Diesel Empire, v6.0.0-alpha

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22-1890

The sovereignty of the King is still absolute, but the *Diesel Kingdoms* have begun carving out an empire built on *refined* elos diesel, which is replacing the steam engines of the previous Industrial Revolution.

These modern kingdoms are beginning to have an *unprecedented* level of influence that transcends both borders and the sacred *Bloodline Oath* of the *Ascendant Kings*.

This realization is either *terrifying* or *enthralling* to the ancient Courts of the *Grand Kingdoms*, and a new century begins, they will be forced to reconcile with a world that is on the cusp of another technological revolution.

The South Kingdom Civil War (22-1839 to 22-1890)

The *South Kingdom* is currently in a decades-long protracted civil war to reign in its northern territories, who recognize themselves as the *Frontier Kingdoms*. After two smaller territories succeeded to Bonethorne Port in 22-1839, the Southern Kingdoms recognized that their grip on the Frontier Kingdoms was too lax, and that they needed to reign in their northern cousins.

The Southern Kingdom is clearly winning this war and will likely defeat the Frontier Kingdoms within the next year, but the war will carry long-lasting consequences well into the next century.

The Ruling Kingdoms, 22-1890

The Grand Kingdoms of the Ascendency

The North Kingdom (Est. 20-5. Formerly "The Grand Ascendant Kingdom")

Monarchy. Greater Northern Expanse. The largest and most powerful kingdom on the planet, it has built its power on its massive workforce and military.

The North takes a "humans-first" position on most policy matters, deeply rooted in the North's perception that non-humans are more easily influenced by The Veil, and that humans have always been the first and last line of defense against the Fae.

The North has been selling weapons to the Frontier Kingdoms for decades. Without North Kingdom support, the Frontier Kingdoms would have fallen decades earlier.

The Southern Kingdoms (Est. 21-2201)

Monarchy/Republic. Western Expanse. The second largest "kingdom", the USK was once part of the North Kingdom, two thousand years ago. Unlike the North, which has had a single ruling bloodline since the Ascendancy War, the Southern Kingdom has *eight* Kings.

Each King is still a descendant of the *Bloodline*, and each swear by the *Bloodline Oath*, but each rules their own kingdoms *separately*, meeting periodically at *The King's Table* to resolve issues that affect the Southern Kingdoms as a whole.

The Frontier Kingdoms (Est. 22-1838)

Monarchy/Republic. Western Expanse. Once a part of the Southern Kingdoms, the Frontier Kingdoms have made their riches through distributing refined elos diesel from Bonethorne Port. They are also the chief importer of elos grain to Bonethorne Port, which is the main component to the fuel.

While Bonethorne Port is a neutral party, the Frontier Kingdom continues to make guilders from its endeavors with Bonethorne Port.

Much like the Southern Kingdom, the Frontier Kingdom is ruled by *five* Kings, but currently The War King Ellis Monds is considered to be the final authority.

Silohain (Est. 20-5)

Monarchy. Central Expanse. 1,167,322 mi². Pop: 30m. The ancestral homelands of the elves, which is also home to the last remaining *dragons*, and primordial *Ancients*.

While elven kingdoms existed for thousands of years previous to the Silohain, this kingdom was created as a formal political entity which united the elves after the Ascendancy War.

The kingdom is self-sustaining and reclusive, so its borders are tightly controlled. Very little is known about the Silohain outside of historical texts, but nearly all accounts describe it as a virtual paradise.

The Diesel Kingdoms

Bonethorne Port (Est. 22-1402)

Democratic Republic. Western Expanse. *"The Rogue Kingdom"* is legally a territory of the North Kingdom. The orc Bonethorne Axesplitter captured the peninsula in the 22-1402, but has been able to maintain autonomy by paying reparations to the North.

The port currently controls 80% of the world's diesel production, and is the world's leader in advanced industries, sciences, and weapons. The Port has become synonymous with modern innovation and industrial might.

The Port also has one of the most diverse populations on the planet, and hosts the largest community of elves outside of the Silohain.

While the Port has always given *all* of its citizens equal rights, the military has an enormous amount of influence, which sometimes supersedes civilian laws and freedoms.

In order to survive, the Port has maintained very close ties to both the Frontier Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom, even during the Civil War. While Bonethorne Port continues to sell diesel directly to the Southern Kingdom, it still pays Frontier Kingdom distributors to sell diesel to the orcs in the Eastern Expanse. The Southern Kingdom tolerates these actions, since Bonethorne has agreed to sell its advanced weapons exclusively to the Southern Kingdoms.

Creating Characters

Step 1: Attributes

Attributes are the traits that have a strong influence over your character, like *agile*, *strong*, *precise*, *small*, *creative*, *technical*, *wise*, *impulsive*, *beautiful*, *confident*, *witty*, *stubborn*, *brave*, *determined*, and *cowardly* are all examples of Attributes.

- **Give your character *two* Attributes.** You can use our examples or create your own.
- **Your character can have duplicate Attributes**, which just means that it has a bigger impact on their lives, for better or worse.

Step 2: Species

Pick your character's species. Your choice will give your character additional Attributes.

Species: Human

Prolific. Over-confident. Stubborn. Except for the *Silohain*, humans have a significant presence in every kingdom and of all the sentient species, humans are probably the majority.

The main reason for this proliferation is that humans seem to have evolved from more than two dozen different regions across the known world, appearing about ten thousand years ago with the orcs.

Attributes:

- **Social Dominance** - All major cities in the world are willing to accept the human North Gilder as currency, and almost everyone in these cities can, at least crudely, communicate in the common human language of *Northword*. Also, since most of the industries are controlled by humans, most modern devices and equipment are designed for humans.

Species: Orc

Expansive. Powerful. Stubborn. Orcs developed throughout the plains and steppes of the Eastern Expanse, where they continue to maintain total control. They appeared alongside humans, ten thousand years ago. Second only to humans, orcs are a major presence in every major kingdom outside the Silohain, but until recently, their populations were largely segregated.

Hardened tribalism keeps the orc nations divided and allows elven and human nations to maintain global dominance, but orc societies have been much faster in adapting to modern advances, which is beginning to become a significant economic advantage.

Attributes:

- **Resilient** - Orcs are famously difficult to kill.
- **Strong** - Orc are naturally as strong as a human athlete.
- **Family First - Who is your family?** This concept is a central tenet of all orc nations. Orcs are *driven* to advance the interests of their *own* family before the interests of anyone else, including themselves and other *individuals* of a family.

Species: Elves

Dogmatic. Magical. Ancient. Elves were the first species to "Know with the mind of the Gods" nearly thirty millenia ago and founded the first schools of science, magic, and philosophy. The elven calendar is still the world standard. As elves developed, magic became a central tenet of their societies, and their lifespans began to extend as a result.

Attributes:

- **Magically Attuned** - Elves are naturally attuned to magic.
- **Magical Senses** - Elves are able to naturally sense magical energies, perceiving magic in a way similar to a sense of smell.
- **Long Lives** - Elves live a long time (800 years or more), which gives them a level of historical wisdom, but makes it much harder to imagine the *immediate* future.

Species: Dwarves

Productive. Generous. Loyal. Evolving from deep within the mountains of the Essian Range, dwarves were largely isolated but maintained a relative peace with their neighbors for twelve thousand years, even creating a kind of peace with the orcs for the last thousand years.

Dwarves have a special kinship with saurians. Saurian medicines and ingenuity help to stop the Firehand Plague, which nearly wiped out the dwarves two thousand years ago.

Attributes:

- **Resilient** - Dwarves almost as difficult to kill as an Orc.

- **Short** - Dwarves are usually only about four feet tall, and never taller than five feet.
- **Muscular** - Though shorter, dwarves have a very *dense* musculature which makes them as strong and as heavy as an average human.
- **Clan Affiliation - What is your Clan?** Dwarves are strongly tied to their clans, and are fiercely loyal, and will do what they can to help fellow clan members.

Species: Halflings

Patient. Diplomatic. Friendly. Halflings are the demi-Fae who were born during the Ascendancy Wars, eight thousand years ago.

Though there are no major halfling nations, halflings have kept their Fae ancestors from obliterating the world for thousands of years by maintaining a peace with The Veil and the Fae. By all accounts, the Fae only tolerate the existence of this world because of their half-cousins.

The Fae nature of the halflings means that they care very little for worldly power or wealth, preferring to spend their lives in pursuit of joyful fulfillment as explorers, artists, and teachers.

Attributes:
- **Short** - Halflings are short, never growing much taller than four feet. This also makes them slightly lighter and weaker than the average human.
- **Demi-Fae** - Halflings *usually* look like smaller humans or elves but halflings have a wide range of vestigial physical traits that come from their Fae ancestry. They are also able to sense the presence of other Fae and demi-Fae as a natural intuition.

Species: Goblins

Curious. Ancient. Underestimated. Goblin labor helped to build the First World and the Ancient World, and they were witnesses to every great fall for the last *thirty thousand* years. Their history is as long as the elves, but goblins have never held any significant power. Instead they have been subjugated by the elves, humans, and orcs several times throughout history.

Goblins have begun to see a renaissance in the last few centuries. While many nations still use goblin labor, modern manufacturing has replaced this need, and many goblins have begun to explore both the world and their history. Several key archaeological, geological, and biological discoveries in the past century have been made by goblins.

Attributes:
- **Small** - Goblins are famously small, never exceeding more than three feet. This makes them much lighter, but also weaker than the average human.
- **Stubborn Survivors** - Goblins can survive on miniscule amounts of food and water in very extreme conditions.
- **Extreme Immunities** - Goblins *can* get sick and are weakened by infectious diseases, poisons, and *radiation*, but only *very old* Goblins (60 years or more) actually *die* from these causes. Sadly this has made Goblins a favored target for magical and scientific experimentation.

Species: Saurians

Strange. Respected. Isolated. This species is relatively young, only eight thousand years old, but during that time saurians have been able to achieve the same level of scientific and philosophical achievements as the ancient elves.

The saurians also have a long-standing friendship with the dwarves. Though saurian doctors saved the dwarves from the Firehand Plague, dwarven experts and materials allowed saurians to build a thriving civilization in the swamps of the Southern Expanse.

Attributes:

- **Abstract Thinker** - Saurians have a unique brain structure and thought process.
- **Cold Blooded** - Saurians require less food to survive (preferring large, occasional meals), but they also are unable to *naturally* regulate their body temperature and sudden temperature changes can be *harmful*.
- **Amphibious** - Saurians are able to *safely* breath underwater for a little under fifteen minutes and roughly twenty minutes in an *emergency*.

Step 4: Trades and Abilities

Trades represent your character's areas of expertise and experience, and *each* Trade has **four Abilities: Fight**, **Resolve**, **Expertise**, and **Influence**.

- **Fight** represents your character's ability to use the Trade in *combat*.
- **Resolve** represents your character's ability to use the Trade in *extreme* and *dangerous* mental or physical situations.
- **Expertise** is your character's skill and mastery in applying the trade in practical applications.
- **Influence** is how your character uses this skill to change the beliefs and motivations of other characters.

You get *three points* to spend on your character's **Trades** and **Abilities**.

- **Pick *one* starting Trade.** You can buy additional Trades for *one* **point**.
- **Pick a *Background* for *each* of your Trades**, which describes how your character gained their Trade and their experience with the Trade.
- **Trades have *one* Ability that starts at *one* and the rest start at *zero*.** It costs *one point* to increase an **Ability** by *one* **rank**.

Trades

Assassin

- **SPECIAL COMBAT** training with a variety of **firearms**, **hand weapons**, and **martial arts**, specializing in **close combat** and **long-range marksmanship**.
- **ESPIONAGE** training with **security systems**, **evasion**, **stealth**, and **situational awareness**.
- **MANIPULATION** through **deception** and **emotional exploitation**.
- **RESISTANCE** training designed to **defeat interrogation** and **torture**.

Abilities:

- +1 FIGHT

Bounty Hunter

Combat training to fight in close quarters with **non-lethal martial** combat and **firearms**. **Tracking** training to find target's location including being able to **search**, **investigate**, and **discover clues** through and the ability to find information through **personal interviews** and **intimidation**. **Physically fit** and **mentally focused**.

Abilities:

- +1 RESOLVE

Trade Resources

Watch contact, military contact, safe-house, political contact, exclusive membership.

Trade: Engineer

The practical application of scientific properties to create complex systems.

Skills:

- **APPLICATION** which encompasses the skills needed for **implementing solutions** and **repairing systems**.
- **TROUBLESHOOTING** skills that allow an engineer to **identify issues** and **design practical** or **radical solutions**.
- **JURY RIGGING** skills that allow an engineer to **improvise repairs** and **tools**.
- **ACADEMIC** skills that provide an engineer with the **scientific knowledge** to **understand** complex systems.

Abilities:

- +1 EXPERTISE

Trade Resources:

Academic contact, workshop, laboratory, political contact, advanced tool kit.

Trade: Fixer

The creative application of law and politics in the pursuit of power.

Skills:

- **Back-Channel** - Collecting and understanding exploitable secrets.
- **Authority** - Exerting political power for gain.
- **Intelligence** - A through understanding of local politics, culture, and law.
- **Propaganda** - Guiding someone towards a truth, real or imagined.

Abilities:

- +1 INFLUENCE

Trade Resources:

Political contact, criminal contact, political favor, profitable investment, criminal influence, foreign contact, safe-house.

Trade: Gunslinger

You are an expert at small arms and are practiced in unconventional gun fighting styles.

Skills:

- **Gunfighter** - Using firearms to engage in improvisational, close-range combat.
- **Sharpshooter** - Being able to take precision shots, even under unusual circumstances.
- **Steel** - Being able to stay calm and clear regardless of the circumstances.
- **Gun Almanac** - The ability to identify, maintain and repair small arms.

Abilities:

- +1 FIGHT

Trade Resources:

Finely crafted small arm, specialized ammunition, weapon contact, watch contact, military contact, experimental small arm.

Trade: Medical

Using modern medical techniques and medicines to heal others.

Skills:

- **Pathology** - Finding the root cause of an ailment.
- **Aid** - Healing trauma in emergency situations.
- **Medicine** - The practical application of herbalism and pharmaceuticals.
- **Surgery** - The art of healing extreme trauma.

Abilities:

- +1 EXPERTISE

Trade Resources:

Trauma kit, advanced medical equipment, advanced pharmaceuticals, medical contact, lab access, university access, hospital access.

Trade: Ranger

The training needed to survive and live in a hostile environment for extended periods.

Skills:

- **Endurance** - Physical and mental fortitude.
- **Hunting** - Seeking, stalking and killing a target.
- **Instinct** - A sense for finding things out of balance.
- **Survival** - Skills for living in harsh environments.

Abilities:

- +1 RESOLVE

Trade Resources:

Survival pack, hunting weapon, advanced survival equipment, cabin in the wild, Fae contact.

Trade: Soldier

The knowledge needed to maneuver a battlefield and the training needed to win a fight.

Skills:

- **Combat Training** - The ability to fight with firearms and fists.
- **PT** - Physical training needed to navigate and endure combat.
- **Tactics** - Using strategy to subvert and defeat an enemy.
- **Alertness** - Being aware of all the dangers and advantages of a location.

Abilities:

- +1 FIGHT

Trade Resources: Military contact, military-grade weapon, watch contact, advanced military equipment, illegal explosives, safehouse.

Trade: Spy

Gathering information about a target through covert observation, or more aggressive means like bribery, and torture.

Skills:

- **Clandestine** - The art of keeping secrets and staying undetected.
- **Coercion** - Convincing a target to perform a given action.
- **Observation** - The ability to detect important details.
- **Intelligence** - The ability to discern secrets from collected research and observation.

Trade Resources: Political contact, criminal contact, foreign contact, foreign influence, safe house, high-level political access, Fae contact, advanced surveillance tools, advanced security tools.

Abilities:

- +1 RESOLVE

Trade: Thief

The art and craft of stealing through careful and patient observation.

Skills:

- **Fast-Talk** - The ability to convince through confusion.
- **Underground** - Navigating the illegal trades and services market.
- **Stealing** - The art of taking something in secret.
- **Stealth** - Discipline required to be undetectable.

Trade Resources: Political contact, criminal contact, safe house, advanced surveillance tools, advanced security tools.

Abilities:

- +1 EXPERTISE

Magical Trade

School: Elemental

The ability to channel and embody the primal forces of nature. This art is older than Ritual magic and does not require any rites (though rites exist), but it requires an innate understanding of the energies at work and is *significantly* harder to *control*.

Attribute Prerequisites:

Magically Attuned

Arcana

- **Fire** - Controlling the transformational properties of fire.
- **Air** - Manipulating the air, which surrounds and witnesses all things.
- **Water** - Channeling the restorative and destructive elements of water.
- **Earth** - Harnessing the grounding and protective wisdom of the earth.

Abilities:

- +1 RESOLVE

School Resources: Fae contact, elemental familiar, rites book, academic contact, safehouse, arcana library, university access.

School: Alchemical

The transformation of base materials into exotic compounds through the use of magic. The more powerful effects require the use of extreme rites, but the lesser effects can happen through simple incantations. This is considered one of the *Classical* Schools.

Arcana
- **Transformation** - The founding rites of the School, which allows for the creation of new compounds from *base* elements.
- **Analysis** - The rites to divine the nature of a compound, like its composition and how it was created.
- **Dissolution** - The skill to break compounds down to base components.
- **Blending** - The rites need to combine *complex* compounds into *stable* materials. This does not always create *useful* combinations, but modern *plastics* were created through these rites.

Abilities:
- +1 EXPERTISE

School Resources: Fae contact, academic contact, rare elements, rites book, academic contact, lab access, safehouse, university access.

School: Mecharcana

This School blends mechanics with alchemy to create incredibly complex systems. The more powerful effects require difficult rites, but lesser effects only need simple incantations. This Art is less than a century old, but it has had a *massive* impact on society.

Attribute Prerequisites:

Abstract Thinker

Trade Prerequisites:

Engineer

Arcana
- **Binding** - This art to create a permanent bond between two objects. This does not create any *new* compounds, and the bond is not always very strong.
- **Machine Nature** - This allows the engineer to fully visualize and understand the internal workings of a device.
- **Shaping** - The ability to shape *stable* materials into intricate shapes of any size. This Art is often used to shape the copper circuits of modern devices.
- **Infusion** - Allows the infusion of magical energies into a compound. Most often this is used to create batteries and Anatomancer surgical tools.

Abilities:
- +1 EXPERTISE

School Resources: Workshop, advanced tools, rare elements, rites book, academic contact, lab access, university access, advanced electronics.

School: Divination

This Art allows the wielder to open their minds to visions from other realms. It can be used to peer into parts of our own reality, or even other *existences* and futures. This is an *embodied* school, and requires no rites, but rites do make the casting *safer*.

Attribute Prerequisites:

Magically Attuned, *Intuitive*

Arcana

- **Precognition** - The ability to see into *all* possible futures. Often a team of researchers are employed to help narrow the possibilities.
- **Outsider** - The training needed to see outside of our realm of existence. This does not grant *comprehension*, just the ability to see.
- **Prophecy** - The ability to try to *set* a destiny for a subject. This is most often paired with *Precognition*, since it is easier to set a subject on an *existing* course as opposed to creating an entire *destiny*.
- **Viewing** - This allows a wielder to see into *this* realm of reality, provided they are able to create some *connection* to their location.

Abilities:

- +1 INFLUENCE

School Resources: Rites book, academic contact, safehouse, arcana library, political contact, university access, Fae contact.

Trade: Anatomancy

A modern School, derived from the art of *Necromancy*, allows for the manipulation of living tissue. This is a highly disciplined school requiring *many* rites, but many *commercial* tools have been developed for these purposes.

Trade Prerequisites: Medical.

Skills:

- **Mend Flesh** - The ability to mend flesh and bone back together, but the caster still needs to understand how the tissue *should* be mended.
- **Sense Flesh**- This allows the wielder to sense the blood in the patient, and allows them to get a sense of the *state* of the blood, which helps for diagnoses.
- **Shape Flesh** - This Arcana allows the caster to *reshape* flesh and bone, which is used to heal scars or resolve complications from traditional surgeries.
- **Transfuse Flesh** - Allows the mage to transfer tissue and fluids from one body to another. Required to *restore* lost fluids or tissues. Many goblins make their living selling their tissues to rich patients, since goblin tissue is universally compatible.

Abilities:

- +1 RESOLVE

Trade Resources: Advanced medical equipment, advanced pharmaceuticals, advanced alchemical compounds, medical contact, lab access, university access, hospital access.

Step 5: Starting Point

In addition to the starting resources from your *Trades*, describe your character's:

- **Income** from their *Trades*.
- **Essential possessions** that they have gained as a part of their *lifestyle* and *hobbies*.
- **Friends and family** that still have an impact on their life.

Playing the Game

The Deck

You'll need a regular **52-card Poker deck**, *with both* Jokers.

The Hand

At the beginning of each game, the GM deals *five* **cards** to each player. **The GM does *not* get a hand.**

The Check

The GM can call for a *Check* whenever a character takes an action where the *outcome* is *unclear* or will have a *significant* impact on the story.

A player can call for a *Check* if they want to take an action to *change* or *interrupt* the outcome of an event that has *just occurred*. A character that is *ambushed* by an attack might ask for a *Check* to see if their character can react *before* the attack happens.

In all cases, a Check determines if the action *succeeds* or *fails*.

Step 1: Pick the Trade and Ability

The GMpicks the *Ability* for the Check, but the player picks which *Trade* will be Checked.

The *Ability* will determine the *suit* of the Check and **any** *side-effects*.

Ability	Suit
Fight. Actions that involve active combat, including *defensive* actions.	**Clubs**
Resolve. Actions that push the *psychological* or *physical* limits of a character to *dangerous* or *life-threatening* extremes.	**Spades**
Expertise. Actions that test a character's *knowledge*, *experience*, or *ability*. This can include *physical* actions, like *climbing* or *jumping*.	**Diamonds**
Influence. Actions that require a character to try to change the *beliefs*, *behavior*, or *motivations* of other characters.	**Hearts**

Any **Trade can be chosen**, but it should have *some* relevance to the action being Checked. A character could pair *Diplomat* with an *Influence* Check to *improve* a trade deal, or use *Diplomat* and *Expertise* to *understand* how the deal will affect future treaties.

Step 2: Attributes

The GM decides if the character has any *Attributes* that will help or hinder the character. The *Small* Attribute will help if a character is trying to *hide*, but it is a disadvantage if they are trying to *tackle* an opponent.

Add one to the **final** total for **each Attribute** that *helps* the character, and **subtract one** from the **final total** for **each Attribute** that *hinders*. It is possible to have a Skill rank of **zero or less**.

Step 3: Risks

The GM also decides how much *Risk* a character is taking based on their action and their current situation, which affects the *final outcome* of the Check.

Risk *starts* **at zero**, but *increases* if the character attempts actions that are beyond her *abilities* or *experiences*, or if they are facing *matched* or *overwhelming* opposition.

Automatically increase Risk by *one* if the *Trade* or its *background* has no relevance for this Check. Having *no* formal experience in a challenge is an *obvious* Risk.

The GM can also *escalate* or *deescalate* the Risk from any previous Checks. If a character is in a *prolonged* challenge, like a lengthy argument, or keeping an engine from *exploding* while it is *running*, the Risk might *escalate* with each successive Check.

Different Risks for Different Checks

Risk is not always the same for every situation. A character might have *two* relationships that have *two* different Risk levels, which is different from the Risk they have when they attempt to make repairs under poor conditions.

In a scene, individual characters might have different Risk levels. Some characters might be faced with much harder opponents, or find ways to reduce their own Risk in combat.

Step 4: Play Cards

The player can play *any* number of cards from their hand. The *bonus* added to the Check depends on the card:

Type	Bonus
Each numbered card (2-10) *matching* the suit of the Check.	+2
Each *Royal* card (Jack, King, Queen) *matching* the suit of the Check, *or any* Ace.	+4
The *Ace* that *matches* the suit of the Check or **either** *Joker*.	*Wild*

You can also *Push* your character by *discarding* a card, which **either adds *one* to the Check, *or* you can *draw* and *play one* card immediately from the deck.** You can *Push* as long as you still have cards in your hand.

Add the *Ability* rank from the chosen Trade to the total, and **subtract the Risk, Strain, and *Injury* levels** from the total**.**

If a *Wild* card is played, the player can pick *any* of the outcomes for their chosen *Goal*, *regardless* of the amount of *Risk*, *Strain*, or *Injury*.

Goal	Outcome
Fight	**Below 0:** *Disaster.* The GM narrates how your character is *Incapacitated.*
	0: *Failure.* The GM narrates how your character suffers *one* level *Injury.*
	1: *Compromised.* Your character *succeeds*, but narrates how your character gains an *Injury.*
	2, 3: *Success.* Your character succeeds, but gains a level of *Strain.*
	4+: *Ace.* Your character *succeeds*, and gains the upper hand. Narrate how they reduce any *Risk* by *one*, but they still gain a level of *Strain.*
Resolve	**Below 0:** *Disaster.* The GM narrates how your character is *Incapacitated.*
	0: *Failure.* The GM narrates how your character suffers *one* level of *Injury.* This might be *psychological* trauma.
	1: *Compromised.* Your character *succeeds*, but they gain an *Injury.* This might be *psychological* trauma.
	2, 3: *Success.* Your character *succeeds*, but they gain a level of *Strain.*
	4+: *Ace.* Your character *succeeds* and is able to *rally*. Narrate how they reduce any *Risk* by *one*, but they still gain a level of *Strain.*
Expertise	**Below 0:** *Disaster.* The GM narrates how your character *critically endangered* everyone in the scene or puts everything into *serious jeopardy.*
	0: *Failure.* The GM narrates how the Risk increases by *one.*
	1: *Compromised.* Your character succeeds, but you must narrate how the situation is deteriorating. *Increase the Risk by one* for anyone involved.
	2, 3: *Success.* Your character *succeeds*, but any *Risk* remains.
	4+: *Ace.* Your character *succeeds.* Narrate how they are able to improve the situation, and *reduce* any *Risk* from this situation by *one.*
Influence	**Below 0:** *Disaster.* The GM narrates how your character *irrecoverably damages* a

relationship, causing total *outrage* and *humiliation*.

0: *Failure.* The GM narrates how this relationship is damaged. *Increase the Risk by one* when dealing with this relationship.

1: *Compromised.* Your character *succeeds*, but you must narrate how they have damaged this relationship. *Increase the Risk by one* when dealing with this relationship.

2, 3: *Success.* Your character *succeeds*, but any *Risk* remains.

4+: *Ace.* Your character *succeeds*. Narrate how your character is able to heal or fortify this relationship, and *reduce any Risk* with this relationship by *one*.

Once the outcome is resolved, all of the cards in play are shuffled *back* into the deck.

If you have *zero* cards in your hand, draw *one card* for your hand *after* the deck is shuffled.

Special Checks

Background Checks

A player can ask to see if their character's *background* can help out in a scene. This might be calling in favors, getting better equipment, or even finding important contacts.

Equipment Checks

Sometimes the *character* is better qualified than the *player* to pick their equipment. If it is *unclear* if a character has an essential piece of equipment, the player can ask for an *Expertise* Check.

This is a *normal* Check, but any *consequences* from the outcome are narrated as a *flashback*.

Magic Checks

Concentration

Most spells require *deep* concentration and *focus* to maintain an effect, but if a character *succeeds* their Check, they can maintain a spell for as long as they are *physically* able.

Casting Methods

The GM is free to give a *bonus* to a spell Check depending on how they cast the spell:

- **Rituals** will always make a spell *much* easier to cast, but more potent effects require longer and more intricate rites.
- **Sacrifices**, either *material* or *living*, will reduce the difficulty of the spell based on the personal *value* of the sacrifice. A raw diamond is a good sacrifice, but a character's *heirloom wedding band* is a *significant* sacrifice.
- **Totems or foci** can also make a spell easier to cast, but they are far less effective than *sacrifices*. These are often used in conjunction with other methods: Anatomancer mages will use *foci* in triage to *stabilize* a patient long enough to reach a surgeon.

Strain

Strain represents *physical* and *mental* stress that affects a character's abilities. It's not permanent, but can cause a character to make mistakes that *can* cause permanent trauma.

Rest Scene

To recover cards and heal Strain, the player must narrate a scene where the character takes a *genuine* break. The player can then **discard their entire hand** and **draw *five* new cards**. The discards are then shuffled back into the deck.

Strain is reduced to *zero* anytime the character takes a *Rest* scene.

It is up to the GM to decide if a Rest Scene is possible. The scene can be as short as a pull from a flask and a deep breath, but the character needs to be able to feel like they can *safely stop* and *take a break*.

Injuries

Whenever a character is hurt, the GM decides if the wound is severe enough to increase their *Injury* level. *Psychological* damage can *also* inflict Injuries.

Injury Level

Wounded	The pain is hard to ignore, but the character can still focus.
Impaired	The trauma is now *debilitating*, but the character is still conscious.
Incapacitated	The character has succumbed to their trauma and is either **barely functioning** or **unconscious**.
Crossroads	**The character is at a pivotal moment in their story.** They may be **dead**, but they are certainly ***unconscious***.

Crossroads

When a character reaches a *Crossroads*, the player must decide if their character's story is going to continue.

If the player wants to continue, they must narrate how the character is able to survive, and the GM creates a *new* Attribute based on the character's injuries.

If the player *does not* want to continue, they must narrate how their character exits the story. **This does not have to be a *death* scene**, but they are no longer part of the story.

The player *always* gets a choice when deciding a Crossroads, even if an injury is *grievous*. There is **no limit** to the number of Crossroads a character can endure.

Treating Trauma

When a character's injuries are treated, the GM decides how many levels of Trauma are recovered based on the character's *injuries* and the kind of *treatment* they receive.

- **Characters who are *Wounded*** can recover with some *rest* and *basic* aid.
- *Impaired* or *Incapacitated* **characters** will need *professional* medical assistance.
- **Characters who survive a *Crossroads*** will require *significant* medical care.

Weapons And Armor

Weapons

Weapons will list the *types* of injuries it can inflict, along with how many Injury levels each injury causes. The Injury level is just a baseline and the GM can change this value.

Attribute Modifiers

For hand weapons, a character's Attributes might increase the amount of *Injury* a weapon inflicts.

Weapon	Injury Levels
Fists. Still the most popular fallback, especially with orcs and dwarves.	1 Strain
Combat Knife. The classic.	1+Attributes Strain
Long Sword. The mainstay weapon of the Elven Nations.	1+Attributes
Spear. Also widely used by the Elven Nations.	2+Attributes
Longbow. Aside from magic, this is the main ranged weapon of the Elven Nations.	3

9mm Pistol. Most civilian pistols.	1
.45 ACP Pistol. Heavier firepower with less armor penetration, but popular in civilian markets.	1
5.56mm Combat Rifle. The kind of rifles favored by human armies.	3
7.62mm Combat Rifle. These heavier rifles are favored by the militaries of the Orc Nations, but also by Bonethorne Port.	3
30.06 Sniper/Hunting Rifle. Used in both civilian and military arenas.	4
14.7mm Sniper Rifle. An anti-vehicle class of weapon used in many militaries.	8
Hand Grenade. Now a common part of military equipment.	6

Armor

Protection Rating

An armor's protection rating is *subtracted* from any Injury that a character suffers. The GM might change this rating based on what is attacking the armor and the condition of the armor.

Armor	Protection
Leather. Basic stuff that a lot of survivalists still wear.	1
Half-Plate. Steel chest armor that some orcs still use.	2
Elven Half-Plate. Magically enhanced steel chest armor.	2
Class IIa Kevlar. The kind of protection commonly given to watch members in major cities.	2
Class IIa KevFlex. Magically strengthened Kevlar, which makes it light enough to be woven into plain clothes. Worn by special watch members.	3
Combat Armor. Laminate cloth with a light steel plate backing. This is what is used by most militaries due to its low cost and *acceptable* protection.	3
KevFlex Combat Armor. Heavy KevFlex with ceramic inserts, which is rarely fielded by any military beyond Bonethorne Port and the Huxlon Republic.	5

Feedback

Thanks for picking up this game and taking a look! If you played in one of my playtests then *very extra* special thank you! *Diesel Empire* is in very early development, and I would absolutely love your feedback if you have any, especially if you decide to take this home and play it with your friends as the GM! Please send any feedback to **jlee@uptoolategames.com**.