High Score RPG Playtest 2

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REQUIREMENTS

•A set of these polyhedral dice for every player: d4, d6 and d8s.
•A few sheets of blank paper and writing implements for character tracking.
•It is recommend you play with 2-4 players and a Game Master.
•Alternatively, you can easily play the game online via Text or Voice chat. You can use dice programs or sites like invisible castle. No battlemaps are required.

INTRODUCTION

High Score is a roleplaying game. The game plays out in a narrative divided into numerous Events. Each event has a High Score: an amount of points that must be earned to complete the Event. Each action you take that advances the scene will earn you points toward the High Score and advancing to the next Event.

So for example, if you are fighting against a mob of monsters, the high score for the round might be 300, and each monster worth 30 points. So if you defeat 10 monsters, you win. The battle may hold other objectives – for example, you might need to rescue someone from the mob of monsters, and that will give you 150 points, putting you halfway to victory. You can choose to go for any objectives.

The High Score system works the same in any situation. It does not necessarily have to be a fight. You might become involved in a high stakes political negotiation. Each participant in the talks will be worth points that you score by trying to persuade him or her. The advisors might be worth few points, but be easy to persuade – you can go from one to the other with little risk and ultimately win. But if you go straight to the President, you could earn many more points.

Your actions are scored based on your character's Skills, Assets and Perks. When you roll dice, the result of the dice earns you points. However, you can also lose points and there are ways for the enemy to reduce the points you've collected. In any task, there is an enemy high score as well that the Game Master keeps track of. If it fills then you fail. You advance, but in unfavorable conditions.

Objectives in each challenge might have mitigating factors. When you and your team declare your wish to follow an objective, the GM will reveal the circumstances under which it is undertaken. You might be put on a clock, or you might need to score over a certain number to have your score count for the round. You might need to prevent the enemy team from scoring off your objective (for example, protecting the civilian from the monsters) or you might need to score off an enemy's objective yourself. A wide variety of challenges and narratives can be constructed using this simple framework.

BASIC SCORING

To Score, you roll Skill dice and add the results to your team's High Score. However, your actions must make sense with the events of the game. You can't simply repeat, "I roll Athletics, and I get 5 points" until you finish an event. The GM can deny or reduce the points of any action that is not suitably connected to the events. You must explain what your character is doing and why. Whenever you Score, you and your GM will decide what that Score means in the context of the game's story, as part of moving the sequence of events to a conclusion.

You have to put effort to advance the events of the game and your character's place in the game otherwise all the scoring will seem arbitrary and hollow. You have to take a variety of imaginative actions and make events interesting and fun to imagine. Every group has some acceptable degree of roleplaying – ask your GM and fellow players how much detail they like to use and tell them how comfortable you are with it. Try to work your creative circuits as much as you can!

For Example:

The super heroine Platypus Girl wants to leap across a street full of traffic to stop a bank robbery on the other side. The player tells the GM that she will roll Athletics and then scores 5 points. A suitable explanation from the player could be: "Platypus Girl takes running leap, skipping and sliding awkwardly atop the tops of passing cars, and lands on the other side on one foot and about to fall. With a twist, she turns this awkward landing into a stylish pose!" This sounds sufficiently like something Platypus Girl would do, and is more fun than merely saying, "I roll Athletics and I get 5 points."

SCORE DIFFICULTY

The game consists of tasks of greater or lesser difficulty, decided on by the Game Master. Normally, the narrative difficulty will not impact your score. However, sometimes you are met with a situation where the difficulty can make a difference, by causing you to rethink your strategies. Difficulty is only used if it creates a significant storytelling shift or to differentiate two objectives.

There are two kinds of difficulty. The first is **Personal Difficulty**. This Difficulty is applied specifically to the rolls of one character. In such a circumstance, the GM will tell the character the level of Difficulty and the character is impeded on his or her roll. When the character rolls for score, he or she does not add the points to the High Score. Instead, the character must clear the Difficulty Threshold before being able to score. The Threshold is presented as negative points. The character "erodes" the difficulty by scoring. Each time the character scores, his or her points go towards lowering the difficulty, until it has been reduced to 0.

Difficulty Thresholds do not recover between scoring actions. Once a Difficulty has been reduced, it will stay reduced, and each time the character scores the Difficulty will be lowered even more until it is removed completely. Once the difficulty has been reduced to 0, it is cleared – the character is able to add his or her score to his or her team's High Score once again.

Difficulty	Difficulty Threshold
Very Easy	-5
Easy	-10
Challenging	-13
Very Challenging	-15
Hard	-20
Very Hard	-25

The second type of Difficulty is called the **Objective Difficulty**. Usually, the most Difficulty objective will pay off more points if you complete it – but it'll take more time to complete due to the Threshold. Evaluate objectives before trying to score. If an Objective has a Difficulty, then any character that tries to score off the Objective will reduce its difficulty – it does not affect just one character. As with Personal Difficulty, the Difficulty Threshold does not recover. If two characters score against it, then both will reduce the difficulty. As such, Objective Difficulties have their own Difficulty Table suited to challenge multiple characters at a time.

Difficulty	Difficulty Threshold
Very Easy	-10
Easy	-15
Challenging	-20
Very Challenging	-25
Hard	-40
Very Hard	-50

For Example:

Platypus Girl is fighting her archnemesis Swampman Bob. She attacks him with her signature POWER BILL attack, and the GM applies no difficulty. She rolls an 8 on her die, so she scores 8 points. Next turn, she attempts to Power Beak again, but Swampman Bob is on to her this time! The GM declares that it is Challenging to spam the same move again! She rolls a 6, failing to satisfy the Difficulty Threshold of -13. So she scores 0 points that round, but the Difficulty Threshold has been reduced to -7. Next round, if she scores 8 points, she will remove the Difficulty Threshold and score the 1 leftover point for her team.

CHARACTER BUILDING

A character in High Score has Skills, Assets and Perks. Skills are the character's abilities that interact with the world. Assets are experiences, equipment and special traits that a character can invoke to score more points. Perks are special and often unique bonuses to score available in specific circumstances.

When you add a Skill, Asset or Perk you gain Character Value. This is both good and bad for you. Characters with high value are more powerful, but enemies gain bonus points for defeating them. If a character is defeated by an enemy or obstacle then the enemy will earn more points for the enemy point pool, which may result in an enemy victory. High value characters must be wary of this.

PURCHASING SKILLS

Skills are rated based on aptitude. Depending on your aptitude, the skill roll uses a higher die and increases your character value by a certain amount. Once you buy a skill at a certain Aptitude, you cannot change its Aptitude yourself – normally the GM will increase your character value and thus your Aptitude when he or she feels you've used the skill enough and your character should improve.

Aptitude	Die Value	Character Value
Trained	2d4	10
Adept	2d6	15
Expert	2d8	20

For Example:

Platypus Girl has the Athletics skill. Because Platypus Girl is a very athletic young lady, her player buys Athletics at Expert. Whenever Platypus Girl rolls Athletics, she rolls 2d8 for Score. This increases her character value by 20.

CHARACTER VALUE

Characters are worth a minimum of 50 points and a maximum of 500. The GM can change these minimum and maximum scores as he or she wishes. However, having a certain character value makes you bigger target. If your Character Value is very high, the enemy will gain bonus points to their High Score when they Stagger you. Your Character Value is used to determine how much you are worth as a target. Whenever an enemy scores off you, you have to write that score down next to your Persistence. If an enemy scores your entire Persistence off you, you become Staggered and the enemy adds your Stagger bonus to its team's High Score. So you must be careful if you've got a very valuable character, because the enemy will want to attack you more than others.

Below are the different thresholds of character value and their impact on your character. Remember to record your Character Value on your sheet. You should not feel pressured to make a high value character – a simple character can add just as much to a group (and much less to the enemies if it gets walloped on!).

Character Value	Stagger Bonus	Persistence
50-200	15	30
201-300	25	40
301-400	50	50
401-500	100	75

For Example:

Platypus Girl is a super heroine! With her shiny white t-shirt and blue jeans of justice, and her platypus-billed power hat, she is ready to protect the citizens of Sydney Australia! As such, her player feels that Platypus girl should have many Expert skills and powerful Assets, and gives her a character value of 200+ through various expenditures. Platypus Girl gives enemies 25 points whenever they stagger her, and whenever an enemy scores 40 points off her, she becomes Staggered. So she must be wary not to give the enemy too many free points.

THE SKILLS LIST

There are 15 skills in the game that encompass the broad variety of things a character can do. You can ask your GM if you can add a skill that is not on this list to your skill list, if you can come up with a good idea for a skill. To use a skill, just explain how it is relevant to the current challenge and roll its Aptitude die to score. Select your skills based on what you'd like your character to do to solve problems. Don't worry about lacking a skill. You can still find some way to score. The skills are divided into three categories in the following table. You can use these to figure out how to narrate skills – but otherwise don't fret about it much.

Physical	Mental	Social
Athletics	Culture	Culture
Artistry	Artistry	Artistry
Dexterity	Equipment	Equipment
Equipment	Esoterica	Esoterica
Esoterica	Perception	Perception
Perception	Science	Persuasion
Prowess	Subterfuge	Society
Stealth	Vehicles	Subterfuge
Subterfuge	Wilderness	
Vehicles		

•**Athletics**: Climbing, swimming, jumping, flipping, tumbling and other stunts.

•**Artistry**: Writing, painting, singing and other artistic pursuits.

•**Culture**: History, Literature, Languages and other subjects of humanity.

•**Dexterity**: Lock picking, sleight of hand, knot tying and other precise handiwork.

•**Equipment**: Using objects, from ropes to simple machines to computers.

•**Esoterica**: Using magic, psychic powers, divine miracles or any such abilities.

•**Perception**: Examining people and surroundings and reacting to threats.

•**Persuasion**: Changing people's minds through whatever means you wish.

•**Prowess**: Lifting, pushing, dragging, pain tolerance and other bodily extremes.

•**Science**: Mathematics, physics, alchemy, any sufficiently advanced subjects.

•**Society**: Etiquette, pecking order, customs, current events and trends.

•**Stealth**: Performing any action without being seen, shadowing, skulking, etc.

•**Subterfuge**: Covering your motives, forging documents, lying, intrigues.

•**Vehicles**: Driving, piloting, horseback riding, and other assisted travelling.

•**Wilderness**: Nature, lay of the land, outdoor survival, and rural living.

For Example:

Platypus Girl has numerous skills to help her on her quest for justice. She first and foremost has Expert Athletics (2d8), for all her superheroic leaps and bounds. But she is not just a brute, Platypus Girl is also a college graduate student (it's her secret identity) studying Physics, so she has Adept Science (2d6). She is well tuned into current events (you have to be to catch crooks!) and high tech, and also manages her own Platypus Girl Facebook page, so she has Expert Society and Expert Equipment (for all her video game and computing needs). She has some trained (2d4) elements – they're not as central to her character, but she has them: Artistry, Culture, Perception Persuasion, and Wilderness. All in all, Platypus Girl has 125 Character Value in skills alone.

ADDING ASSETS

Unlike Skills, Assets are not listed for you to pick from. Rather, you come up with your character's Assets and write them down. There are categories of Assets, however, and you must classify your Asset in the correct one. You can name each Asset whatever you wish and it has any origin and power you think suitable.

To use an Asset you must first roll a Skill. Then, just as you connected the skill to the current event, you must connect the Asset you're invoking with the skill you're rolling. This allows you to add your Asset value to the Score you gain from the skill. Some Assets are easier to connect than others but you can potentially connect any Asset you possess to any roll you are making.

You can use Assets to trigger **Asset Relationships**. These are established when you link one of your Assets to what you perceive to be an Asset an enemy has. The Asset is linked for the duration of the event. For example, if a tank suddenly plows through a wall and you own an anti-tank rocket launcher you can establish this Asset relationship. Relationships can be positive, neutral or negative. A positive relationship benefits you. You score +5 points every time you invoke the Asset and score off the relationship. A Neutral relationship returns to zero: if you are suffering penalties from a persistent narrative obstacle created by the GM you can change the circumstances, and your GM must remove the penalty. A Negative Relationship is usually invoked upon you when the GM feels you are at a disadvantage against a particular enemy Asset – the enemy links the Asset to yours. The enemy gains a Positive Relationship this way. You can only invoke one Relationship in each Event and for the duration of the event, you do not roll that Asset die that you invoked – on Positive you just gain the bonus points every time, and on Neutral you pay with your Asset die to remove the obstacle.

You can sacrifice Assets in other ways to affect the game and the story. This method is called invoking an **Asset Event**. Essentially, you link your Asset to a specific event or to a specific character in an event that you are participating in, rather than linking it to a Skill or to another Asset. You can only do this if it would be extremely important to the character, enough to alter how the character would behave – it should impose a restriction or a risk on the character. Only one character can do this per event. The character that connects the Asset to the event or to another character cannot roll that Asset die for the duration of the event, but adds the Character Value of the Asset to his or her team's High Score.

When you purchase an Asset you gain Character Value depending on how much score the Asset would grant to your skill rolls. Assets are rated by how valuable they are to your character. Remember when you buy an Asset to clearly mark it with the category it belongs to and briefly explain its significance. Like Skills, you can't normally improve the Die Value yourself. The GM may do so at some point.

Asset Value	Die Value	Character Value
Handy	1d4	10
Crucial	1d6	15
Invaluable	1d8	20

During the course of the game, the GM might allow you to swap Assets with Assets of equal or lesser value or gain new ones of equal or lesser value. The GM might also grant you the use of Temporary Assets. A Temporary Asset is worth 1d6 and works exactly like any Asset except it cannot be used to trigger Asset Events, and it is an unreliable presence in the character's life. A car that you stole is a Temporary Asset – even in a game about high-stakes car races, a stolen car can't be used to trigger Asset Events such a climactic race between rivals. You'd want a car that is special (an actual character Asset) for that. The stolen car is not permanent property of the character – the police could track it down. It is possible for a Temporary Asset to become a permanent new Asset depending on the situation, but often it will just be lost after some time.

It is possible to lose Assets, either temporarily or permanently. It is rare for this to happen to your character's non-temporary Assets, but it is a possibility depending on your GM and the game. You always have a chance to get your Asset back, or to gain an Asset to replace it, but for the space of time between such events, you might have to make do without it. The Assets that can most commonly be lost are items or contacts. The player can choose to lose Assets as part of his or her character's growth, to add challenge to the game, to reduce character value, or to use some kind of special ability or gain extra score.

There is usually no limit to the number of Assets a character can have.

Asset Categories:

•**Item**: The Asset is a weapon or gadget you have. It can be normal or it can be customized in some way. Be sure to describe it briefly. An item is the easiest Asset to utilize most of the time – you can quickly link a weapon to combat, a computer when performing research. Even something simple as a set of tools can be an Asset, so long as it is central to the character. Vehicles count as items.

•**Contact**: The Asset is a person you know and who is willing to help you. A Contact can be a family member, a friend, or acquaintance. Describe your relationship briefly when you write down the Contact. Contacts are easy to use in mental and social challenges. You can use a Contact Asset to phone a friend, namedrop a celebrity you know, ask for favors, or even just recall something a family member told you once that could be helpful. The invocation does not necessarily have to involve talking to the person.

•**Trait**: The Asset is a physical, emotional or mental trait of your character. This is one of the more freeform Assets. Anything from "Charming" to "Stubborn" to things like "Star-Shaped Birthmark" could be a Trait Asset. Briefly describe its importance, and try not to make it too abstract. You want to be able to link it.

•**Power**: The Asset is some kind of supernatural power, be it magic, alien psychic powers, or some kind of natural ability. Power Assets must be a bit specialized – you can't simply put "I'm A Wizard" and justify everything you do that way. You can put down things like Telepathy and Chinese Elements, just not "Everything."

•**Moment**: The Asset is a specific memory, circumstance, training or knowledge that you have acquired, witnessed or experienced and which forms a part of your character's story. It is the easiest to use in invoking Asset Events. Briefly describe what exactly the Asset refers back to.

For Example:

Platypus Girl's assets are manifold, but we can focus on the most important. First off, Platypus Girl has her Platypus-Billed Power Hat that is the source of her famous Power Beak attack. This is an Invaluable Item Asset. She also has a driving motivation – her memories of her Mother, who slaved away working a menial job in a Platypus farm so that she could give Platypus Girl an education. This Moment Asset is Crucial to Platypus Girl and serves as her motivation to better herself and to help others. Finally, Platypus Girl has Superhuman Strength! This Invaluable Power Asset figures into much of what Platypus Girl does. For flavor, Platypus Girl is also Charming, which is a Handy Trait asset. All in all, Platypus Girl has 65 Character Value worth of Assets.

If Platypus Girl wants to use an Asset then she must link it to the current skill roll. For example, Platypus Girl might be walking down the street, when suddenly she finds a pedestrian in need of rescue from the nefarious Colonel Colonialism! Platypus Girl chases after using Athletics and links her Superhuman Strength – she can, after all, move faster than ten kangaroos! She rolls 2d8+1d8, provided her player explains everything properly.

An example of an Asset Relationship may occur if Platypus Girl is fighting common criminals. She can link her Superhuman Strength to their Ordinary Joe Strength (even if they don't really have an Asset named like that, this can still work if properly roleplayed). If so, she doesn't have to roll her Asset die the whole event, she just gets +5 points every roll from it. An Asset Event may occur if Platypus Girl is forced to fight her evil sister, Lady Wallaby! This circumstance may cause her so much stress that she momentarily loses her Memories of Ma' Asset – her driving motivation may be harmed due to having to fight her sister.

LIABILITY AND SPOTLIGHT

Aside from Assets, you can also choose a Liability or two. These do not add to your character value and are negative in nature. In certain circumstances, the GM might also force you to choose a Liability for your character – for example, if you have a really high value character in a team of lots of low value characters, or just if it fits the narrative of your character, or because it fits the game setting.

A Liability is like an Asset in nearly every way, except it doesn't have a rating and doesn't add points and doesn't change your character value. You must classify your Liability in the same way you classify an Asset – it can be an item, moment, etc. However, it must be negative: a weakness, trauma, illness or other problem.

When your Liability is linked, it always inflicts some kind of disadvantage upon you, rather than giving you points. Liabilities might be things like "Drunkard" or "Bastard Child." It is usually your GM who will link your Liabilities to the narrative where possible or interested – but you can too, if you think it would be fun. If you link your own liability, you still suffer a disadvantage like usual. The GM always chooses the penalty. It could be anything from lost points, to losing an entire action, losing the ability to use a Skill or Asset, to one of the Disadvantages in the Disadvantage section. Whenever your Liability is linked, you are also forced to roleplay it in the narrative. Generally, other characters don't link your Liability, and you don't Link theirs. It is something that comes up circumstantially.

There is an upside to having a Liability. Whenever your Liability is linked, either by you or the GM, you gain a Karma token. You only gain the token if you roleplay the inconvenience well, so don't just ignore any liabilities you stick on your sheet. You cannot use the Karma token in the same Event that your Liability was linked, and you cannot "hoard" Karma tokens – you can only keep one at a time, and generally, you cannot suffer from your Liability while carrying one.

In any event after gaining the Karma token you can cash in your token for Spotlight time. Spotlight time is your reward for being a good sport with your liability and adding to the narrative in an interesting way with it.

While the Spotlight is on you, you gain any Advantage of your choice and you roll 3d6 for all scoring rolls. The Spotlight time is a major reversal of fortunes in the narrative and gives you an opportunity to roleplay in a heroic, grandiose fashion. While the Spotlight is on you, your Advantage cannot be opposed. Your Advantage lasts until Spotlight time is over. However, there is a catch: you do not link your Assets or trigger your Perks while the Spotlight is on you. They "just work" in the narrative, but they don't give you extra points to your 3d6.

Spotlight time lasts for 1d6 Phases (roll when you spend your token).

SELECTING PERKS

Perks are improvements to your character's Score. All Perks add 15 to your Character Value. A Perk is a circumstantial effect tied to a single Skill or Asset.

Each player must create his or her own Perks, just like Assets. There are three types of effects and three different kinds of "triggers" for Perks. To create your own perks, simply tie them to a Skill or Asset, and choose one trigger and one effect. The rules elements that compose Perks are as follows:

•**Circumstance**: Name one instance where you should get the bonus. Your circumstance can't be something like "whenever you roll." Rather it has to be tied to specific narrative events like "whenever a task requires knowledge of machine parts" or "whenever you roll with a Grace advantage." Unlike other Triggers, Circumstance can only ever grant the Bonus effect and no others.

•**Min/Max**: When you choose this trigger, you choose Minimum or Maximum and write it on your Perk (it cannot be changed). This perk then triggers depending on the die roll of the associated item. So for example, if you linked the Perk to a Handy Asset's Maximum roll, whenever it rolls 4 you Trigger the Perk.

•**Activated**: This Perk is used whenever you want it to be used. You simply choose to activate it. However, you cannot activate it more than once per event. So for example, if you have a Perk tied to your Athletics and it is activated, you gain the Perk bonus, but cannot activate it again during the same Event.

When you choose your trigger, you then choose the Benefit that your Perk will give you. You can choose from the following beneficial effects.

•**Bonus**: Simple enough, the Perk, when triggered, gives you a +5 bonus to the scoring roll you used to trigger the Perk. So for example, if you have a Min Perk attached to a skill, and that skill rolls low, the Perk gives you +5 points.

•**Advantage**: When triggered, the Perk gives you an advantage. Advantages gained from Perks only last until the end of your next Phase. They can't be Opposed but they also don't last very long. So for example, if you have an Activated Perk you could have it give you Advantage when activated this way.

•**Maneuver**: When triggered, your Disadvantage lets you pull off a free Maneuver, effectively granting you two actions in the same round. The Maneuver still only scores only half points, like maneuvers normally do. Furthermore, if you have a disadvantage, the Maneuver is also affected by it (most disadvantages last only one scoring action, but here, they affect the free maneuver too). This benefit can only be tied to the Activated trigger, not to Circumstance or Min/Max.

Here are a few example Perks, in the appropriate formatting.

Hand Over Hand [Athletics: Circumstance Bonus]
Benefits: You undertake a task that involves climbing to a high place.

Wow The Crowd [Artistry: Circumstance Bonus]
Benefits: You undertake a task that requires you to entertain multiple people.

Chronicler [Culture: Circumstance Bonus]
Benefits: Any Support maneuver pertaining to historical events or personages.

Sleight of Hand [Dexterity: Activated Maneuver]
Benefits: You make a free maneuver through your quick hand movements.

Alchemist [Equipment: Circumstance Bonus]
Benefits: Any task that would produce a magic potion or other esoteric item.

Overcharge [Esoterica: Maximum Advantage]
Benefits: Your magic power bursts out in a dazzling display.

On-Target [Assault Rifle (Invaluable Asset): Minimum Bonus]
Benefits: A good three-round burst never misses.

Like Mother Like… [Mom (Handy Asset): Circumstance Bonus]
Benefits: Any mental task that relates back to my mother's profession.

Critical Hit [Dagger (Handy Asset): Activated Advantage]
Benefits: A stab in the shoulder will throw off anybody's game.

The GM should inspect Perks to insure that they mesh well with the game – that they aren't too easy to use, but also not useless or obscure, and that they aren't being unfairly stacked for exploitative. For example, no player should have 10 activated advantages. The GM should limit players to 2 Activated and 2 Min/Max Perks, and maybe only 5-6 Circumstance Perks, for a maximum of 10.

For Example:

Platypus Girl's signature POWER BILL, could be represented the following way:

POWER BILL [Power Hat (Invaluable Asset): Circumstance Bonus]
Benefits: Whenever you attack with a Grace or Tactics advantage.

This Perk adds 15 Character Value to Platypus Girl. She can choose a few more, but no more than 2 Activated, 2 Min/Max and 6 Circumstance Perks.

ADVANTAGES

An advantage is a temporary bonus that is gained during play. When a player gains an Advantage, his or her character has gotten a boost versus another character or obstacle. A player that has advantage can reroll any skill or asset roll that is unsatisfactory to him or her, once per scoring action. Advantages do not apply just to battles, but can be used in any context.

Advantages also have another, altogether different dimension. Advantages have Advantage tags, which you select when you gain Advantage. This is tied to the narrative of your actions and what happened in-universe to give you the advantage – it also determines how the advantage can be removed from you.

Gaining An Advantage: You normally gain advantages as rewards from the GM for a good narrative. You can also gain an advantage if your Skill die both roll the maximum amount – so for example if you roll 2d4 and get 8.

Advantage Duration: An Advantage lasts as long as it goes unopposed (see below). While an advantage remains unopposed, any enemies must abide by your advantage narratively, and you can keep using the rerolls once per action.

Advantage Tags: When you gain an advantage, it has one of the tags below as fitting for the narrative of your action.

•Range: You are outside the enemy's grasp while still able to act.
•Grace: You are using your agility to outmaneuver an opponent.
•Area: You have used the surroundings to your benefit.
•Tactics: You've thought of a plan or strategy that's confounded the enemy.
•Luck: Simply put, you've gotten lucky – the easiest tag to challenge.
•Morale: You've mustered up a lot of courage that's given you the upper hand.
•Competence: You're better fit than your opponent at whatever the action is.

Losing Advantage: Advantage is lost when an enemy character Opposes the character's advantage. If a character has Advantage, he or she cannot be the target of the Harass maneuver until the advantage is properly Opposed.

To Oppose an Advantage, a character first rolls for score. If it rolls higher than the advantaged character's last scoring action, the advantage ends. When a character rolls to Oppose, only half of his or her roll is added to his or her team's High Score. A character can also, *in place of gaining an advantage*, end another character's Advantage. So for example, if an enemy has an advantage, and you roll 8 on a 2d4, you can choose to end his or her advantage, rather than gain one yourself. A GM might also end a certain advantage if narratively appropriate.

DISADVANTAGES

A Disadvantage is a specific type of temporary penalty that is suffered during play. Disadvantages have narrative roots, and can be applied to any situation in the game. Disadvantages don't have tags. Misfortune comes in so many forms that it is abstracted here for the players and GM to interpret however they wish.

Gaining A Disadvantage: A character is disadvantaged when he or she rolls the minimum amount on the Skill die (so for example, rolling 2 on the 2d4). A player can also suffer a Disadvantage when the Harass maneuver is imposed upon him or her, or when it is narratively appropriate that he or she be inflicted one.

Disadvantage Duration: Disadvantages affect a single scoring action – the first scoring action you take after you suffered the disadvantage. The GM may sometimes rule a Disadvantage as lasting longer, but it is usually always a certain amount of scoring actions. You can expect to be rid of it after the Event.

Disadvantage Types: There are a few different ways that a Disadvantage could inconvenience you. The one choosing the Disadvantage to be applied (normally the character using the Harass maneuver, or the GM if the disadvantage was narratively inflicted) chooses from the following Disadvantages.

•**Setback**: A Setback is a temporary penalty to one scoring roll. The penalty is almost always -5. When the player is Harassing, the penalty is always -5. If the player scores the maximum amount on the roll to Harass (for example, 8 on a 2d4) then the player inflicts a -10 instead of a -5 penalty.

•**Cursed Dice**: Cursed Dice causes the player to roll his or her scoring action twice, and use the worst scoring result of the two.

•**Addling**: Addled characters cannot use Maneuvers or invoke Perks.

•**Forcing**: When you inflict this disadvantage on an enemy, it cannot use any of the skills it has already used once during the event, and its next skill roll is treated only as Trained (2d4) regardless of the skill it is using.

Staggered: Staggered is not a normal disadvantage. A character is Staggered ONLY when the enemy team has scored as many points *specifically* off him or her as he or she has Persistence. The character should keep track of how much the enemy team has scored off him or her. When a Character is Staggered, the GM applies him or her a Personal Difficulty (normally Easy or Challenging).

If a character gains an Advantage while Disadvantaged, he or she can remove the Disadvantage in lieu of gaining an Advantage.

MANEUVERS

Maneuvers are alternate actions. Any character can use any maneuver in place of a scoring roll. They are not purchased – they are available to all characters.

Whenever you use a maneuver, you only add half your score to the team's High Score (but it is not halved for the purpose of surmounting difficulty or opposing enemy scores). Maneuvers are not about scoring high, but applying tactics.

Maneuvers can be used in any applicable context. You could use Defend to hide a clue in an investigation challenge or to shelter someone from criticism in a social challenge. Be imaginative with the context of your maneuvers.

Defend: You can choose to defend a character or objective. When you roll to defend, write down your total score as the Defense Target. Any enemy that tries for the objective or character you are defending must roll against that target. Any score equal to or lower than the Defense target is halved. Only scores that exceed the defense target by at least 1 point are actually counted. Any points that are scored by an enemy this way are scored against the Defender, and never against the character or objective the Defender is trying to protect. You can Defend a character or objective until your Defense Target is met. Until that happens, you cannot reroll defense, and you only add half of your rolls to your team's High Score. You can end the defense prematurely, but you cannot defend again immediately – you must take one scoring action between Defend attempts.

Support: You can choose to Support a character. When you roll to Support, select a character and write down your total score as the Support Target. When the selected character rolls for Score, if he or she scores higher than your Support Target, you give the character a +1d6 bonus to his or her score. If the character scores lower than your Support Target, he or she adds +2d6 to his or her score. You must take a scoring action between any two Support Attempts.

Harass: You can choose to harass an enemy character. When you roll to Harass, select a character you are Harassing. You give that character a Disadvantage. The disadvantage lasts until after the victim's next scoring attempt, so it will only ever negatively affect one scoring action at a time. You cannot Harass the same character repeatedly – you must take a scoring action between Harass attempts *and* the victim cannot already have a Disadvantage. You also cannot Harass a character with an Advantage.

Restore: You can choose to restore an ally character. When you roll to Restore, select a Staggered character. Your score is deducted from that character's Personal Difficulty, and half your score is deducted from the enemy team's High Score. You do not add any of your score to your team's High Score.

IMPROVISED RULES

You'll come up with situations where just scoring points off something doesn't really fully express what is happening in the story. It can either be in the middle of the game, or during character creation – a player may find the rules limiting.

There are many good ideas that do not have real rules in the game, such as converting enemies to your team (mind control), restoring lost Persistence ("healing"), attacking multiple enemies at once, or even setting an overwatch on an area using a gun, building a robot companion, or called shots. The game simply lacks the space to cover all of them, but players can still use them – this is after all a game about stories, and stories have these kinds of things in them. So rather than say "No" the GM should work with the player for a suitable tradeoff to attach to the use of these abilities to make them fair.

Enemy Score Bonus: Simply put, you can give a character an ability that works at any time, but gives the enemy Points to their High Score. You can tie this ability to a particular Asset the character has that when linked, triggers the improvised power and adds to the enemy High Score. Common points values to give away are usually multiples of 5, between 5 and 20.

Apply Disadvantages: This is good for abilities that will be used less commonly or that already have a damaging consequence in their flavor. Whenever the player uses an ability, he or she becomes Disadvantaged. This could either be a plain Setback, Cursed Dice or some other unique variation of ill fortune.

Spend An Asset: You can have the character's ability be one of its Assets. Whenever the character links the Asset, he or she uses the ability. However, once the ability is used, that Asset is lost temporarily as payment for the ability. The GM and player must discuss together a suitable time frame for recovery.

Bargain Scoring: You can give the player the ability, but it does not score Points when used. The player may score points *incidentally* in the grand scheme of things (for example, if the player disadvantages an enemy or gives a bonus to an ally) but whenever he or she uses that power it is done without really scoring. You can also (for less powerful stuff) have the player score half points instead.

Character Value: If the player is asking for something permanent and that can't be represented by an active ability or passive item of some kind (for example, a robot companion that acts as an additional independent character), increase the player's character value for the purposes of enemy score, but *not* for beneficial stuff like Persistence. The character has gained value and enemies gain more score for attacking him or her – suitable tradeoff for having a robot buddy.

Here are a few examples of unique effects previously not covered by rules. The GM is welcome to add his or her own. Once introduced, a rule should always work the same, so players can use it without asking how it works every time.

Mind Control: You can convert an enemy to your team temporarily. Any points it scores go into your score, either half or all of them depending on what your GM allows, and the enemy stays on your team for a negotiable time frame.

Companion: Add an ally to your team. All of the points it scores are added to your high score. It behaves as if a player had a low value second character.

Called Shots: You can attack a certain body part on an enemy. It has a difficulty rating, or it might be random (roll 1d6: from 1 to 6 respectively, left leg, right left, torso, right arm, left arm, head). If you strike a limb, you give the enemy a disadvantage. If you hit the torso or head, you score extra points. Some enemies might have specific locations that give specific bonuses if hit.

Healing: A simple but very powerful effect: you remove points off an enemy's score to restore a certain ally's Persistence value by that amount.

Ambushes: Each character in the Ambushing party can roll for score twice on the first round against the Ambushed party.

Multiple Attacks: You score off of two enemies. These enemies must both be disadvantaged, or they must both have scored off you in the past round, or otherwise acting in a manner that opens them up for this sort of attack. This could double your score, or perhaps add half as much again, or you might need to score a certain amount to be able to target the second character at all.

Heavy Armor: You start every battle with a pool of extra Persistence (10 to 20 of it). Enemies only score half as much off of you until they've scored as much as this extra Persistence. Once they have scored as much as your protection, they will start scoring in full against you once again. This is restored every event.

Expendables: These are Assets that you can give up for a certain amount of time. If you link the asset and then give it up in this manner, it will give you a large bonus to points, depending on the time it must spend recovering before you can use it again. Points bonuses will be multiples of 5, and recovery times measured in rounds, events completed or even game sessions.

Vehicles: Entering a Vehicle changes your statistics for the better. It might give you a Perk, allow you to score more, or increase your persistence. A game focused largely on vehicles should build its "baseline" on being inside a vehicle, while characters outside vehicles should feel, and be, weaker, and score less.

EVENTS AND SCORING

Events are specific scenes that have a High Score to be met. The GM and Players construct a story out of Events and their outcomes. There may be non-event scenes between Events to give players some time off to roleplay idly, or to set up the next event. However, the meat of the game will be Events.

In each Event, the GM will inform the players of the High Score they must achieve. Depending on the circumstances, the players will then take actions and rack up score until they get enough to advance to the next scene.

Standard Event: In a Standard Event, players are faced with a large and obvious obstacle or objective that needs little to no explaining. For example, they might have to break into a prison or haggle with a merchant for an artifact. The GM tells them the High Score and they take actions toward achieving the score. There may be an objective on the side that will earn them bonus points to complete the event quickly, but mostly the players chart their own path.

Objective Event: In an Objective Event, players have a number of delineated objectives and they must come up with a way to work through those objectives. The players can earn score based on their actions and are free to take whichever actions they believe will earn them points, but they must earn score towards the objectives they're given. A good example is a battle – there are a certain amount of enemies, and the players score off the enemies (the objectives of this case) in order to earn the High Score and succeed. Another example is a construction project: there are materials to collect and a certain plan to follow.

Freeform Event: A freeform Event reverses some of the roles of the game. In a Freeform Event, the players come up with their own goal and the objectives that will work toward that goal. The GM still sets the High Score, and can do some minor tweaking (such as setting Difficulties), but the players alone construct the scene based around what they believe will plausibly advance the story.

There are a few special rules for Events to take into consideration.

•Teams: Players and enemies or obstacles are divided into two teams. Each team has a High Score to meet. Whoever meets it first decides how to advance.

•Turns: Players and enemies take turns taking actions. To decide the order of actions, have each of them roll a skill and use the results to accommodate them.

•Time: Events are divided into abstract Phases. Each Phase encompasses one scoring action by each of the characters currently in the event. Phases take up however much real time is appropriate to the story and the actions being taken.

EVENT COMPLICATIONS

In certain scenes, there needs to be an element that pushes the players to make decisions and feel the consequences of their actions. Normally a player can just pick a skill, tie assets, roleplay it all well and earn their score, and repeat until victorious. Complications are rules that add an element of difficulty to or alter the outcome of an event based on the skills, decisions and sometimes the luck of the players taking part in the event. Every important event should have some creative mix of these Complications (and any the GM comes up with).

Vulnerable Objectives: There are Objectives in the event that you must keep from the enemy team. The enemy team can score off the objective antagonistically, and use it to reach its own High Score before you reach yours. You need to work with your team to protect the Objective while scoring.

Running Clock: The Phases in the event are tracked, and after a certain amount of Phases, points will be added to the enemy team (if there is no physical enemy team, the points are just used to track how close the party is to failing).

Efficiency Threshold: Each Phase, the player's team or individual players must achieve a certain amount of points. If that amount of points isn't met, then points are added to an enemy team, treated the same as in Running Clock.

Invisible Objectives: There are certain things in the Event which the player has to score off of to complete the Event – you might call them hidden keys. The player scores half the amount of points if they just score idly, and they need to score a certain amount of points off their objective. If they meet the high score without scoring off the hidden objective, they do not succeed. The players can score to attempt to find clues toward their real objective, such as through the use of mental skills or certain Assets or Perks.

Enemies: Enemies are active forces that form an opposing team, and are trying to reach their own high score, which is set by the GM, to defeat the players. The GM builds the enemies like characters, with their own Skills, Assets and Perks and their own Persistence. When a player Staggers an enemy, he or she adds the enemy's Value (often expressed as an objective value) to the team's High Score. Players may need to score off enemies to succeed, or the enemies might just be there as a distraction from other objectives. The GM can adjust the challenge by giving the Enemies a different High Score than the players'.

Objective Difficulty: Each objective is tagged with a difficulty that must be overcome. When the negative points are removed, the Objective gives a one-time points bonus. The harder the objective, the more points it is worth when the Difficulty is surmounted, but the more time that will be spent working on it.

WEAVING IN EVENTS

Scoring can seem arbitrary in an event – you might come up with the problem of how to represent "climbing a wall" as a number of points out of a High Score of 100 needed to "infiltrate a castle." What happens if the player rolls only 10 points trying to climb the wall? Do they "fail"? How can they when they still scored points? How is this working toward the objective of "infiltrate a castle"? Here are a few ideas for handling these game mechanics in a cohesive narrative.

Remember that you are playing a game with a number of other players. One player scoring to climb a wall does not necessarily complete "climb a wall" and rule it out as part of an event, because other players must climb as well – and they could use the help of the player that's already completed the climb. This gives everybody involved something to do. The player that climbed the wall can now score to, in the narrative, help others do the same (this does not necessarily have to be a Support action). You can also extend the "climb a wall" part of "infiltrate a castle" over a certain number of actions by introducing complications. The player might catch a loose stone and slip a bit further down for example.

An event like "Infiltrate A Castle" should allow the players a lot of different options for its completion. When they've climbed a wall in the context of the story, and still have 80 points left to go, you can add another stage to the event – maybe there is a guard patrol, maybe the door into the castle tower is locked. Because "Infiltrate A Castle" is a large, open-ended event, the GM and players have a lot of flexibility deciding where it ends, or whether a seemingly new event (a guard patrol) is just another stage of "Infiltrate A Castle."

If you have a smaller event, such as "Search The House For Clues" then it might seem a bit trickier. You can factor in the outcome of the event. For example, the High Score might actually become a restriction. There may be tons of clues in the House, but only those that are found by the players *before* they meet the High Score are going to be used to determine the outcome of the event, and what the next event will be. So if the players only score a certain amount, and each of those actions is a clue uncovered, they have a certain amount of clues.

In more limited events, it also helps to have objectives and to have those objectives each have a Difficulty and a Point Bonus. So if the players want to know whether the Doctor did it and how, they can search the Doctor's house for weapons, poisons, or other incriminating evidence. They have an idea of what they're looking for. This idea is the Objectives you've told them, and the challenge is surmounting the Difficulty (perhaps before the Doctor gets home). Each Clue will then grant them points, and they will reach the High Score when they have the clues, rather than by idling and thinking and then only grabbing one or two clues. So if the High Score is 100, each clue might be worth 25 points.

Events can be spiced up with "window dressing." These are secondary characters or objects in the game that do not actually contribute to the score, but contribute to the narrative. You can handle grandiose scenes such as huge battles and warfare in this way. Even though there is all this chaos going around you, only the player's team is scoring points toward a High Score. Allies are fighting and dying in the narrative, but in the game there's only your high score and the enemy high score. This can help you manage huge narrative events.

One of the golden rules of the game, if it has any to begin with, is that actions should be open-ended. Don't think about success or failure as "you advance or you cannot advance." The story must always advance somehow. But failure can still be powerful. Failure should cause complications and change events. Failure should affect the narrative. Failure should hurt characters. But it should not stop the characters dead in their tracks, making them incapable of doing anything but trying again and again until they jump the gap or climb the wall. If they fail to jump the gap, maybe they fall into a pit and find a more dangerous part of the dungeon, but it also wastes their time because their goal isn't there. If they fail to climb the wall, maybe they DO climb the wall after all, just slower, allowing the enemy to catch up to them. More setbacks like that, and the enemy can fight them, or capture them. Always have a complication, but never a roadblock.

CREATING OBJECTIVES

Not all Events need to have objectives. For casual events it's okay to just set the scene ("you break into the accused doctor's house through his kitchen window and enter his main room – it is quite messy inside as you search, with books and letters cluttering the dinner table, dusty unused furniture, and plenty of old bookshelves, what do you do?") and set a High Score to determine how long the event should last. However, sometimes it is important to write down some objectives and differentiate them to create interesting events.

What you want to do is develop a sense of how many points each objective will give, what work has to be done to get them, and how they contribute overall to achieving the High Score. Objectives should be paired with a complication like running clock or efficiency threshold – so the doctor is coming back to his house and you can only hit a few objectives before you are found out, or you must search hard to find the proper clues. Objectives may also have a difficulty, particularly if they are physical objects. For example, if you're trying to keep a nuclear reactor from melting down, a Hard objective might be fixing the Cooling system, and an Easy objective might be repairing a console to call for help or warn the population or something. Each objective should have a rating of Points it gives to the team that completes it. It should give points worthy to its difficulty – so the harder objectives should grant more points, but be riskier to go after since you may waste time reducing their Difficulty before getting any points.

INJURY AND DEATH

Because of the nature of High Score, it is easy to think that Injury and Death just don't happen. True, these are unpleasant circumstances – you've poured all your efforts into this character and you don't want inconvenience. However, to have a good narrative you must suffer setbacks as well as victories. Therefore injury and death are possible in High Score, as they would be in real life.

It is easy to forget, amidst all the talk of "scoring," that the game is supposed to represent a narrative, a story with characters that can be hurt. Each of those scoring attempts by the enemy can easily have words as it can have bullets, but if they are bullets, those bullets should hurt. When a character's Persistence is scored upon, one would not be quick to call that "damage," because the character can get back up again after being Staggered. However, it is possible for a character to be hurt. The GM can choose to present injury to challenge a player, or the player can choose to become injured to add flavor to the story.

Injury occurs either when a character becomes Staggered (enemies have scored off him or her a number of points equal to his or her Persistence within the same event) or if the character's team loses an event to an enemy team (or the characters lose against an obstacle). Injury may be dealt in other ways as narratively appropriate, though not arbitrarily or commonly.

When a character is injured, he or she becomes less capable in taking action. The GM gives the character a hard penalty to certain scoring rolls, usually physical rolls. Though Injury need not be physical – penalties to social scoring rolls can represent a fallen reputation, and penalties to mental scoring rolls an injury to sanity or willpower. The penalty can be anything from a simple -2 to some Scoring rolls or -5 to all scoring rolls. The GM can apply the penalty to certain Skills in order to more accurately represent what form of damage.

You can think of an Injury as a negative form of a Perk. It applies a certain static scoring modification (in this case a penalty) to a specific Skill or to certain conditions. A Broken Arm may apply to Athletics when climbing for example.

A player who is Injured can still be Disadvantaged as normal, and can participate in events. Injury is removed when the player scores a number of points equal to an Injury Target set by the GM. Only certain narratively appropriate scoring rolls count towards the Injury Target – for example when changing bandages, when visiting a doctor, when drinking medicine. The acts of healing must be spaced out over time. The player can't simply sit and drink medicine for a whole day to heal.

Unless lethality is agreed to beforehand, Death is rare and occurs when the player wants it to. It is extremely rare when a GM will just say, "you die."

THE ENEMY TEAM

In any Event there is always an opposed High Score that the GM keeps track of. Certain conditions will add to this opposed score, until the players have filled it to the point that they fail. However, in certain events such as fight sequences, there will be an enemy team present that will take actions against you, rather than simply profiting off the consequences of your decisions.

Enemy Scoring: You can score off enemies (and they can score off you in the same way) by selecting one and rolling for score. When you roll for score on an enemy, the GM will keep track of the points scored off that enemy versus that enemy's persistence – and you must likewise do the same for yourself. Scoring off enemies is like any scoring roll. It normally represents an attack, but it could be an argument or even a romantic encounter. It depends on the context. In a fight scene, scoring off an enemy will imply an attack, but not in social scenes.

Enemy High Score: The enemy has a High Score for the event as well. It is not always the same as your own and the GM does not always have to tell you what the enemy's High Score is. Part of the challenge of an Event (or lack thereof) will come from how the GM sets the High Score for the enemy. If both the players and the enemy have the same High Score, then it becomes a race to see who can make the score first. If an enemy has a lower High Score, then it becomes a desperate battle for the players, trying to defeat a stronger opponent. If the enemy High Score is higher than the player's, then the enemy is weak and easy.

Whenever an enemy Staggers one of the players, he or she earns points for his or her team, dependant on the character value of the Staggered player.

Enemy Types: When the GM sits down to write enemy characters, they are typically divided among these three types. Generally, these are quick shortcuts for enemy design, and the GM does not necessarily have to abide by them.

•**Fodder**: Fodder enemies are quick and easy to make. Their skill rolls are always 2d6 and their Asset rolls are always 1d4. They have no Perks. Their Persistence is always 20 or 30. They have High Score equal to twice that of the players, so they are likely to lose, and present quick, simple challenges. Fodder are worth very few points when they are Staggered, and usually becoming Staggered means that the Fodder enemy has been killed or incapacitated – it does not get back up and return to the Event afterwards.

•**Elite**: Elite enemies are built just like players are, and use the same rules as players, except where an enemy rule might contradict them. To build a quick elite, you can have them roll 3d6 for all scoring rolls so you don't have to pick Skills or Assets, and then give them a few activated Perks.

•**Master**: Master type enemies could take on the whole player team by themselves. They take 2 or 3 scoring actions each round (depending on how outnumbered they are by the players) and roll 4d6 for score and 1d6 for Assets. They have Perks and their Persistence is usually quite high. When fighting a lone Master enemy, Staggering it a number of times is usually enough to earn the High Score of the Event. If the Master enemy is accompanied by Fodder or Elites, it loses its extra scoring actions and has reduced Persistence, since these rules should only be employed to allow it to battle multiple players on its own.

Non-Enemies?: Not every character is an Enemy in the narrative, even though they might follow the Enemy rules. A character can be friendly to the players but still function as some kind of obstacle to their goals. For example, trying to convince your banker friend to help you rob the bank. Your banker friend is an Enemy because he or she has his or her own High Score opposed to yours.

Enemy Success: When an enemy team wins an event, the GM chooses the fate of the players. Capture is commonplace, though if the game is brutal enough death may result from an enemy success. Injury and escape are always good narrative alternatives. If the players succeed, they get to decide the enemy's fate.

Non-Skills/Assets: An enemy might not have skills or assets written on its sheet. However, this does not mean the Players cannot use Asset Relationships or the Forcing disadvantage on the enemy. The GM should give the enemy a decent description, and a fairly consistent set of actions, so that players can narratively derive what their skills or assets *might be*, if they *had any*. Then the players should be allowed to use the rules on these enemies as normal. So for example, a group of Fodder terrorists might not have any Asset that reads Ordinary Joe Strength, but Platypus Girl should still be able to derive that they have Ordinary Joe Strength (since they aren't superpowered like herself) and she should be able to establish an Asset Relationship based off this. Likewise, if Lady Wallaby bounces around a lot, Platypus Girl should be able to use the Harass maneuver to give her the Forcing disadvantage and keep her grounded.

Here's what a quick enemy might look like, in this case Lady Wallaby. This sheet is compacted and contains only the most important info for easy reference.

Lady Wallaby (Elite): Persistence 100, Stagger Value 50, Scoring 3d6.
Wallaby Parade (Activated Advantage Perk): Lady Wallaby bounces so quickly it looks like a hundred of her are attacking!
Wallaby Boxing (Activated Maneuver Perk): Wallaby's lightning-fast kangaroo boxing allows her to add a free Harass action to any attack.
Is That You Sis? (Liability): Platypus Girl might be able to remind Lady Wallaby of who she really is in order to save her from Colonel Colonialism's brainwashing!

ADVANCEMENT

Advancement is an optional addition. Normally, you do not advance your character much in the game. Your skills, assets and perks will remain mostly the same throughout the game. But there are a few things the GM can introduce in order to add advancement to the game. Advancement gives players something to look forward to and allows the GM to create a story with a sense of progress. It's true that a story can advance quite visibly outside the numbers, but knowing you've gone from scoring 2d6 to scoring 2d8+5 is rewarding nonetheless.

The GM should decide in which way he or she wants to allow advancement. There are really only two types of advancement: adding new things and improving old things. It's the way that either of these two is accomplished that will really set the tone for the game. Here are a few ideas:

Bonus Stuff: After certain events in the game, such as acquiring new weapons and armor, you gain new permanent Assets at half the character value (or at no extra character value cost). You can earn Skills and Perks narratively as well.

Proficiency Threshold: To learn new skills or gain new perks, the character must subtract some of his or her score in events and add it towards a pool of Proficiency Points. When that pool reaches its Proficiency High Score set by the GM, the player learns a new skill or gains a new Perk – or advances an old skill.

Modifier Bonuses: As in Bonus Points but rather than gaining Assets, you just gain +2 or +4 bonuses to Score with certain Skills, Assets or Perks. Write them down beside the relevant rules item that has advanced in such a manner. So for example, you might become better at Athletics, and roll 2d4+2 instead of 2d4. Or you might gain a suit of plate armor to replace a suit of chainmail armor, and your Chainmail Armor 1d8 asset would improve to Platemail Armor 1d8+2.

Non-Score Points: Players might earn points that exist outside the High Score. You can name them thematically – item points, fame points, investigation points. These can have rewards in the narrative or be used to power Improvised Rules.

Economy: Instead of coming up with your own money system, you can just use real-world currency and prices and shopping lists, or the currency and price list of an RPG game you already own. Pretty much any economic system is perfectly compatible with High Score, so long as you abstract the consequences of owning or failing to own equipment using Event Complications. All you need are the price lists, and then to monitor how much currency you let the players obtain.

If the players advance, remember to advance the enemies a bit also! Otherwise the players may find reaching the High Score before the enemy a bit too easy.

CHARACTER RECORD

It is important for players to keep a sheet for their character. A blank paper and some pencil will suffice, or a simple text document on a computer.

•**Skills, Assets And Perks**: Write down all of your Skills and their Aptitude. Write down your Assets with a brief explanation of each, likewise with your Perks.

•**Character Value**: Keep track of your Character Value and what it entails, and be ready to make any changes to it if you acquire more Assets or Skills.

•**Persistence**: Keep track of how many points the enemy has scored off you. Write it down beside your total Persistence. The GM likewise keeps track of enemy Persistence to insure characters are Staggered.

•**Story Text**: Brainstorm some traits about your character to ground him or her in the narrative of the game. What is your character's appearance, motivation, goals? Where did your character come from and what does your character do?

Here's a very quick write-up of Platypus Girl as an example of the format. A real character should probably have a bit more effort put into than this, however.

Platypus Girl
CV 220**; Stagger Bonus** 25**; Persistence** 40 / 0

Skills: Athletics (2d8), Society (2d8), Equipment (2d8), Science (2d6), Artistry (2d4), Culture (2d4), Perception (2d4), Persuasion (2d4), Wilderness (2d4).

Assets:

•**Memories of Mom: 1d6 Moment.** Platypus Girl remembers her mother quite well, and this motivates her to do her best and cherish her mom's sacrifices.
•**Superhuman Strength: 1d8 Power.** Able to leap wide streets in a few bounds!
•**Platypus Power Hat: 1d8 Item.** The fake duckbill on this platypus fan club hat allows Platypus Girl to carry out her fearsome POWER BILL attack.
•**Charming: 1d4 Trait.** Platypus Girl has a certain pedestrian charm.

Perks:

POWER BILL [Power Hat (Asset): Circumstance Bonus]
Benefits: Whenever Platypus Girl attacks with a Grace or Tactics advantage.

The Heroine Australia Deserves [Charming (Asset): Activated Advantage]
Benefits: All enemies cower before the might and beauty of Platypus Girl!

PLAYTEST GAME

High Score is a work in progress. As such, it is important to the author that other people try it out and share their opinions. What went wrong? What went right? What could use more clarification? Though it is impossible to make everyone happy, rest assured that the author will take into consideration any constructive criticism (and some deconstructive criticism too!) and try to apply it towards making the game better and more entertaining for as many people as possible.

Share your thoughts by commenting on the author's web site or by dropping a line at the author's email account, both easily found on the cover page.

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