loses his entire attack. He can not even roll his three attack dice. This does not affect his other 2 dice pools, but he can not use those two remaining pools to attack the opponent he targeted with his dishonorable strike (remember, a character can only attack a target once per round).

Using the same Special Combat Maneuver in Consecutive Combat Rounds

A Special Combat Maneuver will always be effective the first time it is used, unless countered or some portion of the prerequisite is not met. Counter Maneuvers can be made as often as the character wishes (and has dice for), and are always effective. In certain instances, the same maneuver may be made multiple times against the same target...

- 1) Does the user have a higher Intelligence than his opponent? If so, then the maneuver may be made once more against the same target.
- 2) Does the user have a higher Dexterity than his opponent? If so, then the maneuver may be made once more against the same target.
- 3) Does the user have a higher weapon skill ranking than

his opponent? If so, then the maneuver may be made once more against the same target.

Therefore, an attacker who has a higher Int, Dex, and weapon skill can use a single Special Combat Maneuver 4 times (once initially plus 3 additional times for his higher stats) against his opponent. After the fourth time, however, his maneuver will not work. This is not to say the attack failed; only the special effects caused by the special maneuver will not work, as the target has already adapted to the special combat maneuver.

Critical Hits and Misses

Some people are entranced with the idea of critical hits and misses. To incorporate this into the Earth of the Fourth Sun, the GM is given this suggested rule:

When a player rolls his combat dice, he has the option of adding a special die, called the fate die. A fate die can be any 6-sided die. If the player rolls all successes and a 1 on the fate die, he has delivered a critical hit. If the player rolls all skulls plus a 1 or 6 on the fate die, he has received a critical miss.

Damage caused by a Critical Hit or Miss depends on the number of dice that are rolled; the more dice that are rolled the more severe the consequence. Some suggested consequences are:

# of Dice	Consequence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Using multiple Special Combat Maneuvers in the Same Round

A character can only use a single special combat maneuver per dice pool (except counter- these may be made as often as necessary). However, if a character has split his attack into several dice pools, he could make several special combat maneuvers in the same round. Using multiple maneuvers within the same round allows an attack of opportunity to be made against him. Also for every Special Combat Maneuver made in a single round past the first, the character will have a -5 to his next round's Initiative. Just as a character can not use multiple attack pools against the same target, he can not use multiple special combat maneuvers against a single target.

Nullifying Special Combat Maneuvers- Counters

Every maneuver has a specific **counter-maneuver** associated with it. The counter-maneuver is considered a parry, and to use a counter maneuver requires a single parry die success.

A character who has a special combat maneuver used against him (and who has the counter to that special combat maneuver) simply rolls one or more parry dice. This must occur **immediately** after the attack and/or the special combat maneuver was declared. If the parry dice were successful, then the entire attack is nullified.

Not only did the special combat maneuver not work, but all dice used in the attack pool are negated, and not even rolled; the attacker loses his attack against the target that successfully countered the maneuver! If there were



no success on the parry dice, then the attack takes place as normal.

A target gets only one chance to negate a special combat maneuver. The counter is equivalent for the chance to parry the attack; a defender can not roll separately to counter the maneuver and to parry if the counter fails. If there were no successes on the counter maneuver, then the character will take the full effects of both the damage of the regular attack and any special effects generated by the maneuver.

Using Special Combat Maneuvers against Non-Intelligent Targets

Many of the special combat maneuvers presented here depend on subterfuge and trickery; these maneuvers work only against a sentient being that is capable of being fooled. Other maneuvers are only applicable if the opponent is using some sort of weapon. These maneuvers have a special criteria called *usable* against humans, but this can apply to any intelligent creature such as goblins, Sidhe, ur-trolls, etc. These maneuvers will not work against non-intelligent or non-weapon using monsters such as zombies, gholms, plant and fungoid creatures, as well as animals. If a character wishes to have a Special Combat Maneuver that can be used against such creatures, he should rename the maneuver and pay an additional 5 Character Points to purchase it.

Special Combat Maneuvers Performed by Creatures

Some creatures may have Special Combat Maneuvers. These function against their opponents in the manner they are described. They can be used once; the use of their maneuvers more than once must meet the Int/Dex/Skill criteria stated on page < >. Hence, monsters could possibly perform the maneuver 4 times against a single opponent. The GM is to decide if and when the monster will perform such an action.

A character could also develop a Counter against such an attack. This counter costs 10 Character Points if the counter is only good against a group of similar species (all within the same family, such as wolves, dogs, coyotes and foxes). A counter for any attack of a magical monster or creature, as well as any creature not native to the Earth of the Fourth Sun must be made individually. So even though a barghest is very close to a wolf, a counter-savage attack that targets a wolf's attack is useless against the savaging attack made by the barghest.

Personalizing Special Combat Maneuvers

Most all of the special combat maneuvers are given a generic name. A player can come up with a special name for his maneuver. Although the maneuver is the same, it may seem that renaming it is simply a cosmetic change. This however is false; by renaming the maneuver, the player is essentially saying that his character has changed some aspect of the maneuver, making it different and harder to counter. The player should detail his extra added flourish that makes his maneuver special. If this is done, the player receives the advantage of having the defender to roll 2 successes on his parry die when trying to counter the maneuver for the first time.

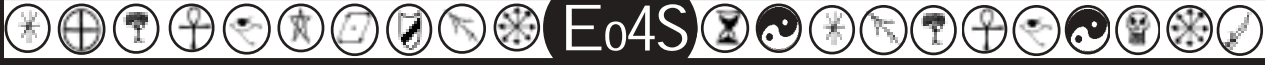
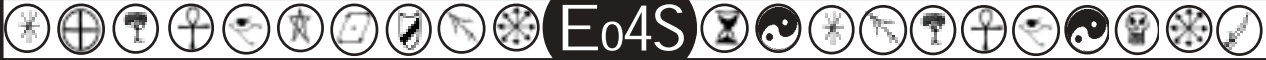


Table X: Special Combat Maneuvers

Name	Cost to Learn	Usable Against*	Description
Attack Armor	5	Any Armor	All LPs dealt in damage target only the target's armor. For every 5 LPs of damage dealt, the target's armor quality rating drops by one.
Attack Weapon	5	Any Weapon	All LPs dealt in damage target only the target's weapon. For every 5 LPs of damage dealt, the target's weapon quality rating drops by one.
Backslash	15	Any	The character can make another attack at 1/2 his attack dice pool immediately after the first if there were no skulls rolled in the initial attack.
Called Shot	10	Any	Damage done in one combat turn is applied to a single location/body part. The GM is to assign a secondary penalty (e.g., a shot to the hand may cripple it if major wounds were inflicted, dropping any weapons carried).
Dishonorable Strike	5	Human	A dishonorable strike adds 1LP of damage and the attacker gains +3 to his next round's initiative score.
Double Blow	15	Any	A type of all-out attack that does not require the attacker to use his entire dice-pool to perform. No successes are added to the damage die, but the number of damage dice are doubled.
Falcon Wing	15	Human	A lightning fast attack, this maneuver increases the initiative score (first round only) by +10. Can be declared after the initiative roll!
Feint	10	Human	This is any subterfuge to get an opponent to expose his attack or parrying strategy. After a feint is declared, the opponent must declare how many dice are being used to attack or parry, and the user of the maneuver is allowed to change his dice pools.
Hardened Attack	10	Any	This attack can only be done with a piercing weapon. The attacker's first LP of damage inflicted is a Deep wound. The attacker receives a -5 to the next round's initiative.
Lethal Twist	15	Human	This attack can only be done with a piercing weapon. The attacker's first LP of damage inflicted is a Body wound. The attacker receives a -10 to the next round's initiative.
Lucky Shot	5	Any	Usable against any foe, if max. damage is rolled on the damage die then the die is re-rolled and the new value is added to the first; this can happen indefinitely.
Mighty Blow	5	Any	The player can roll additional damage dice equal to his Body Attribute
Minor Vulnerable Strike	10	Any Armor	A vulnerable strike allows the character to attack a weak point in his opponent's physical armor. Treat target's AR as if it was 1/2 the value, to a minimum of 1.
Major Vulnerable Strike	15	Any Armor	Like the maneuver above, but the character can ignore any physical armor worn by his opponent.





Name	Cost to Learn	Usable Against*	Description
Offhand Weapon Attack**	15	Any	The character can make an attack at his current rank in the offhand weapon against a single target. The damage die is lessened depending on the size of the weapon: -2 for L and -1 for M weapons
Offhand Weapon Parry**	15	Any	A character can make a parry at his current rank in the offhand weapon, deflecting a single attack.
QuickReload	15	Any	Allows the character to make another missile attack at the end of his initiative. This will break the flow of combat.
Reverse Stroke	10	Human	This maneuver is announced before a parry. If the character has more parry successes than the attacker's successes, the character can roll a damage die and add the net number of successes of his parry. His initiative for the next combat round is at a -5.
Riposte	15	Human	This is used to reflect a strike back against the attacker. The character can only use this maneuver after a successful parry, and it allows him an automatic attack at a skill equal to 1/2 the number of dice that were rolled against him.
Sacrifice Move	5	Any	This move must be chosen before initiative is rolled/chosen. The user can not take any actions this turn, but receives a 50% increase in his next turn's dice pool. If the character aborts to a dodge, this maneuver's effects are cancelled.
Shield Bash	10	Any	This allows an extra attack using a shield. The amount of dice that are rolled is equal to the character's Body or Shield Use +2. Spiked shields gain damage dice
Throw Weapon	5	Any	Any weapon that is not a ranged weapon can be thrown a number of feet equal to the character's Body x 2 for full damage. Every increment of Body (in feet) past this decreases the damage die by 2 levels.
Timed Attack	15	Any	Only usable if 2 or more attackers have this maneuver, and both must attack during the same phase (one will have to withhold an action). Both attackers attack normally, but their combined successes are applied against the target's armor. Each attacker gains additional damage equal to their Mind Attribute.
Swallow Wing	10	Human	This maneuver adds +5 to the character's initiative score (only) for the current round.
Weapon Swipe	5	Human	The character and his opponent make a contest of attributes, each rolling vs. their Body. If the character is successful, he has batted away his opponent's weapon which can not be used to parry. The opponent can still attack normally. After declaring this maneuver, the attacker can make his normal attack.
Whirlwind Attack	10	Any	Allows the character to attack more than 2 opponents without breaking the flow of combat and incurring an attack of opportunity

** Each weapon for offhand parry/attack must be bought separately



Table X: Special Combat Maneuvers, Cont.

Name	Cost to Learn	Usable Against*	Description
Counter Maneuver	5	Any	There is a counter to every special combat maneuver listed here. A character must learn each one separately (e.g., Counter Shield Bash, Counter Falcon Wing, etc.). A counter must be declared immediately after the initial maneuver was declared, and completely nullifies the special combat maneuver. If a special combat maneuver is cancelled, the attacker gains no special benefit of the maneuver and loses all dice in his dice pool. To have a successful counter-maneuver, a character must roll at least 1 success on a parry die.
Advanced Counter	10	Any	As above, but the attacker's dice pool is reduced by 1/2 the next combat round.
Swing Counter	10	Any	Like a regular counter maneuver, but the character gains an immediate extra attack using any remaining parry dice as if they were attack dice.
Double Counter	15	Any Counter	This is a counter of a counter. It negates a specific counter maneuver. It does not work against an Advanced Counter or a Swing Counter. To use a double counter, the attacker subtracts a success from his attack roll.

Hidden Maneuvers

Not all of the special combat maneuvers should be available to starting characters. Part of any good roleplaying game is the advancement of the character, and by having the characters seek out masters of the sword and other weapons to learn new combat maneuvers the GM can encourage character advancement. Also, limiting the types of maneuvers adds excitement and trepidation when squaring off against a new opponent. Finally, other races such as the Sidhe will have their own version of the special combat maneuvers- the GM will have to decide if a human counter-maneuver can be used against this new Sidhe variation.

The following is a list of maneuvers that starting characters can learn: Backslash, Called Shot, Dishonorable Strike, Feint, Minor Vulnerable Strike, Major Vulnerable Strike, Riposte, Shield Bash, Weapon Swipe, and Counter Maneuver (for any of the preceding maneuvers). For any additional maneuver, it is recommended that the character search out tutors and masters to learn from.



A Combat Example

While exploring a ruin that lies partially in the Overworld, a band of characters were unknowingly being stalked by two barghests. The chaos of setting up camp presented a perfect opportunity for an ambush, and the fell doglike creatures are about to pounce on the unsuspecting party. Both creatures will attempt to use their savage attack as much as possible. Rolling randomly, the GM determines that Korin will be the target of the ambush.

Before the game began, the GM asked each character to roll several times against their perception skill, and recorded each player's result. Looking at the rolls made, the GM determines that there just are not enough successes to match the barghest's natural canniness. And so, an ambush is sprung...

GM: It's been another long day in this strange place. You have found a small place amongst the ruins and as you are setting up camp (making Guorner do most of the dirty work, as usual), you each get an intense feeling of dread. Suddenly, fur and teeth are launched, coming out of nowhere and aimed at Korin's throat!

Christy: What? I don't get initiative?

GM: Nope, they got full surprise on you. I checked those rolls I asked all of you to make earlier...

Christy: Wait, don't I get to dodge? (Korin has the skill of Combat Reflexes, which allows her to dodge during a surprise attack).

GM: Sure. You can roll your dodge dice as needed. Snarling and growling, Korin, a large doglike creature jumps out of the darkness and towards your face.

The GM rolls 4 dice for the barghest's attack. He rolls 2 successes, 1 blank, and 1 skull (for 1 net success). The Savage SCM reduces an opponent's AR by 1/2, but Korin's armor is derived from a magical ring, and the Savage attack can not reduce the AR below 1 anyway. Korin's automatic armor of 1/0 blocks the beast's attack.

GM: Korin, the first beast leaps at you. As you're deciding to dodge or not, a faint glow shimmers around you, and your magical armor blocks the creature's attack completely. But let's see about the second creature...

The GM rolls another 4 dice for the second barghest. He rolls 4 successes. Korin's armor blocks one, leaving 3 successes.

GM: Korin, the second doglike beast is only slightly hampered by the magical field from your Ring of Armor. Do you wish to dodge?

Christy: Hell yeah! I have a dodge of 3. Korin rolls to the side!

Christy rolls 3 dice and gets 1 net success

Christy: One success. Did I dodge it?

GM: Partially (*her dodge roll will negate 1 attack success, leaving 2 net successes for the attack*) You tried to dodge but a piece of rubble got in your way. The doglike thing didn't rip out your throat, but it still got a piece of your neck and shoulder, savaging the exposed flesh in its steel colored teeth.

Rodrick

Played by: Sam

LPs 15/8

AR 0/2, MgR 3, PR 4

Attacks: Longsword 4/2M

Damage Dice: +8

Initiative: 9

Special Maneuvers: Called Shot, Backslash, Counter Riposte

Guorner the Black

Played by: Don

LPs 12/11

AR 0/0, MgR 5, PR 5

Attacks: Staff 3

Damage Dice: +6

Initiative: 6

Offensive Spell: Firebolt, Minor (PS 10: D Inst, T 1, R 3, A/D 6)

(Base Spell Initiative: 5)

Korin Farstrider

Played by: Christy

LPs 18/6

AR 1/0, MgR 2, PR 2

Attacks: Mace 6, Shortbow 3

Damage Dice: +8 (mace), +10 (shortbow)

*Initiative: 11**

**Advantage: Combat Reflexes (+3 to initiative)*

Barghest

Played by: the GM

LPs 15/6

AR 0/2, MgR 5, PR 2

Attacks: Bite 4 with Poison 4

Damage Dice: +6

Initiative: 10

Special: Savage SCM: Minor Vulnerable Strike SCM, Howl 6

(insanity)

*** the initiative score does include the optional weapon bonus*

Since the attack was successful, the GM rolls a d6 receiving a 2. He adds the 2 net success (what's left after the dodge and the magical ring), for a total of 4 LPs of damage.

GM: Korin takes 4 surface wounds from the creature's attack. Korin, although the damage is not as much as it could have been, the bite has left your shoulder feeling unnaturally warm... Please roll against your Physical Resistance.

The barghest's poisonous bite will deliver 4 additional points of damage automatically if not resisted.

Sam: Poison? Damn, I hate poison!

Christy: OK. Here's my two dice (she rolls) One success; did I make it?

GM: Nope, not all the way. You take an additional 3 LPs of damage from the beast's corrosive saliva.

Christy: Ouch! Subbing out the 4 from the bite and the 3 from poison damage will leave me at 11/3/3 for Lifepoints.

GM: And that leaves the rest of the party at initiative. Everyone decide how and what your going to attack or do





this round, and let's roll initiative. Christy, since Korin dodged with 2 dice, he's 2 dice short this combat round for his dice pool.

GM: Ok, let's get it on!

Don: Guorner will use magic

GM: OK, roll your initiative.

Don: I rolled a 2; added to 5 that gives Guorner a 7.

Sam: Rodrick attacks with his longsword; I rolled a 10! That gives me a 19!

Christy: Korin's going to use her mace; her initiative is a 11 and I rolled an 8, giving her a 19 also.

GM: Sam, since Christy's character has a higher base initiative, she'll go before Rodrick.

Sam: But she always go first...

Christy: That's because she's a bad-ass!

GM: *The GM now rolls for the barghests. he rolls a d10, adding a 10 for their base initiative and a +2 because they had full surprise the last round against the party. He rolls an 8 for barghest A (for a total of 20) and a 2 for barghest B (for a total of 14)*

GM: All right, the order of combat will be the darker grey-furred beast followed by Korin, Rodrick, a lighter colored and heavily scarred creature, and finally Guorner.

Don: Of course I go last...

Sam: Don't worry dude, we still got some of that healing draught left.

GM: *Rolls randomly to see who will be attacked by barghest A. A 1-2 on a die 6 will be Rodrick, 3-4 will be Guorner and 5-6 will be Korin. The GM rolls a 3.*

GM: Guorner, you are attacked by the first creature.

Don: Naturally

GM: *Rolls 4 dice for the attack. He rolls 3 successes*

GM: Guorner, you can see a little clearer the horrible wolflike beast that has just attacked Korin. It crouches in the rubble, small tendrils of smoke emanating where it's long nail tipped paws touch the stone of the ruins. It's green-colored eyes glow malevolently your way. It's legs seem twisted, and it appears to have a few more joints than a normal wolf/dog should. As it was deflected from Korin's magical barrier, it has landed close enough for it to attack you! I know you're not wearing armor; want to dodge?

Don: Guorner remains concentrating on his spell! Let this devil dog do it's worst!

GM: *The GM rolls for the additional damage caused by the bite itself and gets a 1 on the d6 damage die. Therefore the creature does a total of 4 LPs damage*

GM: OK, the creature snaps at you, tearing a good piece of your clothing and flesh in it's powerful jaws. Guorner takes 4 points of damage from the bite.

GM: Do you want to go ahead and see if Guorner will keep focused on the spell?

Don: Sure. Guorner has a Will of 5. I rolled 4 successes! That should cancel the effects of all 4 LPs of damage! For once, Guorner's going to do some damage.

Sam: 'Bout time.

GM: OK Guorner, like Korin, you too are starting to feel

it's poisonous bite work it's way into your flesh...

Don: *Rolling 5 dice for his Physical Resistance*

Don: 5 Successes!

Christy: You're rolling a lot better tonight!

GM: And although the poison seeps through your system, you seem to shrug off the worse of it. Good rolling! Guorner only takes a total of 4 LPs of damage this combat round.

Don: That leaves me with 8/5/3. Still up!

GM: All right, it's Korin's turn.

Christy: Where are the two dog-things?

GM: One has just pounced on Guorner and stands almost toe-to-toe with him. The other is near you. In fact, close enough for it's charnel-house smell to almost make you retch.

Christy: Korin swings her mace at the devil dog. Did she hit? *Christy rolls 3 dice (she can only roll 3 dice as her 3 die dodge the previous round reduces her 6 dice pool down by three dice); she rolls 1 success and 2 blanks for 1 net success.*

GM: *Rolls two dice for the creature's armor. He gets 2 successes.*

GM: Nope, Korin thinks he gets a bead on the monster, but at the last moment the best jerks away from the descending mace.

Christy: Damn! I knew I should've used all my dice!

GM: Rodrick, your turn.

Sam: Rodrick advances to the wolf-dog that is against his friend Guorner and with two hands arcs the sword in such a way as to use an all-out attack followed by his backslash maneuver! *Sam rolls 4 successes; although he has mastery, none of the icons appeared on the dice.*

Sam: 4 Successes! Take that, damn devil spawn!

GM: *Rolls vs the creature's armor and gets only 1 success.*

GM: 3 LPs of damage penetrate the creature's hide.

Sam: *Rolls for his longsword's damage die (d8).*

Sam: I'm bad! Rodrick does an additional 7 LPs of damage for a total of 10 so far! Now for the backslash. Look at that: I rolled a sword and a success for a total of 3!

GM: Rolls again for the creature's armor and gets only 1 success.

GM: Your backslash starts to turn on the creature's armor, but your locked wrist causes the tip of the blade to stay in the beast'sropy muscles. You have done an additional 2 LPs of damage, and can re-roll the weapon's damage die.

Sam: I rolled an 8! Korin may have went first, but Rodrick does all the damage!

Rodrick has done a total of 20 LPs of damage in one round to the barghest, reducing it's LPs to 0/0/1.

GM: Rodrick finishes pulling his sword from the creature's body, his backslash sending scalding blood in a great arc around and over his body. It sizzles on the ground and on your leather armor, ruining the appearance of both. The creature's eyes grow dim and it falls to the earth. It's





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mate, currently on Korin, sees this and howls a fore-lorn cry. The sound is horrible, it pierces your brain and the world seems to twist in front of you. You can't see straight; a instant migraine rushes across your brain like a wagon train carrying the Emperor's payroll. You all stagger under it's horrible mental onslaught. Everyone needs to roll vs. their Int.

Christy: Does Magic Resistance work?

GM: No.

Christy: Shoot! Ok, My Int is a 3

Christy: (rolling 3 dice) 2 successes. I think I'm going to burn a character point on this one, giving me 3 successes.

Sam: You wuss!

Christy: What happens?

GM: Just a moment. Don?

Don: With my superior Intelligence of 5 I rolled... 3 successes.

Sam: Ok, I roll my 2 dice... (Sam's face falls as he covers his dice quickly)

GM: What's you get?

Sam: 2 skulls?!

GM: Rolls against the 6 die howl of the barghest and gets a total of 3 successes

GM: Ok, first Guorner and Korin: you're both ok. The pounding in the head slowly dissipates and you can rationally think again. But Rodrick, well, You are receiving several commands from godlike voices, all at once. They are telling you to stand, to sit, to make a cheese sandwich, to destroy everything around you, all voices shouting at the same time. The earth is starting to split open, and small bugs are starting to crawl out, determined to crawl under your armor and steal your thoughts. Rodrick stands as if catatonic and I think Rodrick is going to be out of action for a while...

Sam: (stunned silence)

Christy: Wuss, huh?

GM: I believe it's Guorner's action.

Sam: How long will I be like this?

GM: Until the voices tell you so. Say, is that a giant centipede crawling up Rodrick's leg? OK Don, I think you had some payback to attend to...

Don: How far away is the creature on Korin from Guorner?

GM: About 15 feet or so, but say around range of 1 because Guorner can move that far this round.

Don: Good. Guorner has finished constructing his Firebolt pattern and has entwined 5 flows of elemental fire within it's structure. And with a flash of light....

Don rolls 10 dice for his spell. He gains a total of 7 successes.

Don: Guorner releases the magical energy of the spell. One die for range, 1 for target, 5 for damage!

GM: Rolls 5 dice for the barghest's Magic Resistance, getting 4 successes; the barghest will only take 1 point of damage.

GM: Guorner, the magic bolt launches itself towards the creature, but as it hits, most of the flame is dampened, turning from red to green, a color that almost matches it's eyes. You stand looking at a very, very slightly damaged, and dare I say, pissed off wolflike creature. New round!

Don: Magic resistance? A dog has magic resistance?

Christy: Glowing eyes, scalding blood, feet that blacken stone, howl that sends the not-so-sane straight to the looney-farm; dead giveaways maybe?

GM: OK, every roll for initiative. *The GM rolls a 6 for the barghest, giving it a total of 16.*

Don: Guorner switches from spell to staff. He'll take the -2 penalty for unstrapping his staff from his backpack. I rolled an eight, giving me a total of 12.

Christy: Mace side-the-head! I rolled a 4, for a total of 15.

GM: Fine. The sequence is...

Sam: Do I get to roll?

GM: Nope. In fact, Rodrick has a sneaking suspicion that one of the bugs has gotten into his boots and is trying to steal his toes. He better hurry up and take off his boots and guard them before it gets there. The voices are urging you to be quick about it!

Sam: Rodrick sits down and starts to pull his boots off...

GM: OK, the initiative goes to the creature, Korin and then Guorner.

GM: Rodrick, the voices start screaming for you to duck (except for one that tells you to pound a rock on your dangerous toes). Before you get a chance to react, the beast is at your throat!

Sam: Arrgh!

GM: Rolls 3 successes. Rodrick, your armor seems only partially effective against the savaging technique employed by the beast. Please roll a die.

Sam: Rolls one die. A success.

GM: Well, the armor does holdout some against the attack. *The GM rolls a 6 for damage.*

GM: Rodrick takes 8 LPs of damage (two from the attack and 6 on the damage die). As creature rends your shoulder, thankfully not piercing your collarbone with it's powerful jaws. However, poisonous saliva drips into the gash on your neck, necessitating a resistance roll.

Sam: Rolls 4 dice for his Physical resistance 2 successes.

GM: Rolls a d4 for the poison's extra damage, getting a 3. This added to the 2 ranks of poison not blocked by Rodrick's physical resistance gives Sam's character an additional 5 LPs of damage..

GM: Sam, Rodrick takes a total of 5LPs of damage. The poison of the beast and the shock of the attack has lessened your depth of the hallucinatory world your madness has put you in, but you are nowhere near to coming back to reality quite yet.

Sam: Rodrick stamps about, with one boot off, scratching his neck and yelling about the bugs biting him.

GM: That's the spirit!

Rodrick now has LPs equal to 2/3/2

GM: I believe it's Korin's turn...

Christy: Korin all out attacks the creature's head. This time she's gonna do some major damage! *Christy rolls all 6 six dice and gets 4 successes.*

Christy: Four successes!

GM: Rolls against the creature's 0/2 armor and gets 2 successes.

GM: The steely grey hair of the creature blocks exactly half of your mace's impact. The rest gets transferred fully



to the beast.

Christy: Damage time! (She rolls a d6) Four more points for a total of 6 LPs damage.

Don: As Korin strikes the creature, Guorner uses his staff's special ability when attacking. Using 2 please...

Unknown to the rest of the party, Guorner dabbles in blood magic. His staff is magical, and triples the amount of LPs of the user's blood given to it (as minor wounds) as extra attack dice. Guorner loses 2 LPs of damage, giving him a 6/3/3, but allows him to attack with 6 more dice!

GM: Noted. Please attack...

Don: Korin strikes hard against the creature, his staff glowing bluish-black with its powerful energies. He rolls his 9 dice...

Don: 5 Successes!

GM: Rolls for the creature's armor, receiving one net skull

GM: Paydirt Guorner! As you attacked it, its body is moved from Korin's mace strike to place it perfectly before you. You even manage to inflict an extra LP of damage.

Sam: Good going!

Don: O ye of little faith... OK my damage die roll was a 4 (rolled on a d6), so a total of 10 LPs of damage.

The barghest is now reduced to 0/3/2 LPs. The creature will be stunned unless it rolls 3 successes against its Will of 5. Unfortunately for the party, it manages to do so.

GM: You see the creature shake its head, and bends awkwardly at several of its leg joints...but only for a minute. It looks you all squarely in the eye as the next round comes into play. Initiative.

The GM rolls a 4 for the barghest giving it a total of 14.

Christy: Going with my trusty mace. Eighteen total!

Sam: Rodrick decides to dance to the music his voices are conveying to him!

Don: 14 with the staff!

GM: OK, Korin goes first, creature goes next followed instantly by Guorner as you both tied initiative. Korin...

Christy: Time to drive it home! *Christy rolls all 6 dice again*

Christy: 4 successes

GM: Rolls 2 dice for the creature's armor and gets 2 successes.

GM: Christy, go ahead and roll your damage die please.

Christy: Rolls her d6. A four. What happens?

Christy has dealt a total of 6 LPs of damage (2 from action successes, 4 from the damage die), dropping the barghest to 0/0/0.

GM: Korin again swings mightily at the beast but only partially connects. But it was enough. She finally gets to whack the creature on the head, and with a muffled crack, the creature's head turns to the side, and the body hits the ground. Good job everyone....

So we leave our party, much worse for wear from the 3 rounds of combat. Did the other barghests in the pack hear the howl? How is the party going to heal, defend themselves and take care of poor Rodrick? And why is Guorner's staff still glowing, highlighting those strange, new runes? (it's never done that before!) Adventures are never truly over in the Earth of the Fourth Sun...

Infections After Combat

One of the most (historically) feared aspects of battle was that of post-combat infections. In an age where there is little advanced medicine, and only a very small few know about germ theory, infections can claim more fatalities than the actual physical destruction of limbs and organs.

*The GM can declare that all healing spells automatically destroy any infectious particle, or may declare a separate *Cauterize Wound* spell necessary (which would also be an *Alter-Life*). *First-Aid*, however, is a different story.*

*To the average character, most of the damage done is merely superficial bruises and scrapes (because they are, after all, the heroes!). But each time the *First Aid* skill is used, the GM may require the character to roll vs. his entire *Physical Resistance*. If the roll had skulls in excess past one, then the character loses that number of LPs per every 4 hours. These can only be negated by a character using *Mastery Level First Aid*, or by magic.*

For example, Rolf is being patched up after a vicious fight in the sewers of Altain. When rolling vs. his PR, he rolls 2 skulls and 2 blanks! Rolf will take 1 LPs of damage every

LifePoints, Damage and Injury

LifePoints

A character initially starts with a total of 20 LifePoints (LPs), and can add more if he wishes for a cost of **2 Character points (or experience points) per LP**. LifePoints can be thought of as a combination of how resilient a character is to damage (his constitution, *per se*) as well as his ability to escape from dangerous situations that would, in normal conditions, kill an average denizen of the Earth of the Fourth Sun. Simply put, the more LifePoints a character has, the less likely he is to die during the course of an adventure. The player can distribute his 20 LPs amongst his Surface Wounds and Deep Wounds.

Damage Levels

Not all damage received is the same. Some blows land only on the surface and cause minimal damage, while other attacks may rip and tear muscles. Some injuries may even pierce internal organs, break bones, or sever arteries. To reflect the different types of damage that can be afflicted onto a character, the use of *damage levels* have been used.

A character's LifePoints are structured into damage levels. There are two damage levels: *Surface Wounds* and *Deep Wounds*. As a character takes damage, LifePoints are subtracted from his total.

Lifepoints are normally subtracted as the player sees fit. The player usually has free reign to subtract LPs from either his Surface or Deep Wounds. However, when a character drops below -1 Deep Wounds (or has a Body Attribute of -1 or less) from any source, he dies. Also, dropping below a -1 in either the Mind or Soul Attribute also means death.

Certain attacks, as well as conditions such as poisoning and disease, causes damage to a specific health level.

For example, the spirit-inhabited corpse of a Gharu delivers all of it's damage directly as Deep Wounds, bypassing surface wounds altogether!

A character has free reign over how to assign his character points amongst his two levels of damage, but once assigned, he can not change them, only add to them.

Surface Wounds

These are minor cuts, scrapes, bruises and overextensions, coupled with muscle fatigue and soreness that one acquires from heavy exertion and combat. Damage done by surface wounds is negligible and does not truly slow or stop a character from his performance until the total number of surface wounds are

reduced to zero. At that point, a character becomes fatigued.

When a character loses all of his surface wound

When fatigued, a character's maximum die pool is reduced by 1/2. A character can recover from being fatigued by either resting and healing his surface wounds or by sacrificing a Body level or a Spirit level to overcome and persevere. A player can choose this option once per scene, and a character could conceivably work his exhausted body to death.

Another option is that the player can have his character become *stunned*. Excess damage past his last surface wound gives him a negative level in surface wounds. After taking a negative amount of health levels, the character is stunned, and can not perform any action for the rest of the round, and goes last during any initiative (the player does not roll for initiative). Starting the next round, the player must roll vs. his Spirit attribute (at one-half his normal value, because all stunned characters are automatically *fatigued*) during his initiative, and uses any successes against the negative levels. The character remains stunned until he reaches zero. There are certain attacks and weapons that can automatically cause a character to be stunned (the player does not have a choice).

When stunned, a character can not perform any innate ability, cast spells, or mentally trigger any spell-like effect. Treat his Mind Attribute as a 0 (although it is not actually changed). While stunned, a character can not perform any action that has Intelligence as a requisite.

Deep Wounds

A character's Deep wound level *is* his Body Attribute. A player can add to this core number an additional amount of levels from his initial 20 LPs or can buy additional LPs for 2 Character Points Each. But his Body Attribute remains his core level of Deep wounds. With enough damage, his Body attribute itself become lessened. When a character's Body Attribute falls below -1 (or in other words reaches -2) he dies.

For every Body level of damage that the character receives, he receives **one automatic skill** to every physical action that he performs.

Maiming and Disfigurement

This optional wound level allows a player to have his character receive less damage for a price. A character can, once per adventure, declare that instead of an attack doing damage by reducing LPs, it instead affected only a single limb, organ or region of the body. Declaring maiming and/or disfigurement negates the loss of LifePoints and all of their effects.

The rules on maiming and disfigurement are not to be realistic, but cinematic in scope. In many roleplaying



games, there is a kind of safety-net for characters once they reach a certain amount of damage. Not so in the Earth of the Fourth Sun. Running out of Body levels is death, and it is all too easy to reach. With maiming and disfiguring, you can give the character a break (as far as death is concerned), but saddle him with a penalty for getting so close to entering the Spiritworld. It allows the character to take the proverbial licking and still remain ticking. In short, it is this game's safety-net for those players who tend to wear a target every time they go adventuring. But, just like every rule in this game, the GM can disallow maiming and disfigurement if he so desires.

A player can negate the effects of a single attack by declaring that the attack disfigured the character. A disfiguring attack does just that: it leaves a horrible mark or scar that can not be removed except by Alteration- Life magic cast with the Virtue of 'Permanent'. Examples of disfigurement include: loss of an ear, small fingers, or toes, scalp cuts and other skin loss, gruesome facial scars, body scars, burned or other skin disorders, speech impediments, visual impediments, hearing impediments, and or severe limbs. A character does not get any additional character points for a disfigurement, and a character with a disfigurement receives one automatic skull during any social encounter for each disfigurement received.

A player can also bring his Body score back to it's full amount by declaring that the attack maimed the character. A maimed character has some major portion of his body removed or rendered permanently unusable. Examples include missing hands, legs, feet, eyes, and severe neurological disorders (violent fits, seizures, etc.). A player does not receive any additional character points for having this type of disadvantage. A character who is maimed is automatically rendered unconscious until treated, and then may only regain consciousness after combat, and after a period of time equalling 1 hour for every Body level that was negated. Reductions in the dice pool of such a character is warranted until enough game time has passed so that the character has had time to adjust to his handicap.

A character can declare a maiming or disfigurement at any time, even if he was to receive a blow that would kill him. This may be a considered another aspect of a hero's *ilucki*. (It is usually considered lucky to loose something like a hand rather than a life). Again, **maiming or disfiguring can be declared only once per adventure.**

Until healed, maiming or disfigurement reduces both the character's Mind and Soul stat by one for disfiguring and by two if maiming. These two misfortunes go way beyond the physical in their penalties; they also affect both the mind and the animating spark of the character.

Healing the Effects of Damage Naturally

As a character takes damage, his Lifepoint total drops, but this loss of LifePoints is not permanent. LifePoints that are lost due to combat and other forms of stress are regained naturally from resting. Resting does not include any strenuous activity and/or exercise. A resting character can heal the effects of his damage based upon what level of damage he has taken.

Surface Wounds: All LifePoints of surface wounds are healed in 24 hours with complete rest. If a character rests for a fraction of that time, then he receives that fraction of LPs (the smallest fraction of rest is suggested to be 8 hours).

For example, if Ancar has lost 18 surface LPs and then rests for eight hours, he will receive 6 LPs at the end of the resting time (1/3 of a 24 hour period).

A character can still heal surface wounds even if he is not resting completely. Light physical activity (walking, craftsmanship-type skills, light physical exercise) increases the time that surface wounds are healed. A character's LifePoints are fully healed in 48 hours if the character is performing only light physical activity. A character performing heavy physical activity (like combat) does not heal at all.

Deep Wounds, before the Body Attribute is reached: these wounds heal at a rate of one per day, but only if the character is resting completely. A character who is not resting completely or has some surface wounds heals only 1 deep wound in a single 48 hour period.

Deep Wounds/Body Attribute levels : A character can heal one Body level every 10 days if there are no other wounds present. As long as a character is suffering from any additional wound, Body levels are healed at a rate of one every two weeks!

Disfigurement/Maiming: Disfigurement can be healed by time or very powerful magic. Normal healing of a disfigurement occurs after 6 months. After a disfigurement has been healed, the character's Mind and Spirit stats are increased to their original levels. Of course, an Alteration/Life spell may cure the effects temporarily, but it would require the Virtue of *Permanence* to have a lasting effect (and would automatically cause the character to become *manna aspected*, unless magically shielded).

Healing the Effects of Damage with Magic

Damage can be healed by magical means. Spells that heal damage are variations of Alteration- Life. Spells heal a character at a rate of one Lifepoint per Action Success (Surface wounds) or one Lifepoint per 5 Action Successes (Deep/Body wounds). All wounds that are healed are



done so permanently (or until the character loses them due to a misadventure).

For a spell to heal Deep Wounds require the Advantage of: *Can heal Deep wounds which is a 4 point Advantage.* Deep wounds healed are done so permanently. A character wishing to heal multiple levels of damage (like both surface wounds and minor wounds healed at the same time) require a linked spell, coupled with the appropriate number of Advantages.

Maiming can only be healed permanently by an Alteration-Life spell specifically crafted to heal that particular type of handicap. Such a spell must also have the 15 point Advantage 'Permanent'.

Other Forms of Damage

Falling

Typically, a character takes 1die of damage for every 5 feet that he falls (after 5 feet or 1 die of damage starting at 10 feet), up to a maximum of 10 dice of damage. Falling from a height of more than 55 feet, a character receives 1 additional automatic Body/Deep wound for every 5 feet. In certain instances, the damage taken may be more (falling on spikes) or less (falling on a giant feather mattress).

Fire

Being hit with flaming object, or being exposed to a heat source will increase any damage given. Being hit with a flaming object will increase damage by 1-2 LifePoints, while standing in a bonfire may do 20 LPs of damage per round. The damage done by fire may not be healed by a first-aid roll, and must be recovered normally.

Poison

Poison is treated as a special kind of attack. The rank of the poison is the strength of the attack; for every rank of poison, the player or GM rolls a die. Each success inflicts one point of poison damage. Poison in turn is resisted by Physical Resistance, much like armor resists a physical attack. Every success rolled against the PR negates one point of poison. Like a regular attack, many poisons inflict an extra damage die of damage if there are any net poison successes.

Poisons range in their toxicity. A mild to moderate poison affects a character starting with surface wounds. A lethal poison starts affecting a character at his deep wounds. A character can not decide how to subtract poison damage: it will always be subtracted from the listed Wound level first, and will progress to more critical wound levels. Some poisons also inflict an additional damage die of damage if they are not resisted.

Some poisons take a longer time to act. Many natural poisons take several rounds to reach their full

potential, and may do an increasing amount of damage each round. This is treated as multiple attacks, and the player can roll against the character's PR for each attack, until the effects of the poison wears off. Some poisons are so virulent and deadly that they deal automatic damage (the GM does not have to roll) if the character can not resist with Physical Resistance.

For example, Ten Red Turtles is stung by a giant wasp. The wasp's poison is a mild poison and takes two rounds to become fully effective. The first round, it is a rank 2 poison with 2 damage dice, and in five rounds it is a rank 7 poison with seven damage dice. The first round, Ten Red Turtles rolls against his PR of 3 receiving 2 successes. This is enough to counter any successes that the GM could roll, and so negates the poison. Ten Red Turtle becomes very sick, but has not succumbed to the poison's damage. Five rounds later, Ten Red Turtle's player must again roll against his PR. This time he does not receive any successes. The GM this round rolls seven dice and gets 4 successes. The poison will do 4 LPS of damage, starting with Surface wounds.

As an another example, Kyra is stuck by a poisoned needle. The poison is instant, very potent, and is considered 'lethal. The poison is at a rank of 5, but does an automatic 2 LPs of Deep wounds. Kyra has a PR of 3. She rolls all three dice, and gets three successes. The GM rolls his 10 dice and receives 6 successes. The poison still works, and Kyra receives 3+2 (or 5) LPs of damage, subtracted from her Deep wounds.

Disease

Diseases are similar to poisons, but generally have a longer onset time, and do potentially greater damage. The rank of the disease usually progresses to a zenith and then decreases again. The PR roll against a disease is done daily, only if the first roll fails. If the first roll against the disease was a failure, the character did not contract it.

For example, the Red Fugue is a disease that is affecting the village of Holbert. This disease has an initial rank of 3, increasing by 1 per day until a 6 is reached, when it declines by one down to a minimum of 1. When exposed to the disease, the character must roll vs his PR and get more success than the GM rolling against the disease's rank of 3. If the player was unsuccessful, he has contracted the disease, and will take some LPs in damage. Each day during the progress of the disease he will have to re-roll against the strength of the disease to keep from suffering a further loss in LPs.

Both poisons and diseases tend to also affect other Attributes when they run rampant in the character.

