

# *Cranium Rats*

Open Beta - Version 3.0

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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.wordpress.com/> The CSI Games Wiki can be found here: <http://competitiverpgs.pbwiki.com>

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

A game for four (4) players. This text may contain strong and possibly sexually suggestive language.

Him/Her: I am a male, general s/he pronouns will be male, this is also the custom in my mother tongue. If there are players, characters and Aspects present in one occurrence, the players will be male, the characters female and the Aspects will be it/they.



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## *Introduction – The Feel of the Thing*

Imagine.

Imagine that just as you begin your journey towards Enlightenment, on the cusp of something greater, you are pushed over the edge and are no longer in control.

Imagine.

Imagine that the Why to the What of your actions are three insidious metaphysical concepts, and just as you stand on the cusp of greatness they finally took control of things, control of you, for their own all too human ends.

Imagine no more.

This is your life.

They are the Cranium Rats.

### *Author Piece*

When I<sup>1</sup> came to design this game I had several goals in mind, which I hoped to meet. I planned this game around competition between the players who sit at the table, and by proxy, the characters whom they play.

For too long games have either ignored conflicts or had conflicts separated by an inordinate amount of non-conflict activities. I found out that what I like about the game, what I remember once the dice are put down is the conflict, the thrill, and the flare of emotions.

This game is all conflict, all the time. There is no room for cuddly feelings, unless you use them to overcome your friends. There is no room for not owning up when the power to set the stage is yours.

But then again, this is still a game, the goal of which is to have fun. Once you step on others' toes, better take a breather. The fun is the thing<sup>2</sup>.

The in-game action, as viewed by the people, the characters in the story, is aimed to look somewhat like *Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels*; *Snatch!*; *L4yer Cake* or *Pulp Fiction*. Action, which often turns into the furious, various interwoven storylines that as time passes begin to criss-cross more and more and eventually culminate together.

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<sup>1</sup> I am your host and I will use this space to interject my opinions from time to time. These are Guy's opinions. Not those of the Game Text.

<sup>2</sup> Fuck that lie. Play for the win!

You do not play the characters of these stories, oh no, you play the “Cranium Rats”, the Aspects which control these people, pull and push in their struggle to win dominion over them.

The people, the characters, what you get to play in most games are basically your meat puppets, under the control of alien influences some may choose to call “Emotions”.

### **Desired Feel**

Think of “*Snatch*”, “*Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*” and “*Pulp Fiction*”. In these movies you have various interlocking stories that affect one another, you have violence and you have a revolving scene-feel.

When you set a Scene, you should strive towards Conflict. Even if you are striving towards the Goal-Conflict, your narration should give options for other players to interject. They may choose not to, but they should have the option.

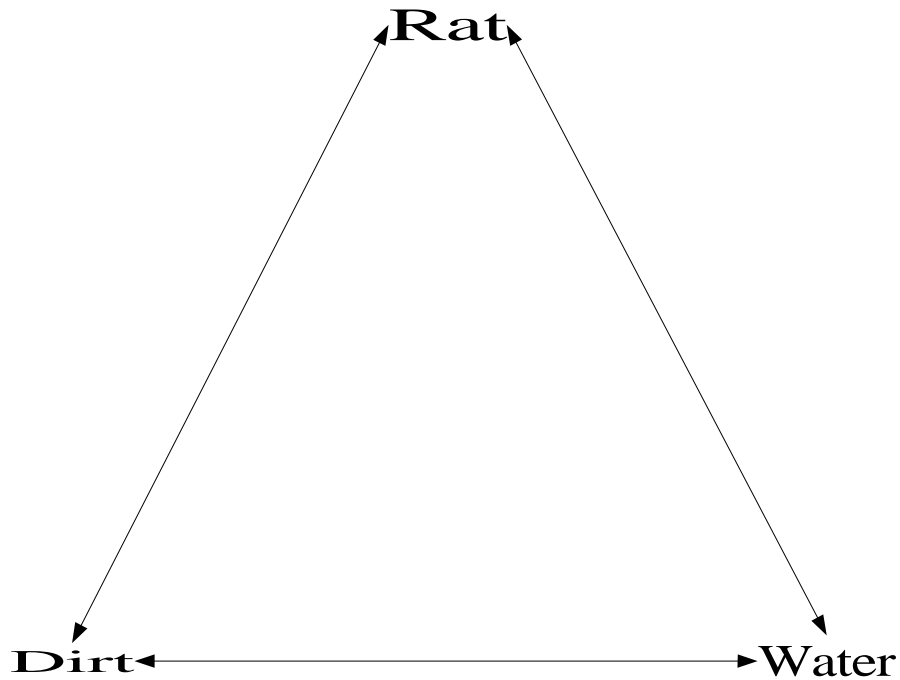
Play can be funny, humorous, or ironically macabre, it has less room for nonsense-silly.

You shouldn’t give other players ideas unless they are stuck, if they don’t want to run a scene, hopefully someone will buy Narration from them. If they are completely stuck, give them ideas. Character Generation is likewise a solo(or duo) act, you can give ideas, but don’t push too hard, it’s that person’s character, and it’s his call.

The game can work without violence, but it helps wet the wheels...

A scene should be a fast thing, you narrate, Conflict, resolution, Narrate and on you go. 5-13 minutes per scene seems more than perfectly alright. Fast, revolving, gritty.

## Roles – Aspects and The Enlightened



The three Aspects, which take part in the struggle for the character, are Dirt, Rat and Water, with the fourth corner of stability being held by The Enlightened. Each of these have certain rights and privileges which will be discussed in depth in later sections as these rights will come up.

I will take this place to define the role of each Aspect in and of itself and in relation to the other Aspects.

Note, the Aspects are as much a Archetypes<sup>3</sup> as they are real fictional beings<sup>4</sup>. I am using broad strokes to describe them here on purpose, I will leave you to add the finer tuning or even change my definitions completely.

Which Aspect is Red, what song is Wrath? These questions are utterly personal and are left for you to answer; I'm only providing a generic and incomplete answer to give you a head start.

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<sup>3</sup> Jungian Archetypes <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archetype>

<sup>4</sup> Yeah.

### On Dirt

Dirt is the ant. It is the part that on one hand builds great monuments, for society, for itself, but on the other hand is a faceless peon.

Dirt is the mother and father. It is that which care for continuity, for the society's well being.

You return to dirt from whence you came; dirt is the "human experience". Dirt is the effort you put into it to draw nourishment from it. Dirt is the effort you put into building society and its structures from it. Dirt is where you inter your forebears for safekeeping, into which you hope to be interred in the future.

Dirt is Society. Dirt is slow and gradual, stable growth.

Dirt is what most humans claim to be or wish to be seen as on the surface.

Dirt(Mud) is **Drone**.

Dirt is *Mind*.

### On Rat

Rat is the darkness behind your eyes. It is every gut instinct that you have and which needs suppression or heed.

Rat is the sex and the violence. It is that which you wish you could be, the power that guides you, if you'd let it.

The urge to reproduce, yhe urge of survival. saving you and yours. Mindless actions. The need to prove yourself; your foot on your fallen enemy's chest. The way in which fear transmits like a disease in a crowded rat-den, the pheromone control we exert and that is exerted upon us.

Dirt is what most humans draw their strength from but wish to repress.

Rat is **Animal**.

Rat is *Urges*.

### On Water

Water is the mirror. Its shape and behaviour change as you act in different manners toward it.

Water is constant. Try to tell the mighty river to not flow. Put a stone in the path of the brook and it will simply flow over or to the side.

Water changes and is changed by the environment.

Water is the need to keep on moving, to shape environment and be shaped by it. It is the need to escape those who will restraint you, the need to push others into conforming with you.

Water is **Meltdown**.

Water is *Freedom*.

## *On The Enlightened*

First, let's make it clear: the Enlightened is a player, like the other players he has vested interest and say in the game and how it turns out. He has slightly different capabilities and responsibilities, but he's a player nonetheless.

You will notice that when a character reaches a certain mechanical goal he becomes "Enlightened", this double usage of the meaning is not coincidental, The Enlightened(player) is technically what a character is after reaching enlightenment.

The Enlightened is the world and all within it, the Enlightened is the Godhead, but he is also the illusion that keeps those who still sleep within it.

The Enlightened is to be impartial; which is to say, he is equally against all the Aspects. He is rooting for the characters, for if they reach Enlightenment it gives him joy, that other throw off the shackles that he did before.

He doesn't help an Aspect that fell behind, he's merely hindering the one ahead.

## *Aspect Relations*

Aspects do not live in a void; they have to live with one another. As such, certain relationships between them emerge.

Dirt and Water give **Clay**.

Dirt and Rat give **Personality**.

Rat and Water give **Impetus**.

As Dirt rises in relation to Water, the Clay becomes harder but also more brittle. Rat is given more protection, but it has a harder time shifting its position.

As Water rises in relation to Dirt, the Clay becomes more malleable, but also harder to keep in form. Rat is given less protection, but finds it harder to move and shape its surrounding area.

As Rat rises in relation to Dirt, the Personality becomes more bestial. The person becomes more prone to act based on his urges and instincts, the body becomes paramount. Water is being controlled.

As Dirt rises in relation Rat, the personality becomes more refined. The person becomes more detached and aloof from his surroundings. The mind becomes paramount. Water is being channeled.



## *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. Three forces are maintaining the lie, 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.

## Setting up Shop

### Who?

I suggest not playing people who are together all the time, but rather people whose lives run in a tangential manner. If you play characters that are together then you're just covering the same things from different viewpoints without pushing the story-time forward, also, you have certain characters as NPCs(characters who aren't the ones being played and controlled by the Aspects) during several scenes, considering that only one character is actually "played" during each scene.

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

Examples:

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!<sup>5</sup>

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(not memories, fighting) and his grandson, fighting in Iraq, right now.

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 neighbour and any other of the participants will do, Hatchet Harry, one of the Weed Growers, whoever, whatever.

Now take the movie "*Pulp Fiction*", if we were to take Vincent(John Travolta) and Jules(Samuel L. Jackson) and have them both as characters, you'd have one of them be the focus of scenes where they are both present and the other will be

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<sup>5</sup> (Such a Rat reaction..)

there to showcase and illuminate parts of his personality. Or you could have one scene in the movie actually be several scenes in the game, where you alternate between them. Don't cover the same ground from two viewpoints though, this is not what the game is about.

## **What?**

There are several questions that you may want to answer or at least keep in mind as you generate the characters and play with your group. Discussing these questions may lead to people being on the same page, to a lower chance of people being hurt and perhaps even to a tighter game, thematically.

The questions are divided into two segments: those regarding characters and those regarding the group playing the game.

If you note down the answers to these questions on a communal sheet of paper, please refer to it as "The What! Sheet".

### **Group Questions**

1. What is the limit, when it comes to graphic and content? Discuss issues pertaining to sex, violence, drugs, abuse and depiction thereof.
2. What is the setting like? Also discuss issues regarding characters of different time sequences, different settings (a fictional character, an imaginary friend, etc.).
3. How do the characters relate to one another, thematically or actually (if they are related at all<sup>6</sup>) ?
4. What is The Enlightened?
5. What are the Aspects? Metaphysical constructs, result of belief, facets of Satan, Shamanic Spirits, subconscious Archetypes or perhaps Id, Ego and Super-ego?
6. What is each Aspect in charge of, specifically?<sup>7</sup>

### **Character Questions**

1. How does the character actually relate to the other characters?
2. How would the character react to violence?
3. What is Enlightenment for the character?
4. How does the character's external conflicts relate to the road traveled towards Enlightenment?

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<sup>6</sup> I suggest they do, the game is built to accommodate such. Even if it's that they all frequent the same subway or that they all have substance abuse issues.

<sup>7</sup> I suggest keeping a sheet nearby and filling it with noteworthy instances as they arise in the game.

Another possible method is to write down these questions and leave some of them unanswered (such as Character Question #2 or Group Question #3) and have them answered as the game progresses, with the answers being put on the sheet for later reference.

### **Preparation**

Gather a group of friends, optimally four people.

You'll need about 10 dice of the normal six-sided variety per player, to be found in most game and hobby shops. You will also do well to find two different types of tokens (poker chips, coins, glass beads, whatever draws your fancy will suffice), about 5 of each variety per player.

Print the sheet included at the end of this document once for each player other than the Enlightened.

Decide who the Enlightened will be. If possible the Enlightened will be the most impartial of the players, so if three of the players know one another, then the fourth will be The Enlightened. He will have greater control over scene and pace.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The Pace-maker.

## *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 who 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.

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<sup>9</sup> And yet Snake, or Beast is Rat.

## Character Creation

Each of the players other than the enlightened (from here on, Players will refer to the three people portraying the Aspects and Group will refer to the four players) plays three Aspects across three characters. Each character has three aspects and three traits.

Each player will play all three Aspects, one Dirt, one Rat and one Water, but divided over three characters. It will result in each character having the three Aspects, but a different player will play each.

### **Example**

The Enlightened is Guy and the three players are Andrew, Filip and Michael. For the first character Andrew will portray Dirt, Filip will be Rat and Michael will be Water. For the second character, Andrew will be Rat, Filip Water and Michael will be the Dirt Aspect's player. For the third and last character, each player will portray the last remaining Aspect which he doesn't have for the other two Aspects; Water for Andrew, Dirt for Filip and Rat for Andrew.

Set each Aspect at 5, which gives the character a total of 15 Aspect Dots, were the character someone not on the road to Enlightenment, that'd be all he'd have. However, since the character is one of those on the road to Enlightenment, he will also gain a 16<sup>th</sup> dot at the end of the character creation phase.

Each Die Reservoir, which houses the temporary dice an Aspect uses for various effects begins fully filled, with 6 dice.

Each Aspect has a different set of priorities and responsibilities during character creation:

**Dirt:** Dirt's player is the prominent agent during character creation, his duties include:

- Come up with a short synopsis of the character. Short does mean short, mind, two to seven words is perfect<sup>10</sup>. Also come up with age.
- Spread 8 dots amongst the character's 3 traits, which begin at 0. Such scores may not be 0 or over 5 at the end of this phase. The three traits are

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<sup>10</sup> The character's concept, history, personality and so on will be created as play progresses, by sketching in the broadest strokes you leave more space for fine-tuning, or tuning at all, later.

- Mental, Physical and Social and are used in external “real world” conflicts.
- Pick two Specialties for the character; these may include hobbies, profession, areas of knowledge, social status, wealth and other temporal things. These act as permanent Advantages (which will be discussed later) which help the character when they can be brought to bear in conflicts. Specialties cannot be personality-based, such as friendly or pessimistic, since the Aspects cover personality.
  - Pick one Goal for the character, which fits the things Dirt is in charge of. Note this on the Dirt section of the sheet. Examples: Prove to one’s boss you’re his better, construct a monument to be remembered by, begin a program to aid the homeless.

**Rat:** Rat’s player is less active during character creation, his duties include:

- Provide opinions and be a springboard for ideas during the above steps.
- Pick one Specialty for the character; as per the guidelines given above.
- Pick one Goal for the character, which fits the things Rat is in charge of. Note this on the Rat section of the sheet. Examples: Bed the girl you met the other day, trying to sabotage the investigation of a cop who’s competing with you, winning the Fear Factor.

**Water:** Water’s player has two duties during the character creation, these are:

- Provide opinions and a springboard for ideas *when asked* during the above steps.
- The last and soul-setting phase: Give a name to the character.

Repeat the above for all three characters.

After all three characters have been created, comes the first conflict in the game, the Flood Scene that symbolizes the character’s first step towards enlightenment and the very moment he’s pushed from balance. The mechanics covering Flood Scenes will be presented later, just know for now that each of them receives 1 free die for this special bidding. This too is repeated for all three characters.

### **Character Creation Example**

For the first character, Andrew portrays Dirt, so he gets to begin and decide on most facets, with Filip(Rat) and Michael(Water) as minor contributors.

He decides that this character’s concept will be “Ex-clown down on his luck”, and spreads his trait dots as follows: 3 points for Physical and Mental, and 2 points for Social.

Next come the specialties, he decides to pick Balloon Animals and Dancing, when the other players give him odd looks he shrugs and tells

them that it may come in handy, and it fits the concept. The Dirt Goal is "Get a Normal Job".

Filip's turn is next, he is more practical and picks Driving as the third specialty, his Rat goal is "Get drunk again", this is a more immediate goal, but works fine, also note that we've just learnt more of the character, that he has a tendency to drink, and drink much.

Last is Michael, which will pull this ex-clown out of his no-name hell, Michael decides to call the clown Rod aka The Great Buffini.

The Flood scene that concludes the character creation ends with Andrew's Dirt Aspect at 6 and the other Aspects still at 5.



## *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.

## *The Flow of the Game*

This ultimately short section is of paramount importance<sup>11</sup>, in this section I will cover the way in which the game proceeds, the way control is distributed.

### *Session Flow*

Each session begins with each participant receiving 3 Story Tokens.

If this is the first session, create characters, if this is not the first session, make use of the characters you've made in a previous session. If you so desire, you may bring forth as characters those people who'd been supporting cast till now, but have a good reason to do so, as it ultimately furthers you from the end-game conditions for this game.

The first session begins with the Enlightened giving a narrative piece to set the stage, as exposition of the world. This is also the first action in the Round. This is the Enlightened's Turn. This is a purely narrative piece, though it can result in a shift in Goals. If people want there to be Conflicts as a result of this, then they will have to follow-up during their turns.

Then each player in turn of seating order(clockwise) gets to set a scene. This is their Turn.

After all the players had their turn, this is the Round's end, and the Enlightened gets to set another narrative piece. If possible, end sessions with the last players narrating and begin them with the Enlightened giving his piece. If that is not possible, decide at the beginning of each session if to give the turn to whomever it belonged to last, or to begin each time anew with the Enlightened.

Each session ends with all Tokens being removed from game. Use them or lose them.<sup>12</sup> Certain penalties are given to those who still possess Tokens.

### *Narration Flow*

When it is a player's turn to narrate, the narration goes as follows:

You pick a character for which you portray Rat or Dirt, you pick a Goal for that character (which doesn't have to be a Rat/Dirt Goal) and narrate a scene that is somehow related to that goal.

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<sup>11</sup> Or at least, that's what most of my previous editions' readers had claimed.

<sup>12</sup> Just like real life.

You may pay one Story Token in order to be able to set a scene for the character for which you portray the Water Aspect. In this case remove one Story Token from your cache and the enlightened gains one Mechanics Token.

A character may not have more than one scene ran for him in a row.

You may offer another player a Story Token in order to buy Narration rights for the character he picked. This is an offer; the currently active player is under no obligation to accept your offer. If the active player accepts, remove one Story Token from your cache and the active player gains one Mechanics Token.

### *On Narration*

So, now we know what we get to do during the play, and during the play we get our turns to narrate. Now we know what we can narrate, but we are still devoid of guidelines on how to do so. Well, look no further!

When you narrate a scene, you're basically talking. You're telling a story regarding the character and what happens to him as he pursues his goals(he may fall off the tracks quickly, you're not too constrained). Narrate with enough pauses and breaks for your fellow players to interject, as they well should.

In your Narration, strive towards conflicts of interest between the character and other people that occupy the world (yes, while narration is yours you have total narration over the world and its inhabitants, so long the other players don't cry foul – the Enlightened has final call if disagreement arises).

Once you've reached a Conflict that interests you, or one of the other players finds a Conflict that he'd like to be followed, someone stops the game and points at the conflict at hand. Please try to find such a conflict in 30-60 seconds of narration<sup>13</sup>.

If everyone thinks the conflict is a non-issue (too easy, too natural) then "Say yes", have what the character wants to happen occur and go on, there's no need to call for this kind of conflict, as it's not really one.

So, we have a conflict of interest that's actually one, where there is more than one party (with at least one side being the character), and they both want different things to occur.

When either there's such a Conflict **or** when the Aspects want different things to happen, reach for the dice and find out the outcome of the conflict, as will be explained later.

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<sup>13</sup> Talking faster is always a viable option.

Water narrates the results of the Conflict. Unless someone wants to buy Narration rights from him, removing a Story Token from his Goal and the Water player adding a Mechanics Token to his, provided the Water player accepts the offer.

Note that “Free talk” or story development only happens during the time the players narrate before a Conflict arises or when the Water narrates after the conflict is resolved. Story only progresses when it is coupled with conflict.

A scene must have at least one Conflict in which dice were rolled. If the conflict’s outcome leads to another conflict or scene continuation, so long everyone is cool with it, so be it. But until one conflict arises and the dice get rolled, keep on going.

Narration is always up to the Enlightened’s approval. If something does not make sense or breaks the theme of the game, or indeed the What! Sheet, the enlightened can veto it and ask for a change by the narrator.

Imagine some Flow-Charts here.

## *On Tokens*

Tokens belong to the players, not to Aspects or Characters. What this means is that you have your cache of Tokens, the same cache to be used in all instances, across all characters. So plan accordingly.

There are two types of Tokens, Mechanics Tokens and Story Tokens. As their names imply<sup>14</sup>, one is used mainly for mechanical benefit and the other for story, or so it'd seem.

The totality of a player's tokens and the place he keeps them is called the Token Cache.

### **Story Tokens**

You gain three Story Tokens when the session begins. Every session. Every player, the Enlightened included. Simple, no?

When you give someone else a Story Token in exchange for something (usually rights to narrate something), he gains a Mechanics Token instead. The Enlightened gets to choose which kind of Tokens he gains, instead of always receiving a Mechanics Token.

You may offer to buy narration rights from a player whose turn it is by giving him a story token (which becomes a mechanics token for him), once he picked the character, though you can ask him to do so before he picks the character, though as always, he is under no obligation to meet your request.

### **Example 1**

Every player currently has 3 Story Tokens and 0 Mechanics Tokens.

It is Andrew's turn, he picks Rod, for whom he portrays Dirt as his character for the turn. Guy, the Enlightened, offers to buy Narration rights, wanting to keep setting the theme and mood of the game in the early stages of the game. Andrew accepts, and Guy removes one Story Token from his cache, while Andrew gains one Mechanics Token.

At this stage, Guy has 2 Story Tokens, Filip and Michael both have 3 Story Tokens and Andrew has 3 Story Tokens and 1 Mechanics Token.

You may offer to buy narration rights from a player who is portraying the Water Aspect, as it is his right to narrate the outcome of a conflict, by giving him a story token (which becomes a mechanics token for him).

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<sup>14</sup> "Imply? I'm outright telling you, motherfucker!"

### **Example 2**

Continuing from the previous example, it is now Filip's turn, He plays Rat for Rod and Dirt for Sarah, a teenager runaway. Since Rod just had the last scene, he will portray Sarah on his turn. After the Conflict resolves, it is Andrew's Narration, in his role as the Water Aspect. Filip wants to narrate the outcome of the Conflict, so he offers to buy Narration rights from Andrew, who declines. Had he accepted, at the end of this turn Andrew would have had 3 Story Tokens and 2 Mechanics Tokens, and Filip would have joined Guy in only having two Story Tokens.

You may normally only portray characters for whom you play the roles of either Dirt or Rat, but if you wish, you may give the Enlightened one Story Token (and he chooses which type of Token he wishes to receive, unlike other players) in order to Narrate for the character for whom he portrays the Water aspect.

### **Example 3**

It is now Michael's turn, and he can't narrate for Sarah, for whom he's playing Rat as she just had a scene, that leaves him with Annie, a senile fortune-teller, for whom he's portraying Dirt. He's not interested in giving Annie more attention currently, and chooses to buy narration rights for Rod, for whom he's portraying Water. He gives Guy, the Enlightened, one of his Story Tokens, which Guy chooses to accept in the way of a Mechanics Token. After the conflict, Michael gets to narrate for Rod again, this time, the conflict's resolution, in his Water aspect capacity.

At the end of this phase, the distribution of Story/Mechanics tokens, respectively, is as follows: Guy 2/1, Andrew 3/1, Filip 3/0 and Michael 2/0.

You may "Invest" a Story Token in another player's Aspect. That gives an Aspect another player portrays a new Goal, which should be relevant to the Aspect in question. Remove the invested token from your token cache. This goal must be relevant to something that was just narrated.

### **Mechanics Tokens**

These tokens have it much simpler, at least for this section of the text.

You may "Invest" a Mechanics Token in one of the Aspects you portray. Giving them an appropriate goal and removing the token from your cache. This goal must be relevant to something that was just narrated.

You can spend a Mechanics Token to give any one side in a Conflict or Bidding (a type of conflict between the Aspects) 2 dice. Spent Mechanics Tokens are removed from the game.

### **Tokens in General**

At the end of each session, remove all Tokens from the game.

At the end of each session, for each Story Token a player has, he loses one Dice from each of his Aspects' Die Reservoirs, which will be explained in the next section of the game<sup>15</sup>.

When a Die Reservoir gets filled over its limit, each of the other players gets a Mechanics Token. The Enlightened, as always, gets to choose which kind of Token he receives.

When a Flood Scene (a special kind of Bidding in which an Aspect goes down) occurs, or whenever a character loses a Conflict, the Enlightened gets a Token of his choice.

When a goal is accomplished, which means it is either met or failed, the Aspect that owns it gains 1 mechanics token and 1 story token. He may instead keep the goal, gain a story token and 2 dice.

### **On Acts**

When there are no tokens present at any player's cache, including the enlightened's, an Act is said to be finished. No more than one Act may be completed in each session, though many sessions may pass without an Act reaching its end.

Once an Act is completed, there are several things that occur:

The player, which portrays the Water Aspect of each character, gets to choose whether to remove 1 Mark from each Trait **or** all Marks from one Trait. Both Marks and Traits will be explained shortly.

The player that portrays the Dirt Aspect for each character *may* choose to give the character a new specialty. If a new specialty was given to the character in this manner, then the player who portrays the Rat Aspect then *must* remove one of the old Specialties.

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<sup>15</sup> Cross my heart and hope I die if I lie.

## On Dice

Dice belong to specific Aspects of specific characters. They are called in a place called the Die Reservoir. In case you were wondering, the plural form of “Die” is “Dice”.

The maximum capacity of the Die Reservoir is 6 dice. It begins the game full.

You spend dice on a 1-for-1 basis, which means for each die of yours that you spend, you get to roll one more die, in either Conflicts or Biddings (and also the sub-group of biddings known as Flood Scenes) in which you participate.

### **Example 1**

Andrew and Filip are vying for control of Rod, in the course of Bidding. Initially they both have full die reservoirs in this stage, with 6 points in them. Since it was Andrew’s turn he begins with 1 free Die, but he is determined to win this bidding, so spends 2 extra dice from his reservoir. Filip wants a fair shot at this, so spends 3 dice from his reservoir. Andrew chooses not to spend more dice and so each has 3 dice to roll for control of the character.

Andrew now has 4 dice in his die reservoir, while Filip has 3.

If you do not participate and still want to affect things, you need to spend dice on a 2-for-1 basis, meaning that for every two dice you spend, the side of your choice (not you, since you’re not participating!) gets to roll one additional die.

### **Example 2**

At the end of the previous example, Filip had proved victorious. We enter the current Conflict where Rod is facing a cop, trying to convince him he did not drive while he was under the influence of alcohol. Filip chooses to spend 2 dice to help Rod, while Andrew, furious over his loss decides to help the cop, also spending 2 dice.

Since Filip is an active participant of the conflict as the one in control of Rod, each of his dice nets Rod 1 extra die, for a total of 2 extra dice. Since Andrew isn’t an active participant in the conflict, his two dice only yield 1 extra die for the cop, total.

At this stage Andrew now has 2 dice in his reservoir, while Filip has 1.

When an Aspect wins a real world Conflict (not a Bidding), for every success he has over the other side, he gains one die. Up to the reservoir’s maximum capacity of 6 dice.

Should he lose a Conflict, he instead loses 1 die.



**Example 3**

Rod manages to win the Conflict with the cop, getting 5 successes to the cop's 3. The difference is 2, so Andrew gains 2 dice, which leaves his Die Reservoir with 4 dice.

Had he lost, he would have also lost 1 Die, leaving him with only 1 die in his die reservoir, like Filip.

You may not spend dice from your reservoir when it has 0 dice. Such is life. No allowances.

## Conflict

The active party is the player whose Aspect currently controls the character. In cases where more than one Aspect desires to be the active Aspect who is in charge of the character, begin a Bidding, which will be explained in the next section.

Oh yes, for this section the word “goal” means what you want to happen in the conflict, rather than the Aspect’s Goal, which will be called just that, Aspect’s Goal. Simply put, it’s what the character wants out of the conflict.

Remember “On Narration”<sup>16</sup>? Well, as it says, each Scene is going to have Conflict. In these Conflicts of interest you always have more than one party, and each party wants something else to occur. In fact, we can present it in the form of questions:

1. Is there more than one party involved?
2. Is the active party’s goal different and contrasting that of the other parties?
3. Is the Active Party going to have any problem achieving his goal?

If the answer to all of those is “Yes”, then you have a Conflict. Reach for your dice.

If the answer to the first question is “No” then there’s no one to conflict with, keep narrating.

If the answer to the second question “No”, then just have both parties get what they want.

If the answer to the third question is “No”, then just let the active party have its way till it reaches a real conflict.<sup>17</sup>

So now we know who the active player is, and more or less what he wants to happen (or otherwise a conflict wouldn’t have been called for). The player states in short form what the goal of the character is, while the enlightened says what the goal is for the NPCs (Non-player characters, those whom the players do not portray). Only the victor’s goal will come to pass.

The Active player (and those trying to wrest control) must specify why their method and goal fit their Aspect. In this game the “What” is often secondary to the “Why”.

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<sup>16</sup> P. 18-19.

<sup>17</sup> Insert another flowchart here.

Depending on the method the character will use the enlightened decides which Trait (Mental, Physical or Social) will be used by the character and which will be used by the NPCs. These need not be the same.

NPCs, those who are also called UnEnlightened, while the characters are also called Seekers, have all Aspects at 5 and assume all Traits to be at 3.

Each side rolls an amount of dice equal to their Aspect rating and counts each die that comes up equal to or lower than the relevant trait as a success.

### **Example 1**

Sarah, our teenager runaway is being portrayed by Michael as Rat, he picks the Dirt Aspect's Goal "Find a part time job" and narrates how Sarah walks through a shortcut on her route to the workplace and meets a cop. The cop looks at the obviously dirty and somewhat underfed girl and we have our Conflict. The Cop wants to ask Sarah questions while she wants to run away.

She runs away because her fear of being taken back home and of authority, fear being a Rat reason.

Guy, the enlightened, decides that this is a Physical contest for Sarah and a Social one for the Cop. After all the people finish spending their dice and bringing in other mechanical aspects into play, Sarah has 9 dice to roll at 1 or under and the cop has 5 dice to roll at 3 or lower. Sarah ends up gaining 2 successes to the cop's 0.

### **Of Success**

If a player succeeds, as in, wins the conflict, there are several things that occur.

First and foremost, what the player stated as the goal of the character for this conflict comes to pass. Narration belongs to the player who portrays the Water Aspect though.

The Active Aspect gains a number of dice equal to the number of successes he has over the opposition, these go into the die reservoir, which as always may not have more than 6 dice.

The active Aspect gains a number of Marks equal to one half the successes he has over the opposition, rounded up. These Marks will be explained later, suffice to say that they help the Aspect rating rise.

### **Example 2**

In continuing the previous example, the success ends up netting

Michael 2 dice and 1 Mark for Sarah's two successes over the cop. Sarah ran away while the cop tried to talk to her. Andrew, as the Water Aspect narrates that the cop begins giving chase but tripping on some garbage, which stops any chance of continuing this scene with a follow-up conflict of the cop giving chase.

### **And Failure**

And then again, there are also some repercussions for failure.

First, the goal of the character is not met, instead, that of the NPCs is. The player of the Water Aspect once again narrates, unless someone wants to buy Narration from him and he accepts (this is also true in case of success, I just don't feel like stating it constantly).

The active player loses one die from his reservoir. If he had 0 dice before the removal of this one dice, this calls for a Flood Scene (which will be covered in the Bidding section of the book, which just happens to be the next one).

The active player also loses *all* of his Aspect Marks.

Last, the character is also hurt by failure, and to denote "damage" add one Mark to trait that participated in the conflict. Marks will be explained later, for now it is sufficient to know that Trait Marks act as damage and that if you obtain enough of them, your trait will decrease.

### **Example 3**

We return to Rod, and we'll continue as if he failed to convince the cop that he didn't DUI<sup>18</sup>. Michael portrays Rod's Water Aspect, so he gets to narrate the fall-out: He's been having a hard day, so he's going to make a serious error; he's going to punch the cop. That's a conflict if I've ever seen one, Guy decides the goal for the cop is to apprehend Rod. Guy also easily calls for a Physical roll from both sides.

Filip originally portrayed rod but Andrew fought for control during a bidding and lost. Since this is a new conflict the control would have returned to Filip even if would've lost the previous bidding.

Filip portrays Dirt, and though this is seriously antithetical to Dirt, he says that if he'll get into jail it'll mark his social standing and chance of getting out of the funk he's in forever.

Rod and Filip end up losing the Conflict. Rod's Physical gains one Mark, and Filip's Die Reservoir is diminished by 1.

Michael? He gets to narrate Rod's bad luck again, as the cop punches him black and blue after Rod's surprise sucker-punch before throwing

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<sup>18</sup> Drive under the Influence, of alcohol/drugs, yo!

him into the back of his car and taking him downtown.

### **Advantages and Specialties**

Specialties, your time has come. Though first we have to deal with Advantage Dice, of which specialties are a special case.

First, let's make it clear. Every player can only add one Advantage Die in every Conflict. The Enlightened can add up to three, so long the first two are given to different sides in the conflict.

When one side has an advantage over the other side, a player can call it out. Give the side with the advantage 1 extra die to roll during the Conflict.

Examples: One side wields a sword while the other has only a knife, one side has the sun in their eyes while shooting at the other, one side having the higher ground, etc. These are subject to the Enlightened's approval.

Specialties are a case of permanent advantages that come up throughout the character's life. Specialties are worth 2 dice. Specialties do not act against a player's limit on the number of advantage dice he may add during a conflict.

While narrating, these can act as a way to add narration while resolving the conflict. Time may move for the sake of advantage dice.

#### **Example**

Let us return to Sarah and the cop. Sarah has the Specialty "Running shoe-less", which Andrew tries to invoke, Guy as the Enlightened notes that it's unlikely Sarah walks the streets shoe-less, so Andrew has her take her shoes off. Filip notes that while she's taking her shoes off, the cop has time to get closer to her, slowly, talking to her all the while, which Guy deems fine.

Sarah gets a total of 2 bonus dice for the specialty and the cop gets 1 extra die for the advantage die invoked for him.

## *Legends 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.

## *Bidding*

### **Glossary:**

**Aggressive Flood Scene:** A Flood Scene where one Initiates the Bidding.

**Defender:** One against whom a bidding is Initiated.

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

**Initiator:** The one who initiates a Bidding.

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

**Unclaimed Region:** Aspect Dots that currently do not belong to any Aspect are placed here.

Bidding is a way of resolving conflicts between the Aspects. These conflicts do not happen in the real external world, but rather in the mental or spiritual landscape which is occupied by the Aspects.

As such, the following should also be said: Discussions between the Aspects and players of must be carried out in the open, before the other players. Passing notes or talking in another room is strictly prohibited.

The Aspects exist in a balance of fear and power, for they know the others are always watching, always plotting.

When more than one player wants his Aspect to be in control of a character in a conflict, or when it is unclear which Aspect should indeed be active, this calls for a bidding.

When calling for a bidding, you need to state both what you wish the Aspect-character goal would be for the conflict and why. Remember, the reason is paramount and often more important than the act itself.

### **Example**

The players decide to portray Vincent (John Travolta) of *Pulp Fiction*; Michael portrays Dirt, Andrew Rat and Filip portraying Water.

We are at the scene where Mia over-doses, this is currently Andrew's turn, and so he says it should be Rat because Vincent wants to save her to avoid being killed by Marcellos, his boss, her husband. He also has a certain interest in Mia and wants to save her. Michael as Dirt claims it should be he that is in control, since he needs to save Mia in order to retain his position in the organisation. Filip tells them to fuck that noise about saving Mia and to make a run for it.

Eventually, Andrew wins with Rat and he takes Mia to his friend of the medical profession.

Note that in the above examples both Rat and Dirt want to save Mia, but because of different reasons. Once the dust settles down, Dirt did *not* have its way; Vincent did save Mia, but it had nothing to do with his position in the organisation and everything to do with Mia and her husband.

Unlike Conflicts, in biddings players start with 0 dice they can roll, and have to spend dice from their reservoir or tokens from their cache in order to have any dice to roll, at all.

Also, in biddings, players need to roll on their dice under or equal to 3 in order to generate successes.

There are some special cases in which one or more of the players will get free dice to use in the Bidding. These are:

1. At the Flood Scene which concludes each character creation, each player gets 1 free die to roll.
2. In Aggressive Flood Scenes (what causes them will be discussed in the next section) the Defender gains 1 free die to roll.
3. In Bidding, the Active Aspect gains 1 free die to roll when other players try to gain control of the character.
4. When an Aspect's rating would go down, he gains 1 free die to roll in the ensuing Flood Scene.

## **Repercussions**

When a bidding ends with no player garnering any successes (not a rare occurrence, considering players start with 0 dice to roll), it is considered a tie.

In most instances, in case of a tie, the "resource" remains with its original proprietor. The active Aspect retains control, the Defender in an Aggressive Flood Scene retains his die, etc.

In case of a Flood Scene that follows an Aspect going down ending in a tie, the Aspect dot is placed in the Unclaimed Region.

When the Flood Scenes that concludes each character creation ends with a tie, roll again. No need to roll if the tie is between the non-leaders(number 2 and 3), as they're not in the running anyway.



If a Flood Scene ends with all Aspects being equal, this is the momentous event called "Rainbow Scene" when the character makes an achievement on the route to enlightenment, mark it on the sheet. Rainbow scenes will be discussed further in the next section.

## Change

### Aspect Change

Your Aspect getting to 10 is your main way to win the game, and as such, changes to your Aspect rating are of much importance to you. Aspects can go both up and down.

When an Aspect goes up or down, its die reservoir is filled to its maximum, 6 dice.

When an Aspect goes up or down, it loses all Aspect Marks.

When an Aspect goes up, its player may instead put that Aspect dot in the Unclaimed Region and raise one of the character's traits by 1.

When an Aspect wins a Flood Scene, it goes up by 1.

When an Aspect would lose enough dice to put him *under* 0 dice in his reservoir, a Flood Scene follows. Do the following, in this order:

1. The Aspect goes down by 1.
2. The Die Reservoir is filled back to its maximum capacity, of 6 dice.
3. Bidding begins for this Aspect dot, in which the Aspect to which it belonged receives 1 free die.

#### **Example 1**

Filip has 0 dice in his die reservoir, he used his dice in order to gain control of Vincent in the last scene. Vincent then proceeds to fail in the Conflict, which means that Filip would normally lose 1 die, but since he has none to lose, this would put him *under* 0 dice, Filip's Water Aspect goes down from 5 to 4, and a Flood Scene for his lost dot begins, after his reservoir is filled back into containing 6 dice.

If a Trait would go down to 0, the highest Aspect (that with the highest score) must sacrifice 1 dot, which is then put into the Unclaimed Region. The trait then returns to a rating of 1. The Aspects may not live in the body while it does.

In case of a tie for the position of the "Highest Aspect", each of those who tie rolls one die, with the higher roller sacrificing a die. In case of a tie, roll again.

In such cases that an Aspect would drop to 0, it instead takes 1 dot from the Unclaimed Region. Should the unclaimed region be empty, it instead takes 1 dot from the highest Aspect (that with the highest score).

In case of a tie for the position of the “Highest Aspect”, each of those who tie rolls one die, with the higher roller sacrificing a die. In case of a tie, roll again.

If, after a conflict resolves, an Aspect has Aspect Marks equal to or over his Aspect’s rating, he may do one of two things: First, he could begin a Flood Scene for an Aspect dot in the Unclaimed Region, which all Aspects may participate in. Second, he could begin an Aggressive Flood Scene, the Defender being the Aspect with the highest rating, himself not included. In case of a tie, the Initiator gets to pick who the Defender will be.

### **On Theft**

A popular method to reduce another Aspect to where a Flood Scene occurs is that of stealing dice.

An Aspect may spend a Mechanics Token and 1 die in order to steal a die from another Aspect.

If the Aspect from which you steal has no dice, you don’t gain a dice back. You can’t take what isn’t there.

#### **Example 2**

Michael has 2 Mechanics Tokens and 1 die, Andrew has 1 die and no Tokens, Filip has 3 dice and no Tokens.

Michael spends his Mechanics Token and 1 die to steal 1 die from Andrew. Andrew now has 0 dice, while Michael has 1 Mechanics Token and 1 die, he had one die which he spent, and he received the one he stole from Andrew.

Michael then spends his second Mechanics Token and 1 die, stealing from Andrew again. This time though, Andrew has no dice left, so a Flood Scene begins, with Michael gaining no dice.

At this stage, things look as follows: Michael has no tokens or dice, Andrew’s Aspect rating goes down by 1 and he has 6 dice, Filip has 3 dice and no Tokens. To boot, there’s now a Flood Scene, with Andrew’s dot up for grabs.

### **Trait Change**

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

If at the end of a Conflict a Trait has Trait Marks equal to its rating, it goes down by 1.

When a Rainbow Scene occurs, the Water player chooses one trait to go up by 1 dot.

When a trait would go down to 0, instead take 1 dot from the Aspects (see above).

An Aspect may choose to decline going up in order to raise a trait by 1 (see above).

### **Goals**

When something occurs in the narration, you may give the appropriate Aspect a Goal. Goals are of the Aspect for the character.

To give an Aspect a Goal, another player may invest in the character one story token, which is then removed from the game.

Alternatively, a player may give his own Aspect a Goal by investing in it a mechanics token, which is then removed from the game.

When a Goal is resolved, which means either it is accomplished *or* it is failed, remove it from the sheet and give the player owning that Aspect 1 mechanics token and 1 story token.

Alternately, do not remove the Goal from the sheet and instead give the Aspect owning it 2 dice and 1 story token.

Remember, you can learn equally well from either success or from failure.

In case you resolve a Goal and have no other Goals on your sheet, you have two options; the first is to keep the Goal on the sheet and take the reward of 2 dice and 1 story token. The other option is to immediately spend your mechanics token in setting a new Goal for your Aspect.

The player of the Water Aspect is exempt from this rule. Water is free-flowing.

### **Rainbow Scenes**

A Rainbow Scene is the moment of Satori, a moment when the character opens his eyes and makes a true headway towards Enlightenment.

The Water Aspect chooses one trait that will go up by 1 and gets to add a new Goal to itself.

Mark down on the character sheet the number of Rainbow Scenes the character had underwent.

## *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.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> I call that lemmings. Bloody lemmings.

## Victory and Loss – The End

All things must come to an end, the character's story and the competition between the Aspects are no exception. Well, the Aspects always compete, but their battle over the character is of finite duration.

There are several cases in which the game reaches its end, each with its own winners and losers.

When the character undergoes 5 Rainbow Scenes, he is Enlightened. The Water Aspect's player narrates the character's final ascent, descent, change of heart, departure from the world, from the world of crime (Jules in *Pulp Fiction*) or whatever it is that Enlightenment is to him, the character and the group.

**The winners:** The character and the Enlightened.

**The losers:** the Aspects.

**Neutral:** None.

If an Aspect would reach the score of 10, then he's won. He reached the goal of the game. The character's quest for enlightenment however is over, and failed. The character is no longer human or indeed in control. He is now a manifestation of a greater, alien and metaphysical power, that of the Aspect.

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 winners:** The Aspect that reached 10.

**The losers:** the character, the other Aspects.

**Neutral:** The Enlightened.

If 4 Acts reach their end, the characters' stories reach their end. Their window into enlightenment, whatever chance they had, is now gone. At least for now.

**The winners:** None.

**The losers:** The Aspects.

**Neutral:** The characters and the Enlightened.

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<sup>20</sup>. NPC death and random slaughter will happen quite often, but the PCs will live.

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<sup>20</sup> Just like John McClane.

## Appendix – Theory – What are CSI Games?

Note, this is rough, this is incomplete. This is purposeful. That gets me your opinions and gets you thinking. When something is too streamlined, it is problematic to put wedges in. I need those wedges to create the streamlined version. Funny how that goes, eh?

The following is taken directly from my [Blog](#), and is included for the purposes of explaining what this game is supposed to be like, and to hopefully further my agenda regarding CSI Games.

So, we keep talking about CSI Games, but we do not yet have a clear definition of what comprises a CSI Game. What we do have right now is what I said in my [first post on the topic](#). To wit:

*"..\"CSI Games\", CSI being Competitive Story Interaction. These are RPGs(\"What is an RPG?\" is a question I will leave unanswered for now, hoping you know what I mean) where there is a story being generated, but the social interaction is competitive and even antagonistic in nature, rather than the \"Cooperative\" mode suggested and propagated throughout our hobby's history. In a way, this is us going back to Board/War games, from which our hobby draws much of its history. I'd say that we're growing in the opposite direction, rather than regressing.*

*What is Chainmail, Dungeon and Dragon's Proto-form if not a Wargame to which one adds little acting? So CSI Games are in a very real way RPGs to which you add a Wargame mentality!"*

So we'll start with that as an introduction and continue to construct a definition, one that hopefully could be used as is, or as a basis in game-book introductions.

CSI Games.

C is for Competitive/Cooperative.<sup>21</sup>

Most games under the umbrella of "Role-Playing Games"(RPGs) till now had been Cooperative in nature, the social interaction between players, players and Game Master(GM) and that of between player-characters had been Cooperative. This is the origin of or originated from the "party". We're all in this together.

This may also be a leading cause into the "You don't win in RPGs" when explaining what you're doing to an elder party member.

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<sup>21</sup> And that's good enough for me!



The other side of the coin is that which I am putting up as the main identifier of CSI Games, the Competitive side. Competition is something inherent to human interaction, inherent to the act of gaming. You find competition in Board, War and Card games, along in most sports (where you have competition between groups and cooperation inside them). I want the players to compete, whether for spotlight, victory, control, in-game resources, whatever. There need be a competitive element somewhere in the game.

It should be reflected in the mechanics as well, but that comes second.

S is for Story.

We're here to tell a story, to hear a story or experience one's wake. We're not here to merely roll the dice or shuffle the cards. Unlike board-games and card-games, we have a story unfolding here. If we don't, we're dealing with something else.

Story often goes with Cooperative. The story-building part is a joint effort by all participants.

I is for Interaction/Isolation.

We're playing a game with other people, you interact with them. You want to help them stop that other guy from winning, you're talking to them and trying to stop them, that's also interaction! You do not play in a void, you're playing with people, interact with them.

Mechanics should have some way to represent and encourage interaction between the players.

Isolation has little place in this scheme, it's mostly there as the other side of Interaction, where you're "Snubbed" for game reasons, as others ally against you. Alternately, if you're snubbed for out-of-game reasons, you're unlikely to do well in game, or have fun.

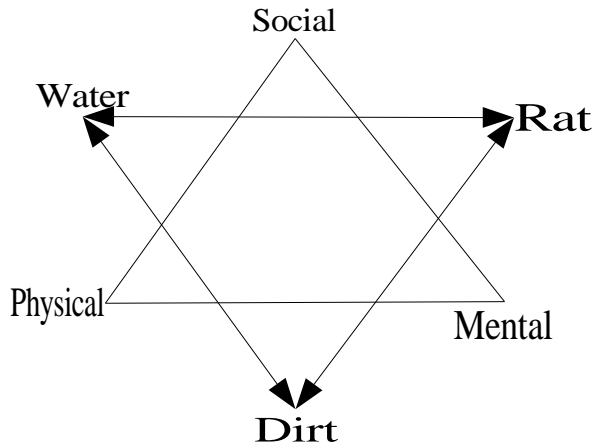
Game is self-explanatory.

This is a game, it has winners. This is a game, it has rules. This is a game, it is an activity you do for fun. This is a game, one of the basic human activities, and you know one when you see it.

So we are left with CSI Game, or Competitive(/Cooperative) Story Interaction Games.

Isolation plays little part in this, and is mostly there as something to be avoided. Competitive is what sets this apart from other games, so we're paying it more heed. Cooperative is also there, but more as part of the Story or Interaction bits and less as an individual agent.

## Character Sheet<sup>22</sup>



Use the following chart to help you ease and speed up tracking Aspect Ratios, as covered in page 17. The first column gives you the conditional in mathematical terms, the second tells you the effect. The third and fourth columns tell you if it applies to Bidding or Real World conflicts, or both. The fifth and sixth columns give you a place to put a bead, to show if the condition is met right now or not.

Enlightened's Name:

**Tokens:** Story Tokens/Mechanics Tokens

Enlightened's: /  
 Player Name: /  
 Player Name: /  
 Player Name: /

**Character Name:**

**Specialties:**

**Unclaimed Aspect Dots:**

**Traits:** Rating/Marks

Physical: /  
 Water Player: **You.**

Goals:  
 Rat Player:  
 Goals:  
 Dirt Player:  
 Goals:

**Details:**

**Rainbow Scenes:**

Mental: /  
 Aspect Dots/Marks:  
 Aspect Dots/Marks:  
 Aspect Dots/Marks:

Social: /  
 Die Reservoir:  
 Die Reservoir:  
 Die Reservoir:

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<sup>22</sup> Considering the son's Seals, what do you think the father's Shield was for?

**Character Name:**

**Specialties:**

**Unclaimed Aspect Dots:**

**Traits:**Rating/Marks

Physical: /

Water Player:

Goals:

Rat Player: **You.**

Goals:

Dirt Player:

Goals:

**Details:**

**Rainbow Scenes:**

Mental: /

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Social: /

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

**Character Name:**

**Specialties:**

**Unclaimed Aspect Dots:**

**Traits:**Rating/Marks

Physical: /

Water Player:

Goals:

Rat Player:

Goals:

Dirt Player: **You.**

Goals:

**Details:**

**Rainbow Scenes:**

Mental: /

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Aspect Dots/Marks:

Social: /

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir:

Die Reservoir: