

Cranium Rats/W.(M).D.R – Beta

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This is a Competitive(/Cooperative) Story Interaction Game, aka CSI Game, my CSI Game blog can be found here: <http://competitiverpgs.blogspot.com/>

This game has nothing to do with the Cranium Rats presented in TSR's Planescape Campaign world.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Setting up Shop.....	4
Play Example:.....	4
Who?.....	6
What?.....	6
Background.....	7
Legends of the Fall:.....	7
Legends of the World:.....	7
Legends of the Child:.....	7
Legends of the Moon:.....	8
Legend of Wrath:.....	8
In Between.....	9
Aspect Relations:.....	9
Rules.....	11
Glossary:.....	11
Character Generation:.....	12
Game Prep:.....	13
Tokens:.....	13
Scene Framing:.....	13
Game Zones:.....	14
Resolution:.....	15
Dicey Business:.....	15
Repercussions:.....	15
Bidding:.....	17
Glossary:.....	17
Dicey Business, take two:.....	17
Results:.....	18
Advancement:.....	19
Rainbow Scene:.....	19
Trait Drop:.....	19
Aspect Drop:.....	19
Aspect Rise:.....	19
Goals:.....	19
Game End:.....	21
Other:.....	21
Magicians:.....	21
Meta-Chanics.....	22
Influences.....	23
Character Sheet.....	24

Introduction

I like roleplaying games. I like card games. I like board games. I like computer games.
I like games

Some of the recent games that were spawned by the Indie makers have pushed towards conflicts. Say yes or roll the dice, escalation in Dogs, the general mood and theme of Polaris.
I like Conflicts.

I decided to go one step further. All Conflict, all the time. I want there to be a strong Gamist influence on the game I create. I want there to be ecstasy and adrenaline pumping as someone else is nearing victory and you realize you and your previously rival must join forces in order to stop the one racing to victory. In the end, there can be only one.

This game's background draws heavily from my own interests and past experiences. If this game seems to feature fucked up people, or at least people that seem to spend an inordinate amount of energy fighting themselves and focusing inward, and seems to have a faux-psychological/philosophical background combined with a certain mythological flair, you know why.

If you want to know how the in-game action looks like, from the view-point of the characters, look at *Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels*; *Snatch!* or *4 Layer Cake*. Where the action is furious and there are many interwoven storylines that culminate together.

You're not actually playing these characters though. What you're playing are the three Aspects that rule a person's motivation, the bits which make him act, the bits that push and pull him. The character wants Enlightenment, the Aspects want control of the character.

Hopefully this game will get you people to feel the action of a game, and perhaps even the dilemmas of not knowing whose puppet you are, who really controls your actions; you or some alien influence that may be called "Emotions".

Remember, there is one true goal in this game, fun.¹

¹Fuck that lie. Play for the Win!

Setting up Shop

Play Example:

Quentin is the Enlightened, GM in other games. The Character taking central scene is Paul, whose Rat is Guy, Dirt is Michael and Water is Klail. Paul has Water 7, Rat 5 and Dirt 4. Physical 1, Social 3, Mental 4 and works as a programmer as a wage-slave. The sitting order is Quentin, Guy, Michael and Klail, it is now Guy's turn to narrate.

Quentin: Guy, would you mind me setting up the scene for Paul, for whom you're Rat?

Guy: Sure thing man, sure thing.

Quentin: I see your Goal is to hit on the girl working the grocery next door and bed her, how about we set the following scene there? Also, have a Token for giving me the right to set up the scene.

Klail raises an eyebrow, wondering what could happen that'd be of any interest there, and knows he'll be surprised, knowing Quentin

.Quentin: So there you are, talking to Daphne, hitting on her, when all of a sudden this unshaven grizzly of a man bursts into the grocery, sawed-off in his hands and yells, "Nobody fucking moves!", he shoots the nearesy bystander to pieces to make his point clear, the bystander explodes into a red shower.

Everyone: Oh shit!

Michael: I have Paul do nothing, considering he's the type who sits in the background and does nothing. I think the best thing would be for him to stand in the background, not attracting attention.

Guy: I could have him run away out of fear, but fuck that shit, Daphne is here, this is my chance, this is my day. I'm going to have him jump over Grizzly bear and take his gun away!

Quentin: That's a Bidding, Michael is going to get one free die, considering his is the default action.

Guy: I bid my 4 Dice, I want this!

Michael: I won't bid, I have an idea for my next scene.

Quentin: Remember next scene can't be for Paul. No two scenes in a row for one character.

Michael: Grrr, oh well, I don't have any spare Dice, and I need my Tokens for later. Michael rolls a 6 with his free die, Guy rolls 2, 3, 3 and 5; 3 successes. Guy will control Paul and set his Goal, but Michael will narrate the results.

Quentin: Physical test. If you succeed, you will take the shotgun away from him, if not, he'll knock you with the butt of his shotgun and laugh at you.

Guy: Hmmm, I have 5 dice, need to roll a 1, I don't know if I can. Klail, how about you give me some dice?

Klail: Why should I? You put yourself into this mess, deal with it! If you'd fail, Daphne won't give a rat's ass about you, where would your goal be then?

Guy: You're the highest Aspect, Physical is at 1, if I fail you'll lose a whole Point.

Quentin: Don't forget, he gets one extra die for having the advantage of the gun.

Klail: Damn you, take 3 dice and be done with it.

Some rolls later, Guy wins and manages to take the gun away from the robber. Michael, narrating: "Paul jumps him, he's surprised and I manage to wrest the gun from his hands as I knee him. While the gun is still clenched in his hands he manages to shoot though, spraying a young girl standing nearby".

Quentin: Guy, take another die and add a Mark to Rat., and we're through with Paul for now.

Quentin: Now we move on to Michael, considering as you can't run another scene for Paul, would you mind if I set a scene up for Terrance, for whom you're Rat?

Michael: Do as you wish. *Glowering at Paul.*

Quentin: we move to Terrance as he gets a phone-call, telling him his sister, Beth, died in an attempted robbery. He goes to his locked safe and gets his gun, swearing under his breath. Michael, have 1 Token for giving me scene-set up rights, I'm also going to spend 1 Token and add the goal "Get revenge for Bethany" under Rat.

Who?

I suggest not playing people who are together all the time, but rather people whose lives run in a tangential manner. You're just covering the same things from different viewpoints without really advancing the story, also, you have certain characters as NPCs during several scenes.

Examples:

To take the movie “Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels”, you won't have the 4 “Protagonists” as three of the characters, but rather pick one of them, the armed robber and any other of the participants will do, Hatchet Harry, one of the Weed Growers, whatever.

Siblings, who meet twice-or three times a day, to avoid constant action together: Middle Sister gets mugged and tells Older Brother over Lunch. He goes out and looks for the mugger, accidentally killing him during the confrontation. The Young Brother getting back from Elementary School spies this and decides to run away, being sure he's next!(Such a Rat reaction..)

Cross-time lines, or even realities: Character A is an author, down on his luck, writing for Full-Metal Magazine. Character B is his successful cousin, who always looked out for him. Character C is the Hyperborean Conan-esque protagonist of Character A's last novel! How does that shake up your view of reality?

Or have two of the characters be the grandfather during his WW2 Service and his grandson, fighting in Iraq.

Make the setting an interesting one, have things cross-over, have impact on others' future scenes, even for other characters.

What?

The following are questions that “Set up” the game, not all of them need to have “Hard” answers, merely thinking of the questions and keeping them in mind is enough for some of them. The answers do not have to be the same for all characters, not discussing and sharing your answers with the other players can result in some interesting results, especially in regards to Cosmology(questions 1-2).

- 1.What is the Enlightened?
- 2.What is Enlightenment?
- 3.How do the characters relate to one another?
- 4.What external elements exist in each character's surrounding that create tension and conflict?
- 5.How does the external conflict relate to one's road towards Enlightenment?
- 6.How would the Character react to violence?

Background

Legends of the Fall:

And Man was cast from the Garden of Eden, Man which was created from the Dirt, who shall toil the Dirt, and to the Dirt shall one day return.

Man was tempted by one, one was in turn seduced by two others. Man was seduced by Woman, whose name was Life. Procreation tempted Man.

Woman was tempted by two. Woman was tempted by a fruit, whose juice was knowledge. Woman was tempted by Snake, whose name was Beast.²

And God cast the three out, Man, Woman and Snake.

And Snake and Woman keep tempting Man.

And Snake and Man tempt Woman.

And Man and Woman tempt Snake, into coming and tempting them once more.

Legends of the World:

And so it came to pass that the Illusion was created. Some called it Maya, some called it The World, some have recently called it The Matrix. The lie is being maintained by three forces, they strive to encompass all of creation but they are currently held in check by the other two, who will not relinquish control so easily.

Where did they come from, no one knows, who created them, no one knows. Who knows of them?

Very few, at the table where people are reading this *paper*, probably only one will, we call him Enlightened for that.

Who are we?

Enlightened.

Who are we?

You.

Legends of the Child:

When a child is born, his body is soft, so soft that for the first week he can clench his feet. His skull is also soft in the beginning, and in burrows the Rat.

The Rat: perhaps an idea, perhaps a concept, perhaps a fourth-dimension entity that is squid-like in look and Lovecraftian in outlook.

From that moment and till its death, the Rat is part of the child, teen, adult, elder. When the Person it inhabits dies, so does the Rat.

The Rat has vested interest in the well-being of the person.

The Rat has an even greater vested interest in the well-being of Rat.

Such is Rat, and such were always Rat's tales, even when he was called Raven.

² And yet Snake, or Beast is Rat.

Legends of the Moon:

A quiet sea, overseen by the moon. Underneath the moon, a ship rides the waves. The ship is sinking fast, a hole breached in its hull. The sailors are shouting, torchlight dances merrily on the waves of an indifferent sea.

In the tricky light small forms can be seen swarming out of the ship. Out of the ship and into the salty water of the sea. These are Rats.

Rats on a sinking ship, escaping into an endless sea, in the middle of nowhere.³

Legend of Wrath:

And the Jews were a troubled lot, so their Rabbi came up with a plan. Gathering the earth he constructed a mannequin, the Golem. Into the Golem's empty head he delivered a small Rat. For animals are God's own Truth.

And the Golem protected the Jews.

And the Golem ran amuck.

None could stop the Golem, for it was mighty, and it feared for itself, protecting itself.

Protecting Golem. Protecting Rat.

Till from the heavens rain poured down on Old Prague.

The Golem melted, the Rat drowned.

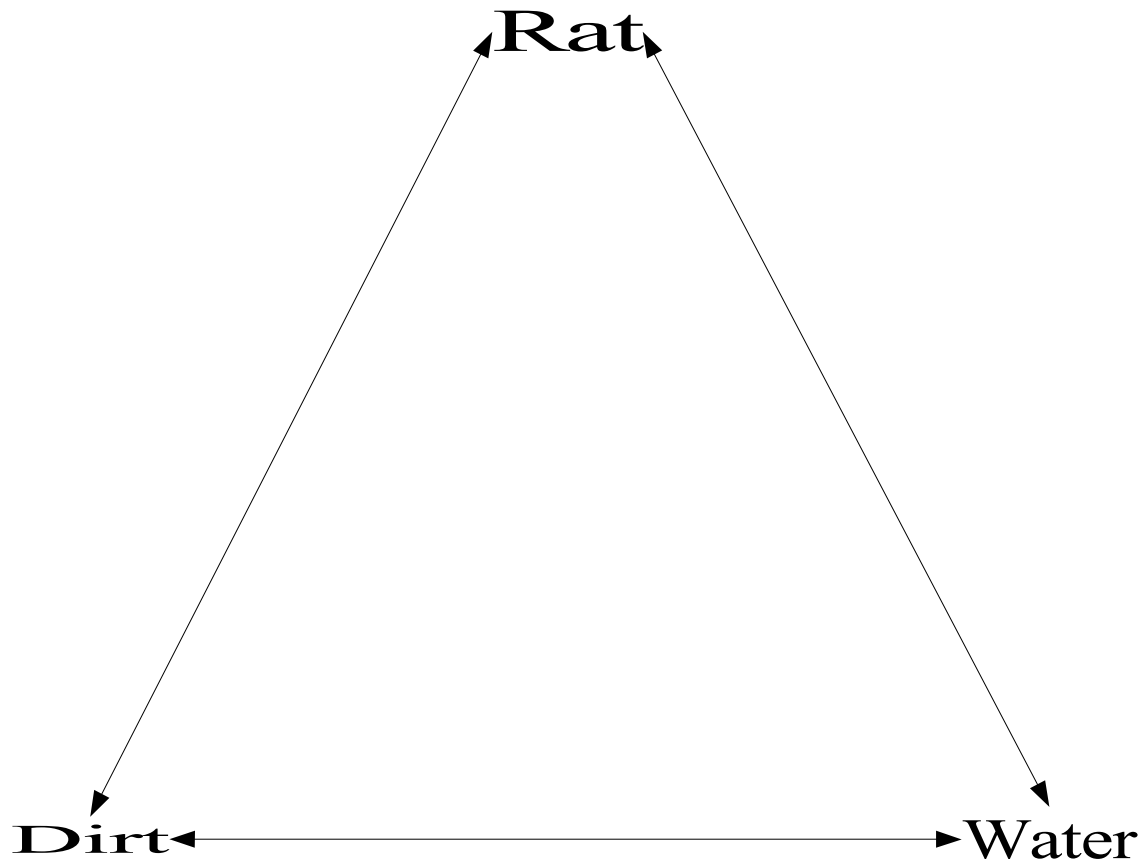
And Truth was no more.

³ I call that lemmings. Bloody lemmings.

In Between

Aspect Relations:

Read the following section and let it sit in your mind. Watch it grow like a sac of eggs a spider may lay. After you finish reading it wait till the Neurons go “Zing!”, then continue reading further.



More Dirt and Rat initiate more Change, the downside is Indirection. Less Dirt/Rat cause stasis and lack of direction.

More Dirt causes brittleness, more Water causes Fluidity.

More Water makes Burrow for Rat easier but gives less protection. Less water means the body provides more protection but it is harder to burrow, in or out. Locked within its own armour.

Rat is **Animal**.

Rat is *Urges*.

Rat goes up: Change, Base.

Rat goes down: Timid, unfeeling.
As Rat goes up you become more bestial, more prone to act by urges.
Mind/Dirt suppressed. Water is controlled.

Dirt(Mud) is **Drone**.
Dirt is *Mind*.
Dirt goes up: Change, High.
Dirt goes down: Uncaring, lack of thought.
As Dirt goes up you become more cerebral, more detached from your body and emotions.
Rat/Urges suppressed, Water unflowing

Water is **Meltdown**.
Water is *Freedom*.
Water goes up: Infirmness.
Water goes down: Rigidity.
As Water goes up you become free, you become loose. You change into the stable form,
the path of least resistance
Rat flushed out, Dirt loses form.

Dirt and Water give **Clay**.
Dirt and Rat give **Personallity**.
Rat and Water give **Instability**.

Rules

Glossary:

Aspects: Rat, Dirt and Water. Game end at Aspect 10/0, all Aspects combined cannot surpass 16, 15 for UnSeeking.

Traits: Physical, Social, Mental. No Trait can go above 5.

Round: A full circle of scene-setting, beginning with the Enlightened and ending the player sitting left to him. Also **Turn**.

Goals: Goals *of* the Aspects, *for* the Character.

UnSeeking: Those who are not on the road to enlightenment, includes most NPCs.

Seeking/Seeker: Those who are on the road to Enlightenment. Pcs belong to this group.

Enlightened: Those who have reached Enlightenment. Also the name for the GM.

Character Generation:

1. Decide which player plays which Aspect for the Character being generated.
2. Set each Aspect at 5 Dots. Each Aspect begins with a full Dice Reservoir, of 5 Dice.
3. The player of the Dirt Aspect carries out the following stages, with input from the players of the other two Aspects:

- Come up with a short (and I do mean short, one-two sentence tops, four words works just fine) concept/description of the Character and its name.
- Spread 8 Dots between the 3 Traits; Physical, Social and Mental. None may be lower than 1 and none may be higher than 5.
- Pick 3 Specialties for the Characters, these include hobbies, professions, areas of knowledge, social status, wealth and other temporal things. No personality traits are to be included as these are covered by the Aspects.

4. The players of the Rat and Dirt Aspects each come up with a Goal for the Character that aligns with the Aspect's nature. For example, Rat may want to bed that woman the Character met at the bar yesterday while Dirt will want to show his boss off and prove he's smarter.

5. Begin a Flood Scene for the Character, representing the first moment where the character steps towards Enlightenment. If this Scene would end in a tie, roll again, unless you decided beforehand to allow for Magician PCs. This is for the 16th Dot, the one which marks the push out of balance.

- Repeat the above for each Character.

You have one Character per player.

You have one Rat, Water and Dirt per player, each Character has all three Aspects.

For example:

Players are P1, P2, P3.

Characters are C1, C2, C3, each has (W)ater, (R)at and (D)irt.

P1 is W, C1; R, C2; D, C3.

P2 is W, C2; R, C3; D, C1.

P3 is W, C3; R, C1; D, C2.

An Aspect belongs to one player.

Give each Player 3 Tokens and the Enlightened 5, do this at the beginning of every session. At the end of each session take all Tokens away. You do not carry them over sessions. Use them or lose them.⁴

⁴ Just like life, or people for that matter.

Game Prep:

Gather a group of friends, optimally 4 people, though adjustment can be made to having from 3 players up to N.

Each player should have a copy of the character sheet included at the end of this document. Each player should have a number of tokens distinct from the other players', such as poker chips, coins, beads or whatever else draws your fancy.

About 10 six sided(D6) dice, these can be found in most board-games and hobby-shops.

Tokens:

- Tokens belong to the players, not the Aspects, they are also to be used to reward what's cool and make it more likely to happen.⁵
- At the beginning of each session each player is given 3 Tokens and the Enlightened is given 5.
- At the end of each session all unused Tokens are removed from game and are essentially lost.
- Every time a Flood Scene occurs or whenever an Aspect loses a Conflict roll, the Enlightened gains 1 Token.
- In order to steal 1 Die from another player's Reservoir spend 1 Die and give the person from whom you're stealing 1 Token; when the person stolen from is at 0 Dice bring on a Flood Scene, in this case you don't get any Dice.
- If a Character would go above the maximum Die Reservoir limit(6), each other player gains one Token.
- When a Goal is completed, you may spend 2 Tokens and fully replenish your Die Reservoir, this may only occur outside of Conflict/Bidding.

Scene Framing:

- Scene-setting goes in a clockwise direction, beginning with the Enlightened. The Enlightened can set the scene, tell a short story that may or may not deal directly with the characters or Aspects, yet. Each player can only set the scene for his Rat or Dirt Character, and it should follow one of his goals(not necessarily that of the Aspect he controls).
- No character may have two scenes run in a row.
- In order to run a scene for a character for whom you play Water you need to give the Enlightened one of your Tokens.
- In order to set another player's scene you need to give him one of your Tokens. He need not accept your offer. This includes the Enlightened.

⁵ Yes, that means you may have to help another player. Story comes first.

Game Zones:

- Each Aspect has a Die Reservoir, Dice he can use for various reasons. Die Reservoir Limit is set at 6.
- Aspect Dots are Aspects' semi-permanent rating, they are ranked 0-10. When an Aspect reaches 0 and no Aspect can give it a Dot(when all three Aspects are at 1, 1, 1) game ends with the character and Aspects "losing". When an Aspect reaches 10 it has won the game. All Aspect Dots combined may not surpass 15 for Unseeking characters or 16 for Seeking Characters(which include the PCs).
- The Unclaimed Region is where all Aspect Dots that currently belong to no Aspect reside. They may be fought over during Flood Scenes.
- Dice Pool is where the dice currently used in a conflict are.

Aspect Ratios:

When the Aspects are imbalanced, the character and the nature of the relationships between the Aspects can do nothing but give. Change leads to more change.

Plus and Minus refer to Dice taken or added to the Dice Pool that occur when the following conditions apply:

- Water is higher than Dirt; Rat gains a Die when Defending, loses a Die when Attacking(Initiating).
- Dirt is higher than Water; Rat loses a Die when Defending, gains a Die when Attacking.
- Rat and Dirt combined are higher than Water*2; Initiators gain 1 extra Die.
- Water is higher than Rat and Dirt combined; Initiators lose 1 Die.
- Rat is higher than Dirt; Social Conflicts gain 1 Die, Mental Conflicts lose 1 Die.
- Rat is lower than Dirt; Social Conflicts lose 1 Die, Mental Conflicts gain 1 Die.

Resolution:

When an Aspect's player decides he wishes to accomplish something within the game, or the Enlightened decides one of the NPCs is out to accomplish something, there is a simple question to be answered: Is there Conflict involved, or not? If no conflict is apparent, the Character succeeds and achieves his goal, otherwise, you need to resolve the situation.

You have an Aspect controlling the action, either the one out to accomplish something or the one who wants to stop an NPC from accomplishing something. The Aspect states the goal he wishes to accomplish in this situation, this is Conflict Resolution, and decides on the relevant Trait, with Enlightened fiat. The Enlightened decides what will happen if the roll is unsuccessful and states it.

The Aspect rolls an amount of dice equal to his Dots, each die that comes up equal to or lower than the relevant Trait is a success.

If more than one Aspect wants to control the action, read below under Bidding.

Dicey Business:

Advantages:

Every advantage one side has over the other translates into more dice added to the roll on a one-for-one basis. Examples are: In a sword fight, having a longer reach weapon than your opponent, having the higher ground, having the sun in your opponent's eyes, etc. Subject to the Enlightened's approval.

Advantages must be brought up by the Players and Enlightened. Specialties act as a sort of Permanent Advantages that come up repeatedly in the character's life.

Die Reservoir expenditure:

Each die spent from the Die Reservoir by the active Aspect nets one die added to the roll. Each of the other Aspects may pay two dice in order to add one die to one of the sides active in the Conflict.

It is impossible to go under 0 Dice in the Reservoir in these ways. You cannot spend dice you do not own.

Token Expenditure:

Each Token spent by one of the Aspects nets two dice to one of the participants in the Conflict, these Tokens are given to the Enlightened. Tokens spent by the Enlightened in this way are removed from play.

Repercussions:

On a successful roll, the goal stated by the Aspect is met and the action is narrated as agreed by the relevant Aspect(the Character's Water Aspect) and the Enlightened. Final approval is that of the Enlightened.

You may offer the Water Aspect a Token in order to buy narration rights, though he need not accept the offer.

The Active Aspect gains one Mark. Dice equal to the amount of successes the Character has over the opposition are added to the Aspect's Die Reservoir, up to the Die Reservoir

Limit(6)

On an unsuccessful roll, the goal stated by the Aspect is not met and the action is failed(the “Goal” stated by the Enlightened occurs), narration is as above.

The Active Aspect loses all Marks and one Die from the Reservoir, which may bring him under 0 Dice.. The relevant Trait gains one Mark to denote "damage".

Bidding:

Discussions between the Aspects must be carried out in the open. Talking in another room or passing notes between the players is prohibited. The Aspects exist in a balance of power for they know the others are watching.

When it is unclear who the active Aspect is, or when one wants to wrest control of the Character and impose his actions on it, a bidding is initiated. For example, if a character is a coward being faced with a supermarket mugging his natural response would be staying in the background or escaping. Fear is the default choice. If however he wished to negotiate it'd fall under Dirt, which will need to initiate a bidding in order to gain control and state the goal of the Conflict.

Each player begins with 0 dice, as modified below. The number to roll under or equal to is 3.

Glossary:

Initiator: The one who initiates a bidding.

Defender: One against whom a bidding is Initiated.

Flood Scene: A bidding in which an Aspect Dot is up for grabs.

Rainbow Scene: A Flood Scene which ends with all the Aspects being of equal value.

Aggressive Flood Scene: A Flood Scene where one Initiates the bidding.

Dicey Business, take two:

Die Reservoir Expenditure:

- You may purchase dice on a one-for-one basis from the Die Reservoir if you're participating in the Bidding.
- For each 2 dice spent from the Die Reservoir you may give another Aspect 1 Die.
- In order to "Steal" 1 die from another Aspect, placing one die in your Reservoir and taking one from their Dice Pool for the bidding, to a minimum of 1, you need to spend 1 Die from your Reservoir and give the person from whom you're stealing 1 Token.
- It is impossible to go below 0 dice in the Die Reservoir by bidding them.

Token Expenditure:

Each Token buys two Dice for one of the sides. Tokens used in this way are given to the Enlightened. Tokens used by the Enlightened in this way are removed from play.

Situational Modifiers:

- At the Flood Scene which concludes each Character Generation, each Aspect gets one free die.
- In Aggressive Flood Scenes, the Defender gains one free die.
- The default active Aspect gains one free die if someone tries to wrest Active status.

- In Flood scenes initiated by an Aspect going down, that Aspect gains a free die.

Results:

- If no one rolls any successes, the bidding culminates in a tie.
- When a bidding intended to take control from the Active Aspect ends in a tie, it retains control. Otherwise the Initiator becomes the Active Aspect and sets goals for the Conflict.
- When an Aggressive Flood Scene ends in a tie, the Defender keeps his Dot. Otherwise the Initiator wins and takes a Dot from the Defender.
- When a Flood Scene ends with a tie, the unclaimed die is put aside, unlost and unclaimed. Otherwise the winner gains the Dot.
- When the initial Flood Scene which culminates in a tie, roll again, unless you decided beforehand to allow Magician PCs, in which case the Dot is unclaimed and it is a Rainbow Scene.
- When a Flood Scene ends with all Aspects being equal, it is called a Rainbow Scene. Mark it on the sheet, the player of the Water Aspect chooses one Trait to be increased by one.

Advancement:

Rainbow Scene:

This moment of Satori marks your advancement on the road towards Enlightenment, the Water Aspect chooses one Trait to raise by one after reaching a Rainbow scene, the Water Aspect also gains one Goal after reaching each Rainbow scene. Mark it down on the character sheet.

Trait Drop:

When a Trait has Marks equal(even in the middle of Conflicts) to its Rating, it goes down by one.

When a Trait goes up or down, it loses all Marks.

Aspect Drop:

- When an Aspect loses enough dice to put him *under* 0 dice in his Reservoir, a Flood Scene follows. The Aspect goes down by one Dot, his Die Reservoir is considered full and bidding begins for the lost Dot, with him gaining one free die(the order of events is important).
- When a Trait would go down to 0, the Highest Aspect will put one Dot in the unclaimed region and the Trait would go back to 1. In case of a tie roll one die, with the high roller sacrificing a Dot.
- If an Aspect would go down to 0, it gets one Dot from the unclaimed region. If the unclaimed region is empty, the highest Aspect gives it a Dot. In case of a tie roll one die, with the highest roller sacrificing a Dot.
- When an Aspect goes down it loses all Marks.

Aspect Rise:

- Those who win a Dot in a Flood Scene have their Aspect go up by one, and find their Dice Reservoirs filled to its maximum capacity(5).
- When an Aspect has Marks equal to or above(as this may only be done after current Conflicts are resolved) his Dot Rating he may either initiate a Flood Scene for an unclaimed Dot or initiate an Aggressive Flood Scene, the Defender being the Aspect with the highest Dot Rating(second highest if he's the highest one), in case of a tie, he picks who the Defender is.
- When an Aspect would go up, its player may put that Dot in the unclaimed section and instead raise one Trait by one.
- When an Aspect goes up it loses all Marks.

Goals:

When something happens in-game any player may spend 1 Token and add a goal to an appropriate Aspect. This Token goes to the Enlightened. Tokens spent this way by the Enlightened are removed from the game.

When a goal is accomplished *or* failed, mark it down and give the Aspect's player one Token. You can learn equally from success and failure.

When a Goal is resolved and you have no remaining goals, you must set a new one immediately.

Game End:

5 Rainbow Scenes mark the character's achievement of Enlightenment. The Water Aspect's player will narrate the character's ascent, descent, relevation and/or departure as he sees fit, taking into account the character's views of cosmology. The character is now removed from the game, its tale finished. For now.

When an Aspect reaches 10 the character's quest for Enlightenment is over, and failed. The character has lost an integral part of his humanity and himself to a greater and impersonal power and can no longer even see the goal.

At Rat 10 the character acts only upon his instincts. Bestial and unthinking.

At Dirt 10 the character is an uncaring, unimaginative and dull drone, only following his routine.

At Water 10 the character had undergone a complete meltdown; No change or thought is possible and he is in a vegetative state.

The Character cannot die unless a Trait reaches 0 and cannot be brought up, which will only happen once all Aspects are at 1; when at this point a Trait goes down to 0 an Aspect reaches 0. The Character has lost part of himself and is no longer a full-human being.

If the character fights someone with an axe he gets scraped, he ducks and bangs his head on the floor, whatever. The character can survive just about everything.⁶

Other:

Magicians:

There are those that on the first Flood Scene roll a tie, and then using their forceful personality stay at that stage. These people after five more successful Rainbow Scenes where they never fall from equilibrium become Magicians. By marking off one Mark from the two appropriate Aspects they can work Magic: Water and Dirt for Physical actions, Water and Rat for Social actions, Rat and Dirt for Mental actions.

Each such investment gives dice equal to the average of the two Aspects (initially 5), by investing multiple Marks the action gains more dice. The action is supernatural, whether a social contest manifests as charming, a physical manifests as blasting lightning or whatever is up to the one with narration control.

Once a Magician loses control once, it is all over. When one of the Aspects gains the remaining Die it becomes Prominent. Forever this Aspect will be Prominent. No matter how much the Magician or the other Aspects (this being a Magician, they have very little say) wish to contest the Prominent Aspect, it may not go down, only up. This Magician is out of balance and slowly but surely will become a paragon of his Prominent Aspect on Earth.

⁶Just like John McClane.

Meta-Chanics

Insert explanation of how mechanics and theme interact, will only be inserted during closed beta-testing, check out Alpha version for rough version after //.

Influences

Things which ever got my juices flowing, gave me resources for mechanics and/or may get your juices flowing. Rarely did I spot a hole and stole a mechanic, but rather used a mechanic and later traced it back to where I think I got it from:
Some of these have similar concepts you may want to check out, rather than influences.

PrimeTime Adventures: Tokens have some origin from FanMail.

Dogs in the Vineyard: Conflict and Escalation.

Polaris: Also the strive towards Conflict and spreading one character over various players.

InSpectres/octaNe: The basic conflict mechanic. This I stole directly, as it fit me.

The Shadow of Yesterday: Goals.

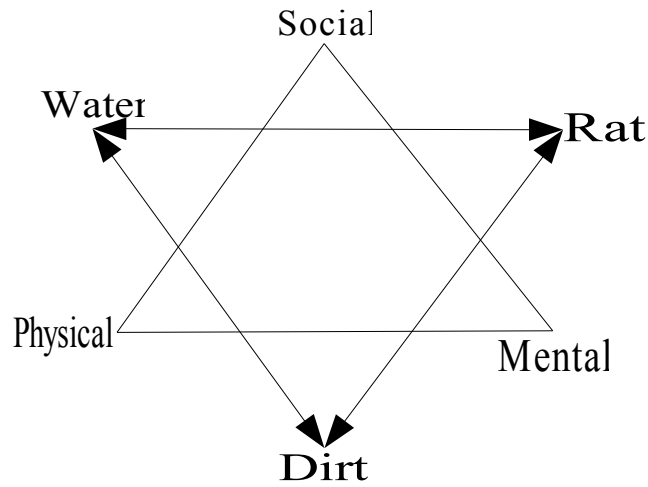
My Life with Master: Another game where you have specific end-game results.

"Snatch!", "Lock, Stock and two Smoking Barrels" and "4 Layer Cake": These gave me an idea of how I want the in-game action to look.

"Pulp Fiction"(Movie) and "A Song of Ice and Fire"(Book): These gave me the idea(indirectly, they taught me much) of how what happens before ties to what will follow next. A Game of Thrones is a must read for those interested in pacing/scene framing.

Planescape: For providing the name "Cranium Rats".

Character Sheet⁸



Enlightened's Name:

Character Name:

Traits:Rating/Marks

Physical: /

Water Player: **You.**

Goals:

Rat Player:

Goals:

Dirt Player:

Goals:

Rainbow Scenes:

Mental: /

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Social: /

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

Character Name:

Traits:Rating/Marks

Physical: /

Water Player:

Goals:

Rat Player: **You.**

Goals:

Dirt Player:

Goals:

Rainbow Scenes:

Mental: /

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Social: /

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

Character Name:

Traits:Rating/Marks

Physical: /

Water Player:

Goals:

Rat Player:

Goals:

Dirt Player: **You.**

Goals:

Rainbow Scenes:

Mental: /

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Social: /

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

⁸ Considering the son's Seals, what do you think the father's Shield was for?