

Fudge Lite

Version 3.12.1

<http://www.fudgelite.com>

Fudge Ladder

- Superb
- Great
- Good
- Fair
- Mediocre
- Poor
- Terrible

Character Creation

The GM starts by providing the players with a list of traits to assign ranks on the Fudge ladder to. Some possible traits are listed below, but the GM is free to create their own list.

Setting-neutral traits:

- Athletics
- Melee combat
- Persuasion
- Ranged combat
- Stealth

Medieval fantasy traits:

- Defense against magic
- Nature (foraging, handle animal)
- Thievery (disable traps, open locks, pick pockets, sleight of hand)

Sci-fi traits:

- Psionic defense
- Starship use (piloting, gunnery, navigation)
- Technology (hacking, repair)

Traits represent the character's skill level when something significant is at stake. A character with poor driving isn't always getting into car accidents, and can probably drive without major incidents in their day to day life, but in the

middle of a car chase they would be far more likely to make significant mistakes.

Each player has a number of ranks to assign to their character's traits based on the total number of traits their character has.

2-6 traits:

1x great, 1x good, 1x fair, 1x mediocre

7-11 traits:

2x great, 2x good, 2x fair, 2x mediocre

12-16 traits:

3x great, 3x good, 3x fair, 3x mediocre

17-21 traits:

4x great, 4x good, 4x fair, 4x mediocre

This pattern can be extended for games that use more than 21 traits.

Any traits not allocated are poor.

Examples:

Marcy's character has three traits: body, mind, and soul. She assigns the great rank to body, the good rank to mind, and the fair rank to soul. The lowest rank, mediocre, is discarded because there are no more traits to assign a rank to.

Steve has a character with six traits: strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence, wisdom, and charisma. He assigns the great rank to strength, the good rank to dexterity, the fair rank to constitution, and the mediocre rank to charisma. Since there are no more ranks to assign, this leaves intelligence and wisdom ranked at poor.

Backgrounds

The GM and the player should work together to determine the character's current role in society, any previous roles they may have had, and any social or professional connections they might have. These come into play when determining what knowledge and resources the character might reasonably have access to. I recommend that the entire playing group be included in this process.

The following list contains modern-day careers, sorted into broad categories. It doesn't cover everything, but if a player is struggling to come up with something it might spark some ideas.

- Academic: includes librarians, archaeologists, scholars, professors, teachers, and other education professionals.

- Adventurer: includes professional daredevils, big-game hunters, relic hunters, explorers, extreme sports enthusiasts, field scientists, thrill-seekers, and others called to face danger for a variety of reasons.
- Athlete: includes amateur athletes of Olympic quality and professional athletes of all types, including gymnasts, weight trainers, wrestlers, boxers, martial artists, swimmers, skaters, and those who engage in any type of competitive sport.
- Blue Collar: includes factory work, food service jobs, construction, service industry jobs, taxi drivers, postal workers, and other jobs that are usually not considered to be desk jobs.
- Celebrity: anyone who, for whatever reason, has been thrust into the spotlight of the public eye. Actors, entertainers of all types, newscasters, radio and television personalities, and more fall under this occupation.
- Creative: artists of all types who fan their creative spark into a career. Illustrators, copywriters, cartoonists, graphic artists, novelists, magazine columnists, actors, sculptors, game designers, musicians, screenwriters, photographers, and web designers all fall under this occupation.
- Criminal: includes con artists, burglars, thieves, crime family soldiers, gang members, bank robbers, and other types of career criminals.
- Dilettante: usually gets their wealth from family holdings and trust funds. The typical dilettante has no job, few responsibilities, and at least one driving passion that occupies his or her day. That passion might be a charity or philanthropic foundation, an ideal or cause worth fighting for, or a lust for living a fun and carefree existence.
- Doctor: a physician (general practitioner or specialist), a surgeon, or a psychiatrist.
- Emergency Services: Rescue workers, firefighters, paramedics, hazardous material handlers, and emergency medical technicians fall under this category.
- Entrepreneur: self-employed business owner.
- Investigative: includes investigative reporters, photojournalists, private investigators, police detectives, criminologists, criminal profilers, espionage agents, and others who use their skills to gather evidence and analyze clues.
- Law Enforcement: includes uniformed police, state troopers, federal police, federal agents, SWAT team members, and military police.
- Military: covers any of the branches of the armed forces, including army, navy, air force, and marines, as well as the various elite training units such as Seals, Rangers, and Special Forces.
- Religious: Ordained clergy of all persuasions, as well as theological scholars and experts on religious studies.

- Rural: farm workers, hunters, and others who make a living in rural communities.
- Student: high school, college, or graduate school. He or she could be in a seminary, a military school, or a private institution. A college-age student should also pick a major field of study.
- Technician: scientists and engineers of all types.
- White Collar: office workers and desk jockeys, lawyers, accountants, insurance agents, bank personnel, financial advisors, tax preparers, clerks, sales personnel, real estate agents, and a variety of mid-level managers.

Magic-Using PCs

If magic (or any similar ability, such as psionics, ki abilities, superpowers, high-tech gadgets, etc.) exists in the setting and is available for player use, each player can create up to four magic spells or abilities of defined and limited scope (e.g. "fireball" or "talk to animals") that their character can cast or use. All abilities need to be approved by the GM (and possibly the rest of the players, depending on the group expectations) before they are used.

When creating magic abilities, there should always be a way for somebody to defend against it. A character shouldn't be able to, for example, fill somebody's lungs with concrete (because how do you defend against that?), or cut through literally anything, or sift through peoples' thoughts without them knowing, or attack with pinpoint accuracy from a mile away. Success shouldn't always be a foregone conclusion. The existence of a defense against magic trait helps with this, but it's still an important principle to keep in mind.

If a magic ability would be so powerful or useful that the GM would have trouble meaningfully challenging the PC, that could be mitigated by giving it one or more limitation and/or flaw. Some examples:

- It costs a finite resource, such as mana, energy points, or physical components*.
- It causes fatigue or mental strain, weakening the PC if overused*.
- There is a social stigma or legal restriction against it. Using it in front of others could cause you to be ostracized or arrested.
- It can only be used in a certain environment or context.
- There is a risk of corruption. Prolonged use of the power leads to negative personality changes that aren't easily removed.*
- It can be nullified by a certain spell, technology, material, or element.

The limitations/flaws marked with asterisks can be tracked using the optional rules for condition tracks written later in the rules.

If the player struggles to come up with magic abilities, they could draw inspiration from what they know, or what they can invent, about their character. Does their magic relate to a present or past occupation? Is it thematically relevant to their personality? How did they obtain their magic? Was it learned? Inherited as a bloodline ability? Did it spontaneously occur due to some stressful or dangerous situation?

If the magic was learned, who taught them and why? What were they expected to do with the magic once they learned it? If it was inherited, what is significant about their parent or parents, extended family, and/or ancestors? If it spontaneously occurred, was it triggered by a stressful or dangerous situation? If so, how did that situation influence the magic obtained? These questions are optional, but the answers might help the player determine their magic abilities.

Injury Track

Each PC has an injury track that looks like this:

Minor injury [][]

Serious injury [][]

The player marks off a box of damage whenever the GM tells them to.

Gameplay

Trait Checks

When the GM calls for a trait check the player rolls four Fudge dice (or Fate dice; they're the same thing.) These are 6-sided dice with two "+" sides, two "-" sides, and two blank sides each. 4dF means four Fudge dice are rolled, for a result from -4 to +4.

The player starts with the appropriate trait on their character sheet and rolls 4dF, shifting the result up or down the Fudge ladder by the rolled amount. The player compares the result to the GM-decided difficulty level, or to an opponent's relevant trait plus or minus an optional GM-decided modifier. A tie or better is considered a successful roll, and anything worse is considered a failed roll.

Example: a PC with fair athletics attempts to jump over a small river. The GM decides that the difficulty to do this would be great, which is two levels higher than fair, so the player would need to roll a +2 or better to succeed.

Success and failure at a trait check generally correspond to in-game success or failure, but not always. In any event, the results of a failed roll are always worse than they would have been if the roll had succeeded.

The results of a trait check can't go above superb or below terrible, no matter how well or how poorly the player rolled.

If a player doesn't own any Fudge dice they can roll 4d6 instead, treating the result of 1 or 2 on a die as a minus, 3 or 4 as a blank, and 5 or 6 as a plus. Thus, a roll of 1, 1, 2, 5 would be equivalent to [-][-][-][+], which adds up to -2.

Bonuses and penalties

At any time the GM may assign a bonus and/or a penalty to a player's roll based on the fictional situation. +1 is a good bonus, +2 is a very good bonus, and +3 is a very rare, very large bonus. Penalties work the same way with negative modifiers. Only the single largest bonus and the single largest penalty apply to any given roll.

Using Magic

When a player casts a spell or uses a magic ability, if a trait check is required, they roll using the nearest relevant trait. For example, athletics could do double-duty as a player's flight trait, and ranged combat could cover eye-blasts.

The base difficulty of the trait check uses the following spell difficulty guidelines, adapted (with permission) from [Daneel's Simpler Magic System for Mini Six](#). The difficulty can be further modified by any external advantages and/or disadvantages. ("You have sure footing and there's nothing distracting you, but he's actively dodging your fireball, which gives you a 1-point penalty to your roll at that distance.")

Poor, Mediocre:

Short range (touch)

Short duration (one action)

Single target (one creature/object)

Examples: Cantrips/Orisons, See Auras, Speak Languages, Burning Touch

Fair, Good:

Medium range (thrown rock)

Medium duration (several actions)

Medium area (several people)

Examples: Charm People, Mystic Armor, Fire Ball, Polymorph

Great, Superb:

Long range (sight)

Long duration (entire scene/encounter)

Large area (crowd)

Examples: Resurrection, Group Teleport, Earthquake, Anti-magic Zone

The GM may increase the difficulty if the spell being cast meets more than one criterion of a spell of that level. A spell that has long range, long duration, and targets a large area may be more difficult to cast than a spell that has long range but short duration and a single target.

Each spell cannot inflict more than one injury against an opponent capable of defending themselves.

A failed spellcasting roll usually means that something bad happens. The exact consequences are determined by the GM.

Dealing With Injuries

Minor injuries go away when anybody (even the character themselves) spends a few minutes tending to the character's injuries. This generally cannot be done during combat because it requires no distractions and takes longer than combat does.

Serious injuries require the character to spend a significant amount of time recovering, but once they do they get to clear all of their injuries.

When a PC's last injury box is marked off they are incapacitated and can no longer meaningfully contribute to the scene. In this state they cannot clear their own minor injuries, but another character can revive them by tending to their wounds for a few minutes and clearing their minor injuries. If the entire party is incapacitated they revive with their minor injuries cleared at a time and place of the GM's choosing.

The GM is encouraged (but not required) to use this opportunity to show an unpleasant truth or otherwise upset the status quo. Perhaps the PCs were captured by enemies, or their equipment was broken or lost, or their enemy achieved their goal, or an NPC ally died. Perhaps their street cred took a severe hit, and people who used to help them unconditionally now demand a price for their services. Perhaps another party completed the task and got the rewards instead. Perhaps a more powerful character intervened, and now they want the party to do them a favor in return. Or perhaps the PCs just got really lucky and a good samaritan helped them recover.

Before the game starts, the GM and the players should determine what (if any) situations could cause a PC to die. Some possible decisions:

- Any time their last injury is marked off. This would completely replace the incapacitation rules.

- When their last injury is marked off and the player decides to end their character.
- When their last injury is marked off in a fight against a narratively-significant opponent.
- Never; death is not a possible consequence for combat failures.
- In addition to any of the above, when the GM warns the player that a specific action or failed trait check will cause their character's death, and the player decides to take the action anyways or fails the trait check.

Character Advancement

Each player gets 1 XP at the end of each session. The player can spend 4 XP to advance a trait by 1 level or gain a new spell/magic ability (if magic is available to the PCs). Traits cannot go above superb.

Gamemastering

Rule Zero

None of the rules listed anywhere in this document are meant to be restrictive, prohibitive, or mandatory. As long as everybody at the table is happy with the result, the GM is free to fold, spindle, and mutilate the rules to their heart's content.

Session Zero

Before any in-character gameplay the GM and the players should get together to make sure that everybody is on the same page regarding the gameplay experience. This can be done as a separate session or at the beginning of the first session.

Possible Topics of Discussion

- Game genre (sci-fi, medieval fantasy, etc.) and focus (what is the game *about*?)
- What tone(s) would we like for the game? (e.g. serious, silly, dark, lighthearted, etc.) Are there any tones we would like to *avoid*?
- What expectations do we have of each other?
- Should the players be involved in the worldbuilding?
- Should PCs be able to die? If so, under what circumstances?
- Is conflict between PCs okay? If so, under what circumstances?
- Is there anything that should be handled off-screen or completely avoided? For example: detailed violence, torture, sexual content, sexual assault, dark themes, or any player anxieties or phobias.
- Safety tools, such as the [X-card](#) and/or [Lines and Veils](#).

- Is alcohol allowed at the table?
- How long will each session last?
- Are phones allowed at the table?

Session zero can also be used to determine and/or share setting details, such as types of magic, prominent NPC factions, etc.

Player Traits

If the GM creates their own PC trait list, no trait should be obviously more or less useful than any of the other traits. If a trait is too specific, or the setting won't naturally challenge that trait, the GM should alter it to be more broadly applicable or just remove it. Conversely, if a trait would be too useful compared to the other traits the GM should split it into narrower traits.

The default trait lists do not contain any knowledge or perception traits. This is by design. The GM is supposed to be free with any information that the player characters could reasonably have.

PC Magic

Before the game starts it is strongly recommended that the GM have a discussion with each of the players to determine what they can and can't do with their magical abilities, how somebody might defend against them, what traits are likely to be used for what magic abilities, and likely consequences for failure of each ability.

A failed magical trait check may have negative consequences based on the in-game situation. Here are some possible contextual consequences for a failed magical trait check:

- The spellcaster draws unwanted attention or is put in a difficult situation.
- The spell works but it has an unexpected side effect.
- The spell is miscast and does something other than its intended effect.
- The spell targets the wrong person or thing.
- The spell works *too* well.
- The spell can only succeed if the caster takes an injury.
- The spell fails and the caster takes an injury from the backlash.

In general, the more powerful the spell that was attempted, the worse the consequences should be for failing.

Running the Game

The core gameplay loop goes back and forth between the GM describing the situation and one of the players saying what they do (sometimes requiring a trait check).

When the GM gets to a place in their description where one or more players could make a meaningful decision the GM should find out what, if anything, they do. If a PC is just walking down a path there's no meaningful decision to be made, because there's no reason for the PC to do anything other than keep walking.

The GM finding out what a PC does often takes the form of the direct question "What do you do?" asked to a player or a group of players, but it doesn't have to be phrased like that. As long as the GM finds out what a PC does, it doesn't matter what phrasing (if any) the GM uses.

The GM should not jump straight to making something bad happen if at least one PC could reasonably have a chance to prevent or mitigate it. In that case, the GM should show the player(s) the threat first, then find out what at least one of them does before any negative consequences happen. If the PC(s) would have no chance to prevent or mitigate the bad thing, or if they had the chance but failed to do so, the GM can just make the bad thing happen.

If a player is overwhelmed by the amount of freedom their character has and struggles to decide what they do, the GM can help by giving them two or three options to choose from and making it clear that they can do something else if they want to. Relatedly, if the player is stuck trying to determine the best choice, the GM can help by making it clear what the likely outcomes of each choice will be.

The Spotlight

The spotlight is a metaphor for whichever player gets to act at the moment. One of the GM's jobs is to move the spotlight from person to person, making sure that everybody gets a reasonable amount of time to act before moving the spotlight to somebody else. This is not the same thing as traditional gameplay turns; it's more like taking turns in a conversation. Players can go in any order and can jump into the situation whenever they wish to, as long as the fictional situation supports it and it wouldn't be rude to anybody else.

When the GM moves the spotlight onto a player the GM should resolve that player's actions and situation up to a satisfactory point, then move the spotlight to someone else. This may take a single action or several actions (or even longer, if the situation calls for it). The GM can move the spotlight at any time, even if it would leave the player on a cliffhanger. There's no exact rule for how long the spotlight should stay on one player, but the goal is for every player to feel like they got a fair and satisfactory amount of time to contribute to the game.

GM Preparation

The GM is free to do as much or as little planning as they wish, though anything that isn't planned ahead of time will need to be improvised in the moment.

Here are three possible approaches to GM preparation. None of them are inherently better or worse, it's just a question of what works best for the GM and their players, and that's something the GM will probably learn from experience. Tools marked with an asterisk can be found later, in the optional section of the rules.

Low/no prep. The GM mostly improvises situations. Useful tools: GM moves*, incorporating player ideas*. Recommended reading: [the Spouting Lore blog article "My recipe for starting adventures"](#)

Moderate prep. The GM prepares world elements but not a plot. The GM may choose to plan what certain NPCs will do if the PCs don't interfere. Recommended reading: [the Alexandrian blog article "Don't Prep Plots"](#)

High prep. The GM prepares world elements and a plot. Useful tools: don't require rolls for plot-critical actions, and/or make the rolls for those actions determine between moderate success and great success*.

Even if the GM is running the game with a high prep style, they should still allow the players to solve problems in ways the GM didn't expect or didn't plan for. If this would take the plot in a different direction the GM should generally allow this, since players tend to have more enjoyment when their decisions aren't negated. If the GM would struggle to run the game in this new direction, or if it would go against what the players agreed to at session zero, the GM may need to pause the game and have an out of character conversation with the players about the direction the game is going.

Relatedly, the GM should never be so wedded to their preparation that it makes the game less enjoyable for the players. For example, if the GM plans out a jail cell that is so secure that escape is effectively impossible, and the PCs are isolated there indefinitely, that's probably not going to be fun for the players because they would be unable to do anything significant. Instead, the GM should alter the prepared material behind the scenes and give the PCs opportunities to escape or do other significant things.

Trait Checks

The GM should generally only call for a trait check when a player attempts to do something significant and the GM isn't certain whether or not they would succeed. If there's nothing important at stake, or the GM already knows whether the player would succeed or not, the GM shouldn't make the player roll dice.

(If the GM and/or a player want the player to roll dice for trivial actions, just for fun, that's fine too. The GM should run the game however works best for them and their players.)

If the GM is uncertain of the difficulty of the trait check they can set it to fair or to the level of the opponent's relevant trait with no modifiers.

Whether or not a trait check succeeds, it should always change the situation. There should never be a situation where the GM says, "Things are the same as they were before the roll." This is mainly to avoid a situation where a player rolls dice until they succeed. Sometimes a situation will naturally lend itself to meaningful consequences for both success and failure. Other times, either success or failure (usually failure) wouldn't naturally cause the situation to change. In this case the GM should either come up with consequences on the fly or skip the trait check.

For example, if a player attempts to pick a lock before guards show up, that's a situation where both success and failure would obviously change the situation. If the player succeeds, they get the lock open. If they fail, the guards show up. However, if the player attempts to pick a lock without any obvious time limit, the GM could either decide the outcome without requiring a trait check, or the GM could call for a trait check and decide that a failed trait check means that guards unexpectedly show up, or that the player triggered a trap or alarm, or some other less than ideal outcome.

The GM should not make a player roll to determine what their character knows or perceives. If it's information their character could reasonably have, or if the PC did the necessary work to obtain the information, the GM should give it to them without requiring any rolls. This is to ensure that players don't get stuck, unable to proceed, if they fail to obtain necessary information.

If the GM is uncertain whether a player character should be able to know or perceive something, the GM should err on the side of giving them too much information rather than not enough. Don't withhold information from the players without a good reason.

In general, when a player fails a trait check, the GM should frame it as something that happened because the PC was up against strong opposition or a tough challenge, not because they were incompetent. This doesn't apply if the player intentionally created an incompetent character, or if the game is meant to not be serious.

Injuries

The GM should generally only assign a single wound to the PC per injury source, starting with minor injuries and advancing to major injuries once the

minor slots are full. However, an enormous threat, such as being hit by a train or falling off a tall building, may deserve more than one injury and/or jumping straight to major injuries. In this case, the GM should explicitly warn the player, out of character, that this will happen before the player takes action that could trigger such heavy damage.

It's also possible that the damage is so severe that the PC will die or become incapacitated if it is inflicted on them. Again, the GM should explicitly warn the player of this before the player takes any action that might trigger the damage.

Combat

There is no such thing as a predetermined turn order in Fudge Lite. Combat is almost exactly the same as the rest of gameplay: the GM moves the spotlight between players, describes situations, finds out what players do, and calls for trait checks when appropriate.

When a player fails a roll the GM decides what happens as a result. This may include damage but doesn't have to. This is true whether or not the PC is in combat.

Injuries only apply to NPCs in situations where the NPC is able to respond to the threat. If an NPC is disabled or caught unaware they can be knocked out or killed regardless of their injury track. Conversely, if an enemy is too well-protected fictionally, the player cannot roll to deal damage to them. A large dragon or a military tank won't be injured by an average person punching them, no matter how well the player rolls.

Example Combat

The GM in this example is running a medieval fantasy game about exploring dungeons, killing monsters, and retrieving treasure. A warg is a larger, evil version of a wolf.

GM: The cultist waves his staff ominously over the altar, but the more immediate threat are his two warg rider cronies who are rapidly approaching you. The goblins have wicked curved blades and they cry for your blood. How do you react to their charge?

Player: I cast a flash cantrip to blind them.

GM: I'm gonna say casting flash in this context requires a mediocre intelligence roll. What's your intelligence?

Player: Mediocre.

GM: Okay, so you just need to roll 0 or higher on the Fudge dice.

The player rolls -1.

GM: Mediocre minus one level is poor. Unfortunately, you lose your concentration and the spell fizzles out on you. One of the warg-riders charges at you, trying to knock you down. There's no time to cast another spell, what do you do?

Player: I jump out of the way!

GM: Dexterity check.

The player rolls -3.

Player: Mediocre dexterity minus three is... one level below terrible?

GM: Just terrible. It doesn't go below that. Okay, so you try to get out of the path of the warg, but it's just too fast for you. The warg knocks you to the ground and tramples on you as it passes. Mark off an injury.

Player: That was my last minor injury. Freaking hell.

GM: You're on the ground and the warg appears to be looping around for another pass. What do you do now?

Player: I get up and try to run to safer area. You said the cavern had three exits? Which one is closest?

GM: That would be the one you came from.

Player: Okay, I make a break for it.

GM: Roll your dexterity. Success means you make it out of the cavern and the goblin gives up the chase, failure means he catches up with you. The difficulty is fair.

The player rolls -1.

GM: Mediocre dexterity minus one is poor. You don't even get halfway there before the warg knocks you to the ground again.

Player: *whimpers* I'm gonna die.

GM: Yeah, maybe. You feel the teeth of the warg clamping around your arm, trying to get tear through your leather armor. What do you do?

Player: It's latched onto my arm?

GM: Yeah.

Player: I draw my dagger and stab it into the warg's eye. What do I roll for that?

GM: There's no need for a roll, since there's nothing keeping you from just doing it. You drive your dagger into the eye socket of the warg, who seizes up and drops to the ground, dead. [The warg only had 1 injury box.] The goblin that was riding it makes a high, keening noise of grief. He looks at you with a wild fury in his eyes, and the dead warg's jaw is still clamped on your arm. What do you do?

NPCs

NPCs have an injury track and any traits the GM wants them to have. Traits that don't fit on the Fudge ladder are called gifts (when positive) and faults (when negative). NPCs also have behaviors that can be used for GM inspiration.

NPCs that aren't supposed to be serious obstacles to the PCs should only have 1 or 2 boxes in their injury tracks. NPCs with more narrative importance can have larger injury tracks, up to the size of a PC's.

Example NPCs

Christine Cassiopeia

Setting: Modern-day upper-class.

Physical: Terrible

Social conflict: Superb

Gift: Super-rich.

Fault: A super-bitch.

Behavior: Make snide comments about somebody else's outfit. Let your flunkies take care of things.

Troll

Setting: Medieval fantasy.

Description: Big. Dumb. Strong.

Physical: Great

Gift: Quick regeneration. On a failed player roll the troll may heal an injury.

-and/or-

Gift: Slow regeneration. The troll comes back to life a certain amount of time after dying (minutes, hours, days), eventually coming back to full health. Limbs regenerate, etc.

Fault: Pretty dumb.

Fault: Fire attacks and acid attacks both permanently deal damage to the troll.

Fault (optional): Permanently turns to stone in sunlight.

Behavior: Grab things, pick them up, and smash them against other things. Do the same thing to people.

Giant Spider

Settings: Medieval fantasy or horror.

Body: Great

Gift: Paralyzing venom in fangs.

Gift: Webspinning.

Behavior: Create sticky webs to catch prey, inject a paralytic venom with your fangs, then wrap your prey in a cocoon before sucking their fluids out.

Alternatively, the spider may store the cocooned character for later consumption. It depends on how lethal of a game the GM is running.

Brigand

Setting: Medieval fantasy.

Combat: Good

Behavior: Loot, pillage, and plunder. Obey your leader. Attack the innocent. Take by force.

Brigand Leader

Setting: Medieval fantasy.

Combat: Great

Leadership: Great

Behavior: Command your followers. Reward obedience. Crush any challenges to your authority. Boast recklessly.

Pyromaniac Fire Mage

Setting: Medieval fantasy.

Magical combat: Great

Physical combat: Mediocre

Gift: Spellcasting. Spells known: Fireball, Flamethrower.

Gift: Immunity to his own flames.

-OR-

Gift: Immunity to all flames

Behavior: Burn all the things! If anybody tries to stop you, burn them as well!

Psionic Monk

Setting: Space opera.

Combat: Great

Gift: Psionist. Psionic abilities: Telepathy/empathy, Telekinesis, Physical Augmentation (acrobatic jumps, fast movement), Suggestion.

Gift: Plasma Sword.

Behavior: Defend the weak. Destroy the wicked. Be at peace in all your actions.

Fallen Psionic Monk

Setting: Space opera.

Combat: Great

Gift: Psionist. Psionic abilities: Telepathy/empathy, Telekinesis, Physical Augmentation (acrobatic jumps, fast movement), Lightning.

Gift: Plasma Sword.

Behavior: Let your anger and hatred flow through you. Crush your enemies. Show no mercy.

Mooks (guards, stormtroopers, minions, cultists, etc.)

Setting: Any action setting.

Combat: Mediocre

Behavior: Mob the heroes, die in droves.

Alternative Rules and Extra Rules

Everything from here onward is completely optional. If you're happy with the rules as presented, you can stop reading and not miss anything. However, if you wish to alter the gameplay mechanics of Fudge Lite, this section is full of optional and alternative rules that you can use in your game.

Knowledge/Perception Traits

If the GM wishes to run a game with more traditional knowledge and perception traits, they can add these at character creation:

Setting-neutral traits:

- Physical awareness
- Social awareness

Medieval fantasy traits:

- Cultural knowledge (history, religion, customs, etc.)
- Dungeoneering (knowledge of dungeon environments)
- Magic lore
- Nature (plant and animal knowledge, navigation and tracking) (combine with the existing Nature trait)

Sci-fi traits:

- Galactic knowledge (planetary customs, history, xenobiology, etc.)
- Psionic lore

"How" Traits

Instead of creating traits based on what the player character can do in the fictional world ("what" traits), the GM could create traits based on how the player character accomplishes things ("how" traits), such as Fate Accelerated's approaches of careful, clever, flashy, forceful, quick, and sneaky.

"What" traits are a good choice if you want the character traits to represent specific abilities that exist within the game's reality. "How" traits are a good choice if you care more about the player helping to build the narrative by describing (or at least determining) the manner in which they act every time they roll the dice.

Note that players using "how" traits may try to use their best trait for everything. That's fine, as long as they can justify the trait by describing their character taking appropriate action, and as long as that action makes sense for the trait used. A player can't sneakily do something flashy.

Trading Traits

At character creation, after the player has assigned trait levels to their traits, they may reduce one or more traits to increase one or more other traits on a one-to-one basis. The traits cannot be increased above great or reduced below poor. The player cannot use unspent trait levels for this.

Gifts and Faults

At character creation the players and the GM can collaborate to determine positive traits for the PCs that don't fit on the Fudge ladder (gifts) and/or negative traits that don't fit on the Fudge ladder (faults).

Faults should not be used as an excuse to cause problems for the rest of the table in-game, unless everybody is okay with it out of character. A PC with kleptomania shouldn't steal from another PC unless their player agrees to it or has explicitly stated that they're okay with PvP conflict of that nature. "Lone wolf who doesn't get along well with others" would probably be a poor choice for a fault, unless the player can come up with a really good reason why it won't cause problems for the rest of the group (and the rest of the group agrees).

A player who chooses gifts and/or faults for their character will probably want them to be relevant to the game at some point, so the GM should occasionally put together a situation where the player can invoke one of their gifts or faults in a satisfying way. If the GM is using GM moves (described in a later section), appropriate GM moves for this might be "Let a player show off a gift" and "Let a player show off a fault".

Subjective Character Creation

Instead of assigning a specific number of trait levels to the character, the player can work with the GM to develop their character concept. Then the player and the GM use their understanding of the character to rank any traits that can be ranked on the Fudge ladder.

Here are some questions that the GM can ask to help develop the PC. They are just examples, though, so don't feel like you need to follow the list. The goal is just to get a feel for who the character is and what they do.

- What is a goal the character has, or something they desire?

- What are they good at?
- What aren't they good at?
- How do they make a living?
- Do they have any friends or contacts?
- Do they have any enemies?
- What is their relationship to the rest of the PCs?

Alternative Character Creation (Risus)

Instead of traits a player character can be defined by cliches, broad collections of behaviors and abilities. Some sources of cliches are:

- a character's job (actor, fast food worker, etc.)
- what would be a character class in another system (fighter, mage, hacker, etc.)
- their role in society (criminal, little old lady, etc.)
- something they're good at or interested in (painter, singer, amateur detective, etc.)
- something in their past (disgraced politician, retired assassin, etc.)

These categories are meant as examples, not requirements. Players should feel free to come up with cliches that don't necessarily map to any of these categories.

When building their character the player has 10 levels to spend on their cliches. All cliches start at poor, and each increase costs one level. The player can have as many cliches as they can afford. Cliches cannot go above Great at character creation.

Cliches should be defined broadly enough that they could reasonably come up in a game, but not so broadly that they are always applicable (so "good at everything" would be a bad choice for a cliche).

The GM and each player should discuss that player's cliches to make sure that they're in rough agreement about what sorts of skills and abilities would fall under that player's chosen cliches.

Player characters should be checked by the GM (and possibly the rest of the players, depending on the group's expectations) before the game. The player should work with the GM or the group to rework any cliche that is too broad or narrow or doesn't fit the setting or genre.

PC Magic Abilities

The GM can set the quantity of player character magic abilities at character creation to be higher or lower than the default of four.

Instead of letting the PCs start with 4 specific magic abilities, the GM could instead allow any player to take a single, broader ability, such as "pyromancer", "illusionist", "gadgeteer", etc. Be aware that this runs the risk of player abilities being broad enough that they could almost always apply as a solution to the situation. ("Fortunately, I just happen to have some shark repellent spray in my gadget belt.")

Superhuman Traits

The Fudge ladder is normally capped at superb, but if the GM wants the results of a player's roll to have effects above superb, or if a player or the GM wants to give a character traits above superb, there is the superhuman tier.

- Superb superhuman
- Great superhuman
- Good superhuman
- Fair superhuman
- Superb
- Great
- Good
- Fair
- Mediocre
- Poor
- Terrible

Example NPCs With Superhuman Traits

Huai Dan

Setting: Xianxia (fantasy China, but with assholes everywhere).

Description: A qi cultivator.

Social: Fair

Combat: Fair superhuman

Gift: Capable of superhuman feats.

Fault: Has a very thin skin when it comes to perceived disrespect.

Behavior: Avenge any insults. Stand proud and boastful, even in front of a stronger foe. Steal cultivation resources from others.

Killbot 9000

Setting: Survival horror/action.

Description: Human flesh over a robot body. Easily capable of passing for human.

Physical: Good superhuman

Combat: Fair

Gift: Virtually indestructible robot body.

Fault: Vulnerable to incredibly high pressures or temperatures.

Behavior: Track down and try to kill one specific human.

Expanded Guidelines for Superhuman Magic

Poor, Mediocre:

Short range (touch)

Short duration (one action)

Single target (one creature/object)

Healing a minor injury

Examples: Cantrips/Orisons, See Auras, Speak Languages, Burning Touch

Fair, Good:

Medium range (thrown rock)

Medium duration (several actions)

Medium area (several people)

Healing a serious injury

Examples: Charm People, Mystic Armor, Fire Ball, Polymorph

Great, Superb, Fair Superhuman:

Long range (sight)

Long duration (entire scene/encounter)

Large area (crowd)

Examples: Resurrection, Group Teleport, Earthquake, Anti-magic Zone

Good Superhuman, Great Superhuman, Superb Superhuman:

Any range, duration, area & effect

Examples: Wish, Miracle

Alternatives to Fudge Dice

Custom Fudge Dice

If the player(s) don't have access to Fudge/Fate dice they can make custom dice by taking white 6-sided dice, coloring the die faces with colored permanent markers (two positive, two neutral, and two negative), letting them dry, and then sealing the color in with clear nail polish.

1d6 Minus 1d6

Instead of 4dF, the player(s) could roll 1d6 minus 1d6, with the positive and negative dice determined ahead of time. The probability isn't exactly the same,

but it's close. It will occasionally return a result of -5 or +5 (2.78% chance of each,) and the results are a little more swingy.

A way to do 1d6 minus 1d6 without subtraction is as follows:

Assign one d6 to be positive and one to be negative. Roll them both. Whichever die shows the smaller value, use that and discard the other. If the dice are tied, the result is zero.

d66 Table

Another option is rolling two six-sided dice on this table. The table is diagonally symmetrical, so it doesn't matter which side corresponds to which die.

	1:	2:	3:	4:	5:	6:
1:	-4	-3	-2	-2	-1	0
2:	-3	-1	-1	-1	0	1
3:	-2	-1	0	0	1	2
4:	-2	-1	0	0	1	2
5:	-1	0	1	1	1	3
6:	0	1	2	2	3	4

The biggest difference between this table and 4dF is that -4 and 4 are both slightly more likely to occur (1/36 instead of 1/81, or a difference of about 1.5 percentage points each).

3d6 table

Roll	3-4	5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16	17-18
Result	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

Each result on this table is within roughly 2 percentage points of the equivalent 4dF result.

1d100 table

Roll	01	02-06	07-18	19-38	39-62	63-82	83-94	95-99	00
Result	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

Each result on this table is within roughly half a percentage point of the equivalent 4dF result.

Fudge Points

The GM may give the PCs 1-5 Fudge points to start the game with. The GM should establish which of these uses the player may spend Fudge points on:

- Reroll a trait check.
- Automatically succeed at any unopposed roll of Superb or lower difficulty.
- Alter a roll by 1.
- Negate an injury when it happens.
- Convert a failure to a success.
- Get a +4 result without rolling.
- Ensure a favorable coincidence in the world around them.

If using Fudge points, the GM will need to answer the following questions:

- Will the players get Fudge points at the beginning of each session?
- If so, will it be up to a maximum or will there be a flat amount given?
- Can the players earn Fudge points in-game? If so, how?

Both Fudge points and XP can be used as a reward to encourage specific behavior from PCs. Fudge points should be awarded when the GM wants to give the players one-time out-of-character bonuses, while XP should be awarded when the GM wants to represent long-term in-character character improvement. It's the difference between character luck (Fudge points) and character skill (XP).

The GM should not make the players choose between spending Fudge points and saving XP. Having to trade a permanent asset for a temporary boost can be deeply unpleasant to some players, and it can lead to imbalanced characters later on.

Handling Missing Traits

If the GM wishes to call for a trait check, but none of the PCs' traits would fit the situation, they can create a temporary trait for the player to roll. Generally this will range from fair, for traits that virtually everybody has to some extent, to terrible, for a trait the PC is very unlikely to have any skill at. However, if it seems like the player character would reasonably have a different trait level, based on their established backstory and/or existing traits, the GM can set the trait to that level instead. If it seems like the trait will come up again in the future, the temporary trait can be made permanent for future use and character advancement.

Alternatives to Succeed/Fail Trait Checks

Normally the in-game results of a trait check are either success or failure, but sometimes it makes sense for a trait check to have different outcomes. Here are some alternative trait check outcomes and some situations in which it might make sense for the GM to use them.

If a player only barely fails a roll, or if the GM wants the player to accomplish something even though they failed the roll, the GM can (but doesn't have to) let them succeed at a cost. The outcome is still worse than it would have been if the player succeeded at the roll, but the player accomplishes their goal.

A GM running a tightly-planned one-shot session might include trait checks for plot-critical actions where failing the roll is impossible and the outcomes are either "success" or "major success". This could be done to ensure that the players don't get sidetracked and can complete the game within the allotted time.

If a PC is up against a challenge they have no hope of overcoming, the GM might have them roll between failure and major failure. If the possible outcomes are slightly better, the GM might make the roll determine between success at a cost and failure. The player should be explicitly informed out of character of the impossibility of complete success before their character takes an action that would trigger such a die roll.

Examples:

Success/failure: "Your leap takes you over the river safely, landing on the other side" vs "You fall short and land in the river."

Success/success at a cost: "You lift the heavy portcullis" vs "You lift the heavy portcullis, but not before pulling a muscle. Mark off an injury."

Success/major success: "You spot the tracks. They're leading out of town." vs "...and you recognize them as belonging to imps. They don't usually travel far from their home base, so either they're based somewhere close or something has pushed them out of their usual territory."

Failure/major failure: "You succeeded at the athletics roll, so your fall off the skyscraper *only* deals 4 injuries at once to you, incapacitating you," vs "Splat. You're dead."

Success at a cost/failure: "You trade blows with the enemy, taking an injury but dealing one as well" vs "You're overpowered by the enemy and take a blow. Mark off an injury."

And, of course, the GM always has the freedom to say a PC's action succeeded or failed without requiring a trait check. This is usually for situations where the fictional situation is so clear that it's obvious what would happen, or for situations where the player needs to succeed for the game to move forward.

Whenever a roll doesn't have the usual "success/failure" outcomes it's usually a good idea for the GM to let the player know what the stakes are before they roll

the dice. Failure to communicate this could lead to players being confused or frustrated when the outcome isn't what they expected.

NPC Trait Checks

By default the GM just decides whether or not an unopposed NPC accomplishes something, and NPC opposition to a PC is just a static difficulty rating the player rolls against. However, if the GM wishes to roll dice themselves they could assign NPCs traits on the Fudge ladder and roll 4dF trait checks for them as appropriate. The requirements for rolling dice for an NPC are the same as they are for a PC: they should only be done in situations where it isn't obvious whether the character would succeed or not and there are significant outcomes for both failure and success.

If an NPC tries something unopposed the GM can roll 4dF with the NPC's relevant trait against a GM-determined difficulty level.

If an NPC opposes a PC the GM can roll 4dF with trait for the NPC against the player's 4dF with trait.

Smaller Bonuses and Penalties

If the GM wishes to apply a bonus or penalty less than one level they may use advantage dice or disadvantage dice. These dice are colored differently and replace regular Fudge dice when they are rolled. The player ignores any minus result on an advantage die and ignores any plus result on a disadvantage die. The two die types cancel each other out, so a player will never roll an advantage die and a disadvantage die in the same roll.

A (dis)advantage die is worth roughly 1/3rd of a Fudge rank, and three or more (dis)advantages are converted to a single +/-1 modifier. Here are some rough guidelines for GMs:

- +/-3 modifier: an overwhelming modifier
- +/-2 modifier: a very significant modifier
- +/-1 modifier: a significant modifier
- 2 levels of (dis)advantage: a moderate modifier
- 1 level of (dis)advantage: a minor modifier

Incorporating Player Ideas

Traditional RPGs generally have a clear line between the GM role and the player role. The player determines what their character does, says, thinks and feels, and the GM determines everything else. However, it may be more enjoyable if the GM shares some of the creative responsibility with the players. One of the

ways the GM can do this is by asserting something about the world and asking a player to explain or elaborate on it. For example:

"Alice, the mayor is wearing something that marks him as a member of the Cult of Kathoon. What is it and how do you know that?"

"Bob, you barely escaped this city with your life the last time you were here. Why was that?"

"Charlie, you helped Bob escape the city. Who here still holds a grudge over that?"

Before doing this, though, the GM should check with the players to determine if this is something they would enjoy, since some players prefer a more traditional split of creative control. Session zero would be an excellent time to check this.

Let a Die Decide

Sometimes the GM will need to determine what happens in a situation that the players have no control over. One way of doing this would be for the GM to let a die decide.

To do this, the GM picks a single die of arbitrary size, decides what the possible outcomes are and which results would lead to those outcomes, and rolls the die. For example, the GM might decide that there's a 2 in 6 chance on a d6 that a monster shows up, or they might decide there's an 80% chance on a d100 that an NPC triggers a player's trap, or they might use a single Fudge die to determine an NPC's initial disposition (positive, neutral, or negative).

GM Moves

A GM move is just a broad description of something the GM can do. Here's a list of GM moves that can apply to most games:

- Use an NPC's default behavior
- Reveal an unwelcome truth
- Announce future badness
- Offer an opportunity, with or without cost
- Put a character in a spot
- Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask
- Inflict an injury

Whenever the GM isn't sure what should happen next they can reference the list of GM moves, picking one that would make sense for the situation and making it happen. GM moves are especially useful in low-prep games, where the GM has to improvise rather heavily.

The GM is free to alter or even replace the list to fit their desired gameplay experience. For example, here is a set of GM moves I wrote for a slice of life, non-combat, low-conflict setting I ran for my mom:

- Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost
- Show a conflict
- Give somebody a conflicting priority
- Encounter a character
- Share a person's history, problem, desires, or goals
- Let the player succeed, with or without a cost

When making a move the GM shouldn't say its name to the players. Instead, the GM should make it something that actually happens within the fictional world. The GM shouldn't say, "I reveal an unwelcome truth." Instead, they might say, "It turns out the bridge wasn't as stable as you thought! You hear a loud cracking noise from the stone under your feet."

Most GM moves end in a place where at least one player can make a meaningful decision, which means the GM should find out what they do.

GM Moves in Action

Use an NPC's default behavior

"Christine scoffs at you. 'Whatever, loser,' she says. 'Will one of you be a dear and take care of this wretch for me?' Two well-built men in tuxedos step forward with grins on their faces. One of them cracks their knuckles ominously. What do you do?" (Christine's behavior here is "Let your flunkies take care of things.")

"The dryad says something incomprehensible, spoken in a voice that is the wind rustling through the trees. What do you do?" (The dryad's behavior here is "Be alien.")

Reveal an unwelcome truth

"You punch him in face. The skin tears and pulls away, revealing the grinning skull of a lich. What do you do?"

"You successfully crafted the cloaking device, but even with your best efforts you couldn't make it work perfectly. The machine is unstable, prone to malfunctions, and the resulting invisibility will be temporary at best. What now?"

"The man clad in black armor says, 'No, Lucas, I didn't kill your father. I *am* your father!' What do you do?"

Announce future badness

"The doorknob rattles as somebody attempts to open it. You hear the jangling of keys on the other side. The house's owner must have come home early. What do you do?"

"Looking through the telescope you see the telltale flashes of light that indicate missile fire and two tiny blobs that grow larger at an alarming rate. They'll arrive in less than a minute. What do you do?"

"With his dying breath he gasps, 'You may have stopped me, but the Crimson Legion... is... coming...'"

"The miner says, 'Just so you know, there's trouble in them there mines. A creepin' darkness that don't look so good. Conrad didn't believe the warnings, said it was a load of superstitious nonsense. Never came back.'"

Offer an opportunity, with or without cost

"His path takes him right underneath you and he doesn't seem to have noticed you perched on the overpass. You could drop onto him, dealing some heavy damage, but you'd take an injury doing that. What do you do?"

"Nobody's eyes are on you. If you wanted to grab the amulet, now would be the time. What do you do?"

"You don't see an easy way for your group to get inside the building, but you notice an air vent large enough for your drone."

"You notice, just down the road, that a travelling vendor has set up a booth. It is decorated with eye-searingly bright colors. Would you like to check it out?"

Put a character in a spot

"Your foot is stuck and the giant counterweight is swinging towards you. What do you do?"

"As you approach the scroll you hear a strange click as the ground under your feet shifts downward just slightly. The portcullis behind you starts loudly sliding downwards. You can stay inside with the scroll or you can run out of the room, but there isn't time to do both. What do you do?"

"The snarling monster swipes at the overturned car, trying to get at the woman trapped inside. You hear her scream in terror. What do you do?"

Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask

"'You want this sword?' the man asks. 'Sure, if you can beat me in a duel.' What do you do?"

"The guard is willing to look the other way while you sneak into the palace, but in exchange he wants that golden statue you obtained earlier. Do you make the trade?"

"If you do this, it will cost your character their reputation and any contacts they have. Are you sure you want to go through with it?"

Inflict an injury

"Alex swings the crowbar wildly, painfully clipping your head. Mark off an injury. What do you do?"

"You tumble down the ravine, landing painfully at the bottom. Mark off an injury. What now?"

"Yes, but"

A roll resolves the question, "Can I do this thing?" Sometimes, however, the GM may want to make the answer to the question part of the ongoing plot, taking longer to resolve than just a simple 4dF roll. In that case the GM can tell the PC what complications are in the way of accomplishing their goal. If the PC can overcome the complications they get the outcome they wanted.

This is an expansion of the "Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask" GM move.

Situations where "Yes, but" could be appropriate include, but are not limited to: crafting equipment, giving medical treatment, creating a new magical spell or effect, and improving traits.

Sample complications:

- It's going to require rare or expensive resources
- It will require assistance from somebody else
- It will require following a specific procedure
- You and your allies will risk danger or unwanted attention
- While you work on it, a specific situation will be getting worse elsewhere

The GM may allow the player to choose between different combinations of complications. ("Either it will take a lot of money and several weeks, or you can swallow your pride and ask Jorgen for help." "Never!")

Condition Tracks

Fudge Lite uses injury tracks by default, but not all games use injuries as the primary measure of whether a PC is able to continue or not. For example, a game about bargaining with dark forces for power might track corruption instead of injuries, and a game about social conflict at cocktail parties might

track embarrassment. An injury track that doesn't necessarily track injuries is called a condition track.

The GM is free to customize anything about the condition tracks, such as the number of tracks, what conditions they track, how many boxes each condition has, how long it takes the different boxes to recover, and what causes each track to recover.

For example, a game where players investigate mind-shattering elder gods and the cults that worship them might have only two boxes for injury (indicating that physical combat is very dangerous and something to be avoided) and a separate track for mental health that has 6 boxes, to represent a slow deterioration over time.

Nonlinear Conditions

Instead of using condition tracks that are marked in order, the GM could create single-box conditions that can be marked in any order. These could be physiological states like sick, hungry, injured, and exhausted, and/or emotional states like afraid, angry, guilty, and hopeless. The specific conditions should be chosen to reinforce a specific gameplay experience. For example, a game about teenage drama would have different conditions than a game about wilderness survival.

When marking conditions, if the GM doesn't have a specific condition in mind they should let the player decide which condition is marked.

The GM should determine ahead of time what actions are required to clear each condition. For example, a hungry PC might need to eat food, and an angry PC might need to spend some time cooling off.

The GM may include a condition that is only marked off when all of the other conditions are already marked. This condition indicates that the PC is incapacitated (or worse) and can no longer contribute to the scene (or the game).

Condition Penalties

Marking in certain condition boxes may give the PC penalties to relevant trait checks. For example, this injury track gives the following penalties to physical actions:

Scratch: [][][]

Hurt (-1): []

Very hurt (-2): []

Incapacitated: []

Be aware that this can lead to a death spiral where it becomes harder for a PC to keep from taking conditions because they already have conditions.

Reliable Spellcasting

Spellcasters may have the following condition track:

Small mana cost [_][_]

Large mana cost [_][_]

When a player fails a spell roll the GM has them mark off a condition instead of making something bad happen. The idea is for the condition track to act as a buffer for players, allowing them to fail spell rolls without worrying about catastrophic spell failure. Nothing happens if they are out of conditions, except that they can no longer mitigate the effects of a bad spellcasting roll.

Spellcasting conditions are cleared at the same rate as health: a few minutes for small costs, a more significant amount of time for large costs.

Weapons and Armor/Variable Damage

For a slightly more granular system, the GM can assign damage/defense ratings to weapons and armors and let attacks mark off more than one wound track box at a time.

Example damage sources

Throwing a punch: mediocre damage, 1 box.

A knife or handgun: fair damage, 2 boxes.

A sword or shotgun: good damage, 3 boxes.

An assault rifle: great damage, 4 boxes.

Being hit by a train: superb damage, 5 boxes.

Example armors

Light armor: easily hidden or not obviously armor. Prevents 1 box of damage.

Heavy armor: clearly visible and obviously armor. Prevents 2 boxes of damage.

Some types of damage, such as drowning, burning, suffocation, etc., will bypass armor.

While variable damage is more realistic, it may not be fun for the player for their character to be incapacitated or killed so quickly. The GM is encouraged to give PCs additional injury boxes to compensate for the increased danger, especially if it's a setting where armor isn't readily accessible to the PCs.

Ship-to-Ship Combat

Any ship (spaceship, sailboat, submarine, etc.) can have a wound track just like a PC or NPC and can regain "health" in the same manner as a PC; it takes a few minutes of effort outside of combat to fix a minor injury, and it takes a more significant amount of time to fix a serious injury.

Ship-to-ship combat is very similar to character-to-character combat. Any PC in the appropriate spot can use the appropriate trait to pilot the ship and/or fire weapons. The ship's qualities don't directly adjust the player's roll. Instead, the GM takes them into account when making any adjustments to the difficulty of the roll.

Countdowns

Whenever something may happen in the future but hasn't happened yet, the GM can create a countdown for it. A countdown is just a series of boxes that get checked off when certain criteria are met. Once all the boxes are checked off, the thing happens.

Countdowns are incredibly versatile. The injury track technically counts as a player-facing countdown. Countdowns also can be used as Apocalypse World/Dungeon World Fronts, as skill challenges with success and/or failure conditions, and as a visible "ticking clock" to spur players into action.

Countdown Examples

Front countdown

Trigger: players fail to act against the kobold menace.

- Kobolds attack the town
- Kobold mage steals The Tome of Dragons
- The Dragon Lord awakens

"Ticking clock" countdown

Countdown advances as a GM move

- Stairwell collapses, limiting access to the second floor
- Building creaks ominously. Players are informed it's about to collapse.
- House collapses, incapacitating anybody still inside.

Skill challenge countdown

Goal: get funding for a new spaceship

Trigger: make enough successful trait checks to the relevant people

-

Skill challenge with linked failure countdown

Goal: get funding for a new spaceship

Trigger: make enough successful trait checks to the relevant people

[_] [_] [_]

Result: get the funding

Trigger: fail the relevant trait checks

[_] [_] [_] [_]

Result: get kicked out of the embassy

Character Advancement

Instead of, or in addition to, a flat amount of XP per session, the GM can use as many of the following methods to reward players with character progression as they like.

If the players gain more or less XP on average than they would under the default XP advancement rules, the advancement cost should be adjusted so that the rate of character advancement stays roughly the same (able to advance a trait by one level every four sessions).

Any rules that award XP can be adjusted to reward Fudge points.

Keys

Keys are PC-specific behaviors that reward the players with XP. They are determined either through collaboration between the player and the GM, or by the player selecting one or more from a GM-provided list. (See Appendix A for example lists.) The GM can award 1 XP any time a player hits their key, or 1 XP the first time a player's key is hit in that session (awarded then or at the end of the session), or just 1 XP at the end of a session if they hit any keys that session.

If a player feels that their current keys don't fit the type of character they wish to play, the GM can let them swap out one or more of their keys.

The GM should make sure to give the players opportunities to hit their keys during gameplay. An appropriate GM move for this might be "Set up a player's key."

XP on a Miss

Every time a player fails a roll they gain 1 XP. This is meant to encourage players to use their weaker traits and take some of the sting out of a failed roll.

This rule should only be applied when the player risks something significant by failing the roll. Trait checks already generally shouldn't be made if failure

doesn't risk anything, but it's even more important when the GM awards XP for failed rolls.

In-character Costs

The GM may choose to impose in-character requirements for a PC to improve their trait, as described in the "Yes, but" rule. This may or may not be used in conjunction with XP requirements.

Appendix A: Example Keys

The Shadow of Yesterday Keys

Key of Bloodlust: Your character enjoys overpowering others in combat. Hit your key when you defeat someone in battle.

Key of Conscience: Your character has a soft spot for those weaker than their opponents. Hit your key whenever you help someone who cannot help themselves.

Key of the Coward: Your character avoids combat like the plague. Hit your key when you avoid a potentially dangerous situation or stop a combat using other means besides violence.

Key of Faith: Your character has a strong religious belief that guides them. Hit your key when you defend your faith to others or convert somebody else to your faith.

Key of Fraternity: Your character has someone they are sworn to, a friend who is more important than anyone else. Hit your key when your character makes a decision influenced by this person or defends them in some way.

Key of Glittering Gold: Your character loves wealth. Hit your key when you increase your wealth by a significant amount.

Key of the Guardian: Your character has a ward, someone who depends on them for security and protection. Hit your key when your character makes a decision influenced by them or rescues them from harm.

Key of the Masochist: Your character thrives on personal pain and suffering. Hit your key when you are bloodied or broken.

Key of the Mission: Your character has a personal mission that they must complete. Hit your key when you take action to complete this mission.

Key of Vengeance: Your character has a hatred for a particular organization, person, or even species or culture. Hit your key when you hurt a member of that group or a lackey of that person.

Key of the Vow: Your character has a vow of personal behavior that they have sworn not to break. This could be a dietary restriction, a requirement to pray at sunbreak every morning, or something else like that. Hit your key when you uphold this vow even when it causes harm or serious inconvenience.

Lady Blackbird Keys

Key of Banter: Hit your key when your character says something that makes the other players laugh or when you explain something using highly technical jargon.

Key of the Broker: Hit your key when you bargain, make a new contact, or exchange a favour.

Key of the Commander: Hit your key when you come up with a plan and give orders to make it happen.

Key of Conscience: Hit your key when you help someone who is in trouble or when you change someone's life for the better.

Key of the Daredevil: Hit your key when you do something cool that is risky or reckless (especially piloting stunts).

Key of Fraternity: Hit your key when your character is influenced by your friend or when you show how deep your bond is.

Key of Greed: Hit your key when you steal something cool or score a big payoff.

Key of the Guardian: Hit your key when you make a decision influenced by your ward or protect them from harm.

Key of Hidden Longing: Hit your key when you make a decision based on your secret affection or when you somehow show it indirectly.

Key of the Impostor: Hit your key when you perform well enough to fool someone with your disguise.

Key of the Mission: Hit your key when you take action to complete your mission.

Key of the Outcast: Hit your key when your outcast status causes you trouble or it important in a scene.

Key of the Paragon: Hit your key when you demonstrate your superiority or when your noble traits overcome a problem.

Key of the Pirate: Hit your key when you impress someone with your piratical nature or do something to add to your reputation.

Key of the Tinkerer: Hit your key when you modify, improve, repair, or patch some technology.

Key of the Traveler: Hit your key when you share an interesting detail about a person, place, or thing or when you go somewhere exciting and new.

Key of Vengeance. Hit your key when you strike a blow against those who wronged you.

Key of the Vow: Hit your key when your vow significantly impacts your decisions.

Key of the Warrior: Hit your key when you do battle with worthy or superior foes.

Dungeon World Alignment Keys

Key of the Chaotic Barbarian: Eschew a convention of the civilized world.

Key of the Neutral Barbarian: Teach someone the ways of your people.

Key of the Good Bard: Perform your art to aid someone else.

Key of the Neutral Bard: Avoid a conflict or defuse a tense situation.

Key of the Chaotic Bard: Spur others to significant and unplanned decisive action.

Key of the Good Cleric: Heal another.

Key of the Lawful Cleric: Follow the precepts of your church or god.

Key of the Evil Cleric: Harm another to prove the superiority of your church or god.

Key of the Chaotic Druid: Destroy a symbol of civilization.

Key of the Good Druid: Help something or someone grow.

Key of the Neutral Druid: Eliminate an unnatural menace.

Key of the Good Fighter: Defend those weaker than you.

Key of the Neutral Fighter: Defeat an opponent.

Key of the Evil Fighter: Kill a defenseless, beaten, or surrendered person.

Key of the Lawful Paladin: Deny mercy to a criminal or unbeliever.

Key of the Good Paladin: Protect someone weaker than you.

Key of the Chaotic Ranger: Free someone from literal or figurative bonds.

Key of the Good Ranger: Combat an unnatural threat.

Key of the Neutral Ranger: Help an animal or spirit of the wild.

Key of the Chaotic Thief: Leap into danger without a plan.

Key of the Neutral Thief: Avoid detection or infiltrate a location.

Key of the Evil Thief: Shift danger or blame from yourself to someone else.

Key of the Good Wizard: Use magic to directly aid another.

Key of the Neutral Wizard: Discover something about a magical mystery.

Key of the Evil Wizard: Use magic to cause terror and fear.

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